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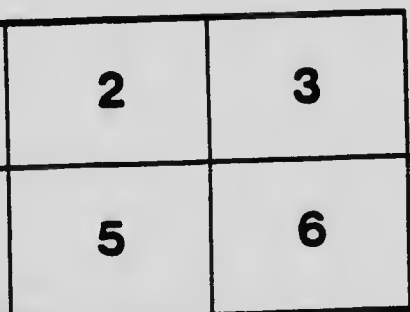
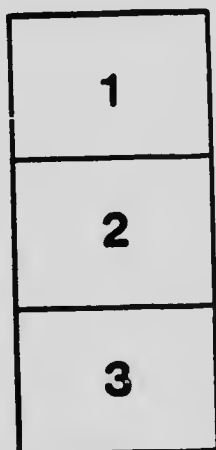
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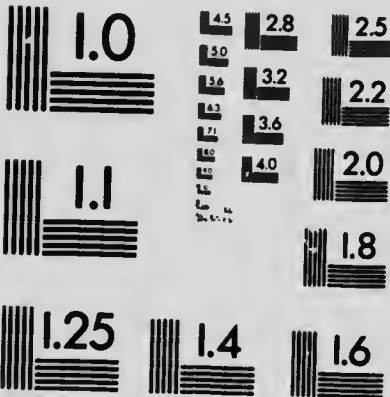
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Romance

Characters

In the Prologue and Epilogue:

BISHOP ARMSTRONG.

HARRY
SUZETTE } His grandchildren.

In the Story:

THOMAS ARMSTRONG, Rector of St. Giles.

CORNELIUS VAN TUYL, of Van Tuyl & Co.,
Dankers.

FRED LIVINGSTONE.

HARRY PUTNAM.

THE BUTLER at the Rectory.

A SERVANT.

A BELL BOY.

MISS ARMSTRONG, The Rector's Aunt.

MISS SUSAN VAN TUYL.

MRS. RUTHERFORD.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM.

MISS FROTHINGHAM.

SIGNORA VANNUCCI.

MME. MARGHERITA CAVALLINI.

GUESTS of Van Tuyl, etc.

**“My thoughts at the end of the long, long day
Fly over the hills and far away!”**

THE PROLOGUE: The Bishop's library in his house on Washington Square. About ten o'clock.

THE STORY:

ACT I.

Over forty years ago. The blue drawing-room in Cornelius Van Tuyl's house,—58 Fifth Avenue. A November evening.

ACT II.

The Study in St. Giles' Church Rectory, East 8th Street. The afternoon of New Year's Eve.

ACT III.

Late that night. Mme. Cavalieri's apartments in the Brevoort House. After her farewell appearance as "Mignon."

THE EPILOGUE: The Bishop's library again. Midnight.

PLACE: New York. **TIME:** Now and the '60's.

The Prologue

SCENE:

The Bishop's library in Washington Square. The two walls meet back at a wide angle. At right are two windows, with heavy curtains drawn. At left is a large fireplace and white marble mantel and, above it, a door. There are high bookcases, running up to the ceiling, set in both walls wherever there is any space. In corner at back, where the two walls meet, is a Victrola, of sober mahogany. Before the fire place, half facing audience is the Bishop's big arm-chair. At right, is a big mahogany table-desk, arranged in an orderly way with electric lamp, telephone, desk-furniture, books, memoranda, files, etc. The chair is behind it, between the windows. The whole room is one of quiet dignity,—slightly old-fashioned in effect, yet very comfortable.

It is night. The lamp on the desk is turned on and there is a cheerful wood fire burning. In his arm-chair before the fire sits Bishop Armstrong, a charming, gentle, humorous old man, over seventy years old. At the right, Suzette, a pretty young girl of seventeen, is sitting reading a newspaper.

SUZETTE:—(Reading head-lines) "Reputation of Skyscrapers—Measures." (*She yawns*) "Borough President gives to Board of Estimates the Report on Improvement." (*looking up*) Sounds dull, doesn't it?

THE BISHOP:—No—but if you think so, try the next.

(*Reading*)—"President in the West—yesterday's Speech at Cheyenne"—Is that the way you pronounce it?—"Crops, Race Suicide, and Tariff Reform." (*Looking up.*) It looks dreadfully long! Now, grandpa, speak the truth! Wouldn't you really rather hear *Caro Nome* on the Victrola?

THE BISHOP:—Well, my dear, perhaps I would. Where's Harry? He said, he said he wanted to speak to me after dinner about something important.

SUZETTE:—(*At Victrola*)—Oh, he just went out. He'll be back soon. (*The record begins*) There, grandpa! Isn't that a splendid record?

THE BISHOP:—(*Singing.*)—Ta—ta—ta—ta—ta? Yes, a rather fine voice—who is it?

SUZETTE:—Tetrazzini.

THE BISHOP:—Ah, you should have heard Patti sing this at the Academy in '72—!

SUZETTE:—Now, grandpa, I can't help being young and anyway I'm sure that Melba and Destin and Farrar are every bit as good as your Cavillinis and Pattis and Grisis. And as for Caruso—!

THE BISHOP:—Ah, my dear! I have heard Mario! —(*Humming again*)—Ta—ta—ta—ta—ta!. Now—(*He listens*)—Ah well, fair—fair! (*With a sigh*) After all, there's no one like Verdi.

SUZETTE:—Grandpa?

THE BISHOP:—Yes, dear?

SUZETTE:—(*Beguilingly*)—Which do you think would be more apt to melt you into a perfectly angelic, Bavarian-cream sort of mood—'O Parigi' from *Traviata* or the 'Sextette' from *Lucia*?

THE BISHOP:—I'm melted already. I'm just running over the side of the dish.

SUZETTE:—(*Looking at him*) Really? (*Doubtfully*)—No, I think you need one more. I want you very, very soft!—(*Picking out a record*)—Oh, here's a brand-new Destinni! That'll do it!

THE BISHOP:—What's the opera?

SUZETTE:—(*Adjusting the record*)—Wait and see! (*The machine starts playing the accompaniment*)—Do you remember it?

THE BISHOP:—(*Looking away*)—Yes—yes, I remember—(*The song begins—he rouses himself suddenly*) Don't play that, Suzette. I know I'm foolish, but it makes me rather sad.

SUZETTE:—(*Stopping the record*)—I thought you'd like it! It's from *Mignon*!

THE BISHOP:—Yes, I know—but—(*In a different tone*)—Suppose we have a little Harry Lauder for a change?

SUZETTE:—“I love a lassie?”

THE BISHOP:—(*Relieved*)—I think that would be very pleasant indeed.

SUZETTE:—And you a Bishop of the Episcopal Church!—(*She puts on the Lauder record*)—There!—(*She starts on the machine*).

THE BISHOP:—(*Leaning back in his chair with a chuckle*)—Ta—ta—ta—ta—a—ta!

SUZETTE:—(*Leaning on the arm of his chair*)—grandpa, I've got something to tell you.

THE BISHOP:—Yes?

SUZETTE:—And I don't know whether or not you'll like it.

THE BISHOP:—I like everything. It's my greatest fault!

SUZETTE:—(*Suddenly smiling*)—Oh, oh! What about Wagner?

THE BISHOP:—(*Firmly*)—Except Wagner. Yes, that's true—I can't stand Wagner!

SUZETTE:—Well, I doubt if you can stand this, either.

THE BISHOP:—Suppose you give me a try!

SUZETTE:—All right. (*Turns off record.*)—It's Harry. He's gone and done it.

THE BISHOP:—What?

SUZETTE:—(*All in a rush*).—I mean he hasn't *really* gone and done it, because he naturally can't do anything without *her* and *she* says she won't do a thing until you've said it's all right, so *that's* why Harry wanted to speak to you tonight and you musn't breathe one word about my telling you—you see, he's planning to do it all himself. I thought I'd better break it to you gently. (*Slight pause*)—Don't you think I've been wise, grandpa, to break it to you gently?

THE BISHOP:—You haven't broken it at all, my dear. I don't know what you're talking about.

SUZETTE:—Why grandpa, I've just *told* you! Harry's engaged to a girl named Lucille Anderson!

THE BISHOP:—Oh! I must be getting deaf. Dear me! And who is Lucille Anderson?

SUZETTE:—Well, that's just it! Lucille's an—an artist!

THE BISHOP:—You mean she paints?

SUZETTE:—No, she doesn't exactly *paint*. You know there're all kinds of artists, grandpa, and Lucille—well, Lucille's art is—er a beautiful art, it's the art of—er—

THE BISHOP:—Well?

SUZETTE:—The art of—er—impersonation on the stage.—(*A slight pause.*)

THE BISHOP:—An actress!

SUZETTE:—Yes. (*Nervously.*) Well, it doesn't make any difference. Lots of nice girls are nowadays.

THE BISHOP:—(*To Himself*)—An actress—!

SUZETTE:—(*Bursting out*)—But she's a perfect dear and her father was a well-known lawyer in Toronto, Canada, but he died and left her without a cent and her influence over Harry is very, *very* good and I'm sure you'll love her when you get to know her—I do, anyway, and I've only seen her four times—(*Coaxingly*)—Grandpa, remember—it's our own Harry!

THE BISHOP:—(*Drily*)—That's just what I *am* remembering, dear. He always *did* have very little sense!

SUZETTE:—(*Reproachfully*)—Why, grandpa, he played quarter on the 'varsity!' And you said yourself that took a lot of brains!

THE BISHOP:—(*Smiling*)—Did I? Well, this proves I was mistaken.

SUZETTE:—Oh, dear! I—(*Suddenly*) Wait! I heard the front-door! Hhere he is—! (*She slips off the arm of his chair*)—Now remember! Don't you get me into trouble!

THE BISHOP:—I won't!

SUZETTE:—Promise?

THE BISHOP:—Cross my heart and hope to die!—(*Enter Harry from left. He is an attractive young man of about twenty-two or three—restless, young and impetuous. He wears a dinner-coat.*)—Well! We'd almost given you up!

HARRY:—(*Ill at ease*)—I had to make a call. Didn't Suzie tell you?

THE BISHOP:—(*Traquilly*)—Oh, yes, she said something or other. Well, what about our little chat?

HARRY:—(*Nervously*)—Your—your rheumatism is not bothering you too much, is it, sir? Tomorrow would—

THE BISHOP:—Oh no! Suzie's played all my aches away with *Rigoletto* and Harry Lauder. I'm fit as a fiddle, my boy, so put another log on the fire and go ahead.

HARRY:—All right, sir. (*He puts on the log, motioning the while for Suzette to leave.*)

SUZETTE:—(*Shutting the Victrola*)—There!—(*To the Bishop*)—I'll come in later and finish the *Post* before you go to bed. (*To Harry in a lower voice*)—Don't worry. I've got him going!

HARRY:—Thanks, Old Girl. (*She goes out—left.*)

HARRY:—(*Turning resolutely to the Bishop*)—Grandfather, I have something I want to—

THE BISHOP:—(*Gently*)—If you go to my desk, Harry, and open the second drawer from the top on the

left-hand side, I think you'll see a box of cigars—(*Harry obeys.*)—Thank you. Can you find them?—(*Harry returns with the box*)—Won't you have one?—(*Harry shakes his head*)—I know they're not as good as yours, but I can't afford the *very* best brands.

HARRY:—I don't feel like smoking now. Grandfather, I've come to you in order to—

THE BISHOP:—(*Interrupting gently*) Er—just one moment. I haven't any match!

HARRY:—Oh, Lord! Excuse me!—(*He lights the Bishop's cigar*)—There! Now I want to tell you what's on my mind, grandfather. It's been there for some time and I—I—

THE BISHOP:—Yes?

HARRY:—(*Embarrassed*)—I think I ought to—to get it off.

THE BISHOP:—Well?

HARRY:—You see—it's this way.—(*Pause*).

THE BISHOP:—(*Mildly*)—What way?

HARRY:—Hang it, I don't know how to put the thing, but—but—(*Looking up and seeing the Bishop smiling at him*)—Well, I'll be—! You're on! You've seen on all the time!

THE BISHOP:—Your intuition is overwhelming, Harry,—but it's correct. As you say,—I'm on. (*Pause*).—

HARRY:—(*Wrathfully looking at door*).—I might have known no girl could keep a secret!

THE BISHOP:—(*Hastily*)—It's my fault! I wrung it out of her! I kicked her shins! I—I twisted her arms!

HARRY:—(*Disgusted*)—And now you're making fun of me! Well—! (*He straightens up defiantly.*)

THE BISHOP:—(*Suddenly tender*)—I'm not making fun of you, Harry.

HARRY:—(*Uncomfortably*)—I meant to tell you myself about Lucile. I didn't want anybody else butting in.

THE BISHOP:—Of course—I know. You must love her a great deal!

HARRY:—(*Still a little sulkily.*)—Well, I do.

THE BISHOP:—And she's very pretty, isn't she?

HARRY:—(*Brightening*)—Did Suzie tell you?

THE BISHOP:—No—I just guessed—that's all.

HARRY:—(*Enthusiastically*)—And she's awfully clever, too—acts like a streak—and she has just bunches of character! Why, when it comes down to it, she's ten times too good for me!

THE BISHOP:—(*With a tender, sad little smile, looking far away*)—Of course she is—of course—of course!

HARRY:—I met her at the Randall's—you know, that painter fellow—and now she's all alone in a rotten boarding-house on 10th Street and she has no work and her family are all dead—and so I really think I ought to marry her right off. Now don't you agree with me? (*Pause*)—Well! Don't you?

THE BISHOP:—(*Rousing himself with an effort*)—I don't know, Harry. You see, you're so young—you're just beginning life, and you may change and grow, my dear boy. there may come a time when you'll need more than any little actress can ever give you—(*Harry makes a movement*) Oh, it's all right now, you love her—I know that! But are you quite sure, Harry, that you'll always love her just the way you love her now and nothing hidden in the future—or in the past—can ever shake your faith and beat you down and break your heart?

HARRY:—I don't know what you mean.

THE BISHOP:—You must be very, very sure, my boy—or else you're not fair to yourself—and what's worse—I'm afraid you're not fair to her.

HARRY:—(*Bursting out*)—Oh, what's the good of talking! I just knew it would be this way! There's absolutely no use trying to do things with my family—they're all alike—narrow, conventional, dry-as-dust! (*Turning away suddenly*)—If only dad and mummy were alive, they'd understand!

THE BISHOP:—(*Hurt*)—Don't say things like that, Harry! You know I've done my best for Suzette and you.

HARRY:—(*Penitent*)—Oh, I didn't mean that, grandpa. But you see, it's a long time now since you've been young and I think it's sort of hard for you to remember back and—*sympathize* with a fellow! (*Going on quickly*)—Oh, I know you're awfully wise and you can see clear through people and understand 'em *that* way, but this is different—I don't believe you ever felt the way I'm feeling now—and so—(*Gulping*)—Oh, well, there's no use going on. Thanks for trying, grandpa—I won't keep you up any longer! (*He is at the door ready to leave.*)

THE BISHOP:—Where are you going?

HARRY:—(*A trifle defiantly*)—I'm going to get married!

THE BISHOP:—To-night?

HARRY:—Yes, I got the license this afternoon. (*Slight pause*).

THE BISHOP:—Come in, Harry, and shut the door.

HARRY:—(*Doing so*)—What do you want?

THE BISHOP:—You said I couldn't remember back and realize how one felt when one was young—Well, I do remember. Because no matter how old one grows, Harry, there always are some things that keep a little youth still burning in one's heart.

HARRY:—I didn't mean to hurt, grandpa.

THE BISHOP:—You didn't my dear boy. But you've made me think of something that I'd supposed I'd forgot—ten—it's so long ago since it came up in my mind. It's something I never told to anyone before—I used to think I never would. Oh, well—times change, and I didn't realize then I was to have a grandson just like you. I wonder, Harry, if you'll have time to wait and hear about it?

HARRY:—(*Distrustfully*)—If you think it's something that's going to change my mind about Lucile, you might as well stop right here! (*As the Bishop rises with difficulty and goes slowly over to the desk*)—What is it, grandpa? Can't I get it?

THE BISHOP:—(*Suddenly, with a sharp intake of breath*)—A-ah!

HARRY:—(*Sympathetically*)—Your rheumatism, sir?

THE BISHOP:—(*With a smile*)—Don't mention rheumatism now, my boy. (*He stands for a moment above the desk and shuts his eyes*)—I'm only twenty eight years old! (*Taking a bunch of keys from his pocket, he unlocks a lower drawer and, after some fumbling comes up with a small box of mahogany which he lays on the desk before him.*)—Do you know what's in this little box?

HARRY:—No, sir. What?

THE BISHOP:—(*With a radiant smile*)—Romance, my boy, the perfume of romance!

HARRY:—How—how do you mean, sir? (*Music begins?*)

THE BISHOP:—Look! (*He opens the box and tenderly takes out a little whisp of lace.*)

HARRY:—(*Awed*)—What is it, grandpa? A handkerchief?

THE BISHOP:—(*Nodding*)—A little handkerchief. (*He undoes it and discloses a few old flowers*)—White violets—(*He sniffs them, then smiles and shakes his head*)—They're dried and yellow now—their sweetness is all gone

—I'm an old man Harry—but somehow—why, it seems like yesterday—

HARRY:—(*Wonderingly*)—What, sir?

THE BISHOP:—(*Turning out the desk-lamp, and crossing to his chair again holding the flowers and handkerchief very carefully in his hands*)—Ah, that's what I'm going to tell you now! Sit, down my boy—(*As Harry sits on the floor by his feet, looking up at him*)—Are you comfortable there? That's right! Well, it was over forty years ago—forty years—dear me, how the time flies! and I was the young Rector of St. Giles, you know. That was before I married your grandmother—God bless her! Although I've known her nearly all my life. Well, Harry, one night—in November, it was—I went to an evening party at Old Cornelius Van Tnyl's house and—

(*Harry is seated on the floor, looking up into the Bishop's face. And, as he speaks, there is music and the whole scene melts into the dark. The music swells, growing sweeter and louder, then falls and dies away, as the lights come softly up, revealing the stage set for Act I.*)

Act 1

SCENE:

Evening reception at Mr. Cornelius Van. Tuyl's house, about 1867. It is a small balcony-room, overlooking drawing-rooms below. Stairs in centre coming up from floor below. Steps at each side of well leading to semi-circular gallery at back, overlooking rooms below. In fore-ground at right a couch turned slightly to face audience. At its head a small marble-topped table. At left of foreground, a tete-a-tete chair. Seat running along balustrade which encircles staircase well. Lamps in foreground give a mellow light which contrasts with the brilliance of the lighting in the rooms below.

As the lights go up there is the subdued sound of voices and laughter from the rooms below. The faint sound of a distant orchestra playing a quaint polka. There are several people on the stage. At right of gallery at back stand two men-about-town, looking out over the rooms below. At centre of this gallery are a young man and girl, talking, laughing and flirting. Another young man and a girl—she on his arm—are coming down the steps at left, chatting gaily. They turn and descend the main staircase. Mrs. Rutherford a rather pretty, affected woman—is sitting on the couch at right. Besides her is Miss Susan Van Tuyl, a sensible, healthy, attractive young woman of thirty-two or three, dressed simply and charmingly in white. They are listening to Mr. Harry Putnam, an elderly bean of the period, who stands twirling his monstache, his feet crossed, ogling and talking to them. Mrs. Frothingham, a buxom, florid dowager, very richly and fussily dressed, sits on the tete-a-tete at left with her daughter, a pretty young girl of eighteen.

THE YOUNG MAN:—(*To young girl on his arm, as they come down—left—from gallery.*)—A very brilliant party—don't you think?

THE GIRL:—Oh, quite the most elegant affair of the winter!—(*They turn to the stairs.*)

THE YOUNG MAN:—(*To another young man just coming up*)—Oh, Frank—is the dancing salon crowded?

THE SECOND YOUNG MAN:—Not just now. They're beginning to serve supper.

THE FIRST YOUNG MAN:—(*To the girl*)—Splendid!—(*They go downstairs.*)

THE SECOND YOUNG MAN:—(*To Mrs. Frothingham, with a bow*)—Mrs. Frothingham, may I have the honor of this polka?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—You droll wretch—don't you know my dancing days are over?

THE YOUNG MAN:—(*To the girl*)—Miss Frothingham, then, may be persuaded to atone for—

MISS FROTHINGHAM:—(*Rising*)—Of course I may! I love the polka!—(*They turn towards the stairs.*)

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—(*Rising*)—My dearest Susan—Agatha—forgive me if I come and talk to you!

(*She joins the group at couch—right.*)—

(*Meanwhile the two men-about-town are heard to speak from gallery, where they are looking at crowd below.*)—

THE FIRST MAN:—Who's that woman with the diamonds—down there by the door? I thought at first it might be Cavallini.

THE SECOND MAN:—(*Turning away*)—No, Cavallini's singing that new opera—what's it's name?

FIRST MAN:—“Mignon?”

SECOND MAN:—“Mignon”—of course! She's still at the Academy—she won't be here till twelve.

FIRST MAN:—Shall we have supper now or shall we wait?

SECOND MAN:—Now, my dear chap, now! This is one of the few houses where Blue Seal Johannisberger flows like water!

FIRST MAN:—(*At the stairs*)—And the '48 claret! I'd forgotten that—(*They disappear below, talking.*)—

(*A burst of laughter from the girl at back of gallery.*)

THE GIRL:—You musn't talk to me that way any more! Now give me your arm and take me down stairs to mamma—

HER PARTNER:—Do you know you have the same effect on me as a glass of Champagne!

THE GIRL:—(*At stairs*)—Of course, I don't know anything about that!

HER PARTNER:—No, of course, not. It doesn't last long—still—while it lasts—(*They disappear talking and laughing.*)

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—(*At couch—right*)—You can say what you please, Miss Van Tuyl, his nose is *not* Grecian!

SUSAN:—(*Very polite*)—Dear Mrs. Frothingham, are noses your only standard?

MRS. RUTHERFORD:—(*Shaking her head*)—Ah, well—his grandfather on his mother's side came of very doubtful stock! An Irish peasant, I believe—he landed sometime about 1805.

SUSAN:—Surely, Mrs. Rutherford, your memory doesn't take you quite as far back as all that?

PUTNAM:—And to think we are condemned to listen to his sermons! Why last Sunday I woke up just in time to catch the young puppy making scurrilous allusions to me—?

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—Dear me, I regret exceedingly that my neuralgia kept me from attending church! What did he—?

SUSAN:—He said he didn't doubt that several of our elderly beaux would soon be making Heaven fashionable and organizing society among the more exclusive angels!—

(*Tom is seen leisurely coming upstairs. He is about twenty-eight, handsome, positive and determined. He is dressed very simply and a little shabbily. He has a very hearty, genial quality, but no humor.*)

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—Abominable!

MRS. RUTHERFORD:—Blasphemous, I call it!

PUTNAM:—Hardly the remark of a gentleman!

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—But he's not a gentleman!

PUTNAM:—He dresses like a pen-wiper!

MRS. RUTHERFORD:—He spends all his spare time with working men!

PUTNAM:—(*To Susan*)—My dear young lady, why your excellent uncle ever gave him the church is more than I shall ever understand!

SUSAN:—Because uncle knows he's the coming man—that's why! Look what he's done here in just these two years! Hasn't he built up the congregation from nothing at all to the third biggest in New York. Hasn't he started the athletic club for the young men and the cooking school for the girls? Hasn't he founded our parish school for poor children—and got people to donate a playground—and a circulating library—and a big hall for free lectures and musical entertainments? Isn't he just as much at home and just as much loved down in a Bowery saloon as he is here in Fifth Avenue drawing-room? Isn't he—

PUTNAM:—(*Interrupting as he sees Tom*)—I—er—I quite agree with you, Miss Van Tuijl!

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—(*Also seeing Tom*)—Very praiseworthy, I'm sure!

MRS. RUTHERFORD:—Quite remarkable indeed!

SUSAN:—(*Bewildered*)—But— (*Suddenly turned and seeing Tom*)—Oh, I see! (*To Tom*)—We're talking about you, Tom!

TOM:—I heard. Thank you, Susan.

MRS. RUTHERFORD:—(*Rising*)—We were all saying the most flattering things—

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—(*Rising*)—Dear Dr. Armstrong, I—I wonder your ears weren't burning—

PUTNAM:—(*Laughing nervously*)—By Jove, yes—so do I!

TOM:—Don't let me drive you away.

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—Er—I must look after my Mabel.

PUTNAM:—And I was on the point of offering Mrs. Rutherford some supper.

MRS. RUTHERFORD:—(*To Susan*)—Au revoir, my dear—good-night, Dr. Armstrong!

MRS. FROTHINGHAM:—Good-night—good-night!

PUTNAM:—(*Bowing*)—Your servant! (*The three go downstairs.*)

SUSAN:—(*After them*)—Don't go before Madame Cavallini comes—she's promised to sing for us and you know what *that means!* Au revoir—an revoir! (*Turning to Tom*)—Cats! Two tabbies and one old tom! Did you hear what they were saying?

TOM:—Just a little. What does it matter? They're not the people that really *count!*

SUSAN:—I know. But I just can't bear their criticising you! (*Looking at him*)—Oh, Tom! You've got on your oldest clothes. Why couldn't you have stopped to dress?

TOM:—Well, I was going to, honest I was. But this is my night at the athletic club and about ten o'clock, just as I'd taken on the heavy weight of the ward, little Jimmy Baxter came running in and said young Sullivan was drunk and killing his wife so would I please step over? (*Noticing her glance*)—What are you looking at?

SUSAN:—Your hair!

TOM:—(*Feeling it*)—Is it sticking up behind?

SUSAN:—Just one lock—on the left. (*Coming up to him*)—Bend over! (*He does so and she smooths it down, as he goes on talking.*)

TOM:—(*Going on all the time*).—And I found Sullivan in a fighting mood and rather difficult to manage and in the middle of it all, if Mrs. Sullivan didn't go and have another baby!

SUSAN:—(*Trying to take out a spot from his lapel with her handkerchief*).—Poor dear! I'll go round tomorrow and see how she's doing. (*Orchestra heard below*.)

A MAN'S VOICE:—(*Coming upstairs*)—I say!

SUSAN:—(*Looking over balustrade*)—Oh, it's Mr. Livingstone! (*Enter Fred Livingstone, a dandified young man of about thirty*.)

FRED:—Who is carrying a plate in each hand)—There, Miss Van Tuhl! You owe that dab of mayonnaise to no less a person than the Golden Nightingale! (*To Tom*)—Hello, Tom—how goes it?

SUSAN:—Why, Mr. Livingstone!

FRED:—It's a fact. I never would have got it if it hadn't been for her. Why, all the literary and artistic talent in New York was fighting like a band of demons round the supper-table when, thank the Lord! the band struck up and someone said that Cavallini had arrived!

SUSAN:—(*Smiling*)—I see!

FRED:—Two seconds—and there wasn't a soul in the dining-room but me. Why, even the caterers men were standing up on chairs to catch a glimpse of the divinity!

SUSAN:—I really *must* go down and greet her!

TOM:—If you see your uncle, Susan, tell him where I am.

SUSAN:—Very well. (*To Fred*).—Mr. Livingstone?

FRED:—Er—will you excuse me, Miss Van Tuhl? I want to have a word or two with Tom here.

SUSAN:—Of course. An revoir. (*She goes downstairs*.)

FRED:—(*Quivering*)—Well! This is the last time I bring my wife to *this* house!

TOM:—(*Amazed*)—What—?

FRED:—Why, the man must be out of his head!

TOM:—Who?

FRED:—Van Tuhl!

TOM:—What on earth's he done?

FRED:—(*Staring at him*).—Good Lord, man, don't you realize who's downstairs? Don't you know who's making a tour of the rooms on his arm? Don't you know who he's introducing to every respectable woman that's been fool enough to come here tonight—

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—No, I don't—who?

FRED:—(*Impressively*)—The—Cavallini!

TOM:—(*Puzzled*)—Oh, you mean that foreign opera singer? Well, what of it?

FRED:—What of it? She's his mistress.

TOM:—(*Controlling himself with difficulty*)—What?

FRED:—I wouldn't have mentioned it if he hadn't brought her here tonight! I believe in letting a man's private affairs strictly alone, but gad! I expect him in return to show a little decency!

TOM:—(*Clenching his hands*)—I see.

FRED:—And look here, Tom, as long as you're his rector and all that, I think you ought to speak to him about it—haul him over the coals and haul him jolly hard.

TOM:—(*Holding himself in.*)—And this is all you wanted to say to me?

FRED:—Yes.

TOM:—(*Coming close to him.*)—Then I have one or two things to say to you. And I'll just begin by telling you what you are—and that's a miserable, gossiping old woman!

FRED:—(*Taken aback*)—Wait—hold on!

TOM:—(*Continuing*)—A pitiful fool who hears a dirty story and can't wait until he's passed it on! Why, you apology for the male sex, do you know what you're doing? You're a guest in a gentleman's house—you've eaten his food and soused yourself in his wine and shaken him by the hand and now you're turning round and circulating dirty lies behind his back—

FRED:—(*Interrupting*)—They're not lies! He lived with her for years—she has a villa on the Riviera that Van Tuyl gave her—it's called Millefleurs—Jack Morris saw them there together—

TOM:—(*Thundering*)—Be still!

FRED:—(*Angrily, as he gets behind the sofa and talks over it*)—I won't be still! Why, all the fellows know what Rita Cavallini is—except yourself and you're a clergyman! Ask Guvvy Fisk—he knew the French musician chap that found her singing under hotel windows—years ago—in Venice. And Guvvy knows just when she kicked him out and went off with that Russian grand-duke and lived with him in Petersburg, until the Prince de Joinville set her up in Paris! Why, she's notorious all over Europe—she's ruined whole families—run through fortune after fortune—it was outside her door that that young English poet shot himself—the Emperor borrowed money from the Roths-

childs just to buy her diamonds—the King of Naples gave her—

TOM:—(*Breaking in*)—Stop it, Livingstone!

FRED:—(*Going right on*)—And as for Van Tuyl, well, everybody knows what *he's* been like—

TOM:—(*Interrupting and making for him*)—You little cur you—(*Just here Van Tuyl comes up from downstairs. He is a man of about fifty, big, deep-voiced and strong—a powerful personallity. His manner is genial and full of wise, quiet humor—but he suggests the possibility of volcanic emotions lying beneath. He is dressed soberly, but beautifully and with great care.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Quietly*)—Well, my young friends! What's the matter?

FRED:—(*Politely*)—Oh, nothing! Tom and I were arguing—that's all. (*He looks at his watch.*) Good gracious—twelve o'clock! You haven't seen my wife, sir? —

VAN TUYL:—But you're not going? Why, Mme. Cavillini's going to sing!

FRED:—(*Simply*)—I'd rather my wife heard Mme. Cavallini across the footlights—a touch of prejudice. I suppose—don't let it bother you—good-night! (*He bows, smiles, and goes out—back.*)

TOM:—(*Simply and a little shyly*)—I'd have come downstairs to find you, sir, but I'm not dressed as you see—and I thought you mighten't like it.

VAN TUYL:—(*Heartily*)—Nonsense, my boy! I think you're very good to come at all. I don't remember if you're interested in terra-cottas, Tom, but if you are—

(*He is at the mantel, lifting one of the vases lovingly*)
—Here's something that came in last week. It's a lekythos of the time of Pericles. Look at the exquisite grace and freshness of those figures! And the hand that made them has been dust two thousand years!

TOM:—(*Hastily*)—Er—very pretty—very pretty indeed.

VAN TUYL:—(*He puts back the vase with a sigh*)
But I think you care more for pictures than for terra-cottas, don't you? Come and look at the new Millet. I've got it in my room where I can—

TOM:—(*Firmly*)—Thanks, sir, but I'd rather stay here. I want to—to talk to you. (*Awkwardly*)—I don't quite know how to begin, sir, as it's a rather important—and at the same time a rather—a rather *delicate* matter but

—but—(*Suddenly*)—I'm not by any chance keeping you from your guests?

VAN TUYL:—Tom.

TOM:—Yes, sir?

VAN TUYL:—(*Putting his hand on Tom's arm*)—It's—it's about Susan, isn't it?

TOM:—Yes, but—

VAN TUYL:—Then it's all right. My boy, I'm as glad as can be!

TOM:—(*Puzzled*)—But *what's* all right? I'm afraid sir, I don't follow you.

VAN TUYL:—Why, aren't you asking me if—(*He looks at him sharply.*)

TOM:—I'm sorry, sir, but it's advice I wish to offer you.

VAN TUYL:—Advice—?

TOM:—Yes, I regret it, but it's my duty.

VAN TUYL:—In that case, pray go on. (*He sits*).—Won't you sit down?

TOM:—No, thanks. (*Ingeniously.*) Mr. Van Tuyl, I suppose some people would say that after all you'd done for St. Giles and me, it wasn't in my place to suggest anything—

VAN TUYL:—Nonsense, Tom. Do you know you're getting to look more like your dear mother every day?

TOM:—No, am I? (*Resuming.*)—But after all, I'm your rector and I feel I've got to—to—

VAN TUYL:—Quite right, my boy. I respect your feelings. Well?

TOM:—Do you know, Mr. Van Tuyl, that there's a woman downstairs whose reputation is—

VAN TUYL:—(*Calmly*)—Whoever, she is, Tom, she's one of my guests.

TOM:—(*Persisting*)—But she's a woman whose—immoralities are notorious—

VAN TUYL:—(*Sternly*)—Tom!

TOM:—Excuse me, sir. I'm speaking as the rector of St. Giles!

VAN TUYL:—(*Bowing his head*)—Go, on.

TOM:—(*Unconsciously assuming his pulpit manners*)—A type that disgraces even the effete and vice-worn civilizations, but from which—thank God!—our country has been comparatively free!

VAN TUYL:—(*Politely*)—Ah—?

TOM:—(*Quickly*)—We have our sins, sir—I know them well. But vice till now was forced to crawl her way

through poverty and darkness, or bask in the false light of an abandoned stage! She never dared to rear her slimy head and look into our homes—nay, touch the white hands of our wives and daughters!

VAN TUYL:—(*Smoking*)—And nieces?

TOM:—(*Hastily*)—And nieces. (*Resuming*)—And is it time, now after all these years of honest deeneey to open wide our doors to a Du Barry? To welcome Messalina to our hospitable board?

VAN TUYL:—(*Mildly*)—It isn't Sunday, Tom.

TOM:—I ask you, sir, as friend and clergyman, is it fair, is it wise, is it *right*—that your pure threshold should be crossed by Mme. Cavallini? (*Pause.*)

VAN TUYL:—How old are you, Tom?

TOM:—(*Lamely*)—E. —twenty-eight.

VAN TUYL:—(*With a wistful smile*)—Life's a simple thing when you're twenty-eight.

TOM:—(*Loftly*)—If one has standards—yes.

VAN TUYL:—Standards?

TOM:—Of right and wrong, I mean.

VAN TUYL:—Oh, yes,—I had those standards once.

TOM:—(*Shocked*)—Once, sir?

VAN TUYL:—and then one day I got 'em all mixed up—and the right seemed wrong and the wrong seemed right and I just didn't know where I was at.

TOM:—Oh, come, sir!

VAN TUYL:—And now I'm fifty-one years' old, my boy, and—(*With a chuckle*)—well, I'm dashed if I ever got 'em straight again!

TOM:—(*Distressed*)—Oh, sir, don't talk that way!

VAN TUYL:—(*Soberly*)—I've learnt a few things, though—stray spars I've clung to in all this storm and ocean—One's how to value people that are good—that's why you're rector of St. Giles, my boy—and another's how to pity people that ar—

TOM:—Bad.

VAN TUYL:—No, not bad, but there're some poor devils who find it harder to be good than you that's all.

TOM:—(*Impulsively*)—Oh, what a fool I've been! I might have known there wasn't a word of truth in what that puppy said.

VAN TUYL:—What puppy?

TOM:—A young he-gossip, sir, who reeled off lies about this woman. And I was ass enough to believe him,

and come to you and talk like a—like a—like a confounded prig! I wonder you don't throw me out of the house!

VAN TUYL:—(*With a twinkle*)—You're my rector, Tom.

TOM:—Do you think you forgive me, sir? (*Just here the band downstairs begins a beguiling Strauss waltz.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Rising*)—There's nothing to forgive, my boy. And now run down stairs and ask Susan for some supper.

TOM:—But, I'm not dressed—

VAN TUYL:—Oh, nonsense! But if you'd rather, go into the library. She'll bring it up to you.

(*Meanwhile, there is heard down the staircase the sound of men's voices, high and eager, and over and above them, a woman's laughter. This comes nearer and nearer.*)

TOM:—But I'm not—

VAN TUYL:—(*Clapping him on the shoulder*)—Don't tell me you're not hungry! You're twenty-eight years old—and when a young man's twenty-eight—bello! Who's this?

(*He turns and glances at back, as the sound of the voices and laughter grows nearer.*)

A WOMAN'S VOICE:—(*Just off, rising above the others.*)—Go 'vay—go 'vay—you mus' not come vit' me—no—no—you are naught-tee—you are mos' 'orr-r-rible naught-tee men I I evair see—

(*She comes on with the group of young dandies who have accompanied her. She stands a moment at the top of the stairway at back, laughing and talking, always facing in the direction whence she came,—away from Tom and Van Tuyl. She is a bewitching, brilliant little foreign creature—beautiful in a dark, Italian way. She is marvellously dressed in voluminous gauze and her dress is trimmed with tiny roses. Her black hair hangs in curls on either side of her face and three long soft curls hang down her low-cut back. On her head is a wreath of little roses. She wears long diamond earrings, a riviere of diamonds is about her neck, diamonds gleam of her corsage, her wrists and hands. She carries a fan and bouquet in a silver filagree holder. She speaks in a soft Italian voice, with quick bird-like gestures. She seems herself a good deal like an exquisite, gleaming, little humming bird.*)

ONE OF THE YOUNG MEN:—But it's my waltz!

ANOTHER—Don't listen to him, madame, you know you promised me to—

A THIRD:—(*Interrupting*)—Nonsense, Willie—*my* name's on her card!

THE FIRST:—It's no such thing.

THE SECOND:—I appeal to her!

THE THIRD:—Madame,—

RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—Oh—! Vhy you makesuch a beeg, beeg noise?

THE FIRST YOUNG MAN:—(*Frankly*)—You're driving us crazy—can't you understand?

RITA:—(*Mock serious*)—Vhat, *Me*—? Poor, leetle me? You beeg bad boy, you make of me—'ow you say?—vone seelly joke!

THE CHORUS:—"We don't!" "It's true!" "Of cours. it is!"

RITA:—(*Laughing*)—Go make de love to dose be-eautiful Amer-r-ican ladies wid de long nose an' de neck full of leetle bones—!

ONE OF THE YOUNG MEN:—But I want to make love to *you*!

ANOTHER:—And so do I!

A THIRD:—I do, too.

THE OTHERS:—And I—and I!

RITA:—Ouf! You cannot *all* make de love to me—so look! I tell you—(*They all gather nearer.*)

ONE OF THEM:—What?

ANOTHER:—Tell us!

RITA:—(*Triumphantly*)—You shall not *any* of you make de love to me!

CHORUS:—(*Disappointed*)—"Oh, madame!" "Please!" "You must!" etc.

RITA:—No—no! I stay here vid Meestaire Van Tnyl.

CHORUS:—"Oh, don't!" "What a shame!" "Please come downstairs!" etc.

RITA:—But listen now! Vich vone of you, 'em catch dis peenk camellia look—'e drive me 'ome!

(*She holds up the flower.*)

THE MEN:—(*Surging forward to snatch*)—"Give me it!" "Oh, madame!" "Get out of the way!" "It's mine!"

RITA:—(*Laughing and tossing it over the balustrade*) Eet is all gone—so run—run qvick! Oh, 'e has fallen himself down—dat leetle meestaire! *Povrino*!

(*Excitedly, looking over balustrade*)—Oh—! Oh—! You vill be hur-r-rted—(*Pointing*)—Oh Dio! *Guardi—guardi*!—(*Clapping her hands and leaning over the balustrade*)—All r-r-right—all r-r-right—you meestaire vid de

beeg moustache—*Bene! capito!* You take me 'ome!—*(She kisses her hand and turns away, still laughing)*—Dey are so fr-r-rightful-ee funn-ee, dose—*(She suddenly sees Tom, who has been standing quite still staring at her all the time. She stops. The words die away from her lips. She looks at him. An instant's pause.)*

TOM:—*(Indistinctly, as he tears his gaze away from her)*—I—I beg your pardon. *(He passes her quickly, his head down, and goes downstairs)*—*(She turns and follows him with her eyes.)*

RITA:—*(Very simply, still looking after him.)* Please who is dat young man?

VAN TUYL:—Tom Armstrong. He's a clergyman.

RITA:—*(Vaguely)*—Cler-gee-man?

VAN TUYL:—Abbe—priest—you know.

RITA:—*(Almost to herself)*—Ah—! Den it vas dat—

VAN TUYL:—What?

RITA:—*(Turning away)*—I dunno. Jost some'ting in his eyes—

VAN TUYL:—I don't suppose he'd ever seen anything like you in all his life.

RITA:—*(Impishly)*—No? My Lør-rd, 'ow very sad! *(Glancing again downstairs—this time with a certain calmerie)*—an' he vas 'an'some, too!

(Van Tuyl chuckles. She hears him, turns, catches his eye and they laugh together.)

VAN TUYL:—*(Coming up, still laughing, and taking her in his arms)*—You little monkey you!

RITA:—*(Softly, her eyes closed, a smile of triumph on her lips)*—De beeg Amer-r-ican, 'e like 'is leetle frien' tonight—ye-ss?

VAN TUYL:—*(Smiling)*—I don't think he could help it if he tried!

RITA:—*(Softly)*—Den please w. . . don' 'e keese 'er?

VAN TUYL:—*(Laughing and kissing her)*—There!

RITA:—*(Drawing herself away suddenly)*—My Lør-rd, I have forget some-t'ing!

VAN TUYL:—*(Following her)*—Come here.

RITA:—I have forget dat I am oh, mos' fr-r-rightfull-ee angr-ee!

VAN TUYL:—Not with me?

RITA:—Si—si!

VAN TUYL:—But why? What have I done?

RITA:—*(Briefly)*—You know.

VAN TUYL:—My dear, I don't!

RITA:—(*Sitting—right*)—Ssh! You mus' not say t'ings like dat—dey are not tr-r-rue! You 'ave tr-r-reat me ver' bad tonight—yes, you 'ave tr-r-reat me qvite, qvite—on-spikable!

VAN TUYL:—Why, I've invited you to my house, I've introduced you to my friends—I've entertained you before all the world—and isn't that exactly what you wanted?

RITA:—You ask me to your *soiree*—dat is tr-r-rue—but you ask me as an *ar-r-rtiste* not as a *femme du monde*!

VAN TUYL:—That isn't so!

RITA:—(*Like a flash*)—Ah no? Den please vhy you ask de ouer singer-r-rs, too?

VAN TUYL:—Now, Rita, listen—

RITA:—I vill not leesten! You t'ink I am a leetle—vhat you say?—*donnacia—une p'tite grisette*—

VAN TUYL:—My dear, you know I don't think anything of the sort—

RITA:—An' eet is not tonight a-lone—oh, no! Eet is two—t'ree mont's—all de time since fir-r-rst I come to your mos' ver' diz-a-agree-a-ble count-ree! (*With a smile*)—A-ah! Eet was not like dis at Millefleurs—I vas not dere a singer-r-r from de opera—at Millefleurs I vas a queen!

VAN TUYL:—Millefleurs—! Our Palace of a Thousand Flowers!

RITA:—(*Caressingly*)—Do you r-r-remember de night I sing to you de Schubert serenade—vhen you valk up an' down below de vindow—ye-es? An' all de r-r-roses in de vor-r-rld, dey blossom in de moonlight? Dere vas no vind—de sea vas qvite, qvite steell—an' you valk up an' down—up an' down—an' always I sing to you—an' sing—an' sing—an' de vind an' de sea an' de beeg gol' moon—dey all of dem leesten to me!

VAN TUYL:—(*Rousing himself*)—That was Millefleurs The roses there had brought me baek my youth.—(*With a sigh.*)—I came home, and I lost it, dear. I'll never find it again!

RITA:—Vhat you mean—please?

VAN TUYL:—I'm fifty-one years old. (*She instinctively draws away from him a little*)—That frightens you?

RITA:—Ah, no, but—

VAN TUYL:—(*Gently*)—I know how—you must feel. (*Pause*)—Rita.

RITA:—Vell?

VAN TUYL:—Rita, suppose we finish our—our friendship—end it here tonight.

RITA:—To night—?

VAN TUYL:—Give me your hand. There! Now we can talk! I'm fond of you, dear—I always shall be that—but already I'm beginning to disappoint you. And I'm afraid I'll do it more and more as time goes on. (*Slight pause.*)—Look at my hair! There wasn't any grey in it last year—at Millefleurs! But now—and next year there'll be more! And I've began to be a little deaf and fall asleep in chairs and dream about tomorrow's dinner. My rheumatism, too, came back last week—(*She winces and draws away her hand*)—Don't blame, me, dear—I can't help—getting old.

RITA:—(*Nervously*)—Don't—don't talk dat vay!

VAN TUYL:—(*Quickly*)—God knows I'm not complaining! I've lived my life—and it's been very sweet! I've done some work, and done it pretty well, and then I've found time to enjoy a great many of the beautiful things that fill this beautiful world! (*Politely*)—Among them, my dear, I count your voice—and you! (*Resuming*)—And yet the fact remains I've *lived* my life, I'm in the twilight years—oh! They're golden yet, but that won't last, and they'll grow deep and dim until the last tinge of the sunset's gone and night comes—and it's time to sleep. (*With a change of tone*)—But you—Good Lord, *your* life has just begun! Why, the dew's still on the grass—it's sparkling brighter than your brightest diamonds! (*He touches the ornaments*)—You wear the morning like a wreath upon your hair—don't lose all that, my dear,—don't waste your springtime on a stupid fellow, fifty-one years old! (*Pause.*)

RITA:—(*Coldly*)—All r-r-right. (*She turns away whistling.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Watching*)—What's the matter?

RITA:—Vone more—'ow you say?—frien'sheep feenished—! (*In a hard voice*)—Vone more! (*With a careless gesture*)—Oh, che m' importa—ee ne sono altri!—(*She yawns ostentatiously and sniffs her bouquet.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Looking at her keenly*)—Rita?

RITA:—Vell—Meestaire Van Tuyl?

VAN TUYL:—(*Simply*)—Haven't you ever—loved someone?

RITA:—'Ow you talk? 'Ave I not love you two—t'ree year-r-rs?

VAN TUYL:—(*Always very gently*)—I don't mean that.—Isn't there someone whose memory is dear and—sort of holy—like an altar-candle, burning in your heart?

RITA:—(*In a hard voice*)—No.

VAN TUYL:—Think back—way back. Didn't someone ever make you feel so tender that you didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the thought of him? Wasn't there ever someone you wanted to help so much that it—it hurt you, like a living pain? Wasn't there some one who—

RITA:—(*Rising suddenly*)—*Basta! Basta!* Stop eet—don'—don'—(*A little pause. She recovers herself*)—'ave you felt—like dat?

VAN TUYL:—(*Nodding*)—Yes.

RITA:—Who was she?

VAN TUYL:—(*Simply*)—Just a girl. Not wonderful or beautiful or gifted—and yet—she meant the world to me.

RITA:—Vhat 'appened?

VAN TUYL:—She died before I ever told her that I loved her. (*Pause.*)

RITA:—(*Not looking at him*)—Eet vas a good t'ing—dat she die so soon.

VAN TUYL:—What?

RITA:—Sometime I vish dat I had died before—I ever'r 'ear-rd dose vor-r-rds—"I lo-ove you."

VAN TUYL:—What do you mean?

RITA:—(*Ironically*)—I never-r tol' you of my fir-rst so bee-autiful r-romance? No—? Vell, I do not often t'ink eet—eet make me feel—not nize. (*Pause.*)—Eet vas in Venice. I vas jost seexteen years ol'—I play de guitar wide de serenata—(*With a sigh*)—*Ah Madonna! Come sembra lontano!*

VAN TUYL:—Well?

RITA:—(*Not looking at him*)—A young man come join our serenata—Reppa. 'is name vas—Reppa Aquilone. 'e vas an'some—an' 'e 'ad nize voice—oh, var-y light, you know—but steel—*simpatico*. Ve stan' together-r an' have—I dnnno—vone, two duets. An' so eet goes for two—t'ree veeks an' every time 'e smile an' look at me my 'ear-r-rt is full wid gr-r-reat beeg vishes an' I feel like every-t'ing in all de vor-r-rld is new an' bor-r-rn again—an' so vone evening 'e come vid me to my leetle r-room—an' den 'e tell me dat 'e love me—an' all night long 'e 'old me close an keese me—an' I feel 'is 'ot br-r-reat' like a fir-r-re upon my face—an' de beating of 'is 'ear-r-t like strong blows 'ere—against my own—an' den 'e sleep. But I—I do not sleep. I lie steel an' qviet an' in my mind I have vone t'ought—"Is dis vhat people mean vhen dey say—Lo-ove?" An' so de 'onrs go by, an' de night is feenish, and' a—a—'ow you

say? a long, theen piece of sunlight, it creep in, through my leetle window, an' it shine on Beppa where 'e lie beside me. An' oh! 'e look so young—an' den de sunlight, 'ow you say?—eet tease him, so 'e 'alf vake up, an' 'e veenk 'is eyes an' say "Ah, Rita Ti amo!"—an' den 'e sigh an' put 'is had 'ere—on my shoulder—little a leetle bab-ee dat s tir-r-red, an' 'e go to sleep again. (*With a passionate tenderness*)—Ah, oh! I put my ar-r-rm about 'im an' I smile an' t'ink "For Lo-ove I waited all night long, an' wid de day—*it come!*"

VAN TUYL:—And so it does, my dear.

RITA:—(*In a different voice*)—Yon t'ink so? Vait—! (*She has turned away*)—In twelve 'our—*twelve 'our* 'e sell me to an English traveller-r for feefty lira. At fir-r-rst, I t'ink I die—I suffer so. An' den at las' I on'erstan'—an' laugh—an' know dat I 'ave been vone gr-r-reat beeg fool—

VAN TUYL:—(*Protesting*)—My dear, I—

RITA:—(*Shaking her clenched hands*)—A fool to t'ink dere vas some gr-r-reater-r better-r love—a love dat come at mor-r-rning an' shine like sunshine—yes, all t'rough de day!

VAN TUYL:—There is.

RITA:—(*Fiercely*)—Dat is vone lie! You 'ear—? Vone lie! (*Voluptuously*)—Love is a str-r-ruggle—ver' cr-reulan' sweet—all full of madness an' of whisper-r-red vor-r-rds an' leetle laughs dat br-r-reak into a sigh! Lover is de hunger-r for anoder-r's flesh—a deep down t' ir-r-rst and dreenk anoder-r's blood—love is a beast dat feed all t'rough de night an' when de mor-r-rning come—Love dies! (*Slight pause.*)

VAN TUYL:—My dear, I think you must have suffered a great deal.

RITA:—Yes—because I 'ave believe vonce in a lie, but—not any mor-r-re! (*With a grimace*)—Oh, vhy ve talk about dose bad ol' t'ings?—see'ere—I blow dem far away! Pst—! Pouf—! (*With an exultant smile*)—Now look dey are all gone! (*As he does not answer but looks at her*)—You know what I t'ink—ye'es?

VAN TUYL:—(*Smiling*)—I never know.

RITA:—I t'ink—dat you an' I ve have not come quite to de en'.

VAN TUYL:—My dear, you make me very happy.

RITA:—So you vill drive wid me tomor-r-row after-r-noon at four-r?

VAN TUYL:—I'm honored.

RITA:—I tell you somet'ing—

VAN TUYL:—Well?

RITA:—You are naugh-tee—but I like you fr-r-right-full-ee much!

VAN TUYL:—(*Kissing her hand*)—(*The orchestra begins a waltz downstairs.*) Good Heavens, I've forgotten I'm a host! What will those wretched people think! My arm—? (*He offers it to her.*)

RITA:—(*Like an unwilling child.*) Vhen mus' I sing?

VAN TUYL:—Let's see. I've asked Artot and Capoul to do the duet from *La Traviata*—and then I want the sextette from *Lucia*—and after that we'll all be ready for the Golden Nightingale!

RITA:—(*Lying on the sofa*)—De Golden Nightingale vill r-r-rest alone 'ere till de time is come. An' oh! sen' someone vid 'er r-red vine an' er lemon joice—she is so tir-r-red—she cannot sing vidont!

VAN TUYL:—That's all?

RITA:—Dat's all.

VAN TUYL:—(*On the stairs*)—You're beautiful to-night.

RITA:—(*Lying back and looking at him*)—Vhy not? My star-r-r is Venus—I vas bor-r-rn for love!

VAN TUYL:—(*Tenderly*)—"O love forever in thy glory go!" (*He disappears. The sound of the waltz is heard full of insistent rhythm. She whistles it under her breath, looking straight up into the air, conducting it gently with one swaying hand. Once she stops whistling to laugh to herself. At last with a sigh, she drops her hand, flings her arms above her head, stretches her body, and closes her eyes with a voluptuous smile. A moment's pause. Then Tom enters from Left.*)

TOM:—Mr. Van Tuyl your—(*Suddenly seeing her*)—Oh, I—I beg your pardon!

RITA:—(*Opening her eyes*)—Eh—?

TOM:—(*Horribly embarrassed*)—I—I though Mr. Van Tuyl was here. I'm afraid I—(*He makes as if to go.*)

RITA:—You are-r-r going?

TOM:—(*Turning*)—I beg your pardon?

RITA:—(*Smiling*)—Don' go—please—

TOM:—(*Shuddering*)—But—I—I—I—

RITA:—I vas jost begun to be a lectle—'ow you say?—lone-lee? An' now a nize young man come—oh! My Lor-r-rd, I am so gla-ad.—(*She smiles at him bewitchingly.*)

TOM:—You're sure—I'm not—intruding?

RITA:—But no! Come in—an'—'ow you say?—oh yes! make your-r-self qvite to 'ome!

TOM:—Er—thank you.—(*He sits down on other side of room.*)

RITA:—Vhy you seet vay, vay over der-re?

TOM:—Why—er—er—I don't know—I

RITA:—(*Sweetly*)—Ar-r-re you afr-r-raid of me? (*As one would talk to a young and timid baby*)—I vill not 'ur-rt you—no, I like de young men! Plense come! Seet 'ere!—(*She indicates a chair at foot of couch.*)

TOM:—You're—very kind. (*He comes over and sits down.*)

RITA:—(*Lying back with a sigh*)—A-ah!—(*She smiles at him—A pause—then, curiously*)—Vhut make you-r-r fnee so r-r-red?

TOM:—(*In consternation*)—My fnee—

RITA:—(*Dreamily*)—Eet is de r-r-reddest t'ing I evair see in all my life!

TOM:—(*Agonized*)—It's rather—warm in here.

RITA:—You t'ink so? I am qvite, qvite col'.

TOM:—That's—very odd. (*Pause.*)—I'm afraid I—I'ven't had the honor of being—presented—er—er, my ame's Armstrong.

RITA:—Ar-rim-str-rong! But dat is not all—eh? Now wait—no—yes—*ecco!* I 'ave it—*Teem!*

TOM:—(*Slightly nettled*)—No, not Tim. That's Irish. Tom.

RITA:—Tome!

TOM:—Not Tome! *Tom!*

RITA:—Tom—Dat r-r-right—? (*Repeating it to herself*)—Tom—Tom! (*Laughing*)—My Lor-r-rd—vhat a funnee name!

TOM:—It's not a *real* name. It's just short for Thomas.

RITA:—(*Illuminated*)—Ah—Tommaso! *Si—si!* Now I on'erstan'! I vonce 'ave a frien' name' Tommasso—oh, yes, ver' long a-go! 'E 'ave jost vone leg; 'e vas (*ow you say?*)—*r-r-rag-picker-r!*)

TOM:—Was he?

RITA:—(*Critically*)—You look mos' ver' much like 'im!

TOM:—(*Pulling uncomfortably at his coat*)—Do I?

RITA:—(*With a sudden happy thought*)—May-be you are fine, beeg, Amer-r-rican r-rag-picker—no?

TOM:—(*Secretly*)—Madam, I am the rector of St. Giles'!

RITA:—R-r-rector?

TOM:—Yes—I mean I—I own it—I'm its minister—it's clergyman—

RITA:—(*Quickly*)—Oh, *cler-gee-man!* I have forget! 'ow hee-antiful! An' St. Giles—who vas 'e? Some leetle Amer-r-ican saint—hein?

TOM:—(*Sternly*)—St. Giles is one of the most important figures in the great history of the Church of England.

RITA:—(*Softly*)—Is dat so? Anodder cler-gee-man—ye-es? (*He nods*)—'ow fr-r-rightful-ee nize! Ve never-r 'ear of 'im in Ital-ee!

TOM:—(*Struck*)—In Italy—! Why, you don't live in Italy?

RITA:—I have a house in Flor-r-ence an' a villa on de Lake of Como—yes.

TOM:—(*With a relieved laugh*)—Oh, that's all right, then. Do you know what I thought for a moment?

RITA:—No. What you t'ink?

TOM:—I thought that you might be Madame Cavaini—or lini or whatever her name is! You know—the opera singer!

RITA:—(*Laughing*)—You funnee man!

TOM:—Forgive me—do'!

RITA:—It vill be 'ar-red! You 'ave not seen La Cavalini here?

TOM:—I—? Oh, no. I don't go to the opera?

RITA:—(*Confidentially*)—You have not meess much when you mees La Cavalini. She is of a fatness—(*With gesture*)—oh, like dat!

TOM:—You're sure?

RITA:—(*Nodding*)—She eat twelve poun' of spaghetti every day!

TOM:—No!

RITA:—(*Enthusiastically*)—An' nglee—oh, Madonna—'ow dat womans is ug-lee! Jost to look at 'er give vone de nose-bleed!

TOM:—But everybody says—

RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—Leesten! Vone eye is made of glass—an' 'er nose—my Lor-rd 'er nose!

TOM:—What's the matter with her nose?

RITA:—(*Covering her face with her hands*)—She 'as not got vone—!

TOM:—But surely you're mistaken—why—

RITA:—(*Shuddering*)—Lost *papier-mache*—stuck on to her face! *O Dio!*

TOM:—Well, I suppose her figure is what makes them say—

RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—I tell you somet'ing *ter-r-rible!* She 'as a 'ump!

TOM:—A what?

RITA:—(*With horrid emphasis*)—A 'ump—a 'ump upon 'er back!

TOM:—You mean a *hump?*

RITA:—(*Nodding*)—'Er dressmaker in Paris—*she* tell me dat! *Now* vhat you t'ink—eh?

TOM:—(*Rising*)—Do 'ou really want to know?

RITA:—Yes—tell me 'ense!

TOM:—(*Very sternly*)—I think, madam, you have been guilty of the grossest cruelty!

RITA:—What—?

TOM:—(*Oracularly*)—Yes—*cruelty*, I repeat the word! To hear a woman, on whom an all wise Providence has showered its choicest gifts deride, hold up to scorn and gloat over the physical failings of a less fortunate sister—for, madam, you *are* sisters in the sight of God! I say this heartless act deserves a far more serious rebuke than any I'm at—at liberty to offer.

RITA:—(*Suddenly covering her face with her pocket handkerchief and gasping*)—Ah—don'—don't—

TOM:—What if this unhappy lady *does* suffer from exaggerated fleshiness? Beneath that bulk may beat the tenderest of female hearts! What if one eye is glass? The other, doubtless, is the window of a noble soul! And even though she bears a hump upon her back, she may, with Christian patience, change it to a—(*Suddenly inspired*) a cross!

RITA:—(*Her voice still covered, shaking*)—Don'—don't—! *Dio mio!*

TOM:—(*Pompously*)—I am glad very few, poor simple words have touched you. Never forget them—and, should the temptation come again, remember that a soft, sweet tongue is Woman's brightest ornament!

RITA:—(*Unable to control herself*)—Tschk! Tschk! Tschk—! (*She presses the handkerchief over her mouth.*)

TOM:—(*Suddenly, taking a step toward her*)—*Madam!*

RITA:—(*Dropping the handkerchief and screaming with laughter*)—I cannot 'elp it—oh—! oh—! oh!

TOM:—(*Grinding his teeth and striking one palm against the other as he turns away*)—Madam—! You—a-ah

RITA:—(*Exhausted, gasping*)—Oh—! Oh—!—(*Wiping her eyes*)—My Lor r-rd—! (*A liveried servant comes from downstairs carrying a silver tray with glasses, a carafe and a decanter of wine.*)

THE SERVANT:—The wine, madam.

RITA:—P-put it 'ere—on dis leetle table. (*She indicates the little table by the head of the couch. The servant places the tray upon it.*)

THE SERVANT:—Is that all, madam?

RITA:—Yes—dat is all. (*The servant goes downstairs.*)

TOM:—(*Stiffly*)—Good night.

RITA:—You are not going?

TOM:—After what has occurred, I see no reason for staying.

RITA:—(*Carelessly.*)—All r-right. (*She half rises and occupies herself with an elaborate mixing of the wine and lemon juice and water.*)

TOM:—(*Lingering*)—Aren't you sorry for making fun of me?

RITA:—(*Always intent on the drink*)—Oh— so fr-r-rightfull-ee sorr-r-ry!

TOM:—(*Doubtedly*)—You don't look it.

RITA:—(*As before*)—Is dat so? Good bye. (*Tom walks to stairs, pauses, hesitates—then slowly comes back and sits down in his old chair.*)

TOM:—Madam——

RITA:—(*Turning to glance at him.*)—Oh, I t'ought you go!

TOM:—(*With dignity.*)—So long as you're sincerely sorry—so long as you truly repent—(*He pauses expectantly, awaiting her corroboration. But she whistles gaily and pays no attention to him. He finished somewhat lamely.*)—I don't suppose there's any need of my going.

RITA:—(*Gaily, as she pours the drink from one glass to another*)—Look—see 'ow bee-cautiful I do it—! (*Her voice softening*)—Someone who was vonce ver' fon' of me, 'e teach me dis! (*He stares, hypnotized. She finishes and fills both glasses*)—Der-re! (*She holds one out to him*) Dat is for you!

TOM:—(*Rousing himself*)—Thanks, I—I don't take stimulants.

RITA:—(*Very Softly*)—Not even when I givc dem—?

(*A pause, she holds out the glass and smiles. At last he takes it*)—Ah, dat is r-r-right!—(*She lifts her own glass*)—Now vhat ve dreenk to—eh? (*Suddenly*)—*Ecco!* Dat nice ol' cler-r-gee-man—St. Gile'! You don' like dat—no? (*She pauses and considers, gazing at him*)—(*At last in a slow, mysterious whisper*)—Don' 'ow you like it if I dreenk to vhat I see in *your eyes*—an' you dreenk to vhat you see in mine—? (*A pause. She stares at him steadily with a mysterious smile. He cannot take his eyes away. Together they slowly lift their glasses to their lips and drink, their gaze never faltering. From outside can be heard very faintly the voices of the other singers, singing the sercette from "Lucia," with the orchestra accompaniment.*)

TOM:—What are you? Tell me—I—don't understand!

RITA:—(*Slowly and mysteriously*)—I am a cup—all full of sacr-r-red vine! I stand' upon an altar built of gol' an' pearls an' paid for wid de blood an' tear-rs of men! De steam of per-r-fume dat fills all de air, it is de t'oughts of me in poits' 'ear-rts—de white flowers lying at my feet, dey are de young boys' bee-auti-ful deep dr-r-reams! My doors are open vide to all de vor-r-rld! I shine in dis gr-r-reat dar'rkness like a living star, an, somewhere—some time every man 'as 'ear-rd my voice—"Come, o you t'ir-rsty vones—come dere is vine for all!" (*Pause.*)

TOM:—(*At last, almost in a whisper*)—Who are you? What's your name?

RITA:—Ah, vhy yon ask?

TOM:—(*Always looking at her*)—Because I want to see yon again—and again—I want to ask yon things—(*His voice rising*)—I want to know yon—

RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—Ah, poor young man—all dat can never be!

TOM:—(*Rising*)—It must—it's got to be!

RITA:—(*Gently*)—Ssh—! Don' make a noise! (*Impulsively*)—Come 'ere! (*He comes up to the side of the couch*)—Kneel down—(*As he does so*)—Dere—like dat! Close—close so ve can talk. (*Picking up her bouquet*) You see my violets 'ere—so sweet an' fr-r-resh an' bee-cautiful? 'Ow long you t'ink dey last?

TOM:—A long time, if you treat them well.

RITA:—Now look—! (*She pulls the flowers in handfuls from the bouquet*)—I pr-r-ress dem on my face an' neck—I feel dere fr-r-resh-ness on my eyes an' 'air-r—I dreenk dere sweetness like I dreenk new vine—

TOM:—(*Warningly*)—You're crushing them!

RITA:—Vhat does it matter-r? I have keess dem—
an' dey vere bor-rn to die! (*Taking up two great handfuls
and covering his face with them*)—Don' t'ink sad t'oughts
of vhat mus' be—jost laugh an' love dem—dat is all dey
need! (*Giving him more*)—Take dese—an' dese—take
mor-r-re—oh, take dem all—(*She throws a last handful
into the air. The flowers fall all about them.*)—Dere—!
(*Showing the bouquet holder*)—It is empty. Not vone is
left to take 'ome vhen I go. You on'erstan'?

TOM:—No—tell—me!

RITA:—(*Tenderly*)—Our meeting 'ere tonight—vhat
is it but a bunch of violets? Of flower-r-rs dat ve smell an'
love an' t'row into de air-r? Vhy should ve take dem 'ome
vid us an' vateh dem die? I t'ink it is oh! Much mor-r-re
vise to leave dem her-r-re—like leetle memor-r-ries—all
sveet an' white an' scatter-r-red on de gr-r-roun'!

TOM:—Couldn't I keep—just one or two?

RITA:—(*Smiling*)—Dey vere not meant for keeping.
Dere whole life vas tonight!

TOM:—(*Simply*)—I know—but I'd like to try. (*A
little pause. She looks at him and shakes her head.*)

RITA:—Ah, you ar e so young! (*She picks up a few
flowers from where they have fallen and puts them in his
button-hole as he kneels beside her*)—Dere! (*Then, with
her fingers still at his buttonhole*)—I vish—(*She hesitates.*)

TOM:—What do you wish?

RITA:—(*Very simply, almost like a child.*)—I vish I
knew some flower-r-rs dat would never-r die! (*There is an
instant's pause, then quite suddenly, he seizes her hands
and kisses them again and again.*)

RITA:—(*Trying to rise.*)—No—stop it—vhat you do?
—(*She manages to tear herself away from him just as Van
Tuyt appears on the stairs. He pauses on the top and looks
at them. A brief pause.*)

RITA:—(*With complete self-command*)—Ah, 'ow nize
you are to come!

VAN TUYL:—(*Politely*)—You're ready, Madame?

RITA:—Qvite, qvite r-r-ready. (*To Tom*)—T'ank you
m'sieur, for-r your-r kin' polite-ness. Good-bye. (*She
bows to him and picks up her scarf, gloves, fan, etc., pre-
paratory to departure.*)

TOM:—(*Hoarsely*)—But I—want to see you again!

RITA:—You are—sure?

TOM:—(*Gulping*)—Yes—

RITA:—(*Very "Femme du monde"*)—Den vould you

come to my 'otel tomorrow after-noon at four-r? It is de Br-r-revoor-rt House—you know.

TOM:—(*With difficulty*)—All right—

RITA:—(*Smiling*)—An' I vill take you for a leetle drive upon your-r *bce-eauti-ful* Fift' Avenue!

VAN TUYL:—(*Always very polite*)—And our engagement, madame, what becomes of that?

RITA:—*Our* leetle engagement is—is—'ow you say?

VAN TUYL:—Postponed?

RITA:—(*Finishing*)—Een-definite-lee'. (*Van Tuyl bows. She moves towards the stairs.*)

TOM:—(*Who has never taken his eyes, from her now steps forwards as he sees her leaving.*)—Wait—! I'm awfully sorry, but I—don't know your name—

RITA:—Oh, of course—I 'ave forget—so stupeed! Vill you tell 'im—Meestaire Van Tuyl? (*At stairs,—she gives them each the most correct of smiles and bows, unconsciously dropping her handkerchief, as she does so, then goes downstairs. As she goes there is a murmur swelling up into loud applause which comes from below. She is smiling and kissing her hand to this unseen crowd as she disappears*)—(*A pause*)—(*Van Tuyl lights a cigar. Tom, staring after her, comes slowly to the top of the stairs, sees the handkerchief and picks it up. He is fingering it aimlessly when he sees the ini—" at one corner. He starts, looks at them more carefully and then turns dumbly to Van Tuyl. The orchestra begins to play below.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Gently*)—Do you mean to say you really didn't know who she was?

TOM:—(*Shaking his head and speaking almost inarticulately*)—No—I hadn't the least idea—

A WOMAN'S VOICE:—(*Sing below*)—

“Non conosci il bel suol
Che di porpora hail, eiel?
Il bel suol i de're
Son piu tersi i colori
Ove l' aura e piu dolee
Piu lieve l'angel.”

(*Tom walks slowly to the gallery and stands there, looking down at the singer in the room below. Van Tuyl watches him rather sadly as*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

Act 2

SCENE:

New Year's afternoon. The study of St. Giles Rectory, a charming, old-fashioned, spacious New York House, looking out upon a quiet street. The study, a square room. At left are two windows, with heavy, rather faded curtains. Holly wreaths, tied with scarlet bows, hang in both windows. At back is the double doorway leading into the hall. At one side of it hangs the bell rope. Over it is a long ear, and above the center of this, a stag's head—mounted. At right is the white marble mantel and fire-place in which a fire is burning. On the mantel are several silver cups, medals in their open cases, little old-fashioned photographs of young men, a big old clock, and two handsome candelabra. Over the mantel is a large steel engraving of Del Sarto's St. John. Above fireplace in corner, right back, is an old-fashioned cabinet with glass covered shelves and drawers. Below fireplace is a rack containing rods and guns. A pair of boxing gloves hangs here, too. There are book-eases at back and above fire-place and windows, filled with sober, pious, dusty volumes. On top the book-cases are a few more engravings of old Masters—a last supper, etc. Also an occasional bust. In front of windows—left—is a very large, heavy table-desk; on it are a lamp, water-pitcher and glass, desk-fittings, several books, a daguer-reotype in a velvet case, a large well-used Bible, a smaller Testament, etc. A big leather chair faces this desk at left. There are one or two other chairs at right of it. At right of room, facing corner—right-back—so that key-board is not seen, is a small, but exquisite old-fashioned square piano. There are candles on each side of key-board and several rather worn volumes of bound music, neatly ranged. In the corner—left back—is an arm-chair piled high with books and papers. There is a hair-cloth settee and one other chair near the fire-place. All the furniture is old-fashioned black walnut, upholstered in black. An old-fashioned carpet covers the floor.

The sunlight of a cold winter's afternoon comes through the windows. Outdoors the glitter of snow is seen. As the act goes on the sunlight changes to the ruddy glow of a winter's sunset, and then the twilight fills the room with shadows. As the curtain rises Miss Armstrong, wear-

ing a little black silk apron, is discovered arranging some roses in a bowl on the desk. The clock on the mantel strikes four.

(The door opens and Roger, the old Butler, appears.)

ROGER:—Miss Van Tuyl. *(Susan enters, dressed in bonnet and mantle.)*

SUSAN:—*(Coming in)*—Tom, I—*(Seeing Miss Armstrong)*—Oh, Happy New Year, Miss Armstrong!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—Don't be premature, my dear—it's only New Year's Eve! *(Kissing her)*—What nice cold cheeks you have!

SUSAN:—*(Laughing)*—I ought to—I've been walking. Tom asked me to come in at four, and hear about the final arrangements for tonight.

MISS ARMSTRONG:—To-night—?

SUSAN:—Yes. The midnight New Year's service for the lost and friendless—

MISS ARMSTRONG:—Oh, *that*!

SUSAN:—*(Enthusiastically)*—We're going to have a brass band and torches and sing hymns and parade the streets for half an hour before-hand—oh, it'll be wonderful! Is Tom upstairs?

MISS ARMSTRONG:—*(Nervously)*—No. He—went out after luncheon—er—to pay a call.

SUSAN:—*(Meaningly)*—At the Brevvoort House?

MISS ARMSTRONG:—*(Flustered)*—Oh, I'm sure he'll be here if you wait a moment! He has a Deaconesses' Meeting at a quarter to five and I *know* he never would miss *that*!

SUSAN:—Wouldn't he? Well, we'll see—*(Noticing the flowers)*—What lovely roses!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—They're mine—they came just a moment ago! Without any card, too!

SUSAN:—*(Chaffing her)*—Aha! An anonymous admirer—!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—*(Embarrassed and pleased)*—My dear, how foolish! But you know it's the first time in years that anyone's sent me flowers, and—

SUSAN:—*(There is the sound of sleigh-bells outside)* *(At the window)*—Oh, look! It's uncle's sleigh! He's driving his new team!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—Is he getting out?

SUSAN:—Yes. He's come to call for me on his way uptown. *(Glancing at clock)*—I wonder if Tom—

MISS ARMSTRONG:—My dear, there's something I

want to discuss with your uncle, so I think you may as well go home.

SUSAN:—Miss Armstrong, promise me not to tell Tom I came—unless he speaks of it himself, I mean. I don't want to be a—a drag on him—oh, Miss Armstrong, promise—*—please!*

MISS ARMSTRONG:—Very well, my dear—if you insist. But that boy really deserves a good, plain talking to, and—*(Roger enters)*—

ROGER:—*(Announcing)*—Mr. Van Tuyl. *(He stands aside to let Van Tuyl pass.)*

• VAN TUYL:—*(Who wears a long fur coat and driving gloves)*—How d'you do, Miss Armstrong. Real New Year's Eve weather—eh? *(Taking of his coat and giving it to Roger)*—Well, Susannah; I thought I'd find you and Tom waving your arms and singing hymns and generally getting up steam for to-night's procession!

SUSAN:—*(Smiling)*—Tom's out. Can Ralph take me home? *(She puts on her wraps.)*

VAN TUYL:—Yes—good idea. I don't like to keep the horses standing. *(To Miss Armstrong)*—Have you seen my new team, Miss Armstrong? The prettiest sight in New York—*(At the window)*—Look at that off mare there! Isn't she a little witch? The highest stepper on the Avenue and a mouth like a French kid glove!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—She looks very wild indeed! *(To Susan)*—Good bye, my dear. Tell Ralph, to be careful.

SUSAN:—*(Kissing Miss Armstrong)*—Don't forget your promise. *(In a lower voice)*—And, dear, don't worry. I don't worry—I know it's going to be alright! *(She goes out)*—

MISS ARMSTRONG:—*(Turning from the door)*—Oh Mr. Van Tuyl,—I am in great—in a very great distress!

VAN TUYL:—Dear lady, what is it?

MISS ARMSTRONG:—*(Crying quietly)*—I'm ashamed to act like this—but—it's been so hard carrying it on my mind—all alone—

VAN TUYL:—*(Soothingly)*—There—! Count on me.

MISS ARMSTRONG:—You're Tom's oldest friend—and his father's and mother's before him—and you're his leading parishioner, too—and the chairman of the vestry—*(She sniffs.)*

VAN TUYL:—*(Comfortingly)*—I know—I know—

MISS ARMSTRONG:—*(Breaking down)*—Oh, save

him, Mr. Van Tuyl—save him from that d-d-dreadful woman! (*She sobs.*)

VAN TUYL:—I've done my best. He came to see me Saturday about the new gymnasium and I talked to him as I would have to my own son.

MISS ARMSTRONG:—What did he say?

VAN TUYL:—He was very sweet, but somehow he wasn't there—the real Tom, I mean—it was only the outside shell that I was speaking to.

MISS ARMSTRONG:—I know! I've seen it! He's with *her*!

VAN TUYL:—(*Reassuringly*)—Oh, come, Miss Armstrong! You mustn't be alarmed! Remember that she sails tomorrow morning, and—(*Glancing out window*)—Hello--!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*Stopping*)—What's the matter?

VAN TUYL:—Why, her carriage is just stopping at your door!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*In amazed horror*)—Not Madame Cavallini—?

VAN TUYL:—She's evidently going to pay a call!—(*As Miss Armstrong goes and pulls the bell-rope*)—What are you going to do?

MISS ARMSTRONG:—Tell Roger I'm not at home.

VAN TUYL:—(*Frankly*)—Let her come in. Perhaps I could say a word or two—

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*Earnestly*)—You'll make her promise not to write to him?

VAN TUYL:—I'll do my best.

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*Vehemently*)—There ought to be a law against such women! Why, I'd sooner have a hungry tigress walk into this room than—

ROGER:—(*At door*)—Madame Cavallini—(*He enters and stands aside to let her pass. She comes in quickly. She is dressed in a wonderful black velvet and ermine mantle, an ermine bonnet. In her arms, as if it were a baby, she carries a great ermine muff. From one end of this peeps a monkey's head, adorned with a tiny pink satin turban, large aigrette and diamond clasp.*)

rita:—(*To Miss A., shaking hands*)—My dear-r mees, 'ow you do? I come in for-r vone meenute just to say good-bye an'—

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*Seeing monkey and drawing back with a cry*)—O—! What's that—?

rita:—Vhat—? (*Noting her look*)—An' I breeng

my 'e bab-ee to show you. I call 'er bab-ee—because I am lone-lee—you too 'ave no bab-ee so you on'erstan'—yees? (*Seeing Van Tuyl*)—Oh—! (*Advancing to him*)—'Ow you do, Meestairs Van Tuyl? (*She shakes hands with him.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Shaking hands*)—How do you do? It seems a long time sincee we've met.

RITA:—Dat night I siag at your-r so hee-cau-ti-ful soiree! To me, also, it seem a long, long time.

VAN TUYL:—And Adelina—(*To the monkey*)—*Cement ca va mademoiselle—hein?*

MISS ARMSTRONG:—Adelina?

RITA:—Ye-es—because she look so much like Patti in *La Traviata*.—(*To Van Tuyl*)—I t'ink she 'ave forget you, sir.

VAN TUYL:—You ladies can forget me so quickly.

RITA:—Ye-es? Sometime—I wish you men for-rget a leetle—too! (*Taking the monkey out from her muff.*)—*Tesaruccio mio, sei quasi gelato—non importa qui ci fa caldo!* (*The little animal is dressed in pale blue satin trousers and coat, diamond buttons, etc.*)

MISS ARMSTRONG:—Why, it's all dressed up!

RITA:—(*In surprise.*)—But sure-lee she is dr-ress!—Do you vant she go—'ow you say?—na-ked? Dat would be—ah! shock-eeng!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—The horrid little animal!

RITA:—(*Warningly*)—Tschk!—Tschk—! You 'urt 'er feeling! *Ecco—!* See—! She begin to er-r-y! (*To monkey*)—*Bellez mia! tu un' faresti male a nessuno!* (*Taking monkey*)—I t'ink she is like me, Meestaire Van Tuyl. (*With a reproachful glance towards Miss Armstrong*)—She is not 'app-ee vhen de peoples do not l-ove 'er! (*Slipping the monkey into muff again*)—*Ti amo—bambinello mio—si—ti amo!*

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*Watching her*)—Ugh!

RITA:—Putting both muff and monkey in big chair by fire where neither can be seen)—I put 'er 'ere an' she vill tak vone leetle nap! (*Bending over chair*)—*Dormi, bebina cara di mamma—* (*Rising and turning quickly to Miss Armstrong*)—*Santi!* I 'ave for-get! I 'ave a somet'ing to tell you fr-r-om Meestaire Tom!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—You've seen him?

RITA:—(*Innocently*)—But ye-es—'e dr-r-rive wid me. I leave 'im at de—oh, vhat you say?—de con-firm-a-tion class—

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*Interrupting*)—Isn't he coming home?

RITA:—Yes-es—jost a leetle while, 'e say. (*Holding out her hand to Miss A.*)—So I come fir-r-rs'—to make my r-r-respee' to you, dear mees, an' say good-bye.

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*Stiffly to Van Tuyl, paying no attention to the outstretched hand*)—When Madame Cuvallini goes, I hope you'll step up to my sitting-room and have a cup of tea (*He bows.*)

RITA:—(*Seeing the roses on the desk*)—A-ah! De r-r-roses—dey ar-rive all r-r-right? You like dem—ye-es? I 'ave choose each vone myself—! (*She smiles winningly at Miss Armstrong.*)

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*Amazed*)—You sent me those—?

RITA:—(*Wistfully*)—Just a leetle surprise—to r-r-remember me two—t'ree days aftair I 'ave gone—sonfar!

MISS ARMSTRONG:—(*After a speechless moment*)—Thank you—you were very kind. (*She goes over and takes up the bowl of roses from the desk*)—Mr. Van Tuyl will put you in your carriage whenever you're ready. Good-bye, madame. I wish you a pleasant voyage. (*She goes out at back.*)

RITA:—(*Turning in wonder to Van Tuyl*)—Vhat for-r she go away so qveeck?

VAN TUYL:—I asked her to. Come here. (*She looks at him and sadder g smiles.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Smiling too*)—You little monkey, you—(*Recovering himself*)—Now pretend for five minutes I'm your father confessor!

RITA:—You vant to seo-old me—ye-es?

VAN TUYL:—(*Taking her by the shoulders*)—Well, that depends—

VAN TUYL:—Has Tom asked you to marry him-

RITA:—(*After a little pause*)—No.

VAN TUYL:—I'm glad. And if he did?

RITA:—(*Not looking after him, speaking with a rather sulky defiance*)—I vould not marr-ee 'in—an A-mer-'can cler-gee-man—'e vould vant I stop sing-ing—an' be so fr-r-rightful goo-ood—an' live 'ere in dis 'orrible New Yor-r-rk—mos' col' diz-zgree-a-ble place I evair see—! Adelina, in two—t'ree mont's she die—ye-es! An' 'e vould not let me go to Paris vhen I need de new dr-r-ress—an' I vould be all bor-re—an' seeek— (*With a sniff.*)—Mebbe I die, too— an' den—everyone is gla-ad—!. (*She dries her*

eyes resolutely with her handkerchief)—Oh, no, my frien', I could not marr-ee 'im—no—no—dat would be vone beeg meesake!

VAN TUYL:—Then why do you lead the poor boy on?

RITA:—Lead 'im—?

VAN TUYL:—He's not like the young gentlemen you're accustomed to have circling round you—remember that' my dear! He's not a Baron Vigier or a Captain Ponsonby.

RITA:—But no, my friend—but no—

VAN TUYL:—(*Interrupting*)—Well, isn't that the way you're treating him? Aren't you amusing yourself—just a little bit at his expense?

RITA:—No—you do not on'erstan'—ah! it is so 'arr-r-rd to say! Now leesten—! (*She speaks very seriously*)—'Ow long I know 'im? Two months? Ver' vell—(*Solemnly*)—In all dat time 'e 'as not spik to me a vor-r-rd of lo-ov—no, not vone leetle vor-r-rd!

VAN TUYL:—(*Amazed*)—What—?

RITA:—At fir-r-rst I try to make him—moh, you know— for-r fun! An' den— some'ow—I am so sorr-ee for-r 'im—an' I don' tr-r-ry any mor-re!

(*She sits on a hassock at his feet, leaning against his knees. He puts his hand on her shoulder.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Tenderly*)—My poor little Rita—don't you know there's nothing in all this, dear, for you?

RITA:—Oh, yes! I 'ave often say, "Seely voman do not see 'im vhen 'e come today. Jost tell de gentleman down-stair-r-r you vant to sleep an' no-bod-ee shall vake you up!"

VAN TUYL:—Well, why didn't you?

RITA:—I say no-bod-ee—like dat! No-bod-ee in de vor-r-rld—(*shamefacedly*)—Excep' jost Meestaire Tom! (*With a sigh*)—O Dio, come e dura la vita!

VAN TUYL:—So that's the way it went!

RITA:—(*Glancing up at him*)—I t'ink you smile a leetle—yes?

VAN TUYL:—No, I'm not smiling, dear. (*Pause.*)

RITA:—(*With a sigh*)—Ah, my frien', I am vone gr-r-reat beeg fool—I—who 'ave believe I vas so vise!—(*She smiles and shakes her head.*)

VAN TUYL:—Never mind, my dear—it's over now. You're leaving us tomorrow.

RITA:—(*Glancing up*)—You t'ink 'e vill for-get me—ye-es?

VAN TUYL:—I'm sure you hope he will.

RITA:—(*Looking off*)—I t'ink I vill not for-get 'im—or if I do—it take a long, long time!

VAN TUYL:—Lah! Nonsense! (*Putting his hands over her eyes*)—Now think of all that's waiting for you over there! Rome and the Spring in Florence—and Como with the snow still in the mountains—and Paris too—! Rome—! Just say it to yourself—! Why, you'll see the first acacias on the Boulevard St. Germain—you'll smell the lilaes when you're driving in the Bois—! And Gounod will be there—and your dear old friend Rossini—! Think of the dinners at the Maison Doree—and the violets in the forest of Compiègne—! Think of the suppers Cora Pearl will give! Why, don't you know what fun you're going to have?

RITA:—Oh, dere on-lee vone t'ing I know!

VAN TUYL:—What's that?

RITA:—(*Passionately*)—I lo-ve 'im—

VAN TUYL:—You're going to make him suffer a great deal.

RITA:—(*Unpinning a bunch of white violets from her wrap*)—When 'e ask for-r me—jost give 'im dese—an' say it is—adieu—(*She kisses the violets.*)

(*Just here the door opens and Tom bursts in, full of splendid spirits and utterly boyish and happy. He wears overcoat and gloves.*)

TOM:—(*Entering*)—Well, did you think I never was—(*Seeing Van Tuyl*)—Oh, is it you, sir? How do you do? (*Shaking hands*)—I'm glad Madame Cavallini hasn't been waiting here alone.

TOM:—(*Pulling off his gloves.*)—Whew—! It's cold outside! I'm nearly frozen and I ran home, too! (*Rubbing his hands*)—I'll just put some coal on the fire and then we'll all sit down and—

VAN TUYL:—I think Tom, Mme. Cavallini was just going when you came in.

TOM:—(*Stopping*)—Going—?

RITA:—(*Recollecting herself*)—Ye-es, I mus' sleep a leetle befor-re to-night—my las' per-for-r-rmance—I so much vant to give my bes'—

(*She has moved toward the door.*)

TOM:—(*Running up and taking her hand.*)—Oh come, now, you're not going!

RITA:—(*Faltering*)—Please, Meestaire, Tom, de per-r-for-rmance—

TOM:—(*Drawing her over to fire*)—Oh, that's all right—it's *Mignon* and you know it backwards!

RITA:—(*Helplessly to Van Tuyt*)—You see—! (*Roger enters at back.*)

ROGER:—(*At door*)—Miss Armstrong's compliments, Mr. Van Tuyt, and tea is served in the sitting room upstairs.

TOM:—(*Quickly*)—Don't say we're here! We'll come up later—! (*Van Tuyt looks at Rita.*)

RITA:—(*Pleadingly*)—In jost vone leetle vwhile!

VAN TUYT:—(*With a shrug, turns and goes out. Roger closes the door after him.*)

TOM:—(*With a sigh of pleasure as the door closes*)—There! Now isn't this fine? I tell you, it's like a dream come true!

RITA:—Vhat dr-r-ream,—please?

TOM:—You—here in my big armchair in front of my fire—in my study!

RITA:—(*Wistfully*)—A dr-r-ream—ah dat is vhat I am! A leetle dr-r-ream dat lose 'er vny an' r-r-rest vone meenute in your sleeping 'ear-r-rt—

TOM:—One minute—? Always!

RITA:—(*Smiling*)—Ah no, my frien'—tomorrow you wake up—an' pouf! dat leetle dr-r-ream—she is all gone!

TOM:—Please don't—

RITA:—(*Softly*)—You 'ave been 'app-ee den—dese las' veeks—ye-es?

TOM:—(*Lifting his eyes to hers*)—You know.

RITA:—(*Very softly*)—I 'ave been 'app-ee—too!

TOM:—(*Impulsively*)—Don't go tomorrow—

RITA:—Vhat you say?

TOM:—Stay on till spring!

RITA:—But 'ave I not tell you I mns' sing in R-r-ome nex' mont'—? An' I go to Venice for-r de new opera Verdi 'ave com-pose—

TOM:—Don't go—oh, please don't go—

RITA:—An' den I mns' see Mapleson in London—an' de R-r-russian con-cert tour begin in May—

TOM:—I don't care—I just *can't* say good-bye—

RITA:—(*Illumined*)—Den come wid me!

TOM:—(*Surprised*)—What—?

RITA:—Go qveeck an' buy de teecket—

TOM:—Ticket—?

RITA:—(*Enthusiastically*)—Ye-es —befor-re dey are all gone! an an' tomor-r-row ve stan' on de boat—you an' me an' Adelina—an' ve vave de 'an-kerechief an't'row de

kees an laugh! Oh! my Lor-r-rd, 'ow ve laugh at all de stup-ee'd peoples ve leave behin'! Hein? What you t'ink of dat?

TOM:—I think it's wonderful—but I've got a meeting of the Board of Charities tomorrow at eleven—and Patrick Crowley's funeral at twelve—and after dinner I offer my annual report to the Vestry committee—and in the evening my Knights of the Round Table boys—

RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—I 'ave for-geret you are a clerg-er-man!

And I forgot you were a golden Nightingale! (*Pause.*)

RITA:—(*Nodding to herself*)—I t'ink it is a var'y good t'ing I go away tomorro-r-row!

TOM:—(*Much downcast*)—But you're coming back next year?

RITA:—(*With gesture*)—Ah, vhy talk about nex' year—it is so far away!

TOM:—In my profession, one has to think a great deal about things that are far away.

RITA:—Den you are var-y fool-ish—(*As he starts to protest*)—Yes, you are! Leesten—I am ol' an' I know de vor-r-rld—so vhat I tell you now you muns' r-r-rembair al-vays—

TOM:—Well?

RITA:—(*Wistfully*)—Yesterday p—iy is a dr-r-ream ve 'ave for-r-geret. Tomorrow—jost de 'ope of some gr-r-reat 'appiness—some joy dat nevnir come! Before—behin'—all clouds an' star-r-rs an' shad-ow—nodings—nodings dat is r-r-real—onlee de leetle meenute dat ve call today!

TOM:—(*Bitterly*)—Today's so short!

RITA:—(*With a smile*)—Ah, you are young, my frien'! De time vill come when you are gl-ad to 'ave dat leetle meenute—so gla-ad you vould not t'ink to ask for-r mor-r-re!

TOM:—(*Passionately*)—Madame Cavallini—Margherita—I—

RITA:—(*Shrinking from him in sudden nervousness*)—No—no—(*Just here a hand-organ strikes up outside the window—left—playing "Il Bacio."*)

TOM:—(*Startled and furious*)—Drat that hurdy-gurdy!

RITA:—(*Slyly*)—I t'ink it come jost in time! (*Tom goes over to the window where he looks out. Meanwhile Rita is dancing lightly and gaily about the room, whistling and snapping her fingers in time with the waltz.*)

TOM:—(*Opening the window and calling outside*)—Hi! (*Pause. The waltz continues*)—Hi!—you there! Stop that racket! Stop it this minute! (*The waltz breaks off in the middle of a phrase*)—We don't allow any Italian mountebanks in the neighborhood of this church and if you don't—(*Suddenly spluttering with rage*)—Take that monkey off my gate!

RITA:—Monk-ee?—(*She runs up to the window and calls gaily outside*)—Bon giorno, amico! (*Tom stands petrified, staring at her*)—Che tesaro di una scimetta avete! Come si chiamo? (*Slight pause*)—He in? Tomasso—? (*To Tom*)—You an' de monk-ee 'ave de same name!—(*Calling outside*)—Quanti anni ba? (*Slight pause. Then to Tom*)—'E is two year 'ol. (*Calling*)—Ha delle pulci? (*Slight pause*)—Davvero? (*To Tom*)—'E use to 'ave de flea, but now 'e eat dem all.

TOM:—(*Much annoyed*)—Really, I—

RITA:—(*Suddenly struck with an idea and calling outside with mysterious importance*)—Aspettate un momento—voglio forti veder qualch' cosca! (*She runs across the room, picks up her own monkey and returns to the window*)—I make ac-quainted Tommasso vid Adelina!

TOM:—(*Trying to stop her*)—Please, madame—remember my parishioners—

RITA:—(*Holding up Adelina at the window and calling outside*)—Ecco—! Tommasso, questa e Adelina—siete compatrioti! (*To Adelina*)—Sii carina e saluta Tommasso—colla tua manina—(*Waving a hand for her*)—Brava—cosi!

TOM:—(*Angrily*)—Tell him to go away, do you hear? Tell him to away immediately!

RITA:—(*To Tom*)—All r-r-right—give me de money—

TOM:—(*Meekly taking out his purse*)—Will ten cents do?

RITA:—Qveck—qveck, befor-re 'e go away!—(*She snatches the purse out of his hand and throws it out the window, calling as she does so*)—Buona fine e buon' principio, amico! (*Waving her handkerchief*)—Arrivderci! (*She smiles and kisses her hand at him.*)

TOM:—(*Coldly*)—You talk to that man as if you'd known him all your life!

RITA:—(*Turning away from the window with a little sigh and shrug*)—Ah, ve bot' make de music! (*Suddenly seeing the daguerrotype on the desk*)—Who is dat young lady?

TOM:—That's my mother.—(*Slight pause.*)

RITA:—You let me look at 'er—ye-es!

TOM:—Of course.—(*She takes up the picture very tenderly and studies it.*)

RITA:—(*Softly*)—*Oh, she is bee-eau-ti-ful!*

TOM:—(*Coming up and looking at it over her shoulder*)—That was taken before she was married. My father always had it on his dressing table.

RITA:—(*Always gazing at the picture*)—I t'ink you look like 'er.

TOM:—(*Looking at it, too*)—She died when I was fifteen. It was my first winter at boarding school. She'd come up to see me only two weeks before and brought me this—(*Picking up a small, worn book from desk*)—my little Testament. I'd expected a fruit-cake—you can imagine how I felt! But now—(*He brushes it lovingly*)—there's nothing else I value quite so much!

RITA:—(*Whispering*)—She look—like she 'old somet'ing in 'er 'ear-r-rt—somet'ing dat make 'er 'app-ee—an' dat no vone know—(*Slight pause*)—Per'aps—per'aps it is de t'ought vone day she 'ave a son—like you—(*Tom has crossed the room and is unlocking a drawer in the corner cabinet—right, back.*)

RITA:—(*Under her breath, to the picture*)—For-give—(*She kisses it, then puts it back carefully on desk.*)

TOM:—(*Returning with a little box*)—There's something here I've been meaning to show you—(*He is opening the box and is fumbling about in it*)—I keep it in this box with mother's little souvenirs—(*He has taken out a tiny, shabby little shoe and put it on the desk to get it out of the way.*)—Where on earth—(*Suddenly*)—Oh, yes! Now—(*He takes out a small package done up carefully in tissue paper.*)

RITA:—(*undoing package and taking out tiny shoe*)—Oh!—(*Reading from card she finds inside*)—"First shoe worn by my son, Thomas Armstrong—June seex—eighteen 'undred an' t'irty-eight."

TOM:—(*Glancing at it*)—That? Oh, that's my first shoe. Let's see—I must have been three months old!

RITA:—(*Half laughing, half crying*)—An' she 'ave keep it mit 'soch care—(*She cannot go on.*)—

TOM:—(*Half apologetic*)—She did that because she was very sentimental.

RITA:—(*Bursting out*)—She did it because she lo-ove you—such a much!

TOM:—Here's what I really wanted to show you though. (*He is unwrapping the little package he has been holding in his hand.*) Now! Look at those!

RITA:—(*Looking*)—A necklace—ear-rings—

TOM:—They were father's wedding present! (*He holds up the necklace—it is made of seed pearls and has a locket*)—There! isn't that pretty?

RITA:—(*Admiringly*)—Oh, mos' bee-auti-ful!

TOM:—There's one of my baby pictures in the locket. (*Trying to open it*)—I wonder how—oh, yes, I remember—you press the back and then it opens—there! (*He gives her the locket. She takes it eagerly, looks at it, glances at him, then breaks out into irrepressible laughter*)—What's the matter?

RITA:—(*Trying to control herself*)—You are so—so fat!

TOM:—(*Frowning*)—Fat—?

RITA:—You 'ave such beeg cheek—just like dis—(*She puffs up her own cheeks, loses her breath and starts laughing again.*)

TOM:—(*Severely*)—I believe I was considered a very beautiful baby!

RITA:—You are de mos' funn-ee baby I ever see in all my life!

TOM:—(*Defending himself hotly*)—Well, my nurse didn't think so! She kissed me once till she raised a blister—there! (*He puts his hands in his pockets and turns proudly away.*)

RITA:—(*Startled*)—Vhat? Oh, my Lor-r-rd! (*She goes off again.*)

TOM:—(*Interrupting, in rage*)—Oh, very well. I'm sorry I showed it to you! I might have known that—

RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—Ah, don't be ang-ree!

TOM:—(*Not turning*)—I'm not angry!

RITA:—So? Den von' you tur-rn your 'ead—please? (*Slight pause*)—I go avay tomorr-r-row! (*Slight pause*)—Mebbe I navair-r come back! (*Long pause—then dreamily*)—I t'ink you are de mos' bee-auti-ful bab-ee in de whole vor-r-rld!

TOM:—(*Loftily*)—No, you don't either.

RITA:—(*Eagerly*)—Si—si! It is tr-r-rue! (*Softly to the picture*)—So good-bye, leetle fat boy—good-bye—good-bye! (*She kisses it twice.*)

TOM:—(*Turning and seeing her*)—Thank you.

RITA:—(*Shutting the locket*)—Dat vas for-r 'im—my frien'—not you! (*She holds out the necklace for him to take.*)

TOM:—(*Embarrassed*)—Er—don't you want to keep him then?

RITA:—Keep 'im—?

TOM:—Yes, and the necklace, too. I wish—I mean I hope you will..

RITA:—But it is your mother's—

TOM:—(*Eagerly*)—I know—that's why!

RITA:—But she would not like it—

TOM:—(*A little pompously*)—Of course I realize how you feel about accepting presents of jewelry from men, but I think in this case—it's—er—quite all right!—(*Her hand has gone instinctively to her string of pearls.*)—What are you doing?

RITA:—(*Unclasping her own pearls*)—I make for-r it de place! (*She drops her string of pearls on the desk.*)

TOM:—(*Heartily*)—Aha! I knew you would! (*Giving her the rest of the package*)—Here! take the ear-rings, too!

RITA:—(*With tender enthusiasm*)—Dio mio! dey are so lo-ovelee!

TOM:—Can you see to put them on? (*By this time the room is filled with twilight shadows. The firelight is warm and mellow.*)

RITA:—(*At mirror—right*)—Oh, ye-es, I can see!—(*She takes off her own ear-rings, lays them on the mantle-piece and begins putting on his ear-rings and necklace. He watches her.*)

TOM:—You know how it clasps?

RITA:—(*Busy with necklace*)—Y-es, it is all r-r-right (*Finishing it, and turning gaily to him*)—Ecco! Are dey not be-com-ing? (*He does not answer*)—Vhy you look at me like dat? Vbat you t'ink of—hein?

TOM:—(*Simply*)—I was just thinking how mother would have loved you.

RITA:—Ye-es?

TOM:—She loved anything that was beautiful and sweet and good. And then your music that would have interested her so much! *She* was musical, too, you know!

RITA:—Is dat so?

TOM:—(*Continuing*)—Yes, that's why I kept her piano when the Worth Street house was sold. I put it over there—so when I'm writing sermons and get all mixed-up, I can just look at it and imagine I'm eight years old again and hear her dear voice singing "Annie Laurie."

RITA:—(*Softly*)—"An-nie Laur-ec?"

TOM:—That was her favorite song. (*Hesitating*)—I wish—I wish you'd sing it once—before you go.

RITA:—I tell you vhat—I play an' you will sing!

TOM:—(*Embarrassed*)—But I can't—I haven't any voice—

RITA:—Come—where is it—in dis boo-ook? (*She takes up one of the bound volumes of music lying on the piano.*)

TOM:—No—the big one underneath—page 27—but really—it's foolish—the idea of my trying to—

RITA:—(*Finding it*)—Ah! Now light de candle, please. (*She puts the volume on the rack.*)

TOM:—(*Lighting a long paper "spill" from fire and from it lighting the candles on either side of the key-board*)—It goes up to E—that's pretty high, you know. Of course I wouldn't mind if you weren't a professional—(*Taking up his position by her side*)—Give me the note when you come to it.

RITA:—(*Playing the little prelude*)—Is dat too fas'?

TOM:—A little bit—that's better! (*She strikes the note and pauses, glancing up at him. He hesitates*)—Just wait till I clear my throat—(*He coughs*)—It's so long since I've sung! Now I'm ready—go ahead! (*He sings, she "conducting" him with her head and one hand whenever possible.*)

"Maxwelton braes are bonnie

Where early fa'as the dew,
And it's there—"

(*Just here Roger opens the door at back.*)

ROGER:—I beg pardon, sir. The Deaconesses.

TOM:—Get rid of 'em!

ROGER:—What, sir?

TOM:—(*Impatiently*)—I said get rid of 'em! (*Roger bows and goes out closing the door. Tom resumes the song*)

And it's there that Annie Laurie

Gie'd me her answer true."

(*Clearing his throat and speaking*)—Here's where it goes up. —(*Resuming*)—

"Gie'd me her promise true

Which ne'er forgot will be
And for bonnie Annie Laurie,
I'd lay me down and dee."

RITA:—(*Softly, not looking up at him*)—It is a song of lo-ove!

TOM:—Yes. But I never knew it until now! Do you know why?

RITA:—No—tell me!

TOM:—Because I never knew—what love was—until now.

RITA:—(*Sadly*)—An' vhat is lo-ove—to you?—(*She plays a little, idly, as she watches him.*)

TOM:—(*Leaning on the piano*)—It's finding the woman you want to live with all your life—the woman who'll show you the right way and follow it with you—side by side—shoulder to shoulder—making all the good things seem a little better—and all the hard things—well, not quite so hard! It's knowing she'll be with you at your journey's end—when *you're* old—and *she's* old—and you can smile and look into each other's eyes and say: "We've done our work together, dear—and I think we've done it well."

RITA:—(*After a little pause, her eyes full of tears*)—Oh, my frien', dat lo-ove—it is for-r some, ye-es—but it is not for-r me.

TOM:—I don't understand—

RITA:—(*Wistfully and tenderly*)—For-r me, love is jost a leetle light in all dis dar-rk-ness—a leetle varmt' in all dis col'—a leetle flame dat bur-r-rn—not long an' den go out. A star dat come—an' is so bee-eau-tiful it breeng beeg tears an' vhen ve dry de eyes an' look again—de star is gone. I t'ink it is to be a leetle 'appier togeder den ve are par-r-rt—vone meenute and to lie steel in de beloved's ar-r-rm—vone leetle meenute to forget, my frien' an' dat is all!

TOM:—(*Brokenly.*)—My dear! (*He comes swiftly to her and puts his hands on her shoulders.*)—(*He draws her to him and holds her tightly in his arms.*)

RITA:—Oh, vhat you do?

TOM:—(*Pressing her to him*)—I love you!

RITA:—Don'—

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—And you love me. Now say it—

RITA:—(*Pitiously*)—No—

TOM:—(*Through his teeth*)—You must—

RITA:—(*Throwing her arms about his neck in deep abandon*)—All r-r-right—I lo-ve you—! Now ve are alone—you 'ear—an' dere is nodings in de vor-rld but you an' me—Dis is our time—our leetle meenute dat vill nevair come again—so shut your eyes—an' 'old me close—an' lo-ove—

TOM:—But, dear, I—

RITA:—(*Putting her mouth to his*)—Ssh! (*A long kiss. Pause. They stand motionless, locked in each other's*

arms. And just here from the parish house next door comes the sound of an organ and men's voices singing "*Ein Feste Burg*"—all very faint and far away.)

RITA:—(At last.)—Vhat is dat?

TOM:—It's just the choir—they're practicing for to-night—I love you.

RITA:—(Closing her eyes)—A-ah!

TOM:—When will you marry me? (She slowly disengages herself from him and turns away.)

RITA:—(Almost to herself)—I 'ave not t'ink de en' would be so soon!

TOM:—(Eagerly)—When—please tell me when?

RITA:—Ask me anodder time—no, nevair ask me—it is jost not possible—

TOM:—But what's the matter? I don't understand!

RITA:—(Defending herself)—Vhy you in such a 'urree? You mus' vait!

TOM:—(Coming nearer her)—I'd wait forever—if there's any hope.

RITA:—(Retreating)—Please don' come near—

TOM:—There is hope—isn't there?

RITA:—No—no—I 'ave mak e vone heeg meestake!

TOM:—What—?

RITA:—I t'ink I 'ave been mad for jost vone leetle while, but now—I cannot marr-ee you. Good bye. (She goes towards door. He stops her.)

TOM:—Why not?

RITA:—Oh, let me go!

TOM:—Not till you've told me why.

RITA:—Can you not no'erstan' vhat is so plain an' clear? Your frien's—dey know—de night I meet you you 'ave see de young men look at me—

TOM:—Rita—! (He stands paralyzed with sudden suspicion.)

RITA:—Dey know vhy I can navair marr-ee you—de whole vor-rld knows—(Her voice softening)—an' now I t'ink if you don' min'—I go away.

TOM:—(Very tenderly)—No, my dear—not yet. (He leads her to settee by fire)—I think—I think you have something to tell me.

RITA:—I cannot—no—please do not ask—

TOM:—(Always tender)—I'm not going to ask—I'm just going to sit here and hold your hand and listen. (He takes her hand)—That's what I'm here for, you know—

just to help people when they're in trouble and need a friend.

RITA:—You are so goo-ood!

TOM:—No, I'm not, but you'll find I'm very sympathetic. Why, I remember one day last week—Tuesday, it was, that a little tenement girl named McDougal, came in to see me. We sat here just as we are sitting now and after a while she told me all about it. She was going to be married the next day to a young carpenter over on 8th Street—but there was something she hadn't told him—poor child! She didn't dare. She'd been—treated badly by some brute of man when she was only sixteen years old. Of course he'd left her—and she tried to put together the pieces of her life and go on with her work—and then she met the carpenter and fell in love and was going to marry him—and at the last moment her conscience began troubling her—so she came to me.

RITA:—An'—vhat did you tell 'er?

TOM:—Oh, I didn't say much! I just suggested things here and there—and in the end—God bless her! She made up her mind to do the right thing.

RITA:—'r-r-right—?

TOM:—She went home and told him all about it.

RITA:—An' den—?

TOM:—(*Cheerfully*)—He was a decent sort of fellow and he loved her—so of course he understood—and—well, I married them Wednesday morning and now they're two of the happiest people in New York!

RITA:—An' would *you*—feel dat vay, too?

TOM:—Me?

RITA:—If someone dat you lo-ove—(*Quickly*)—no, don't look at me! (*Resuming*)—if someone dat you lo-ove come an' say "I am not goo-od—I must tell you now because ve lo-ove each oder! You are de fir-r-rst man I 'ave ever lo-ove—you are de fir-r-rst man I 'ave ever tol'!"

TOM:—Well?

RITA:—Could you for-give 'er—Meestaire Tom?

TOM:—(*Brokenly, as he catches her in his arms*)—You poor little child!

RITA:—(*Wailing*)—No—no—you do not on'erstan'—it is I who am not goo-od—

TOM:—(*Soothing her*)—There, darling, there! Don't cry—it's all right—you've been fair and brave and honest—you've told me and I forgive you from the bottom of my heart!

RITA:—(*Still sobbing*)—Oh—! Oh! I do not see 'ow it is possible—no, I do not see—I don'—I don'—

TOM:—Why not? It was a long time ago, wasn't it? When you were poor and struggling and lonely—you didn't know anything about the world—how could you? And you had to live—

RITA:—Yes—oh, yes—

TOM:—But you mustn't think of it any more! You must just remember how afterwards you pulled yourself together and raised your head and said to yourself, "I may have sinned, but that's all over—and from now on I'm going to be a good woman! I'm going to turn the rest of my life into a splendid, beautiful thing! I won't stop until I can be proud of myself!" And oh, my dear—I'm so glad—I'm so glad that you can be now!

RITA:—An' is dat vhy you can for-give me?

TOM:—Is what, dear?

RITA:—Because it 'appen—so long ago?

TOM:—(*With a touch of his profession*)—I naturally believe that all sins, finished and truly repented of, should be forgiven by every Christian man or woman. (*Pause.*)

RITA:—(*Gently, releasing herself*)—I see—I see!—(*She rises and walks away.*)

TOM:—(*With an effort to shake off all these ugly things*)—And now that every, ing's cleared up between us, do you know what we're going to do?

RITA:—No. Tell me.

TOM:—(*Smiling*)—Go right upstairs, of course, and announce our engagement to Aunt Emma and Mr. Van Tuyl. Come on!

RITA:—(*In stinctively*)—No—no—not now—

TOM:—What—?

RITA:—Vait a leetle—vait until tomorr-row—

TOM:—But you're sailing tomorrow!

RITA:—Ye-es—dat is vhy—

TOM:—(*Smiling*)—Nonsense! If you don't look out, I'll begin to think you're ashamed of me! Come along!—(*He puts his arm about her waist.*)

RITA:—(*Holding back*)—No, I say,—it is too soon—I am not r-r-ready—ve mus' vait—

TOM:—Wait? What for?

RITA:—Mebbe—mebbe dey do not like it when ve tell dem!

TOM:—Now don't you bother about Aunt Emma! She—

RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—Ah, no! I do not bodder about 'er! But—(*She stops*)

TOM:—It surely isn't Mr. Van Tuyl that's worrying you? Why, he's my oldest friend—and father's and mother's too. He's just like one of the family! Of course we must tell him right off!

RITA:—Vhy don' you let *me* tell 'im?

TOM:—What?

RITA:—To-night—vhen I can see 'im all alone!—(*Eagerly*)—Oh, please—please let me tell im'!

TOM:—But why? What's the matter?

RITA:—If ve tell 'im now, 'e vill be so angr-ee!

TOM:—Nonsense! And even if he is, we don't care!

RITA:—'E vill say t'ings about me—oh yes, 'e vill!

TOM:—But he doesn't *know* anything about you.—(*She doesn't answer. He repeats in a different tone*)—Rita, he doesn't *know* anything about you, does he?

RITA:—No—I mean—not ver' much—

TOM:—What—?

RITA:—Jost a leetle—I tell 'im a leetle vone night in Paris—

TOM:—You don't mean—what you've told *me*?—

RITA:—Yes, an' so if ve go upstairs now an'—

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—But you said just a minute ago that I was the only man you'd ever told—because I was the only man you'd ever loved!

RITA:—(*Frightened*)—I 'ave forget—oh, it vas two—t'ree years ago—

TOM:—(*Thinking*)—But wait! He's talked to me very openly about you—why, only last Saturday when I went to see him about the new gymnasium—

RITA:—Vhat—?

TOM:—He used possible argument—except that one. Why, he never said so much as a word against—

RITA:—I know. I—I ask 'im not to.

TOM:—(*More and more surprised*)—You—? But—but he wouldn't take your side where I'm involved—why, it's incredible!

RITA:—Oh, ye-es, 'e vould—you do not know!

TOM:—But why—?

RITA:—(*Fighting for time*)—Vhy—?

TOM:—Yes—there must be a reason.

RITA:—Can you not guess?

TOM:—No. Tell me—

RITA:—It is because—oh, long ago, you on'erstan'—
'e vas foolish enough to like me—jost a leetle—

TOM:—*What—?*

RITA:—(*Quickly*)—It was not my fault—I cannot
'elp it when peoples—

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—When was this?

RITA:—Oh, two—t'ree year ago! I did my bes' t'
stop 'im—but it vas not easy—I tell you dat!

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—Did he want you to marry
him?

RITA:—(*Trying to speak lightly*)—No—no—it was
nodings—nodings—at all—'e jost like to sen' me flowers
an' 'ear me sing an'—

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—How long did his attentions
last?

RITA:—I—I dunno.

TOM:—(*Going towards her*)—You mean he's in love
with you still?

RITA:—(*With abandon*)—Oh, don' talk about dat **any**
more! Jost take me in your ar-rms an' keess me till—

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—And you knew he felt that
way— you knew it all this time?

RITA:—Yes—I knew—

TOM:—Then why didn't you tell me?

RITA:—I did not t'ink you would—like it.

TOM:—Like it! Why, it was all right! He can't help
loving you, I suppose. There isn't nothing to conceal—
(*Stopping suddenly*)—Rita, there isn't anything to con-
ceal?

RITA:—Vhat—?

TOM:—Tell me there isn't—tell me—

RITA:—(*Retreating*)—I don't know what you mean—

TOM:—Quick—for the love of God!

RITA:—Don' look at me—

TOM:—Not Mr. Van Tuyl?—*Not he—?*

RITA:—(*Terrified*)—Please—oh, please—

TOM:—(*With a sudden cry*)—Oh—!

RITA:—(*Frantically*)—It is not true! I say it is not
true!

TOM:—What—?

RITA:—Dere 'as been nodings—you make vone terr-
rible meestake—

TOM:—How do I know?

RITA:—(*Striking her breast*)—I tell you—I—

TOM:—But you kept back something before—

RITA:—No—

TOM:—How do I know you're not doing it again?

RITA:—No—I am not! I tell you I am not!

TOM:—(*Pulling himself together*)—Ssh—be quiet! They'll hear you upstairs. (*His voice shaking*)—Now we must be calm, both of us, quite calm and sensible. We must settle this matter here, once and for all. If it's true, I—I beg of you—for both our sakes—as you will answer on the Day of Judgment—I beg you to tell me now! (*Pause.*)

RITA:—If I say "Yes, it is true!" would you—would you again forgive me?

TOM:—(*With a cry*)—Ah—! then it is—it is—

RITA:—(*Wildly*)—No—no—

TOM:—You've said it—I heard you say it—

RITA:—Dat is not so!

TOM:—Well, didn't you—?

RITA:—No—no—no! (*Pause.*)

TOM:—Will you swear it?

RITA:—Ye-es—I vill svear.

TOM:—Put your hand here—on my mother's testament.

RITA:—(*Obeying him*)—So?

TOM:—And look me in the eye and say after me—

RITA:—Ye-es?

TOM:—"I swear there has been nothing wrong between Mr. Van Tuyl and me."

RITA:—(*Faintly*)—Oh! Madonna!

TOM:—Swear it—

RITA:—(*Opening her eyes*)—Vhat?

TOM:—You wont—?

RITA:—I svear dere 'as been—vhat you say? noding wrong between —(*She sways a little*)—Meestere Van Tuyl an' me.

TOM:—(*With a sob of relief, as he catches her in his arms*)—Oh, my darling—forgive me—I've been a brute to doubt you—I'm—(*Suddenly*)—What's the matter? Rita—Rita—(*Her head has fallen. She has fainted. He carries her over to the settee, lays her on it, runs to the desk, pours out a glass of water, returns with it, kneels by her side and tries to make her drink.*)—My poor little girl—there—it's all right—I'm never going to bother you again—forgive me—oh, my darling just forgive me this once—(*She is gradually reviving, under his caresses and endearment*)—I was out of my head—I didn't know what I was saying—please—please—(*She sits up dizzily*)—What's the matter? Aren't

you going to speak to me—? *(She rises unsteadily to her feet)*—*Rita!* *(He takes her hand.)*

RITA:—*(Interrupting)*—I want to go away—you don' believ' me—you don' lo-ove me—

TOM:—Yes, I do! I love you more than anything in th' world—love you and I'm going to marry you—

RITA:—*(With passion)*—Vhy you make me swear dose t'ings?—Vhy you make me—?

TOM:—Forgive me, dear—please—

TOM:—Wait! *(He stops her at door, taking both her hands)*

RITA:—I say—good bye! *(He stares into her face. Her eyes drop)*—Oh, let me go please! I mus' r-r-retur-n to de hotel—it is so late—you know I al-vays sleep before I sing an'—*(Suddenly)*—vhat for you look at me like dat?—*(Trying to pull herself from him)*—Let go, I say—let go!

TOM:—*(Trying to control himself)*—I believed you when you swore just now—I want it understood that I believed you—

RITA:—Vell?

TOM:—So—if you don't mind—I think—I think—I'll ask Mr. Van Tuyl to come down here—

RITA:—Vhat—?

TOM:—And then we'll tell him—we're engaged.

RITA:—*(In sudden fright)*—Ah no—no—don' do dat.

TOM:—*(With sudden wildness, pulling the bell-rope violently)*—Not a minute! Not a second!

RITA:—Please—

TOM:—I wont!

RITA:—No—no—

TOM:—Oh, my God—*(Pause—a knock)*—*(Enter Roger.)*

ROGER:—You ring, sir?

Yes. Please ask Mr. Van Tuyl to step down here, please. Tell him I'll keep him only a moment.

ROGER:—Very good, sir. *(Exit Roger.)*

RITA:—*(As the door closes)*—Ver' vell. I vill not stay.

TOM:—*(Before door)*—You've got to.

RITA:—Remembair my perfor-r-romance.

TOM:—*(Snapping his fingers)*—I don't give that for your performance!

RITA:—'E come—I 'ear 'im—*(In desperation)*—O, let me go!

TOM:—(*As if struck*)—Rita—don't tell me you're afraid—

RITA:—Oh, let me see 'im fir-r-rst—for jost vone leetle meenute—it vill be all r-r-right—

TOM:—(*His suspicions returning*)—I wout—

RITA:—(*Shrugging her shoulders*)—Ver' vell. I don' care—I 'ave done my bes'!

(*She sits down at the piano and begins playing a brilliant Chopin waltz. The door opens and Van Tuyl appears*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Genially as he enters*)—Ah—! Still here? We thought you'd—(*Noticing Tom's face*)—Why, what's the matter, Tom? (*Rita stops, and sits at the piano, looking at the two men.*)

TOM:—(*Trying to speak naturally*)—Nothing, sir. I asked you to come down because—I wanted you to be the first to know of my good luck.

VAN TUYL:—Good luck?

TOM:—Yes. Madame Cavillini has been good enough to—(*Briefly*)—We're engaged.

VAN TUYL:—(*In an expressionless voice*) Engaged?

TOM:—(*Harshly*)—Yes—engaged—engaged to be married—(*Pause.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Calmly*)—My dear boy, I congratulate you.

TOM:—(*Choking*)—What?

VAN TUYL:—I congratulate you. Madame Cavillini stands alone, as I have always said. And while I confess I am—a bit surprised, I am flattered—(*Turning to her with a bow*)—that she has chosen one of my friends and country-men for this great honor.

TOM:—Then it's alright—? You approve—you give your consent?

VAN TUYL:—(*Turning to him*)—Consent?

TOM:—Yes—for the parish, I mean—represented by yourself as senior warden and chairman of the vestry.

VAN TUYL:—Most certainly, my dear boy. You know you can always count on me to wish you every happiness.

TOM:—(*Baffled*)—Why you talk—as if you liked it—

VAN TUYL:—(*Not understanding*)—I don't quite—

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—All I can say is, you must have changed your mind since Saturday.

VAN TUYL:—Since Saturday.

TOM:—Why, don't you remember warning me with tears in your eyes to keep away from this—this lady—

VAN TUYL:—(*Smiling*)—Ah, that was Saturday!

TOM:—(*Interrupting*)—And now, sir—I—I want to ask you here—before us both—if you were absolutely frank on Saturday—

VAN TUYL:—What's that?

TOM:—(*His voice almost breaking*)—If there were any argument against my—my attachment which you did not see fit to offer at the time—

TOM:—If there was sir, tell it now—tell it for God's sake—or else forever after hold your peace! (*Pause.*)

VAN TUYL:—I don't see why you're so excited—but if it gives you any satisfaction to know I said all I could on Saturday—

TOM:—(*Quickly*)—You held nothing back?

VAN TUYL:—Why no—of course not! What's the matter, Tom? (*Tom turns away in silent agony. Rita makes a sudden movement. Van Tuyl suppresses her with a glance. A moment's pause. Tom faces them, again, controlling himself with difficulty.*)

TOM:—Sit down, sir, please.

VAN TUYL:—(*Doing so*)—Well?

TOM:—(*With difficulty*)—I—I want to apologize beforehand for what I'm going to say. I know I'm acting outrageously—but—I can't help it! (*Mr. Van Tuyl makes a movement towards him.*)—No, wait! You're my best friend, Mr. Van Tuyl—(*To Rita*)—and you're the woman I want to make my wife—so I—I'm sure you'll both of you be sympathetic and make—allowance for me.

VAN TUYL:—(*Heartily*)—Of course, my boy, of course!

TOM:—(*Still with difficulty*)—Madame Cavallini has been very frank and open with me, sir. She's just told me—about certain portions of her career—and of course, knowing as I do, how hard it is for girls when they're poor and young—and alone—why, I should be only too glad to tell her it's all right and blot it out from my memory forever—but—but—(*He pauses, unable to go on, then rises, gripping the edge of the desk with both hands and leaning over it, haggard and terrible*)—Before I can do that, there's one thing I've got to be sure of—

VAN TUYL:—Yes, Tom?

TOM:—It seems—you've been an admirer of hers for some time—(*As Van Tuyl glances at her involuntarily*)—For God's sake, don't look at her now! And what I've got

—to be sure of is that—there never has been anything—you know—between you two—

VAN TUYL:—*What—?*

TOM:—(*Going on very quickly*)—I've asked her and she's denied it—and I believe her—implicitly, of course—but if—*you'll* be good enough to deny it, too—oh, merely as a matter of form!—why, I—I shall be much obliged. Well?

VAN TUYL:—(*After a slight pause*)—There's one thing I'm not going to deny—and that is my very deep and very true affection for Madame Cavallini. (*Looking at her*)—It is a sentiment none the less deep and true because it has lived for years with no response from her—and I am proud of my hope and my belief that it will continue so long as I'm alive to cherish it. (*Turning to Tom*)—As for the rest of your question, Tom, when you're yourself again you'll agree with me that it deserves no answer. Good-bye. (*To her*)—Good bye, madame—I offer you the best of wishes—(*He is turning toward the door when Tom stops him*)

TOM:—(*Seizing his hand*)—No, wait—you shan't go until I've begged your pardon—I've been a fool, sir—a perfect fool, but if you can I want you to forgive me!

VAN TUYL:—Don't you think, my boy, you'd better ask Madame Cavallini's pardon first?

TOM:—(*Turning to her*)—Rita, darling—I don't know just what to say—but I think if you forgive me again—I can promise I'll never—never— You *do* forgive me, dear,—don't you? Please—oh, please.

RITA:—(*Suddenly pulling herself away*)—No—no—I cannot! It is too much—

TOM:—What?

RITA:—(*Straightening herself up and looking at him*)—I love you—I mus' spik de trut—

VAN TUYL:—Be quiet!

RITA:—(*To Tom*)—It is all lies what ve 'ave said—all lies—lies!

TOM:—(*Crying aloud*)—No—no—

RITA:—I vas 'is mistr-ress till the night I meet you!

TOM:—Not Mr. Van Tuyl—not— (*He chokes.*)

VAN TUYL:—Tom, listen to me for one minute—

TOM:—(*Turning to him*)—You thief—liar—

VAN TUYL:—For God's sake Tom, don't—

TOM:—(*With a cry*)—A-ah! (*He rushes at Van Tuyl to strike him down, but she stands before him*)—

RITA:—(*Gasping*)—'E lied for me—I tell you 'e lied

for me—(*Pause. Tom stands fighting for his control. He regains it, exhausted, and turns to the desk.*)

TOM:—(*In a whisper*)—Please go—both of you—(*He stoops to pick up the little Testament which has dropped to the floor, brushes it involuntarily and puts it on desk*)—

VAN TUYL:—Tom, I'd have given everything I have in the world to have spared you this. I want you to remember that— if you can—(*Going towards him*)—Tom, I—

TOM:—Don't!

VAN TUYL:—(*Half to himself*)—Good-bye. (*He goes out quickly. Tom sits down slowly in his desk chair*)—

RITA:—(*After trying once or twice to find her voice*)—Meesairs—Meestairs Tom— (*He shudders at the sound. She goes to mirror, right, takes off his mother's ear-rings and necklace, kisses locket, and lays them on mantelpiece. Then she takes up her own jewels, puts on her coat, picks up her muff and monkey from chair where she left them earlier in act.*) —(*Softly to the monkey*)—Basta—basta—povrina mia! (*She stands looking at Tom. He makes no sign.*)

RITA:—(*At last, very simply*)—T'ank you—for 'aving loved me! (*She drops her veil and goes out. As he hears the door close, he has a few seconds of gasping for breath. Then burying his face in his arms, he breaks into racking, convulsive silent sobs. From far away comes the sound of the little hand-organ, still playing the waltz.*)

CURTAIN.

Act 3

SCENE:

Mme. Cavallini's apartment at the Brevoort House, that night, after the performance. At right, doors leading to hall. At right-back, two long windows, overlooking old-fashioned balcony. At left-back, arch leading to bed-room, covered with drawn portiers. At left, a smaller door. Further down at left is the fireplace and mantel, fire burning. In corner, right-back—is a grand piano, covered with a confusion of music, hats, clothes, etc. Towards right-centre are a couch and a table. The couch is also covered with various clothes, personal articles, etc. Between the two windows is a perch on which sit, side by side, two stately scarlet macaws. Near the fire is the monkey's cradle—a charming cloud of lace and pale blue satin. There are several open trunks lying about the room in various stages of completed packing. Clothes, of all descriptions, are strewn about in the greatest disorder everywhere. The whole effect of the room is luxurious, yet filled with confusion and a sense of Bohemian life.

DISCOVERED.

When the curtain goes up, it is night. The gas is lit. Before the fire squats SIGNORA VANNUCCI—a fat, untidy old Italian woman with a moustache and long earrings, dressed very gaily, her skirts pinned up, a pair of old soiled pink satin slippers on her feet. She is telling her fortune with a pack of greasy cards, stopping every now and then to turn and stir two saucepans which are cooking over the fire.

SIG. VAN. :—(*To herself*)—O Dio mio! Non importa—riproviamo—! (*She gives the saucepan a stir, shuffles, and deals.*) Il dieci di quardri—A-ha-he! Posso ancora esser ricca—(*She laughs to herself. There is a knock at the door*)—Avanti!

(*Enter ADOLPH, an old German waiter, carrying a tray with plates, napkins, glasses, bowl of salad, etc.*)—You gotta da garlic—yes?

ADOLPH :—(*Putting down tray*)—Two liddle beeces.

SIG. VAN. :—Cut dem ver' small an' put dem in vhen you maka da salad.

ADOLPH:—Madame, she vill be hungry when she baek comes from de opera.

SIG. VAN.:—She eats nodings before she go—she Jreenka a leetle vine an' coffee, dat is all.

ADOLPH:—Ach! no great artiste will eat before she sing! Do I not know? Have I not de first tenor of de Royal Court Opera of de city oi Steichenblatter been? Do I not rememember how I feel vhen—

SIG. VAN.:—(*Gloomily interrupting him*)—You 'ave forgetta da eheese.

ADOLPH:—(*Crushed*)—*De lieber Gott!*

SIG. VAN.:—(*With a retrospective smile*)—Ah, when I was *prima donna* at Bologna an make my debut as *Linda de Chamonix* in da gr-rreat, da bee-autiful da gala per-rfor-rmanee—an' 'is—'ow you say—'is *eccellenza* da duca di Modena, 'e stan' an' clapa de 'an's an' say so loud—“Bravo, Vanuueei! Bravissimo!”

ADOLPH:—(*Interrupting*)—Your sauce, it burn.

SIG. VAN.:—(*Rushing to fire*)—*Madonna santa prottegeteci!* (*She stirs the sauce vigorously*)—

ADOLPH:—(*Sadly as he mixes salad.*)—Ach—so! De good old days—dey are all gone!

SIG. VAN.:—(*Stirring*)—Da opera now—vhat is eet? Vone beeg noise!

ADOLPH:—Dis “Faust” an’ “Mignon”—

SIG. VAN.:—(*Covering her ears*)—*Impossibili!*

ADOLPH:—*Schreklich—!*

SIG. VAN.:—*Orribili!*

ADOLPH:—*Ungeheuer!*

SIG. VAN.:—(*Kissing her hand*)—Ma “la Favorita!”

ADOLPH:—“*Der Freischutz!*”

SIG. VAN.:—*Bellissima!*

ADOLPH:—*Wunderschon!*

SIG. VAN.:—*Celestiali!*

ADOLPH:—*Kolossal—!*

SIG. VAN.:—(*Sighing*)—But ah! who now gotta da voice to seeng dem!

ADOLPH:—(*Scornfully*)—Mario—? Bah!

SIG. VAN.:—(*Loftily*)—Grisi—? Pouf!

ADOLPH:—Ginglini—? *Ein schwein—!*

SIG. VAN.:—La Patti—? *Un putac—!*

ADOLPH:—La Cavallini—?

SIG. VAN.:—Ah, di la Cavallini!

ADOLPH:—(*Patronizingly*)—She 'ave a leedle some-t'ing—

SIG. VAN.:—Ah! Sometime when I stan' in de veengs an' 'old 'er shawl an' leesten—I t'ink it is myself again—come baek fr-rom long ago!

ADOLPH.:—Ach, Gott! I, too, haf treams! An' when I my half dollar pay an' de stairs up climb an' da orchestra begin—I shut my eye an' yet vonce more again I am in Steichenblatter—

SIG. VAN.:—The opera. It is “Norma”—

ADOLPH.:—I am “Pollio”—

SIG. VAN.:—(*With the bottle of oil in one hand*)—The great duet—

ADOLPH.:—Act three—it come at last!—(*He sings softly in German.*)

SIG. VAN.:—(*Rising from fire with spoon still in hand*)—*Piu forte! Così! Ora! Crescendo!* (*She sings very dramatically in Italian.*) (*They sing the duet together in the very old-fashioned operatic way, tremendously in earnest. At the closing high note they fling themselves violently in one another's arms. Just here a small bell boy, in buttons, enters from right, whistling between his teeth. He carries a card-tray, and stops,—amazed at the sight.*)

BELL BOY.:—Where's the madam?

SIG. VAN.:—(*Kneeling by fire and stirring*)—She 'ave not yet r-r-return.

BELL BOY.:—There's a gent downstairs a-callin' on her—see? (*He holds out a salver with card.*)—

SIG. VAN.:—(*Irritably*)—Give me da ear-r-rd—queeck. leetle annaal! Queeck, I say! (*The Bell Boy hands her salver.*)

SIG. VAN.:—(*Reading card*)—A-ah! It is milor! 'E 'ave come back! *Santi benedetti!* (*To the Bell Boy*)—Go—breenga him in! (*To Adolph*)—An' leesten, my frien,' a bottle of champagne!

ADOLPH.:—(*With tray, at door*)—Champagne?

SIG. VAN.:—(*Joyously*)—Da besta you got!

(*Adolph exits. She rises, puts card on piano, and begins unpinning her skirts, etc. The bell boy profits by this to steal some grapes and a cake from the table. She turns and sees him.*)—Ah, demonietto!—(*She rushes at him with hand upraised.*)

BELL BOY.:—Rag-bag! (*He escapes out door—right. She hastily attempts to tidy the room, closes a couple of trunks, etc., then puts on a scarf, sticks an ostrich feather in her hair and is admiring the result in the long mirror,*

when the door—right—opens and VAN TUYL is ushered in by the Bell-boy.)

BELL BOY:—Mr. Van Tuyl.

VAN TUYL:—(Entering)—Well, signora! I haven't seen you for some time, have I? You're younger and more beautiful than ever!

SIG. VAN.:—(Shaking hands)—Ah, milor—you maka da joke as la-vays! But I don' care—I am so full of joy be-cause you 'ave come!

VAN TUYL:—Thanks very much. (Looking about)—How's the menagerie? (To the parrots)—Remember me, old lady—eh?

SIG. VAN.:—Dey are full of lo-ove for-r milor—ecco! See! Manrico, 'e visha to keess 'is 'and!

VAN TUYL:—Bite it, you mean! (Going to fire)—Where's Adelina—? (Seeing the niche)—Oh!

SIG. VAN.:—She 'ave jost eata vone greata beeg sup-pair.

VAN TUYL:—(Looking into cradle)—Six olives—strawberry jam—a few hot-house grapes—

SIG. VAN.:—Rapturously)—An' da cupa of chocolate! Ah, milor—'e 'ave r-r-recolleek ev'ryt'ings!

VAN TUYL:—(Seeing the saucepans by the fire)—What's that you're cooking—not your famous macaroni?

SIG. VAN.:—It is for madame. She eata nodings alla da day. I come 'ome ear-lee an' maka dis for—vhat you say?—sur-pr-ise?

VAN TUYL:—How did she get through the perfrom-ance?

SIG. VAN.:—(Volubly)—Un triomfo enorme! Eet maka me t'ink of dat so splendeed night I seeng *Lucrezina Borgia* an' 'is *Excellenza da duca di Modena*, 'e—

VAN TUYL:—(Interrupting)—Yes, I remember.

(Looking at his watch)—Madame is late.

SIG. VAN.:—She say *addio* to Signor Strakosch an' de oder ar-r-rtistes an' r-r-receive da pr-r-resent—

VAN TUYL:—Really?

SIG. VAN.:—(Nodding)—De peen vid da beeg r-rubee an' de br-racelet wid' man'y pear-r-rl, an' ah! Madonna!—da di'mon' crown fr-om alla da signora of New Yor-rk!

VAN TUYL:—I believe you! (Suddenly)—Wait! What's that? (There is an instant's pause. From far-away come the distant strains of "Yankee Doodle," played on a brass band. During the following scene the music

grows nearer, and beneath it can be heard the vague, confused noise of many people shouting.)

SIG. VAN.:—(After listening a moment)—Da music—
(She goes quickly to window, opens it, steps out on balcony and looks up street.)

VAN TUYL.:—(Following her)—A brass band! (He stands by window.)

SIG. VAN.:—(Suddenly)—Santi benissimo!

VAN TUYL.:—(As the sound increases)—Down Fourteenth street! That's en route from the Academy—

SIG. VAN.:—(Who grows more and more excited as the scene proceeds)—Ecco! See!

VAN TUYL.:—Torches! By Jove, it's a regular Republican rally!

SIG. VAN.:—More people—an' more—an' more an' more dey come!

VAN TUYL.:—Every fellow with his hat off—(Shivering)—And zero weather, too!

SIG. VAN.:—(Pointing)—See—de peoples in de windows! Dat so fat man—vhat is dat 'e say?

VAN TUYL.:—(Raising his voice above the uproar)—I can't hear! (The music stops.)

SIG. VAN.:—(At a loud roar of "Bravo!" "Cavallini!" "Hurrah!" etc.)—Ah! she come—she come! (She claps her hands and leans far out.)

VAN TUYL.:—(Leaning out, too.)—Where?

SIG. VAN.:—(Pointing)—Dere—do you not see da car-r-riage?

VAN TUYL.:—But where's the coachman—where are the horses? Good Lord! if those young fools aren't dragging it themselves!

SIG. VAN.:—Ah! vhen I vas prima donna at Bologna an' singa "Lucrezia Borgia" for-r—

SIG. VAN.:—(Suddenly)—Ah! *Eccola la! Bellazamia! Come e bella!* You see 'er—ye-es?

VAN TUYL.:—No—that tall young devil's in the way! (Suddenly)—Ah, there she is! (To himself)—By Jove! By Jove!

(He stares spell-bound. The band, now much nearer, slowly begins "Way Down Upon the Swancee River.")

(The torchlight illumines the two figures on the balcony. The procession now is almost underneath them. The music stops. There is a burst of cheering. SIGNORA VANNUCCI waves her handkerchief wildly.)

SIG. VAN.:—*Eviva! Eviva! Brava Cavallini!*

Brava reginal! Ecco mi alla finestra! Guards alla tua povera vecchia Vannucci. (In delight.)—Ah! Ecco! Così va bene!—(She laughs and waves. To Van Tuyl.)—She look up—she see us! (Van Tuyl takes off his hat and bows in a very stately way)—

SIG. VAN.:—*(Suddenly, as the glitter of a rocket is seen in the street outside)—Ehi! Ehi! Cosa fate?*

(She clutches Van Tuyl and crosses herself.)

VAN TUYL.:—*(Reassuringly)—It's all right—those fellows in the corner are just setting off some fireworks.—(There is a great cheer from the crowd.)*

SIG. VAN.:—*She come—she descend fr-r-rom da carriage—Look! Look 'ow da young men kissa 'er 'and!—(There are more rockets and the band begins to play "Kennst Du Das Land." From below is heard a volley of shouts and cheers and laughter)—Dere! She is inside—(Coming back quickly into the room)—Queeek! Shut-a da vindow—dis r-room is all dam' col'—*

(He steps in side and closes the window. The fireworks are still seen, but the music and crowd are heard more faintly. SIGNORA VANNUCCI bustles about, putting a new log on the fire, adjusting furniture, etc.)

So! Ecco! Dat is r-right! Vill milor 'elp me vid dis chair—? an' da table—mor-re near-r da fir-re—lika dat! *(Suddenly)—Madonna mia! I 'ave for-got—*

(She quickly pulls back the portieres over arch at back, revealing the bed-room. There is a canopied bed, turned down, with elaborate pillows, etc. A small lamp burns on its head, casting a warm glow. On the bed is a night-gown case, heavily embroidered. A long white dressing-gown lies across a near-by chair, with a pair of slippers underneath. The Signora picks up these last and comes back immediately into the sitting-room. She hangs the robe on a chair close to fire and puts slippers where they, too, will warm.)—Milor, 'e recolleck dis r-robe—?

AN TUYL.:—*(Helping her arrange it)—Millefleurs!*

SIG. VAN.:—*(Laughing)—Ah, vhat go' time milor 'e give us dere! I vish dat—(There is a knock at the door and before anyone can answer, it is opened and ADOLPH appears hurriedly, carrying a champagne bucket.)*

ADOLPH.:—*(Excitedly)—You haf-ear—? You haf seen? Look dere! (He points to firecorks outside)—Mein Gott im Himmel!—(He puts down the champagne by the table. The bell-boy bursts in excitedly.)*

BELL BOY.:—*(With a long whistle)—Whew! Holy*

cats! This town ain't seen the like since the Prince o' Wales was here! (There is an especially brilliant effect of fireworks outside.)—Jee-rusalem—!

(He rushes to the window. The Head Waiter, two Subordinates and two Hall-boys in uniform come in one after the other, talking among themselves and laden with "floral offerings" of all kinds. There are wreaths, "set-pieces" in the form of harps, hearts, etc. One large bird with "Nightingale" worked in white roses upon red, etc. Some have the American and Italian colors attached, others have the sentiments such as "Say not Good-bye," "Our Mignon," "Addio," etc.)

ONE WAITER:—Ouvrez la porte!

ANOTHER WAITER:—Oui—ne voyez-vous pas que je suis occupe—?

HEAD WAITER:—On fait-il poser ces engins-ci, madame?

SIG. VAN.:—Sur le piano—bien! c'est ca! Dis—donc—qu'est ce que tu as sur la table—(To Van Tugt)—Are dey not bee-aautiful? *Santi benissimi!* (To the waiters)—Va doucement, idiot—! Tu vas l'abier—! Penchez cella-la a cote de a chaise—

HEAD WAITER:—Vite! Vite! Espece d'un escar-got—! Madame va venir—toute de suit! Ah, la voila—! Comme elle est ravissante—!

M. BAPTISTE:—(Outside)—Ah, madame, nous sommes infiniment heureux de prendre part dans le triomphe d'une artiste si celebre—Et, si je l'ose dire, une cliente si Exquiset!

(As he has spoken, he has entered and stands respectfully on one side of the door, bowing and rubbing his hands. He is one of the hotel proprietors and wears a froek-coat.)

RITA:—(Entering)—Merci, monsieur—merci mille fois—vous etes trop aimables. (To Sig. Van. in a whisper)—Per l'amor di Dio, mettili fuori! Don posso piu—

(She is in gorgeous evening dress, glittering with jewels. On her head is a crown of diamonds. She wears a cloak of purple velvet, bordered with fur. In one hand she carries a superb wreath of laurel leaves, tied simply with a golden ribbon. With the other she holds a great armful of white roses. She is very pale and exquisitely gracious. The music comes to an end just after her entrance.)

(There is a renewed burst of cheering outside)—Ils sont toujours la? Ecoutez—qu'est—ce qu'ils disent?

M. BAPTISTE:—C'est tres confus madame—(To Bell-

boy)—Eh, you! Dose peoples out dere, vhat is it dey say?

BELL BOY:—(Shrilly)—They're yellin' fer a speech! (There are indeed heard loud cries of "speech!" Just a little one!) "Come on!" etc.)

M. BAPTISTE:—(To Rita)—*Si madame etait assez aimable de leur addresser—*

RITA:—(Drawing back)—Ah, non—non—c'est impossible—

BELL BOY:—(Yelling inside)—They won't go away!

M. BAPTISTE:—*Je vous prie, madame—pour l'honneur de l'hotel—*

RITA:—(In a flash of petulance)—Non, *Je refuse—entendez vous? Je refuse absolument!* (Turning away)—Ah, par exemple—c'est trop fort! (There is a renewed outburst from the crowd.)

VAN TUYL:—(Speaking for the first time.)—*Madame, your public's calling you.*

RITA:—Vhat—?

VAN TUYL:—(Simply)—You must obey! (Pause)—

RITA:—(In a low tone)—Open de vin-dow! (The Bell-boy does so, the noise is heard very much more clearly. She lays down her wreath, then goes slowly to window)—

M. BAPTISTE:—Ah, que madame est honne—(Delighted.)

SIG. VAN.:—(Stopping her)—*Aspetta!*

(Rita steps out on balcony. There is a great cheer as she appears, the red Bengal light, blazing up again, falls fitfully upon her figure. There is the hiss and glare of many rockets set off simultaneously. The band plays a fanfare—the general effect is a blare of light, noise and splendour. She stands in the midst of it all—bowing, smiling and holding up her hand for silence. In the room behind her everyone is applauding. The proprietors utter an occasional "Bravo!" and Signora Vannucci ostentatiously wipes away her tears. Then quite suddenly there is a silence. A man's voice is heard yelling "If you don't feel like talkin'—sing!" There is a burst of laughter, cries of "Shut up!" "Give her a chance!" etc., and silence again falls. A little pause.)

RITA:—(Simply and tenderly)—Sweet ladies—gentlemen—dear-r peoples who 'ave been so goo-ood to me—I do not know your-r names an' faces—I cann-not follow you into you-r 'omes, I can jos' seeng a leetle—an' pr-r-ray de saints dat somet'ing in my song will spik to you an' say—(Holding out her arms to them)—"I lo-ove you! You are all I 'ave to lo-ove in dis beeg vor-r-roid!"

(*There are cheers from below, cries of "That's the ticket!" "Hear that!" "Shut up!" "Let her go on!" etc.*)

Mebbe you don' on'erstan' jos' vhat dat meann—you who 'ave 'nsband's, vives an' leetle child-ren, too! (*With a smile*)—Ah, vell! I would not like it dat you should! I on-lee tell yon so you feel like doing for-r me vone las' gr-r-reat kin'ness—

(*There are cries of "What is it?" "Tell us!" "Give us a chance!" etc. from below. She takes a step forward and speaks very earnestly*)—

To-mor-r-row I go far-r away. Mebbe sometime I seeng for-r you again.

(*Cheers and cries of "Of course!" "That's right!" "Come back soon!" etc. She puts up her hand for silence.*)—an' mebbe not. Who knows? But if t'rough all your-r 'app-ee, 'app-ee lives you carr-ee, vay down deep, vone leetle t'ought of me—vone golden men-o-res of my song—where-ver I am, dear-r frien's, oh! I vill know it an' be gla-ad!

(*Shouts of "We will!" "That's easy!" "Couldn't help it!" "Trust us!" etc. Her tone changes. She continues with tender playfulness.*)—

In my countr-ee ve 'ave a leetle—vhat you say?—t'ing ve tell each oder vhen ve say "Addio!"—"*Chele rose fioriscano nei vostri cuori fin ch'io ritorno a coglierle!*"—May de r-r-roses blossom in your-r 'ear-rt until I co-ome to gadder dem again!

(*There is a great shout from the adoring crowd "Good-bye!" "Good luck!" "Come back soon!" "We'll wait for you!" etc., etc., are heard. The band begins to play, very slowly, "Auld Lang Syne." The cheering continues. There is a final burst of fireworks. Rita tosses one of her white roses over the balcony, there is a renewed shout, she smiles and follows it with another and another, until they all are gone. Then, still smiling and showing her empty hands, she blows a last kiss and steps inside, shutting the window behind her. There has been applause from the people in the room at the close of her little speech and now there is a general movement forward to congratulate her.*)

M. BAPTISTE:—(*Effusively*)—Ah, madame, mes compliments! C'etait parfait!

RITA:—*Merci—merci—*

VAN TUYL:—(*Formally*)—Madame, my congratulations!

RITA:—T'ank you ver' much—I—(*She staggers suddenly, leaning on a chair and putting her hand to her head.*

There is a moment's pause, then everyone speaks at once.)

SIG. VAN.:—(*Rushing to her*)—*Tesaro mio—! Cos'e?*

M. BAPTISTE:—*Mais elle est malade—*

HEAD WAITER:—*Elle chancelle—*

VAN TUYL:—(*To Adolph*)—*A glass of water—quick! (He brings it hurriedly.)*

SIG. VAN.:—(*To Rita*)—*Bevi.*

RITA:—(*Recovering and refusing the glass*)—*No—sto benone—(To the hotel proprietors)—J'ai la tete en feu—mille pardons—(She smiles.)*

M. BAPTISTE:—(*Sympathetically*)—*Au oui, madame—je comprends—des fois, vous, savez, ca arrive.*

SIG. VAN.:—(*To Van Tuyl*)—*She 'ave eat nod'ings for-r vone—two—days! —(To Baptiste and Florian)—Messieurs, vous savez madame—elle est au bout de ses forces—Alors, vous comprenez—*

M. FLORIAN:—*Mais certainement—(To the waiters, chasseurs, bell boy, etc.)—Assez—assez, mes enfants! Dites bon soir a madame et sauvez—VOUS—! (They all huddle toward the door)—*

BELL BOY:—(*To Adolph who is trying to pull him along*)—*Leggo o' me! Don't you see this is my only chance? (He struggles.)*

ADOLPH:—(*Under his breath*)—*Ssh! Be still!*

A WAITER:—(*Officiously*)—*Tais-toi!*

BELL BOY:—(*Loudly, as they all try to pull him*)—*I will not! (Calling to Rita)—Say!*

RITA:—*You want to spik to me—ye-es? Co-me—I vill leesten! (The waiters release him.)*

BELL BOY:—(*Triumphantly to them*)—*Ya—ya! Did ye ever get left? (He turns to Rita and suddenly becomes horribly embarrassed)—*

RITA:—(*Smiling*)—*Vell?*

BELL BOY:—(*All in one breath, speaking very rapidly*)—*Beggin' yer pardon an' thankin' ye for all favors past an' present would it cause ye too much inconvenience t' affix yer autograph to this little album thus joinin' the large company o' famous ladies an' gents what have spread sunshine in the life of a po'r bell-boy!*

RITA:—(*Bewildered*)—*Vhat—? (To Baptiste)—Que dit-il, le p'tit?*

M. BAPTISTE:—(*Smoothly*)—*Oh, c'est votre autograph madame—(Under his breath as he glances ferociously at the boy)—Sacre p'tite cochon—*

RITA:—*Mais certainement—(To the Bell-boy holding out her hand for book)—'Ere—where shall I—?*

BELL BOY:—*(Gratefully giving her the book and pencil)—Say, yer a real Jim Dandy! (Pointing to the page)—Right there—between P. T. Barnum an' General Grant! . (As she writes)—I've been savin' that space for two years, but holy Moses! I guess I'll never get anybody t' beat you!*

RITA:—*(Returning him book)—So—! Be goo-ood boy—vor-r-rk 'ard—en' gr-r-row up fine, beeg A-mer-r-can man! Vait! (Picking up a wreath of roses and smilingly putting it round his neck.)—A souvenir!*

BELL BOY:—*T'anks. But if yer givin' away souvenirs, there's one I'd like morn'n this!*

RITA:—*(Innocently)—An' what is dat?*

BELL BOY:—*(Taking his courage in both hands)—A kiss! (A movement of terror on the part of the waiters, proprietors, etc.)*

RITA:—*(Smiling as she makes believe to box his ears, then bending over and kissing him —Barabbin—! (Pushing him towards door)—Now r-r-run—queek—queek—!*

BELL BOY:—*(As he dashes out)—S'elp me Gawd. I'll never wash that side o' my face again!*

RITA:—*(To all the waiters, etc., as they go out)—Bon soir! Bon soir! Merci bien—bon soir, Adolph—*

THE WAITERS:—*Bon soir, Madame—bon soir— (They exit.)*

M. BAPTISTE:—*(Kissing her hand)—A demain madame—! Et dormez-bien!*

RITA:—*Merci— merci cher m'sieur—(They EXIT. RITA, SIGNORA VANNUCCI and VAN TUYL are left alone.)*

RITA:—*(Turning away with a sigh of lassitude)—Oh! Oh—! Oh—! Son così stanca—(Rita turns away, takes a cigarette from a box on a small table and lights it. Van Tuyl, leaning against the piano smokes a cigarette quietly and watches her. Signora Vannucci bustles about the fire, preparing the peignoir, slippers, etc.)*

SIG. VAN.:—*(Always speaking as one would to a spoilt, tired child)—Vieni, puerino! Levati il mantello!*

RITA:—*(Blowing out her match and turning vacantly)—Eh—? (Understanding)—Oh, già—il mio mantello—(She drops her cloak carelessly on the floor as she comes over to the fire and stops by the monkey's cradle)—(She draws over it a small monogrammed blanket, which hangs*

over the foot, and carefully tucks it in. *Smoking and gently rocking the cradle*)—*Va bene—dormi—dormi, bellezza mia! Mama e qui, vicino a te—dormi, anima mia—dormi—dormi*

SIG. VAN.:—(*Coming to her with a large jewel-case*)—*La tua corona, cara—e i tuoi gioielli—*

RITA.:—(*Putting her hand to her brow*)—*Oh, my head—it is so tired—Eccola—!* (*She slowly and listlessly takes off the diamond crown, her necklace, bracelets, brooches, rings, etc., and gives them to the Vannucci. The latter puts them in the jewel-case.*)

SIG. VAN.:—(*While this is going on*)—*E la collana—così sa fa—ora gli anelli.*

RITA.:—(*Petulantly, as Sig. Van. pinches her in unclasping a bracelet*)—*Fa attenzioine—che mi fai male!*

SIG. VAN.:—(*Quickly*)—*Oh, scusa—scusa, cara!—* (*She shuts the case and puts it in the inside room*)—

RITA.:—(*Sitting down on the floor before the fire where the cards are scattered and speaking in an odd voice*) *Per l' ultima volta—chissa cosa dirann o?*—(*She recovers herself with an effort, gathers up the cards, shuffles, and begins to deal, her cigarette in her mouth*)—

SIG. VAN.:—(*Coming from the inner room*)—*Ah, lascio le carte stassera!*

RITA.:—(*Counting*)—*Una—due—tre—dieci! Così!* (*She deals and moves about the cards in a mystic pattern.*)

SIG. VAN.:—(*Kneeling by her and taking off her slippers, trying not to disturb her*)—*Eccoci! (Feeling her feet)—Ah, madonna mia! Come son freddi—!*

RITA.:—(*Busy with the cards*)—*Il re di cuori cambria posto col fante*—(*She kicks viciously at the Vannucci. Then resuming*)—*E il fante col'asso—*

SIG. VAN.:—(*Gingerly trying to put a slipper on the other foot*)—*Adagio! Adagio!*—(*As she succeeds*)—*Ecco!* (*Undoing Rita's dress*)—*Adesso leviamo questo—ci vuole un momento solo—*

RITA.:—(*In sudden anger*)—*Lasciammi stare—! O ti darò una lavata di capo—*

SIG. VAN.:—(*Appealing to Van Tuyl*)—*Milor—'e see—she vill-a not let me—* (*Rita solemnly crosses herself thrice.*)

VAN TUYL.:—(*Tossing away his cigarette and rising*)—*Rita.*

RITA.:—(*Looking up.*)—*Vhat—?*

VAN TUYL.:—(*Quietly*)—*Stand up. The signora wants to put on your dressing-gown.*

RITA.:—(*Whimpering as she tosses her cigarette into*

the fire and rises)—Oh, dear-r! Vhat for-r you ma-ake me!

VAN TUYL:—(*Interrupting*)—Ssh—! (*During the following, with the Vannucci's help she slips off her ball-gown and puts on the elaborate negligee.*)

RITA:—(*Simply, still looking at him*)—Vhy you co-ome 'ere?

VAN TUYL:—Don't you want to see me?

RITA:—Oh, I dunno—I am so tir-r-red—

VAN TUYL:—(*Taking one of her hands*)—Poor little thing!

RITA:—Ye-es, dat is r-r-right—poo-oor leetle—(*Suddenly and viciously to Vannucci*)—*Per carita! Credi che sia fatta di legno—?*

SIG. VAN.:—(*Panic-stricken*)—Scusi, tanto, cara mia! Va bene,—sosi!—(*She goes off into the inner room, carrying the dress*)—

RITA:—(*In a sulky voice to Van Tui*)—She mos' ver' near-r-ree br-rreak my ar-r-rm! (*She drops on the floor again and lies at full length, her coin in her hands, studying the cards.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Smiling*)—And what do the cards say—eh, little Italian sorceress?

RITA:—Dey say—dey say—(*She looks far away*)—You did not see 'im veep!

VAN TUYL:—What?

RITA:—(*As before*)—'E veep jos' like a leetle boy—vhen fir-r-rst 'e meet de bad-ness of de vor-r-rld—

VAN TUYL:—(*Concerned*)—Ah, don't, my dear! Don't think of it any more!

RITA:—(*Looking down again at the cards*)—T'ree club—dar mean a long, long jour-r-ney—

VAN TUYL:—(*Cheerfully*)—Clever work! You're certainly going away.

RITA:—(*In an odd voice, looking far off*)—Ye-es—I am going away—

VAN TUYL:—(*Leaning over from his chair*)—Well, what comes next?

RITA:—(*Looking down again at the cards.*)—Vour—five seex di'mon'—an' goo-ood vones, too. Dat meun success an' mon-ee—vhat you say?—gr-r-reat fame—on-lee to r-reach it I mus' go t'rough much—

VAN TUYL:—You'll get there—never fear!

RITA:—'E would not spik to me vone leetle vor-r-rd—I say 'tunk you for-r 'aving lo-oved me!—jos' like dut!—an' den I vuit—but 'e say nod'ings—so I go away—

VAN TUYL:—(*Pained*)—Don't dear—it's no use!

RITA:—'Ow long you t'ink, before-ee 'e vill for-get?

VAN TUYL:—Ssh!

RITA:—(*Returning to cards*)—Ah, che m' importa?
(*Pointing to the jack*)—Dat blond young man—look! 'Ow 'e is far fr-om me!

VAN TUYL:—(*Looking at cards*)—From you—? Oh, of course! You're the red queen down in the middle of all those spades. They're nothing bad, I hope?

RITA:—You are amoug dem.

VAN TUYL:—I—?

RITA:—Ye-es—an' de oders, too—see! You are all about me—dere is no vay out—

VAN TUYL:—But, dear, I—

RITA:—(*Beginning with a little smile*)—My—vhat you say? (*Tenderly*)—my flames—my splendid vones of whom I vas so pr-r-round—look! 'Ow you are black—an' str-r-rong—ah santa Madonna! —I 'ave give you ev'ryt'ings—an' now when lo-ove, 'e co-ome an' smile an' 'old out 'is deear-r 'ands. I cannot give—no, cr-r-ruel vones! You 'ave leave me nod'ings—you 'ave take take—it all—(*She sweeps away the cards and buries her face in her hands. Van Tuyl puts his hand gently on her shoulder. There is an instant's pause. SIGNORA VANNUCCI comes bustling in from the other room.*)

SIG. VAN.:—(*Entering*)—Adesso! Siamo bel' e pronto per—(*She sees Rita's position. Van Tuyl makes a gesture for her to be still. She stops in the middle of her phrase. Then, under her breath.*)—Povrina! (*She catches Van Tuyl's eye, makes a gesture towards Rita, then to macaroni at fire, next to table—then pantomime of eating. He nods assent. With every evidence of satisfaction she goes over to fire and takes up the macaroni, pours sauce over it, stirs it, etc.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Turning to Rita, speaking kindly and cheerfully*)—Supper's ready!

RITA:—(*Stifled*)—I am not 'ungr-ree.

VAN TUYL:—(*Pleading*)—Oh, please! Why, the signora has taken all the trouble to cook your favorite macaroni—

SIG. VAN.:—(*From fire*)—Al sugo—e bonissimo!

RITA:—No—no—no—

VAN TUYL:—Think how disappointed she'll be—
(*Raising her*)—There! Come along, little girl—(*Showing her the table*)—Doesn't that salad look good? We'll sit

you down in this big armchair at the head of the table—*(Doing so as he speaks)*—and I'll be butler, with my napkin over my arm, so! *(Imitating a servant's manner)*—And will madame drink Chianti or a little champagne—? *(Looking at the label on the bottle)*—Rozuay et Perrault, '52—not too dry, I venture to recommend it. Champagne—? Very good madame—I'll open it at once! *(He begins to do so.)*—

SIG. VAN.:—*(Serving her with spaghetti)* —*Ecco! Che buon odore?* *(Sprinkling it with cheese)*—*Mettiamo abbastanza fromagio*—

VAN TUYL.:—*(Pulling the cork and filling a glass)*—There! Just taste it now and tell me if it's all right. *(As she refuses the glass)*—Please, dear! You really need it!

SIG. VAN.:—*(As one speaks to a child)*—*Macche! Non mangi?*—*(Coaxingly)*—*Ti prego*—

VAN TUYL.:—*(Offering her again the glass)*—Just as a favor—please. *(She shakes her head.)*

SIG. VAN.:—*(Winding a great coil of spaghetti around the end of a fork and holding it in front of Rita's mouth)*—*Questo pocchina—presto! presto! Apra la bocca!* *(As Rita draws her head away and the spaghetti falls to the plate)*—*Santo Dio!*

(A pause of discouragement. She and Van Tuyl look at each other and shrug their shoulders. Then a happy idea comes to the signora. Behind Rita's back, she gestures towards Van Tuyl, then to the spaghetti, pantomime of his sitting at table opposite Rita, and eating and drinking. He smiles and nods.)

VAN TUYL.:—*(To Rita)*—You know the sight of that's making me hungry? I wonder if there'd be enough to give me just a—

SIG. VAN.:—*(Interrupting and running to serve him)*—*You lika da macaroni, I bet my life!* *(She serves him)*—

VAN TUYL.:—Here! That's enough! Thanks. *(As he pours himself a glass of wine)*—And just a swallow of champagne—I declare, I feel quite famished! *(Pause. He does not touch anything)*—Well, are you going to let me starve?

RITA.:—*(Rousing herself)*—What you say?

VAN TUYL.:—You know I can't eat anything until my hostess does.

RITA.:—*(Aggrieved)*—It is a treec you play!

VAN TUYL.:—*(Humbly)*—No, on my word, I'm hungry!

RITA:—(*Smiling unwillingly*)—Den jus' beecause I am so fr-rightfull'ee pol-ite!—(*She eats a piece of spaghetti Sig. Van. and Van Tuyt exchange glances.*)

SIG. VAN.:—(*Hanging over Rita*)—E buono?

RITA:—(*Patting her cheek*)—Squisito—!

SIG. VAN.:—(*Kissing her*)—Tesorino mio!

VAN TUYL:—I'm thirsty, too!

RITA:—(*Smiling*)—Blageur! (*She drinks some champagne. He smiles and follows her example.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Putting down his glass*)—A thousand thanks! And now, my dear, the signora had a hard day's packing and to-morrow she'll be up at dawn. Why don't you send her to bed and give her a good night's rest?

SIG. VAN.:—Grazia, milor—I am not-a much tir-r-red.

RITA:—Ha regione. A letto! E metti in gabbia i poppogalli! (*She drinks again*)—

SIG. VAN.:—(*Meaningly*)—Capisco! (*To the parrot*)—E loro, povere bestie! Hano anche un bel sonno!—(*Unchaining them and taking one on each wrist*)—Andiamoci—! (*To Van Tuyt*)—

SIG. VAN.:—I 'ope milor 'e sleep ver' fine! Goo-ood night!

VAN TUYL:—(*Politely rising*)—Oh, thanks. Good-night, signora.

RITA:—Buona notte—(*Suddenly putting down her glass, rising and running to Sig. Van.*)—Carissima mia, ti ringrazia tanto—tanto! E ti amo sempre non dimentica! To amo—ti amo—(*She throws her arms around her neck and kisses her warmly*)—

SIG. VAN.:—(*Half smothered by the embrace*)—Madonna santissima, cosa vuol dire tutto questo? (*Snivelling a little*)—Corpo di Bacco! Mi—fai piangere! Buona notte—(*Kissing her*)—Buona notte, milor—! (*Kissing her again*)—Carissima—? Buona notte—buona notte—(*She goes out at left, sniffing and smiling and carrying the parrots*)—

VAN TUYL:—(*Who has served her with salad*)—Now sit down and finish your supper.

RITA:—(*Shaking her head*)—No—it is enough—(*Filling her glass and lifting his own*)—Well, then let's drink a toast—eh? I have it! To the splendor of your days to come! (*He bows and drinks. Then, seeing she has not followed his example*)—What's the matter? Don't they tempt you?

RITA:—(*Holding her glass*)—I do not deenck to vhat

I know mus' be—but to a dr-r-ream I vill not dr-r-ream again—de peecture of a small r-room—var-rm an' br-right—vit 'em so bus-ee wr-r-riting at 'is desk—an' me before-re da fir-r-re—jos' r-rock-eng. smil-eeng—vit' a leetle hab-ee nur-rsing at my breas'—

VAN TUYL:—(*Suddenly*)—My dear, I want you to listen to a plan. (*Sitting in the big chair and drawing her down until she nestles at his feet*)—There—! That's right! (*Cheerfully resuming*)—Now how would you like it if I sailed on the *Alaska* in April and met you in Paris and took you straight back to Millefleurs—

RITA:—But my R-r-russian concert tour-r—?

VAN TUYL:—They can get Patti in your place!

RITA:—(*Not pleased*)—Patti—?

VAN TUYL:—Yes, she'd be glad enough to go!

RITA:—(*Less and less enthusiastic*)—But my dear-r frien', it is not—vhat you say? it is not fair?

VAN TUYL:—To whom?

RITA:—To dose poo-oor R-rusians!

VAN TUYL:—(*Smiling*)—You're jealous!

RITA:—(*Outraged*)—Of Adelina? Me—? (*Very scornfully*)—My Lor-r-rd!

VAN TUYL:—(*Caressing her hair*)—Then why bother? Think of Millefleurs and how we loved it on those nights in May! And it's there now—asleep and empty, like some spellbound garden—just waiting for the touch of spring—and us—to give it life again!

RITA:—(*Her head against her knee.*)—You tol' me vonce you ar-re too ol' to lo-ove Millefleurs—

VAN TUYL:—(*Smiling*)—My dear, your sorcery can make me young again. We'll spend the spring in our enchanted palace—and somehow, in all that beauty, we'll manage to forget. (*He bends over and softly kisses her hair.*)

RITA:—(*Starting at his touch*)—No—no—dat is imposs'ble—you don' on'erstand—

VAN TUYL:—(*Holding her*)—What is it? Tell me!

RITA:—(*Rising*)—I cannot do t'ings like dat—any mor-r-re—(*Pause*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Humbly*)—Forgive me. It was a mistake. I didn't mean to hurt you.

RITA:—You are-re so goo-ood—but vhat I mus' do now, it need no' 'elp fr-r-rom anyone—not even you!

(*She takes up her glass from table and drinks some champagne.*)

VAN TUYL:—What is it?

RITA:—You pr-r-romise you not tell—?

VAN TUYL:—Of course.

RITA:—(*Going to the couch*)—Or get ver' ma-ad an' seol' me—?

VAN TUYL:—(*Smiling*)—I'll do my best.

RITA:—Den I vill show you—vait! (*She hunts behind the cushions, whistling softly to herself*)—Ecco! (*She takes out a small box. This she quickly opens and from it lifts a new and glittering little pistol. She stands and looks at it, still whistling.*)—

VAN TUYL:—(*Calmly*)—Where did you get that?

RITA:—Dis after-noon—vhen I leave 'is 'ouse—

VAN TUYL:—What for?

RITA:—(*Looking at him*)—You know.

VAN TUYL:—My dear child—

RITA:—(*Going to entrance of bed-room—back*)—I 'ave vait till aftair de per-r-for-rmance—I would not like it to 'ave deesappoin' de peoples who 'ave been so nize to me—but now—(*She stops and pats the pistol in her hand.*)

VAN TUYL:—Well?

RITA:—(*Softly*)—Vhen dey co-ome to vake me in de mor-r-ning—I vill be far-r away—(*She turns and slips the pistol under the pillow of her bed.*)

VAN TUYL:—Tell me why.

RITA:—In dese las' few veeks, I lear-rn somet'ing all new—an' bee-anti-ful—de goo-ood-ness of de vor-r-rld! It co-ome like some gr-reat light dat bur-r-n an' blind an' str-rike me to de gr-r-romn'! It show me for-r de fir-rst time to myself! Ah, *santo Dio!* vhat it is I see! But now I cannot change—an' yet I cannot jus' for-get, au' go on as be-for-re—you see, I am—oh vhat you call it? all meex up! An' so I lie down 'ere to-night—an' say 'good-ood-bye.'

VAN TUYL:—And what about Tom?

RITA:—(*Quickly*)—Don' spik 'is name—

VAN TUYL:—I must! If you do this thing, you've got to realize what it means—and that's his ruin—d'you hear me?—the smash-up—the blasting of his life—

RITA:—(*Covering her ears*)—No—no—

VAN TUYL:—(*Seizing her by the arm*)—Do you think Tom could go ahead and do the work God meant him to with your blood on his hands—with your dead body like a mill-stone round his neck—

RITA:—(*Wailing*)—Please—! Please—!

VAN TUYL:—(*Changing his tone*)—Haven't you

brought him enough suffering as it is! Ah, don't be cruel, my dear—don't crush him utterly—

RITA:—(*Desperately*)—It is no use—I 'ave make up my min'—

VAN TUYL:—(*Quietly*)—Then you don't love him.

RITA:—(*With a cry*)—You say dat—? When it is for-r 'im I die—?

VAN TUYL:—(*Instantly*)—Die—? That's easy! Why don't you live for him?

RITA:—(*At bay*)—Don' ask me—no—it is too much—

VAN TUYL:—(*With sudden tenderness*)—I know it's hard, but that's no reason why you should give up. Why, it's your prise—your chance—the power to turn this dreadful business into something radiant and true—the final gift Tom's put into your hands!

RITA:—(*Clasping her hands*)—Ah, Dio mio—

VAN TUYL:—(*Going on*)—Be brave! Live gloriously! And if responsibility's the price of love—love's worth it— isn't it, my dear?—(*Pause.*)

RITA:—You ar-re r-r-right—oh, my frien'—my frien' what 'ave I done—what 'ave I done dat all dis co-ome to me—? (*She bursts into agonized tears and throws herself on the floor by couch, sobbing bitterly.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Putting his hand on her shaking shoulder*)—Will you let me take the pistol with me when I go?

RITA:—(*Lifting her head*)—You don'—tr-r-us' me--? (*He turns up her face and looks at her*)—(*Lifting her to her feet*)—I do—indeed I do—!

(*He takes her face in his two hands and kisses her solemnly on the brow. There is a knock at the door—right. They both turn. A moment's silence. The knock is repeated.*)

RITA:—(*Going to door.*)—Who is dere?

BELL BOY:—(*Voice outside*)—It's me, ma'am. There's a gent downstairs t' see ye.

RITA:—What—? (*She opens the door a crack*)—

BELL BOY:—They told him it was awful late an' you was tired, but he wouldn't go an' made 'em send up this. (*He sticks in his arm with a tray, on which is a note. Rita takes it, looks at it, then opens it quickly and takes out a card, which she reads.*)

VAN TUYL:—(*Watching her face*)—It's Tom?

RITA:—(*Nodding*)—Ye-es—

VAN TUYL:—(*In a low voice*)—What does he want?

RITA:—(*Reading*)—"I mus' see you. It is life or death." (*Looking up*)—Dat's all.

VAN TUYL:—You mustn't see him. It's useless—worse than that!—it's dangerous!

RITA:—But I vant to tell 'im—that you 'ave tol' me. I vant dat 'e should know all 'e 'ave done for-r me.

VAN TUYL:—(*Warningly*)—I wouldn't, dear—

RITA:—(*Decisively*)—I mns'. (*Turning to the door*)—Leetle boy! Please ask de gen'leman please to co-ome up-stair-r.

BELL BOY:—All right, ma-am. (*He closes the door. Then, seeing that Van Tuyl, has found his coat, hat and stick*)—

RITA:—(*Indicating the door at left*)—You go out dat vay—or you meet 'im on da stair-r.

VAN TUYL:—I see. Good-bye! (*He offers her his hand*)—

RITA:—(*Taking it*)—Goo-ood bye.

VAN TUYL:—(*Still holding hers*)—Do you forgive me, dear?

RITA:—For-r vhat?

VAN TUYL:—(*Wistfully*)—For everything. (*With a little gasp she lifts his hand and lightly touches it to her lips.*)—

VAN TUYL:—(*Deeply moved as he suddenly gathers her in his arms*)—My darling—! Beautiful—! Joy of men—!

RITA:—(*Brokenly*)—Oh, my goo-ood frien'—(*She buries her face on his shoulder*)—

VAN TUYL:—(*With infinite tenderness*)—Little bird—! (*He softly kisses her hair*)—I shall hear your singing in my heart forever, and I thank you from the bottom of my soul! (*He bends over and reverently kisses her hands; then quickly and sharply turns and goes out—left. Rita is left alone. She looks after him for a moment, then runs to the window and opens it. Outside the gleam and swirl of falling snow can be seen. She stands there, one hand to her throat, breathing deeply. A knock is heard at the door—right. She closes the window and turns—half-terrified, half delighted—the knock is repeated, more loudly. She tries to speak, but cannot. The knock is heard a third time. She controls herself with a great effort.*)—

RITA:—Co-ome! (*The door opens and TOM appears. He is quite white, his hair dishevelled, his eyes wild. He is without overcoat or gloves—the snow is still on his should-*

ers, his hands are red with cold. His voice is thick and hoarse—his whole manner is strange—he moves and talks as though devoured by some inward flame. During the entire scene he barely takes his eyes away from her once. He closes the door and stands, with his back against it, looking at her.)

RITA:—(With difficulty)—You—you want to—see me—?

TOM:—Yes—(They look at each other, breathing deeply)—

RITA:—(Her manner changing at once)—De fir-re—please—go queeck an' var-rin your-self—(Taking him by the arm and drawing him across)—*Sauti beaissii!*—You ar-re all vet!—(Glancing at his feet)—An' your-r shoe—per carita! You 'ave valk 'ere in dis snow—

TOM:—(Oddly)—Yes—I've been walking—all the time that you were singing there—I think I got as far as Trinity, but I don't—quite remember—

RITA:—Vhat for-r you co-ome out on a night so bad? An', if you mms', vidout dat beeg t'ick coat—?

TOM:—(Again staring at her)—I was thinking about something else—about you—I was praying for you in the twilight—in the evening—in the black and dark night—

RITA:—Oh, Meestair Tom!

TOM:—(Continuing)—I walked and prayed. And in my prayers I felt a little hand here on my arm—some lost one offering herself. I thought—but when I looked down at the quivering mouth under the veil and the tawdry bonnet—my head swam—it was you—

RITA:—(Amazed)—Me—?

TOM:—I heard you crying as I ran away—and I ran and ran, till I saw some lights and people—and then a little beggar, playing on the curb, held up her hand—but when I gave her a penny, she thanked me—with your voice—

RITA:—No—no—you vere mees-take—

TOM:—Of course! And then I saw you—walking by me in the streets—and looking at me out of windows—hundreds of different women, but every one was you—I couldn't move—you were so thick and close—and it began snowing and I thanked God, because that would blot you from my sight—but no—each snowflake was a tiny face—your face—some crowned with diamonds—some with loosened hair—some old and terrible—some sad and young—and you came—and came—and kept on coming—thousands and millions of you, driving and swirling in your devil's dance by the

glare of the gas-light on the corner—and not one spoke—you all just looked at me as if you wanted something—and suddenly I knew—you were begging me to bring your soul to God before it was too late and I called to you—I cried out that I would!—and then you smiled and vanished—and I came here through the storin.

RITA:—(*Clasping her hands*)—You poo-oor, poo-oor boy—

TOM:—Of course you understand! (*With emphasis*)—As man and woman, we've done with one another—But I'm still a minister of God's word and you're still a human being in mortal peril!

RITA:—(*Tenderly*)—Ah, don't talk dat vay! You are all shak-eeng—see! you vill catch col'!—(*She tries to make him sit by fire.*)

TOM:—(*Paying no attention*)—D'you you know you're standing on the brink of life or death? You must choose between them—

RITA:—(*Trying to calm him*)—Ye-es, ye-es—anodder time—

TOM:—No—not another time! To-night! This very minute—Now!

RITA:—(*In deep distress*)—Oh, vhy you co-ome?

TOM:—To save you, dear!—Now listen! At midnight I must lead my clergy through the streets—you know, my plan to gather in the vagrants for my New Year service—and to-morrow you go away. But I have you to-night, and I'll never leave you till you've given me your soul!

RITA:—Ah, if you on-lee knew 'ow—

TOM:—(*Interrupting and holding up his hand*)—Listen! Don't you hear it—now—above us—in this very room?

RITA:—'Earr vlint—?

TOM:—(*In a sort of rapture*)—The sound of many waters—

RITA:—(*Puzzled*)—Eh—?

TOM:—The voice—(*Very solemnly*)—The thunder of an angel's wings—! (*Brief pause.*)

RITA:—I 'ear-r de vind blow—an' my 'ear-rt beat—dat is all.

TOM:—It's here! I feel it—(*Ecstatically*)—Oh, dear God—dear God! you're giving me the strength to conquer her!

RITA:—(*Anxiously*)—Conqu-air—? (*Suddenly*)—You vant to 'ur-r-rt me! Ah, don't 'ur-r-rt me—please!

TOM:—(*Turning to her and speaking with sudden tenderness*)—My dear, I wouldn't hurt you for the world. It's love I'm offering you—(*As she makes a quick movement*)—no, wait, my poor child—not the sick passion of those luxurious beasts, not even the great pity I once knew—the love I bring to you to-night is God's alone!

RITA:—God's lo-ove—?

TOM:—Yes, His—the mighty tenderness that moves the stars, and understands when little children pray.

RITA:—Vhat you mean—?

TOM:—(*Always staring at her*)—Little lost soul, I am ready to carry you home! Little tired heart, eager for joy follow me and find it in His arms!

RITA:—(*Looking at him*)—I don'—qvite on'erstan'—

TOM:—I thought our meeting was the work of chance—but no! God drew you to me, over land and sea, that I might be the engine of His Word—! You are a bride—but ah! not mine—(*His voice dropping*)—not mine!

RITA:—A br-r-ride—me? No—no—dnt is im-pos-
s'ble—

TOM:—(*His eyes gleaming*)—Don't you hear the midnight cry—"Behold! the Bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him!" Don't you see Him—coming from the wilderness like a pillar of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense—? His eyes are as a flame of fire—on his head are many crowns—he wears a garment dipped in blood and on it a name is written—*Lord of Lords and King of Kings*—! Hurk! He is outside, knocking at your door! Rose of Shuron—Lily of the Valley—cense your slumber—for the hour has come!

RITA:—Your eyes—dey bite me—oh, dey bur-r-ru me up—

TOM:—(*Breathing fast and deep as he comes nearer*)—My dear, he's tired—don't keep Him standing there—

RITA:—Meestair Tom—Meestair Tom!

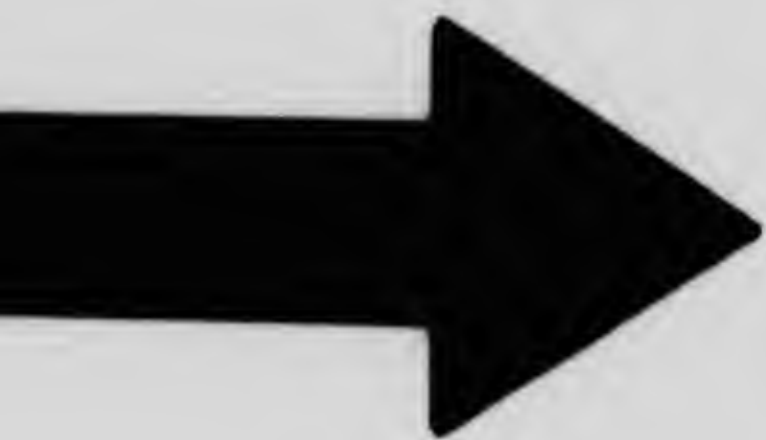
TOM:—(*Hoarsely*)—Darling, open your heart—for God's sake let him in—

RITA:—(*In a spasm of nervous horror as he finally seizes her*)—Don' touch me—don'—don'—let me go!

(*She drops writhing at his feet. He holds fast to her hands and speaks quickly, bending over her.*)—

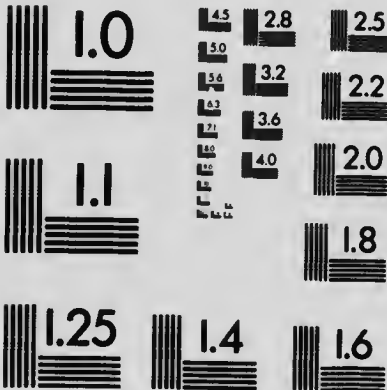
TOM:—(*Changing his tone*)—So you're proud—you think you can close your soul against the Lamb! Well, let me tell you now that unless you repent the day will come when your pride lies broken—shattered by His wrath!





MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

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RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—Let me go—let me go—(She tears herself free and runs over to the fire where she crouches trembling against the wall)—

TOM:—(*With terrible intensity*)—When you have glorified yourself and lived deliciously, and all lands are drunk with the wine of your abominations—when you have said in your soul, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow—then will the Son of Man thrust in his sickle—then will He gather your grapes and cast them down and tread them in the winepress of God's rage!

RITA:—(*Beginning suddenly to cry like a frightened child*)—Oh—! Oh—! I am afr-r-raid!

TOM:—(*Wildly*)—Afraid—! *Afraid?* Miserable sinner, how can you live with that horror staring in your eyes? The visions of that dreadful day when the sun is smitten, and the moon is blood—

RITA:—I don't believe—no—no, I don'—I don'—

TOM:—When the graves are broken, and the sea gives up its dead—and great and small they stand before Him and He sits in judgment—

RITA:—(*Trying to interrupt him*)—Meestair Tom—jos' vait vone meenute—

TOM:—(*Going on*)—Don't you hear that Great Voice like a light that blinds—I made you keeper of my vineyards. But your own vineyards you have not kept. So you shall be cast into the bottomless pit and the lake of fire—and there, in the midst of your eternal torment you shall hear the 'Allelulias' in the rainbow round My throne!

(*He sinks into a chair, and buries his face in his hands. A pause. Rita, who has risen, now comes nearer him.*)

RITA:—(*Simply*)—I am qvite sure dis is de las' time dat ve spik togedder—de las' time dat I loo-ook upon your-face. An' so I vant to tell you jos' a leetle somet'ing—an' den—vell, mebbe, I can say 'goo-ood-bye.' (*She comes a little nearer and speaks at first with some difficulty*)—You ar-re ver' kin' to t'ink of me so much—affair all de tr-r-rouble I 'ave breeng—but dear— you can for-get me now—it is all r-r-right—your vor-r-rk is done!

TOM:—What's that?

RITA:—(*Her eyes shining*)—I vant to ma-ake my life all goo-ood—like your-r-rs! Ah, ye-es—I know dat vill be 'ar-r-rd, but I don' ear-re—an' mebbe de kin' Madonna she vill 'elp me—vhen she see me tr-ry—(*She clasps her hands, the dawn of hope on her face.*)

TOM:—(*Staring at her*)—Your lips drop as the honey-

comb—your mouth is smoother than oil—but your feet go down to death—and your steps take hold on hell—

RITA:—(*A little anxious*)—You don' t'ink God, 'E vill for-give me—no? (*Smiling*)—Ah, foolish vone—! 'E vill! Did 'e not make my face so men 'ave al-vays lo-ove me—did 'E not put voice 'ere to de-light de wor-r-rld? Did 'E not give to vone poo-oor leetle girl—who aks 'Im not'—ings—so much to carr-ee dat she lo-ose 'er vay? 'E vill not be sur-rpr-rise she stumbles so-ometimes—'E vill not seol' much vhen she make meestake—'E vill jos' smile an' keep 'is candle bur-rning—an' in a leetle while she see it—an' eo-ome 'ome!

TOM:—Promise me something—

RITA:—Vhat—?

TOM:—Take my hands and look me in the eyes—and promise me never to give yourself to any man again.

RITA:—(*Turning away in agony*)—Ah, vhy don' you tr-r-rust me—vhy you doubt me so—?

TOM:—(*Aloud*)—You wont—?

RITA:—(*Turning*)—'Ere—take my 'ands—(*as he seizes them*)—'Ow col' you ar-re!—I promise—vhat you vant I say?—nevair to give myse'f to an-y man again!

TOM:—(*Devouring her with his eyes*)—You swear it?

RITA:—Ye-es—I swear! Now ar-re you satisfied?

TOM:—(*Suddenly uttering a cry of pain and hideous unrest*)—A-ah! (*He brutally pushes her away from him.*)

RITA:—Vhat is it now—?

TOM:—I've just remembered that you swore before—

RITA:—(*Shrinking as she understands*)—No—no—

TOM:—You looked up—just as you're looking now—

RITA:—(*Putting up her hands as if to ward off a blow*)—No—stop it!

TOM:—And you lied—and lied—you *lied* to me—

RITA:—No—don't please—it is all different now!

TOM:—Different? I don't see it—why, it's just the same—

RITA:—No—no—I tell you—I am diff'rent—I 'ave change—I am go-ing now to be goo-ood—

TOM:—But ean you?

RITA:—Listen—! (*I vill stop singing*)—leave de stage—fin' out a convent vhere dey take me in an'—(*Suddenly*)—*Ecco!* I 'ave it! Dere ar-re so-ome nuns near Genova who nur-r-rse de seeek—I vill go str-r-raight from Napoli—lear-rn 'ow to 'elp—an' vor-rk until my flesh fall fr-rom de bone—

TOM:—You'll do that—just to show me you're sincere?

RITA:—(*Imploringly*)—I vill do all you vant—ye-es, *anyt-ing*—on-lee believe me or else I die!

TOM:—(*Deeply moved*)—All right.

RITA:—(*Hardly daring to believe*)—You mean it—?

TOM:—(*Huskily, his face working*)—Yes, God bless you, dear—good-bye—(*He turns away quickly*)—My hat—I think I—(*Seeing it on the piano*)—Oh, there it is—I didn't remember just where—(*He stops suddenly and stands rigid. He has seen Van Tuyl's card, left on the piano by Signora Vannucci at the beginning of the act. A moment's pause.*)

RITA:—(*Turning*)—You don' fin' it—no? Mebbe you—(*Her voice changes as she sees his face*)—Vhat is it?

TOM:—(*Trying to point*)—That card—Van Tuyl—(*He chokes suddenly.*)

RITA:—(*Anxiously*)—Meestair Van Tuyl—Ye-es?

TOM:—(*With difficulty*)—He's been here—then?

RITA:—(*Looking at him*)—Si—si.—

TOM:—(*Putting his hand to his throat*)—To-night?

RITA:—Ye-es—

TOM:—(*Hardly able to contain himself*)—When—?

RITA:—Jos' be-fore you co-ome—

TOM:—(*With a yell of rage, seizing the card and crumpling it in both hands*)—Oh—! What a fool I've been! What a fool—what a fool—what a blind, miserable, wretched fool—

RITA:—Vhat is it? Tell me—vhat 'as 'appen—?

TOM:—Why didn't I get it as soon as I saw you in that indecent dress—with your hair unbound—and the night-light burning—

RITA:—Vhat you mean—? O dear-r Lor-r-rd—*vhat you mean—?*

TOM:—Don't try to cheat me any more! I know what's happened in this room to-night—! While I was tramping through the storm and snow, praying with my whole heart for your soul's redemption—(*Pointing to bedroom*)—you lay there laughing in your lover's arms—

RITA:—(*Shrilly*)—No—no! It is not true—

TOM:—And then I came—another chance to make a fool of me! And so you told me you'd repented—you smiled and smirked and—— Tell me, how did you keep your face straight? I'm rather curious to know?

RITA:—(*Piteously*) —Please—Meestair Tom—jos' leesten—I vill—

TOM:—(*Savagely*)—And I believed you! I *believed!* Another splendid joke to tell Van Tnyl! And wont the old man love it—And he'll be dead right—even I can see it's funny—(*He begins to laugh*)—Funny? It's the richest thing I've heard for years and years—(*He throws his head back and laughs, loud and long*)—

RITA:—(*Covering her ears*)—Don'—don'—it is too ter-r-rible—

TOM:—Come on—let's tell him together!

Where is he? Outside there, hanging round the corner? No? He's still here—slinking about some servant's passage-way—hiding behind a door at every sound—waiting till I have gone—and everything's quiet—and you whistle twice to tell him the coast is clear!

RITA:—(*Stung*)—Dat is not so, I say! 'E eo-ome in kin-ness, jos be-cause 'e feel ver' sorr-ee for-r me—an' when 'e ask me to go back to 'im, I 'ave r-re-fuse—

TOM:—What?

RITA:—I 'ave r-re-fuse—you 'ear me?—I 'ave tol' 'im 'No!'—an' 'e is a gr-r-reat beeg man—an' on'erstan'—an' den I t'ank 'im—an' ve say 'oo-ood-bye'—

TOM:—(*Fiercely*)—You lie! Why, look at those two chairs—they look like a refusal, don't they? And those glasses—champagne—

RITA:—No—no—it is quite diff'ren'—you ar-re all meestake—

TOM:—(*More and more fiercely*)—A private orgy, planned and thought out days ahead! Your last caresses—(*He has seized the table cloth with both hands*)—

RITA:—Oh, ta-ake car-re—

TOM:—(*Between his teeth*)—A farewell debanch—(*He pulls the cloth and drags everything to the floor with a crash.*)—

RITA:—(*Closing her eyes*)—Oh—!

TOM:—(*Turning ou her*)—Now will you dare deny Van T 's your lover?

RITA:—(*Her eyes still closed*)—Yes—! Yes—! I do—! I do—! (*Beginning to sway a little as she speaks*)—I 'ave r-re-fuse 'im an' I tell you vhy! I t'ought it was be-cause I vant so much to be goo-ood—! But now I know dat I vas all meestake'—I br-r-reak vit 'im be-cause I lo-ove anodder—

TOM:—(*Almost ready to kill her*)—Who is he?

RITA:—(*Half fainting, as she opens her eyes and sways towards him, holding out her arms*)—You—

TOM:—(*Turning sharply as if she had struck him with a whip*)—Don't—!

RITA:—(*Pulling herself together*)—Forgive me—

TOM:—(*Twisting his hands as if in prayer*)—Oh, my God—Oh, my God!

RITA:—(*Her back to him, holding the big chair for support*)—If you don' min'—I mus' ask you now to leave me—it is almos' midnight—you 'ave your-r sair-vice in de chur-r-eh—an' I myself mus'—tr-r-ry to sleep a leetle—(*Turning with an enormous effort and holding out her hand with a smile*)—So goo-ood- night! I 'ope you—(*Her words die away as she sees the expression on his face then in a sudden paroxysm of terror*)—Vhy you loo-ook at me like dat-? (*A brief pause*)—Please go 'vay—! (*He doesn't move*)—Go 'vay!

TOM:—(*Starting, wiping his forehead nervously, and trying to speak in his natural voice*)—All right—I'm going—yes—I'm going—(*His tone deepening*)—But first there's something we must do—what is it? I forget! Oh, yes, of course—We must pray together—that's it! Pray for your soul and for your soul's salvation—

RITA:—(*Nervously*)—No—go now! I'm in God's 'ands—'E vill take ear-re of me—(*In quick fear, he comes towards her*)—Oh, what you vant—?

TOM:—(*Thickly*)—Come here—(*He seizes her by the arm*)—Kneel down! (*He sits on the couch and draws her down before him between his knees*)—There—! That's right! Give me your hands! (*He fumbles, finds them, and holds them tight against his breast. A silence, they look into each other's eyes.*)

RITA:—(*Suddenly in wild terror as she looks up at him*)—Pr-r-ray! Vhy don' you pr-r-ray—? Pr-r-ray—(*Half smothered*)—O Gesu—(*In a silent fury of passion he has leaned forward, and, in spite of her struggles, now draws her up and crushes her in a terrible embrace*)—

TOM:—(*Triumphantly as he holds her tight against him*)—It's all over—I thought I came here to save you—but I didn't—it was just because I'm a man and you're a woman—and I love you darling—I love you—I love you more than anything in the world—(*He is kissing her frantically*)—

RITA:—(*Half fainting*)—Oh—!

TOM:—(*Between his kisses*)—(*With a laugh*)—What

a fool I've been! But that's all right—it's not too late—we're here—together—and the night is ours—

RITA:—(*Terrified*)—No—no—!

TOM:—It's ours—the whole, long splendid night—it's ours—I tell you—every marvellous minute—

RITA:—(*Struggling*)—Don'—please—! Oh, take away your 'ands—

TOM:—I wout—

RITA:—It is be-cause I lo-ove you—

TOM:—(*Leaning forward to kiss her*)—Ah! I knew—!

RITA:—(*Pushing him away from her*)—An' so be-cause I lo-ove you—I mus' sa-ave you fr-om your-self—!

TOM:—It's too late.

RITA:—Now leesten—please! It is you who 'ave teach me vhat is lo-ove! I 'ave know nod'ings—*nod'ings*—till you show me all!

TOM:—Till I—? (*He breaks into a peal of jangled laughter*)—

RITA:—To lo-ove a man is jos' vone beeg for-getting of vone's self—to 'elp 'im when 'e need 'elp—if it cost your-r life—

TOM:—(*Laughing again*)—Oh, darling—you don't really think that's love—?

RITA:—I know it—now! (*With a sudden sob*)—But, oh, I lear-rn it in such pain an' sor-r-row—(*In passionate entreaty*)—Don't take it fr-r-om me—now dat it is mine!

TOM:—Oh, that's not love—why, that's the sort of rot I used to talk! (*Almost drunkenly*)—But I know better now—you've taught me, darling—love isn't twinkling or forgetting about anything—love's just *feeling*—it's being awfully sick and faint—as if you hadn't had anything to eat for years and years—it's—

RITA:—(*Interrupting*)—Don'—! Don'—! You mus' not talk dat vay—

TOM:—(*Moistening his lips*)—I love you—

RITA:—(*In despair*)—Oh, t'ink of dat beeg lake—de lake of fir-re—de smoke an' tor-ment dat you tell me of—

TOM:—(*Recklessly*)—I know—I'm lost—I'm done for—damned forever—! But I'll have had this night—so I don't care!

TOM:—(*Holding open his arms*)—Come darling—come—

RITA:—(*Shrinking*)—No, nevair—nevair—! Rather would I die!

TOM:—(*Thickly*)—You won't? All right—(*He starts for her*)—

RITA:—(*Wild with fright*)—Don' touch me—no—go back—please—keep away.—

TOM:—But dear—we love each other—

RITA:—Stop—!

TOM:—I won't!

RITA:—(*At bay against the wall*)—For-r God's sake--

TOM:—(*Close to her*)—Oh, my darling—

RITA:—(*Suddenly*)—All right. But first—please go an' lock dat door-r. (*A brief pause*)—

(*He walks unsteadily towards the door—right. As soon as his back is turned, Rita rushes to her pillow and draws out the pistol she placed there earlier in the act.*)—

TOM:—(*Turning and seeing*)—What have you got there?

RITA:—(*Wildly*)—De angel's veengs—I 'ear dem now—not lo-ve—but deat'—

TOM:—(*Holding out his hands*)—Give me that pistol!

RITA:—(*Standing in the entrance to her bed-room, the weapon at her temple, her eyes closed*)—De meenute dat I feel you touch me—I vill fir-re!

(*Pause. They are both breathing deeply. Tom, biting his underlip and never taking his eyes off her face, is crawling softly up on her other side—crouched like a beast—prepared to spring upon her unawares. Then, in the silence just as he is ready to leap—from quite near by is heard the first note of the midnight bell. The full deep tones strike solemnly and slowly, up to four. Then, as it continues, the sound of a brass band and a choir of men's voices—sturdy and sweet—are heard from far away, gradually growing nearer. They are playing and singing the old Lutheran Hymn, 'Ein feste Berg'. As Tom hears them, he gradually straightens and his old look and manner come back to him. He goes rather unsteadily to the window and opens it. Outside it is quite clear—the snow has stopped. The hymn grows louder and nearer. Other bells have begun to strike—some close, some far away. He stands for a moment looking out; then turns to Rita, passing his hand over his forehead as one recovering from a dream. She has opened her eyes; the hand holding the pistol hangs limply at her side. She looks at him in an agony of silent appeal*)—

TOM:—(*In his natural voice, very formal and polite, but a little constrained*)—I beg your pardon—I must take my leave—(*As he looks about for his hat*)—My church—the

choir—procession—join them as they reach the Avenue—my apologies—disturbing you at such an hour—(At the door, fumbling blindly with the key)—I beg you to accept—very best wishes—coming year—my—my—good-night—good-bye— (He is gone without looking back once. As he spoke the pistol has dropped from her hand. Her lips move rapidly in silent prayer. She shuts her eyes and crosses herself. Her head droops and she begins to sway. She tries to cross herself again, cannot, and, as the door closes, she sinks on the floor in a little heap, like a tired child. The hymn swells up in triumph as the lights fade. The scene is in darkness. The noise of the bells continues—whistles take it up. For a moment the bells and whistles nearly drown the hymn. Then they again die away. The voices singing are no longer heard. And the band playing the hymn has evidently shrunk. It is now almost grotesque—so very thin and cracked and out of tune. To this music and the fading sound of the bells the lights are gradually turned up again, and reveal the scene set for the Epilogue.)

The Epilogue

SCENE:

The Bishop's library again. The Bishop is sitting in the red glow of the dying fire, finishing his story. His grandson is at his feet. Outside are heard the last echoes of the bells and whistles. The little street band is still playing 'Ein Fests Berg' (a lamentable performance).

BISHOP:—And that's how I remember her—standing there all in white, with her hair loosened and her eyes shut. She crossed herself—I think now she was praying—and the next thing I knew I was on the sidewalk and my choir—God bless 'em—were coming round the corner of Tenth street, marching like soldiers to the same tune those wretched Germans are murdering outside there now.—*(As they strike a particularly distressing dissonance)*—Ah—, Really—that's too much! Give them a quarter, Harry—and tell them to go away!

HARRY:—*(Throwing up the window and calling)*—Hi—you! That'll be enough for to-night! Here—catch! *(He throws out a coin. The music stops. There is silence, save for a few far-off horns.)*

BISHOP:—*(Rousing himself as Harry returns and putting the dead violets and the handkerchief in his pocket)*—So that's what I wanted to tell you, my boy! I came home that night an older—and I think a better man. It was the following June that your dear grandmother and I were married—Mr. Van Tuyl came all the way from Madrid just to be there and to give his niece away! They're fine people—the Van Tuyls—but your grandmother was the finest of them all. She made my life a happy one—a very happy one indeed!

HARRY:—*(Boyishly)*—And—Madame Cavillini—?

BISHOP:—*(Still looking in the fire and smiling)*—She became even more famous before her retirement—but of course, you know—

HARRY:—Where is she now?

BISHOP:—I'm not sure—but I believe she's in Italy somewhere living rather quietly. *(Wistfully)*—She and Patti are the only ones left—a wonderful career my boy—a very great artist—I never saw here again.

HARRY:—*(Patting his arm awkwardly)*—I think you're just a corker!

BISHOP:—(*Smiling*)—Nonsense—! But now I hope you understand I haven't *quite* what it feels like to be young—and although it's true I always read the Evening Post, I still can sympathize—and even presume to offer some occasional advice.

HARRY:—I know it—I appreciate it—!

BISHOP:—(*Very solemnly*)—My dear, dear boy—unless your love is big enough to forget the whole world and yet remember Heaven—you have no right to make this girl your wife!

(*Brief pause*).

HARRY:—(*Rising abruptly*)—Grandfather I have been an ass! (*He puts his hands in his pockets and walks away*).

BISHOP:—(*Whimsically, as he wipes his glasses*)—I suppose you have, Harry—I suppose you have!

HARRY:—(*Turning back again*)—I've been an ass to hesitate one single minute! However, it's all right now—Lucille and I are going to get married as soon as ever we can!

BISHOP:—(*Thoroughly startled*)—God bless my soul! But *that* isn't why I told you my story! I wanted to get this nonsense out of your silly young head.

HARRY:—(*Laughing affectionately as he stands behind the Bishop's chair and rests his shoulders*)—Quite different, and it's too late now to change.—(*Suddenly*)—Have you any engagement for tomorrow afternoon?

BISHOP:—(*Still flustered*)—I—I can't say that I recall any at this moment—

HARRY:—Then don't you mind if we make one now—?

BISHOP:—Well—well—! I declare—! (*He takes out his spotless handkerchief and passes it nervously over his brow. The door opens and SUZETTE appears smiling brightly*).

SUZETTE:—(*Standing at the door*)—Happy New Year, grandpa!

BISHOP:—Happy New Year, my dear!

SUZETTE:—(*Coming to his chair*)—Well—?

BISHOP:—Suzette, I want you to order some white flowers and a cake—

SUZETTE:—(*With a wriggle of delight*)—Oh—!

BISHOP:—(*Very sternly*)—For tomorrow afternoon—4.30—I believe.

SUZETTE:—(*Flinging her arms around his neck*)—You duck! I just *knew* Harry could get around you!

BISHOP:—(*Twinkling*)—Oh, did you? Well, now that you two have arranged everything to suit yourselves, would you please mind reading me my paper and then going to bed? (*He leans back comfortably and closes his eyes.*)

SUZETTE:—(*Going to desk*)—Where is it? Oh, yes! Wait till I turn on the lamp—(*She switches on the electricity at desk, sits down in a comfortable chair, crosses her knees, sighs, and unfolds the "Post" reading head lines.*)

BISHOP:—Is there any foreign news?

SUZETTE:—(*Sleepily*)—Oh, just some uprising in Portugal—a new Chinese loan—(*turning the page*). Why Cavallini's dead! I thought she died a long time ago, didn't you?

(*A slight pause.*)

BISHOP:—What does it say?

SUZETTE:—Oh, it's just a cable. (*Reading*)—"Milan—December 30.—Mme. Marguerita Cavallini died this morning at her villa on the Lake of Como."

BISHOP:—Is that—all?

SUZETTE:—There's a whole column of biography stuck on underneath. Shall I read it? (*Suddenly*)—Oh, of course! I forgot! She and Patti were your two great operatic crushes, weren't they? Well, she was born at Venice in 1841. That makes her—(*Looking up thoughtfully*)—Let me see—

BISHOP:—Don't tell me how old she was!

SUZETTE:—(*Smiling*)—All right. (*Running her eyes down the column*)—Debut at Milan in 1859—Sang prima donna roles under the direction of Rossini—success in London—hm!—brought to this country by Strakosch—appeared as "Mignon" at the Academy of Music—(*Looking up*)—Everyone went mad over her, didn't they? (*Resuming*)—Opera and concert tours over all the civilized globe. Retired in 1889—numerous charities—founded and endowed a home in Paris for poor girls who came to study music—in 1883 created Marchese Torrebianchi by King Umberto I—the intimate friend of Rubenstein, Grieg and Paderewski—never married—That's funny, isn't it? (*Turning the page*)—Well, no matter what you say I bet she wasn't a bit more wonderful than my divine Geraldine! (*Reading*)—"Anglican Congress at Detroit—Federation of Churches—Further plans." (*Bored*)—Oh dear! There's the old Conference again. (*She yawns and looking up*

notices that the Bishop's head has fallen). Sleepy, grandpa?

BISHOP:—(*Rousing himself*)—I—? No, my dear, I was just thinking—that's all.

SUZETTE:—(*With affectionate impudence*)—I don't believe it! (*Yawning*)—Well, I am, anyway. May I go to bed now?

BISHOP:—Of course, my dear, of course.

SUZETTE:—(*As she alights like a bird on the arm of his chair and kisses the top of his head*)—Oh, grandpa, you are such an old darling!

BISHOP:—Thank you, my dear.

SUZETTE:—(*At door*)—Please don't sit up too late, will you? And don't forget to turn off *all* the lights before you come upstairs.

BISHOP:—(*Meekly*)—I'll do my best.

SUZETTE:—Grandpa—! (*He turns in his chair. She smiles and blows him a kiss*)—I love you! (*She runs out*).

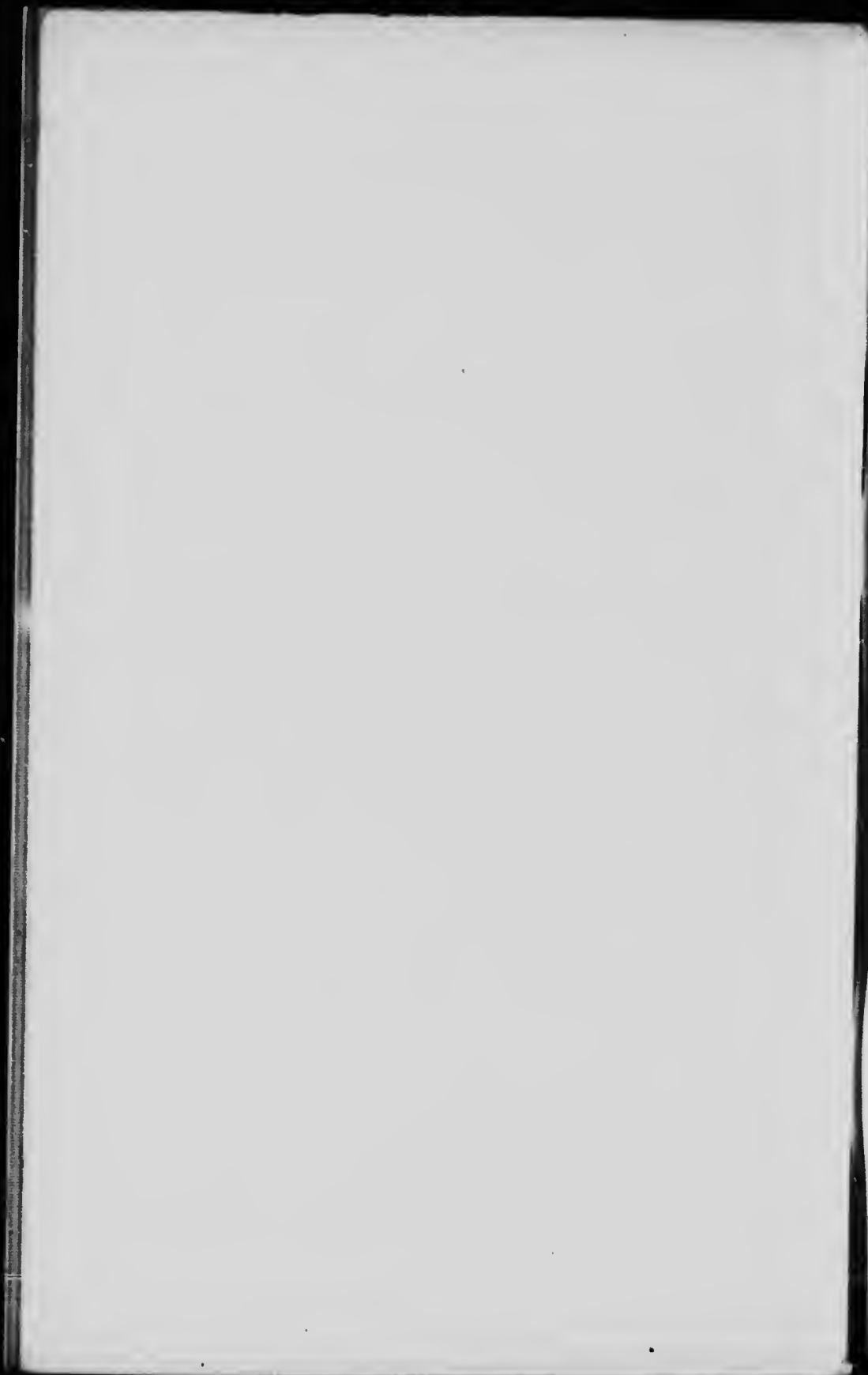
(*He sits alone for a moment in silence, then, rising slowly, he closes the door and listens. There is no sound. Almost stealthily he goes over to the case when the phonograph records are kept, puts on his glasses, and looks over those lying on the top. Finally he selects one with much care and gingerly puts it on the machine. He starts it going. Then switching off the lights, returns to his armchair by the fire. A ruddy glow lights up his figure. He carefully takes from his inside pocket the dead violets and the woman's handkerchief. Looking at them, he smiles a queer little ghostly smile and slowly sits down. The rich voice thrills through the darkness.*

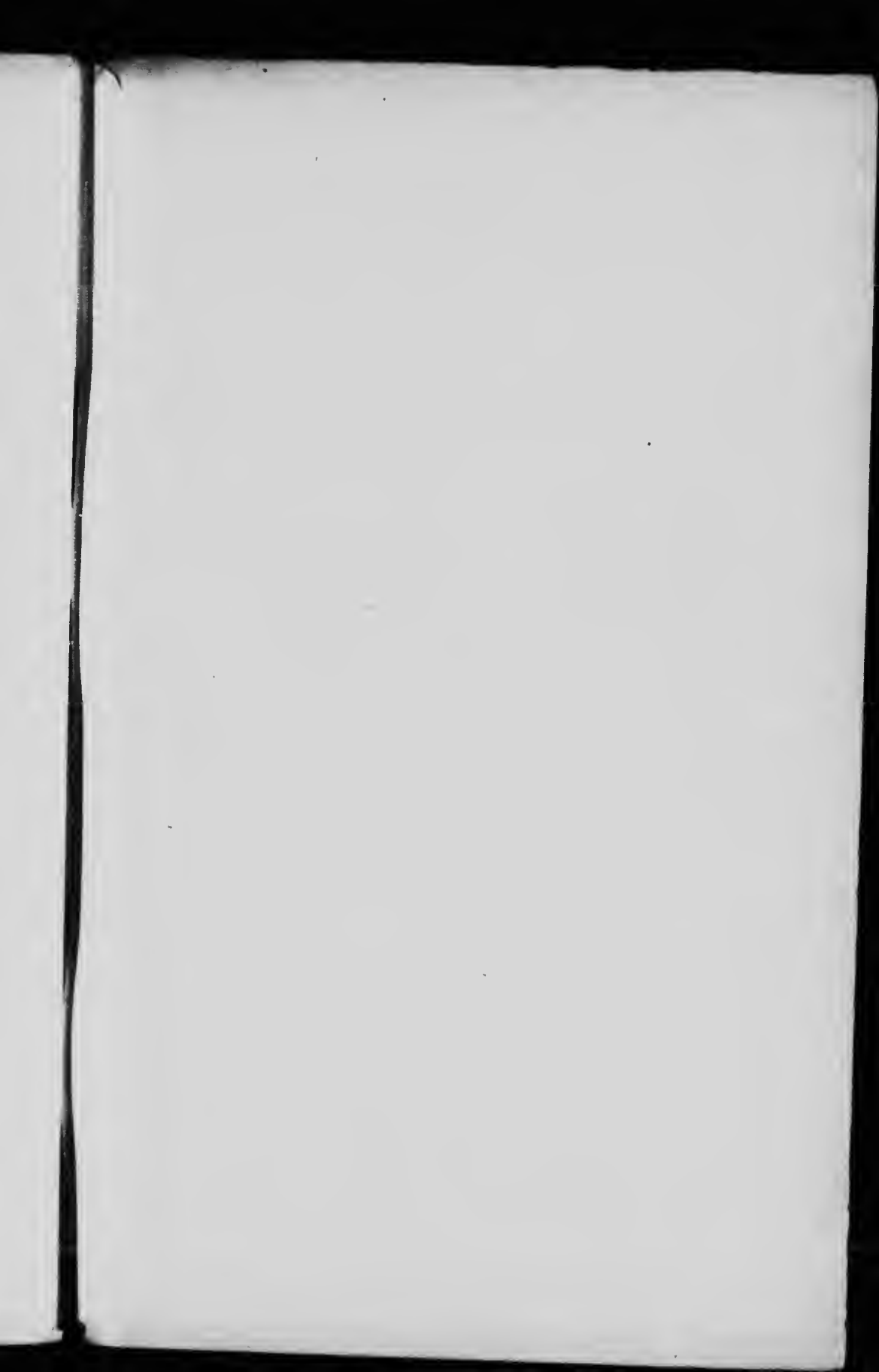
“——Kennst du so wohl?

Dahin! Dahin!

Mocht' ich mit dir, O me in Geliebter, ziehn!”

THE CURTAIN FALLS SOFTLY.





PS 3534 HoZ. RG Preserve



