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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE TEMPLETON TEAPOT: A FARCE IN ONE ACT ***

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BOSTON

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The Templeton Teapot

[Pg 1]

A Farce In One Act

By
GRACE COOKE STRONG
Author of "Marrying Belinda," etc.

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
1912

The Templeton Teapot

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CHARACTERS

HORACE TEMPLETON, *a collector of antiques.*
PROF. ALGERNON GATES, *bashful but persistent.*
LEON BURNETT, *a neighbor of the Templetons'.*
ERIC DEAN, *Burnett's brother-in-law.*
MRS. TEMPLETON, *Templeton's wife.*
HILDA, *his daughter.*
SUE, *his spinster sister.*

TIME:—Summer evening of present year.



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The Templeton Teapot

[Pg 3]

SCENE.—*Library in the Templeton home, a comfortable old-fashioned room, reflecting its owner's love for the antique. A door at R. leads into the hall; another door L., opens into an adjoining room. For furniture, a large desk strewn with books and papers, several easy chairs, and shelves containing books. The room is decorated with pieces of old china, dignified candlesticks, and various old-fashioned articles. In a prominent position on the mantel is a quaint silver teapot.*

(*As the curtain rises, MR. HORACE TEMPLETON is seated at his desk writing, surrounded by several ponderous reference books. MRS. TEMPLETON enters L., carrying a large basket packed with cast-off clothing.*)

MRS. T. (*setting basket on floor near door R.*). Hilda! (*Goes to L.*) Hilda! Horace, have you seen —? (*In despair.*) Oh, it's of no use. Sue! (*Enter SUE, L.*) Sue, have you seen anything of Hilda?

SUE. She came in here after dinner.

MRS. T. (*looking out R.*). She must have gone out, for her wraps are not in the hall. How unfortunate!

SUE. She will be at home presently. (*Looks at basket.*) I wouldn't leave that basket there, Celia. If —if Professor Gates should happen to call this evening he would surely stumble over it; the dear man is so near-sighted.

MRS. T. (*moving basket from door*). It's only a few things that I've collected for poor Mrs. McLaffety. She's to send her boy for them. Did Professor Gates tell you that he was coming this evening?

SUE (*moving about nervously*). Why, no—doesn't he usually call on Tuesday evenings?

MRS. T. (*sitting down*). Yes; and on Wednesday evenings and Thursday evenings and Friday—I declare, I'm so worried about Hilda that I can't keep track of anything. [Pg 4]

SUE (*in surprise*). Hilda?

MRS. T. Yes, Hilda. For weeks she has not been herself. I know that she has something on her mind, but I can't find out what it is. Her father is no help—(*Sound of door-bell.*) I'm sure that's the evening paper; will you kindly get it, Sue? (*Exit SUE, R. MRS. T. rises hurriedly and goes to desk.*) Horace. (*Pause.*) Horace!

MR. T. (*without looking up*). Yes, yes.

MRS. T. (*in exasperation*). Will you give me your attention one moment?

MR. T. (*impatiently pushing aside his work*). Celia, how many times must I tell you that I'm preparing an article for the press, entitled, "The Philosophy of our Forefathers as Revealed by their Kitchen Utensils," and that I cannot endure this constant interruption? (*Resumes work.*)

MRS. T. You shall listen to me. Do you ever wonder at the increasing frequency with which Professor Gates calls here?

MR. T. (*impatiently*). Well, Gates is a good fellow—fine family—most distinguished—that sort of thing.

MRS. T. Very true, and moreover, he is in love with Hilda.

MR. T. Nonsense! He's twice her age.

MRS. T. That doesn't matter. Hilda is old for her years; besides, she's in love with him.

MR. T. You must be mistaken.

MRS. T. (*emphatically*). I am not. Didn't you hear me telling Sue that Hilda is unhappy, moody, incomprehensible? Those are symptoms—trust me.

MR. T. Well?

MRS. T. I'm trying to determine your attitude toward this marriage.

(SUE appears unnoticed in door R., the paper in her hand.)

MR. T. (*irritably*). You speak as if it were a settled thing.

MRS. T. It is—practically.

MR. T. Well, all I have to say is, if Professor Gates marries Hilda, they shall have the teapot.

(Resumes work. SUE gives a little cry.)

MRS. T. (*turning violently*). Sue, you frightened me.

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SUE. You were speaking of Hilda's marriage?

(Lays newspaper on desk. Sits down.)

MRS. T. Yes; we have the prospect of seeing her settled most comfortably.

SUE (*in agitation*). I wouldn't—you mustn't—she's too young.

MRS. T. (*sitting down and picking up the newspaper*). Not at all. (*Glances through paper.*) Of course, since you've never married, you naturally think— (*Springs from her chair.*) For heaven's sake, Horace, the Wentworths were robbed last night of a thousand dollars' worth of silver!

MR. T. (*rising hastily and seizing paper*). It can't be possible. Let me see!

MRS. T. (*weakly*). Burglars!

SUE. It's the third robbery on this street within a week!

MR. T. (*gloomily*). We shall be the next victims, I am confident. Oh, why have I not carried the teapot to the safe deposit vault?

MRS. T. (*indignantly*). The teapot? I think that we have other articles quite as valuable as the teapot.

MR. T. (*pacing the floor in great agitation*). Celia, are you crazy? Consider that teapot, which graced the tables of the English nobility in the seventeenth century when tea was first introduced into Europe, which passed into the hands of the Puritans in Cromwell's time, and was brought to this country in 1680, and which has been in our family for over two hundred years! Why, it's worth its weight ten times over in gold! (*Picks up teapot and examines it lovingly.*)

MRS. T. I'm sure that no burglar would ever want it. My rings are another matter.

SUE. We'll have to sit up all night.

MR. T. (*replacing teapot on mantel*). This shall not stay in the house another day. Fool that I have been to keep it so long.

MRS. T. I'm more anxious about Hilda—out we know not where, and bandits on every corner. (*Noise without.*) Ah, here she is now. (*Enter R., HILDA and PROF. ALGERNON GATES in street costumes, the latter perceptibly agitated.*) Hilda, I'm so relieved that you have come. Good-evening, Professor.

PROF. G. (*bowing nervously to every one*). Good-evening. Oh, my dear Mrs. Templeton, such a painful experience for poor Miss Hilda! [Pg 6]

MRS. T. What has happened?

MR. T. Some one please explain.

PROF. G. (*sinking into a chair near SUE*). A most horrible fright! (*Mops his forehead.*)

MRS. T. I command you, Hilda, to tell me where you have been.

HILDA (*excitedly removing her wraps and tossing them and her purse in different parts of the room*). Such an adventure, mother. I was crossing Elm Street in the shadow of the station, when a horrible man brushed against me, and, before I could prevent him, grabbed my purse, and was endeavoring to tear my watch from my waist—

MRS. T. Mercy on us, has the child been robbed?

HILDA. He would have gotten away in a moment, had not a tall gentleman suddenly appeared from somewhere, who seized the ruffian and held him until the officer that my screams had summoned arrived.

MRS. T. Then what did you do?

HILDA. The strange gentleman had just offered to escort me home, when we met Professor Gates, who was kind enough to take me under his protection.

MR. T. But your rescuer, child? To whom are you indebted?

HILDA. I was so excited that I quite forgot to ask his name.

PROF. G. An unpardonable oversight on our part, Mrs. Templeton.

MRS. T. That is unfortunate! The whole affair is most horrible.

HILDA. Horrible? I think it's splendid!

ALL. Splendid?

HILDA. It was an adventure. I'd never had one before; and, mother, he was so handsome!

MRS. T. The robber?

HILDA. No, no, the man who caught him. He was so big and masterful—quite the most attractive man that I have ever seen.

MRS. T. (*glancing apprehensively at PROF. G.*). Hush, dear, hush. You are all unstrung. You must lie down for a few moments. (*Draws HILDA toward L.*) You'll excuse us, Professor?

PROF. G. Certainly. (*Rises affably*). I trust that our dear young lady will suffer no ill effects from this experience. [Pg 7]

MRS. T. Sue, will you please bring Hilda's wraps?

(*SUE rises and gathers up HILDA'S belongings. Exeunt MRS. T., HILDA and SUE, L. PROF. G. watches them from door.*)

PROF. G. A most remarkable young woman—Miss Templeton—marvelous self-control.

MR. T. (*sitting down at desk and looking longingly at his work*). True, and a most alarming occurrence. Hilda shall not go out alone again.

PROF. G. (*moving about nervously*). You cannot be too careful. And now, Mr. Templeton (*pausing by desk and clearing throat several times*), there is something—in fact—I must explain—to be brief, I love Miss Templeton. If it meets with your approval, I shall be most happy to make her my wife.

MR. T. Well, well, Mrs. Templeton has hinted at this. But, my dear Professor, have you thought of the disparity in ages?

PROF. G. (*delightedly*). Considering the marked congeniality of our tastes, that is hardly worth mentioning.

MR. T. I fear she may prove reluctant—

PROF. G. (*beaming*). I have already ascertained her sentiments; she is quite willing—

MR. T. (*rising and extending his hand*). Then I am most happy to connect my family with one so esteemed and ancient as your own; and, as a further mark of my approval, I shall present you on your wedding day with the Templeton teapot—

PROF. G. (*nervously*). Why, my dear sir, you quite overwhelm me.

MR. T. As I have no sons, it is appropriate that you should own this priceless heirloom (*taking teapot from mantel*) which, as you know, belonged to the Duke of Birmingham when tea was first introduced into England, passed into the hands of the Puritans in the time of Cromwell, was brought to this country in— (*Enter MR. LEON BURNETT, R.*) Why, good-evening, Burnett.

MR. B. Good-evening, good-evening, Professor. I've come over to get you—

MR. T. (*pushing forward a chair*). Sit down, my friend.

MR. B. (*sitting down*). Haven't time, really. I just want you to come over to inspect my new burglar alarm—my own invention—greatest device of the century— [Pg 8]

PROF. G. (*fidgiting about*). If you'll excuse me, I'll join the ladies.

MR. T. (*smiling significantly*). Certainly, certainly, Professor. [*Exit PROF. G., L., with alacrity.*]

MR. B. (*laughing*). Say, does he board over here?

MR. T. (*sitting down*). No, that is—it's a state secret, Burnett, but you are like one of the family; Gates is going to marry Hilda.

MR. B. (*springing up in surprise*). No?

MR. T. Yes.

(*HILDA appears in door L. and listens intently, unnoticed by the others.*)

MR. B. He's too old.

MR. T. Oh, no, merely a dignified age for a girl so conservatively reared as Hilda has been. She is much in advance of her years, I assure you.

MR. B. (*pacing the floor thoughtfully*). I don't like it.

MR. T. I think it a most suitable match, and I am intending to present the happy pair with my

most precious heirloom—the Templeton teapot.

(HILDA *disappears.*)

MR. B. (*sitting down*). Now, Fanny had always planned Hilda for Eric—her brother, you know. By the way, we've just received a wire saying that he was coming this evening. I don't know just what time to expect him, for he comes and goes like a streak of lightning. I'll be glad to bring him over and introduce him.

MR. T. Do, by all means. I know him well by reputation. His collection of antiques is very valuable.

MR. B. Finest private collection in Massachusetts. Eric will hardly leave it. He's never even been to see us since we moved here. But come over to see my burglar alarm. I've just set it. It's going to revolutionize the catching of burglars in this country.

Enter MRS. FANNY BURNETT, R., *hurriedly.*

MRS. B. Oh, Leon, Leon, the burglar alarm is going off! I am sure there's a burglar in the pantry. [Pg 9]

MR. B. We'll see about this. Come, Templeton.

(MR. T. *takes a revolver from a drawer in the desk.*)

MR. T. We'll catch him in the act!

[*Exeunt* MR. T., MR. B. and MRS. B., R., *hurriedly.*]

Enter HILDA, L., *in street costume, carrying a letter and a suit-case. She places letter on desk, goes to door R., pauses irresolutely, then goes to desk, sits down and buries her face in her hands. Enter* ERIC DEAN, R., *with overcoat and suit-case. Drops both, and approaches HILDA softly.*

DEAN. Who do you think—?

HILDA (*springing up with a little scream*). What—who—?

DEAN (*drawing back in confusion*). I—er—beg your pardon. (*Takes off his hat.*)

HILDA. Why, it's *you!*

DEAN. You?

HILDA. Don't tell me that you're a burglar. How dare you come here?

DEAN (*politely*). I'm not a burglar. My name is Dean—of Boston. I'm Mrs. Burnett's brother. I thought this was her house, and, as the door was open, I walked in. I took you for Fanny. (*Looks about.*) I guess I'm in the wrong place.

HILDA (*laughing*). Mrs. Burnett lives next door. Mr. Dean, I've often heard of you, and I'm glad to know you. (*Extends her hand.*) Let me thank you again for your promptness in rescuing me from that brute and saving my money.

DEAN (*taking her hand*). It was my privilege. I wish that I might be always near when you are in danger, Miss—

HILDA. Hilda Templeton.

DEAN (*in delight*). So you're Hilda. Fanny has often told me of you. What a dear old-fashioned name!

HILDA (*bitterly*). Yes; everything about me is old-fashioned. I was born in the Middle Ages, Mr. Dean.

DEAN. You hardly look it.

HILDA. But to-night ends it all. To-morrow I shall be free, free to do as I please for the first time in my life.

DEAN (*looking at her suit-case*). You're not going just as I'm coming? I'd hoped that we'd be such friends. [Pg 10]

HILDA. I'm going to my cousin's in New York—to stay—forever, I guess.

DEAN (*anxiously*). What will you do there?

HILDA (*with enthusiasm*). Something worth while. I'll be an actress, or a settlement-worker, or a suffragette—I don't care what.

DEAN. And your parents?

HILDA. Hush! They do not know that I'm going. (*Goes to door L. and listens, tiptoes back. Speaks hurriedly.*) My father is a collector of antiques. I've been brought up in the stifled atmosphere of tradition. I've never had anything that wasn't at least a thousand years old, or a friend that didn't belong to a family as ancient as that of Noah. I'm sick of it—

DEAN. But, my dear girl, you can't—

HILDA (*excitedly*). Listen! Now father is planning to marry me to a man twice my age, who cares

nothing for me, except as a means of acquiring the teapot—that is, all that the teapot stands for: a family-tree, prestige, that sort of thing.

DEAN (*incredulously*). The teapot?

HILDA. Don't you know about our teapot? (*Takes teapot from mantel.*) Here it is. (*Sarcastically.*) It belonged to somebody when tea was first introduced into Europe; it was seized by the Puritans under Cromwell; it was brought to this country in 1680, and has been in our family for over two centuries. It's what the teapot stands for that I'm running away from.

DEAN (*taking the teapot and examining it with the eye of an expert*). It's a beauty—rather a harmless looking object to drive one away from home.

HILDA (*indignantly*). Don't you dare to make fun of me!

DEAN (*setting down teapot*). I was never more serious in my life. Listen, Miss Templeton, if you will postpone your departure—just a little—I will try to adjust matters. There are ways. Will you give me a trial?

HILDA (*reluctantly*). I've been ready for days—

DEAN (*coming very near*). Will you?

HILDA. I've telegraphed my cousin—

DEAN (*taking her hand*). Will you?

HILDA (*taking teapot*). If you'll take this thing and carry it where I'll never see it again, I'll not go—yet.

DEAN (*drawing back*). I can't—

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HILDA. I won't stay in the house with it another day.

DEAN. But your father—

HILDA (*picking up her suit-case*). Very well. Please let me pass, Mr. Dean.

DEAN (*desperately*). I'll take—anything—only don't go away. You mustn't. (*Takes teapot.*)

HILDA. Don't ever let me see it again. Hurry.

(*Moves toward door L.*)

DEAN (*quickly*). After I've seen Fanny, may I come back?

HILDA. Yes, yes, only please go now. (*Sound of voices without door L. HILDA draws back.*) I mustn't let them see me like this—the suit-case.

DEAN. Come this way. (*Points to R.*)

HILDA. I'll go to the summer-house and wait. (*Shyly.*) Perhaps I may be there a long time, Mr. Dean. [*Exit with suit-case, R.*]

DEAN (*looking after her*). Dear little girl! (*Shakes head at teapot.*) Now here's a quandary: how can I get you back to papa without offending that divinity? Well, I can't let her go to New York. I'll think it over.

(*Places overcoat over arm to conceal teapot. Exit, R., with suit-case. Noise without. Enter MR. T. with a revolver in one hand and dragging DEAN with the other.*)

MR. T. Caught in the act! What does this mean? Put down that teapot. (*DEAN obeys.*) Set down the suit-case. (*DEAN obeys.*) You show great discrimination for a burglar. You know what is valuable.

DEAN. Sir, I am not—

MR. T. (*sarcastically*). You're not a burglar? You haven't robbed three houses on this street within a week, I suppose?

DEAN. Let me explain—

MR. T. (*dragging him toward door L.*). Keep your explanations for the officers.

DEAN (*helplessly*). I assure you—

MR. T. (*pointing revolver at DEAN*). Silence! I need no advice, sir.

(*Drags DEAN through door L. Sound of slamming door without.*)

Enter MRS. T., SUE, and PROF. G., L.

[Pg 12]

MRS. T. (*wringing her hands*). What has happened?

SUE. It's burglars!

PROF. G. (*picking up teapot and replacing it on mantel*). At least, this is safe.

Enter MR. T., L., smiling broadly.

MR. T. Congratulate me: I have caught a burglar in the very act of carrying off the teapot, and I've locked him in the silver-closet!

SUE. The silver-closet?

MR. T. He can't get out.

MRS. T. (*sinking into a chair*). He can fill his pockets with my spoons.

MR. T. The police will soon empty them. (*Goes to desk*.) I must call up the police station. Where is that telephone book? (*Picks up HILDA'S letter*.) What is this?

(*Opens letter*.)

MRS. T. (*rising and going to desk*). Hilda's writing! How strange! Read it, Horace; my nerves are all unstrung.

MR. T. (*reading*). "Dear Father: I am tired of living in the past and being old fashioned and hearing about the teapot. I want to live for myself and have friends that don't belong to the best families. I am going to Cousin Anne's in New York; she will find me something to do that will keep me busy and happy. Don't worry about me. With love, Hilda."

MRS. T. Gone! My dear child! What will become of her? (*Sinks into a chair*.)

SUE (*wiping her eyes*). She has gone to New York alone—at night! (*Cries audibly*.)

PROF. G. (*trying to comfort SUE*). My dear Miss Templeton, do not let your feelings overcome you.

MR. T. (*glaring at PROF. G.*). Why doesn't some one do something? Speak!

PROF. G. (*in embarrassment*). Why—er—this is most unfortunate!

MRS. T. (*indignantly*). Unfortunate? I should say as much. Horace, this is your fault.

MR. T. That is true. I have been buried in my work and have neglected my child.

SUE. If some one went to the station——

MRS. T. Why didn't we think of that before? Professor Gates, run to the station. The train may not have gone. [Pg 13]

PROF. G. (*humbly*). Of course, of course, delighted to be of use. Where is my hat? (*SUE hands him his hat*.) Thank you.

MRS. T. (*following PROF. G. to the door*). If you find her, use every argument to induce her to return.

PROF. G. I'll do my best. [Exit, R.]

MRS. T. If we cannot find Hilda to-night, Professor Gates shall go to New York in the morning.

SUE (*sharply*). Why Professor Gates?

MRS. T. Under the circumstances, we must, out of consideration for his feelings, allow him to make himself as useful as possible.

MR. T. This affair is most awkward.

MRS. T. I have a feeling that Hilda may not have gone; I'm going to search the house. [Exit, L.]

MR. T. Good heavens, Sue, we've forgotten the burglar!

SUE. He can't get away; you must telephone——

MR. T. (*flying around*). Where is the telephone book?

SUE. I'll find it. [Exit, L. MR. T. follows.]

Enter HILDA softly, R. Looks about cautiously. Sees teapot. Takes it and shakes it indignantly.

HILDA (*to herself*). There, I knew it! He didn't take it. He hasn't even come out. (*Examines DEAN'S suit-case and overcoat*.) He's in there now telling father and making fun of me. The wretch! (*Stamps her foot*.) I might have known that I couldn't trust him. I'll go to New York now anyway. (*Moves toward R., then comes back*.) No, I'll stay out in the summer-house and confront him with proof of his perfidy. (*Sees basket*.) I'll dispose of this teapot too. (*Hides teapot in basket of old clothes*.) Mrs. McLaffety may find it useful in making the morning coffee. I'll never forgive Mr. Dean, never, never! [Exit, hurriedly, R.]

Enter MR. T., L., with telephone book, followed by SUE and MRS. T., the latter in tears.

MRS. T. She's really gone!

MR. T. (*searching the telephone book*). Why, I can't find——

Enter MR. and MRS. B., R.

MRS. B. Why, of all things, Eric hasn't come. We can't understand it. (*Looks about*.) What is the [Pg 14]

matter?

MRS. T. (*embracing* MRS. B.). Oh, Fanny, Hilda has gone to New York—

MR. T. There's a burglar in the silver-closet—

(*Drops telephone book.*)

MRS. B. Mercy on us! A burglar!

MR. B. What does this mean?

MR. T. (*in great agitation*). A burglar was stealing the teapot, and I locked him in the silver-closet; and Hilda has run away to Cousin Anne's!

MR. B. (*irritably*). Somebody explain. What has a burglar to do with Hilda?

MR. T. He knew the value of the teapot. It belonged to the Duke of—

MRS. T. Hilda was unhappy; she wanted to be like other girls. It's all her father's fault. (*Bursts into tears.*)

MRS. B. Do I understand that there is a burglar in this house?

MR. T. There is—

(MRS. B. *screams.*)

SUE. Calm yourself, Fanny. My brother, with great presence of mind, grappled with the thief, relieved him of his booty, and has locked him in the silver-closet.

MR. B. Bravo! Have you sent for the police?

MR. T. (*picking up telephone book*). I was about to telephone, when we found Hilda's note—

MRS. T. She's tired of antiques—

MR. T. I have burdened the poor child too much with my hobbies.

SUE. She's gone to Cousin Anne's.

MRS. T. And Professor Gates has gone after her.

MR. B. (*importantly*). Come, I think we'd better attend to that burglar; he may escape.

MRS. B. (*hysterically*). It's the same one that set off our burglar alarm. Leon said that the cat did it.

MR. B. That may be. (*Seizes telephone book.*) I'll 'phone myself. (*Starts for door R.; stumbles over DEAN'S suit-case.*) What is this?

MR. T. The burglar's suit-case. Doubtless it is full of booty.

MRS. B. (*examining suit-case*). The burglar's? It's my brother's suit-case. See, the name is on the tag, "Eric Dean." (*All look at suit-case.*) And his overcoat! Oh, my poor brother has been robbed and murdered! (*Drops into a chair.*) [Pg 15]

MR. B. Bring along your revolver, Templeton; I'm going to take a look at that burglar.

MRS. T. (*trying to restrain* MR. T.). You'll both be murdered!

MR. T. (*pompously*). I'm not afraid.

(*Exeunt* MR. B. and MR. T., L. SUE *listens at the door.*)

MRS. B. They should not open that closet door until the police come.

MRS. T. (*putting her hands over her ears*). There'll be firing in a minute.

SUE. They are bringing him in here!

(MRS. B. *screams. All retreat to farther side of room.*)

Enter MR. T., MR. B., and DEAN, L.

MRS. B. (*running to DEAN and embracing him*). My dear brother, are you alive?

MR. B. (*to DEAN*). Well, this is a fine position from which to rescue you. (*Laughs.*)

MRS. B. (*angrily to* MR. T.). How dare you lock up my brother?

MRS. T. (*weakly*). Horace, what have you done?

MR. T. (*in great embarrassment*). There is some mistake; I am most grieved. However, the fact remains that I caught this young man in the act of stealthily removing my valuable teapot.

MRS. B. Alas, my poor brother has spent so much time over his old antiques that he has lost his mind!

MR. T. I am ready to apologize to Mr. Dean as soon as he explains his—rather singular appearance in my house.

MRS. B. Eric, did Mr. Templeton find you carrying off the teapot?

DEAN. Yes.

MRS. B. Have you no regard for your family? Why did you do this thing?

DEAN. I have nothing to say.

MRS. B. The poor boy is out of his mind. Leon, we must take him home.

[Pg 16]

MRS. T. He is as unfortunate as Hilda. Poor Hilda, gone from her home——!

DEAN (*anxiously*). Do I understand that Miss Templeton has already gone to New York?

MR. T. We've just found this letter——

MRS. T. How did you know?

DEAN (*quickly*). It was once my good fortune to render Miss Templeton a slight service, in consequence of which I became aware of her plans. If you'll excuse me for a moment, I think that I can find her in time to persuade her from her purpose.

MRS. T. Then go, by all means!

MR. B. Eric, do you know what you are doing?

DEAN. Leave that to me.

[*Exit, R.*]

MRS. B. The boy is crazy; he has never seen Hilda in his life.

MR. B. But we couldn't cross him. They say it's dangerous.

MRS. T. If he brings back Hilda, I'll overlook everything.

MRS. B. (*haughtily*). Rest assured, Mrs. Templeton, that when my brother comes to himself, he will make ample apology.

Enter DEAN and HILDA, R., the former carrying HILDA'S suit-case.

MRS. T. (*embracing HILDA*). My dear child, are you still with us? Where have you been?

HILDA (*nervously*). Mr. Dean found me in the summer-house and persuaded me to come in, mother. I don't want to go away, but I don't want to marry——

MRS. T. There, there, child, say no more. Stay with your mother, and you shall do exactly as you like. (*Sound of door-bell.*) Sue, will you kindly go to the door? [Exit SUE, R.]

MRS. B. Oh, Eric, how did you know where to find her?

DEAN (*to HILDA*). Miss Templeton, will you kindly convince these people that I am neither a burglar nor a lunatic?

HILDA. Mr. Dean saved me from that horrid man this evening, and to reward him I gave him the teapot. He isn't to blame for anything.

Enter SUE, R.

SUE (*picking up basket*). Mrs. McLaffety's boy has come after this.

MRS. T. Will you kindly hand it to him, Sue? (*Exit SUE, R., with basket.*) Mr. Dean, we are doubly indebted to you. [Pg 17]

MR. T. (*shaking hands with DEAN*). I apologize most humbly; but you must admit that appearances were against you.

MR. B. (*slapping DEAN on the back*). You've certainly distinguished yourself, old fellow.

MRS. B. (*embracing DEAN*). And you're not crazy—not the least little bit?

DEAN. I hope not.

MR. T. Mr. Dean, I know that you're a collector and lover of antiques. In appreciation of your defense and restoration of my daughter, I should be happy to present you with the teapot, had I not already promised it to Professor Gates, who is to marry—— Why, it's gone!

(Looks frantically for teapot. All look about.)

Enter SUE, R.

MRS. B. Oh, Eric, you haven't——

MR. T. Sue, where have you taken the teapot?

SUE. I didn't—— (*Noise without. All run to door R.*) The burglars!

MR. T. They've got it after all!

MR. B. We'll catch them yet.

Enter PROF. G., R., *hatless, very dusty and disheveled, grasping the teapot with both hands.*

PROF. G. I couldn't find Miss Hilda, but I've saved it! (*Sees* HILDA.) Oh—what—

(*Collapses into chair. SUE fans him with newspaper. MR. T. seizes teapot.*)

MR. T. You've rescued the teapot!

MRS. B. Did you fight with the burglars?

MRS. T. The poor man has been handled most roughly.

MR. B. (*grasping* MR. T. 's *revolver*). Which way did the fellows go?

PROF. G. (*regaining breath*). No burglar—the McLaffety boy—didn't see him—collided most forcibly! He spilled his basket; the teapot rolled out. [Pg 18]

MR. T. Do you mean to tell me that the McLaffety boy was stealing the teapot?

PROF. G. He denied the charge. In fact, he was very saucy, quite rude to say the least; and he ran away before I could restrain him.

MR. T. Thank heaven you saved the teapot!

MR. B. We'll have the urchin in the House of Correction.

HILDA. I put the teapot in the basket.

ALL (*in surprise*). You?

HILDA. All my life that teapot has stood for what I detest. I wanted to be free from traditions and stupid conventions and antiques. I was going away (*glancing at* DEAN); but I didn't, so the teapot had to.

MR. T. Well, this is news to me. Professor Gates, I fear that you will have to take your bride without the teapot.

PROF. G. (*beaming*). To tell the truth, Sue and I hardly need even so priceless a gift as the teapot to make our happiness complete. (*Takes* Sue's *hand*.)

MR. T. } (*in surprise*). Sue?
MRS. T. }

SUE. Oh, Algernon!

MR. B. (*wonderingly*). Say, the Professor can't be a Mormon.

MRS. B. Leon, hush—

MR. T. Why, why, this is—

PROF. G. I have already had your consent, Mr. Templeton, so I take this happy occasion to announce—

MR. T. (*recovering himself*). Surely, surely. I had forgotten—the excitement of the past hour—you understand. We are most happy.

MRS. T. A most appropriate match; the ages are so suitable.

MR. B. (*shaking hands with* PROF. G.). Professor, please accept my congratulations.

DEAN (*doing likewise*). No one has introduced us, Professor, but I wish you joy.

MR. T. Hilda, can't you say something?

HILDA (*kissing* SUE). I am so happy. Aunt Sue, so very, very glad.

MR. T. I've got to dispose of this teapot; for I can't have my girl running away again. Mr. Dean, I think that you had better add it to your collection, as a testimonial of our— [Pg 19]

(*Holds out teapot.*)

DEAN (*embarrassed*). Thank you, sir, I greatly appreciate your generosity; but—the fact is—I'm contemplating disposing of my entire collection.

MR. T. Indeed, you surprise me.

MR. B. Eric, are you crazy? How long have you had that idea in your head?

DEAN (*looking at* HILDA). Since I've known Miss Templeton.

MR. B. (*laughing*). I see.

MRS. T. I don't understand.

DEAN. I want nothing that is going to prejudice Miss Hilda against me, Mrs. Templeton.

MRS. B. (*embracing HILDA*). Hilda, how perfectly splendid! (*Shyly*.) But mayn't he have the teapot too?

HILDA. I have no objection to Mr. Dean's having whatever he likes.

DEAN (*taking HILDA'S hand*). Then I take you at your word, Hilda. I like you better than any heirloom in the world. What do you say?

HILDA (*shyly*). I can imagine conditions in which a teapot might be very useful.

MR. T. (*putting the teapot into DEAN'S hand*). It looks to me as if the Templeton teapot was destined to remain in the family.

(*All laugh.*)

CURTAIN

New Publications

[Pg 20]

[Pg 21]

THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR

A Comedy in Three Acts

By J. Hartley Manners

Eight males, four females. Costumes modern; scenery, two interiors, not difficult. Well suited for amateur performance. Plays a full evening. This admirable play, made popular for two seasons by Mr. J. E. Dodson's striking performance of its leading part, is offered for amateur performance at a royalty of ten dollars. All the parts are strong and exceptionally well contrasted. Of especial interest to Hebrew societies from its able and sympathetic presentment of a man of their race.

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CHARACTERS

The Cotswold Family

SIR JOHN COTSWOLD, *baronet*.

MARGARET, *his wife*.

ULRICA, *his daughter*.

CECIL, *his son*.

VINING, *his servant*.

CAPT. *the Hon.* CLIVE TREVOR.

The Jacobson Family

SIR ISAAC JACOBSON, M. P.

REBECCA, *his wife*.

ESTHER, *his daughter*.

ADRIAN, *his son*.

MAXIMILIAN, *his servant*.

WALTER LEWIS, *musical agent*.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

SCENE.—Morning room in Sir John Cotswold's house in the Cotswold Park Estate, Kensington, London.

ACT II

SCENE.—Drawing-room in Sir Isaac Jacobson's house. Next Door. The same afternoon.

ACT III

SCENE.—Same as Act I. Three days later.

MARRYING BELINDA

A Farce in One Act

By Grace Cooke Strong

Four males, four females. Costumes modern; scenery, an easy interior. Plays thirty minutes. An easy and entertaining little play exactly suited for amateur acting in schools or elsewhere. Just the sort of thing half way between farce and comedy that is best liked. Well recommended.

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A Comedy in Three Acts

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Six male, nine female characters. Costumes modern; scenery, an interior and an easy exterior. Plays a full evening. An excellent comedy with the true college atmosphere but with its scenes away from actual college life. A breezy lot of college girls in camp lose their chaperon for twenty-four hours, and are provided by a camp of college boys across the lake with plenty of excitement. The parts are all good and of almost equal opportunity, the situations are very funny and the lines full of laughs. This is sure to be liked by the young people for whom it is intended, and is strongly recommended for high-school performance. *Price, 25 cents.*

CHARACTERS

GEORGE HIGGINS, <i>a Tuft's A. B.</i>		Ernest S. Swenson
JACK ABBOTT,] - <i>Tuft's sub-freshmen, camping with Higgins</i>	Stanley M. Brown
FRED LAWTON,		Arthur J. Anderson
RAYMOND FITZHENRY, <i>a Harvard student</i>		Arthur T. Hale
DICK NORTON,] - <i>off-hill engineers</i>	Ernest A. Larrabee
TOM CROSBY,		Ferdinand Bryham
MARJORIE TYNDALL, <i>George's cousin; a Smith girl</i>		Helen J. Martin
ALICE BENNETT,] - <i>Jackson girls</i>	Dorothy F. Entwistle
AGNES ARABELLA BATES,		Edith H. Bradford
RUTH FRENCH,		Marjorie L. Henry
BLANCHE WESTCOTT,		Beatrice L. Davis
MRS. HIGGINS, <i>the chaperon. George's mother</i>		Effie M. Ritchie
MRS. SPARROW, <i>a farmer's wife. (Not in the original cast.)</i>		
LIZZIE,] - <i>her daughters.</i>	
MANDY		

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The Girls' Camp at Sherwood, 7 A. M.

ACT II.—The Fellows' Camp at Sherwood, 8 A. M.

ACT III.—Same as Act I, 10 A. M.

A BRIDE FROM HOME

A Vaudeville Sketch in One Act

By Willis Steell

Two male, two female characters. Costumes modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. A capital sketch of Hebrew life and character, combining good comedy with genuine pathos. Moves very swiftly and is very effective. Can be strongly recommended for either vaudeville use or for amateur theatricals. *Price, 15 cents.*

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Twenty-two males and twenty females are called for, but one person may take several parts and some characters may be omitted. The stage is arranged as a country store and post-office in one. Costumes are rural and funny. Plays a full evening. A side-splitting novelty, full of "good lines" and comical incident and character. One continuous laugh from beginning to end. Strongly recommended for church entertainments or general use; very wholesome and clean.

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Ten males, eleven females. No scenery or curtain needed; costumes introduce grown people dressed as children. Plays an hour and a half. A modern, up-to-date version of the popular "District School," full of laughs and a sure hit with the audience. All the parts very easy except the Teacher's, and as it is possible for her to use a book, the entertainment can be got up with exceptional ease and quickness. Can be recommended.

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Thirteen females. Costumes modern; scene, an easy interior, the same for both acts. Plays an hour. A clever and original play, suited for school or college performance. Full of incident and offers a great variety of character and great opportunity for pretty dressing. Irish and negro comedy parts.

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New Plays

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MR. EASYMAN'S NIECE

A Farcical Comedy in Four Acts

By Belle Marshall Locke

Six males, four females. Costumes modern; scenery, two interiors and one easy exterior that may be played indoors if desired. Plays a full evening. A clever and vivacious play, full of fun and action. Mr. Easyman's fad of spiritualism leads him into a difficulty that is a source of endless amusement to the audience. Irish and old maid comedy parts. Can be recommended.

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CHARACTERS

MR. STEPHEN EASYMAN, *a wealthy broker.*

MR. CAREW CARLTON, *his nephew.*

MR. TOM ASHLEIGH.

JACKSON, *a servant.*

MICHAEL FLYNN.

MR. SHARPE, *a detective.*

MISS JUDITH CARROLL, *a maiden aunt.*

MRS. EASYMAN,
MISS BESSIE CARROLL, } *her nieces.*

DESDEMONA, *the ghost.*

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By Byron P. Glenn

Two males, two females. One act. Costumes modern; scenery, an easy interior. Plays half an hour. A brisk little curtain raiser of the "vaudeville" type, moving all the time. Easy and effective; all the parts young people and well-dressed. Strongly recommended.

Price, 15 cents

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By Robert C. V. Meyers

Two males, one female. One act. Costumes modern; scene, an easy interior. Plays fifteen minutes. An excellent short play to fill out a bill or to fill in an intermission. All action and lots of fun. All parts young and well-dressed.

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[Pg 25]

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[Pg 26]

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Transcriber's notes:

The following is a list of changes made to the original. The first line is the original line, the second the corrected one.

HILDA. Don't you know about our teapot? (*Takes teapot from mantle.*)

HILDA. Don't you know about our teapot? (*Takes teapot from mantel.*)

PROF. G. (*picking up teapot and replacing it on mantle.*)

PROF. G. (*picking up teapot and replacing it on mantel.*)

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE TEMPLETON TEAPOT: A FARCE IN ONE ACT ***

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