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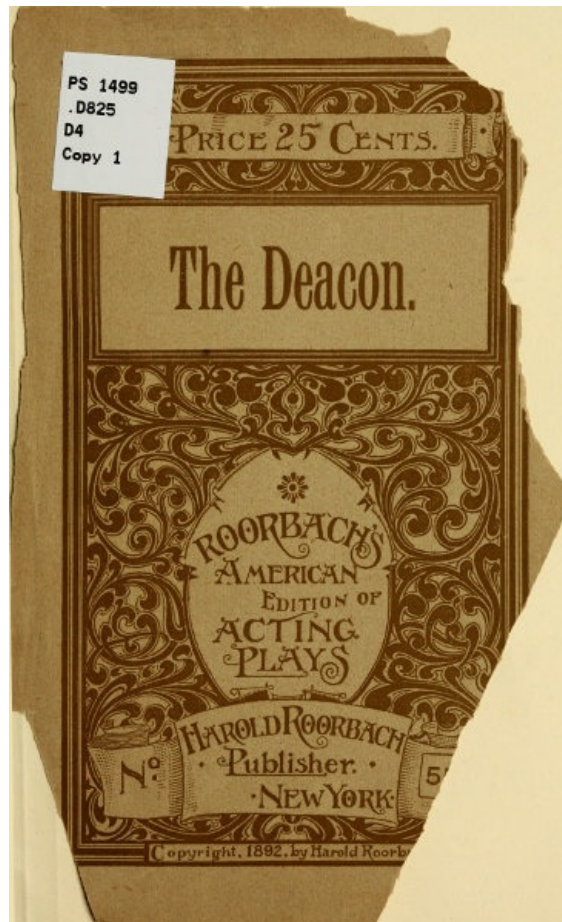
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DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS ***

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THE DEACON

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

BY

HORACE C. DALE

AUTHOR'S EDITION, WITH THE CAST OF THE CHARACTERS, SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS, TIME OF REPRESENTATION, DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES, SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOTS, SIDES OF ENTRANCE AND EXIT, RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS, EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS, AND ALL OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

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NEW YORK
HAROLD ROORBACH
PUBLISHER

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THE DEACON.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

*Grand Opera House,
Reading, Pa.,
Dec. 16th and 17th, 1886.*

DEACON THORNTON, <i>Mrs. Thornton's brother-in-law, with a passion for lemonade with a stick in it,</i>	William Ward.
GEORGE GRAEF, <i>Mrs. Thornton's nephew,</i>	Geo. W. Endy.
GEORGE DARRAH, <i>alias Matt Wheeler,</i>	Jas. I. Foos.
JAMES READ, <i>a friend of Darrah's,</i>	H. C. Lewis.
PEDRO, <i>an organ grinder,</i>	Sam'l Bechtel.
PARSON BROWNLOW,	W. H. Wilson.
PETE, <i>Mrs. Thornton's servant,</i>	H. W. Button.
BILLY, <i>the Deacon's boy,</i>	Sam'l Wolfskell.
MRS. THORNTON,	Agnes Jameson.
HELEN, <i>her daughter,</i>	Claribel Lewis.
MISS AMELIA FAWCETT, <i>Mrs. Thornton's maiden sister,</i>	Minnie Riffert.
MRS. DARRAH, <i>George Darrah's wife,</i>	Ida Radcliffe.
NELLIE, <i>her child,</i>	Lizzie Rivers.
DAISY, <i>Mrs. Thornton's servant,</i>	Annie C. Fisher.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.—TWO HOURS AND A HALF.

TIME, the present. LOCALITY, Eastville, Va.

NOTE.—Officer, in Act I, Pedro and Parson Brownlow can be doubled and played by Read. Officer in Act IV, by Violinist.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

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Act I. Scene, Eastville Hotel garden. The Robbery.—Pete delivers an invitation.—"By golly, he's mad already."—Meeting of Graef and Wheeler.—"I'm no coward; I'll either live down the stigma attached to it, or die in the attempt."—A promised reward.—The Deacon's arrival.—"I'm a gentleman, sir."—"Be sure to put a little stick in it."—The Deacon gets hilarious.—Pete imposes upon Billy.—The Deacon is sick.—"Oh, my head, my head!"—Triumph No. 1.—Curtain.

Act II. Scene, Mrs. Thornton's sitting-room. Pete promotes himself.—"I spruced up to do de honors ob de 'casion."—Miss Amelia is anxious about her dear little pet.—"Ze dog or ze money."—"Horrid men, but dear doggy woggy."—The Deacon's reception.—The Deacon makes a mistake.—"Everything lovely admires me."—"Were you and Bill married by candle light?"—"Deacon, you are drunk!"—Miss Amelia prescribes for the Deacon.—Triumph No. 2.—Curtain.

Act III. *Scene 1.* A street. Mother and child.—"Mamma, will we never reach papa's house?"—The meeting of husband and wife.—"What, you here!"—Accused of many bitter things.—Left in the streets.

Scene 2. George Graef's lodgings. Graef meditates.—The finding of the diamonds.—Meeting of Graef and Mrs. Darrah.—"Minnie, is this you?"—"Welcome little coz."—The photo.—"Yes, alas, too well!"

Scene 3. A street. Pete has a dream and persuades Billy to accompany him on an expedition.

Scene 4. A wood. The treasure hunters.—"Oh, Lor', I'm dead!"—"Let's go home and get the mules."—The treasure is found.—Caught by the spirits.—Tableau. Curtain.

Act IV.—Scene, Mrs. Thornton's sitting-room. Daisy shows Pete what she would do.—Miss Amelia's heart is in a flutter.—"I know I'll refuse him."—Pete at his old tricks.—"Then kiss me."—Consternation.—Pete continues his tricks.—"Tis he, by Jerusalem!"—The Deacon taken by surprise.—More consternation.—"I was insulted by a colored woman."—Billy creates some excitement.—"Thank heaven, at last I enfold thee!" Curtain.

Act V. Scene, Mrs. Thornton's sitting-room. The Deacon in clover. An interruption.—"Hang the Parson!"—The interrupted marriage ceremony.—"That man has a wife living."—"Tis false!"—An attack.—Pete to the rescue.—"No, it is a forgery."—The villain foiled.—Arrest of George Darrah.—Reinstatement of Graef.—Refusal of a hand.—The Deacon is obstinate.—"I can't help it, Minnie, I mean it."—Mrs. Darrah and Nellie forgiven.—"Oh, Deacon, don't be so silly."—The Deacon made happy. Curtain.

COSTUMES.

MRS. THORNTON.—Act II. Light tasteful morning dress, with head dress. Act IV. House dress with apron. Act V. Elegant silk dress. Slightly gray-mixed wig.

HELEN.—Act II. Street dress, with hat, gloves, etc. Act IV. House dress and apron. Act V. Bridal dress with train, orange blossoms, veil, gloves, etc.

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MISS AMELIA.—Act II. Either a very plain or very flashy dress; eyeglasses dangling from cord; regulation spinster curls, gray. Act IV. Dress to suit taste. Act V. Elaborate get-up for the occasion.

MRS. DARRAH.—Acts III and V. Dark dress, bonnet, gloves, etc.

NELLIE.—Acts III and V. Dark dress to suit taste, hat, etc.

DAISY.—Act I. Tasteful maid's dress and hat. Act II. Same, minus hat. Act IV, 1st entrance, same with dusting cap. 2nd, 3rd and 4th entrances, same, with apron, minus cap.

DEACON.—Acts I, II and IV. Old-fashioned-cut pantaloons, dotted vest, old-fashioned easy fitting coat; ditto shirt collar; broad brimmed, light felt hat; square watch fob dangling from watch pocket; square glass spectacles; white bald wig and white throat whiskers. Act V. Old-fashioned dark cloth suit; rose on lapel of coat.

GEORGE GRAEF.—Acts I and III. Dark cutaway suit. Straw hat. Act V. Prince Albert dress coat; light trousers. Dark dress wig and moustache.

GEO. DARRAH.—Acts I and III. Dark cutaway suit. Silk hat. Acts II and V. Prince Albert dress coat and pants. Black dress wig and moustache throughout.

BILLY.—Acts I, II and III. Long white stockings; light broad plaid pants, cut short below the knees; pleated shirt waist; loose fitting linen jacket; low-crowned, narrow-brimmed light hat. Act IV. Same with night gown thrown over. Act V. Same, minus coat. Light flaxen fright wig.

PETE.—Act I. Linen suit, straw hat. Act II. Black pants, white vest, smoking jacket, low-cut patent leather shoes, white shirt, standing collar, white tie and cuffs. Act III. Same as Act I, minus hat. Act IV, 1st entrance, same. 2nd entrance, see description; ditto, 3rd entrance; 4th entrance, same as 1st entrance. Curly negro wig throughout.

PARSON BROWNLOW.—Ministerial suit, coat buttoned up to chin, long black curly wig, black side whiskers and moustache.

PEDRO.—Make-up to represent organ-grinder.

VILLAGERS.—Modern costumes, straw hats.

FIDO.—Red flannel jacket, small straw hat with ribbon streamers. Collar with light chain attached.

PROPERTY PLOT.

Act I.

Newspaper. Note for PETE. Green umbrella and pocket-book containing check for DEACON. White powder for WHEELER. Pitcher of lemonade, salver, 1 empty glass and one filled with soda water. Carpet bag. Placard with "Pinch me" on it for BILLY. Police star. Violin.

Act II.

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Books and flowers. Cigar for PETE. Dog dressed to represent monkey. Small hand organ for PEDRO. Pin for PETE. Purse and money for MRS. THORNTON.

Act III.

Bank-note and pocket-book for WHEELER. Books and papers. Candle lighted. Pitcher of water and glasses. Small pasteboard box for PETE. Photo for MRS. DARRAH. Lighted lantern, spade and flask for PETE and BILLY. Leaves. Small wooden box containing iron pot, covered with tan bark to represent mound. Iron chains. Gun loaded. Bass drum for thunder. "Flash box" for lightning. 3 sheets for "spooks." Red fire.

Act IV.

Dust pan and brush, broom and bits of paper. Linen suit, spectacles, wig and whiskers, similar to DEACON'S, for PETE. Dress and wig, similar to AMELIA'S, for PETE. Flour and dough for DAISY. Bandages for BILLY.

Act V.

Large butcher knife for PETE. Prayer-book for PARSON. Small pasteboard box. Charm and note for GRAEF. Handcuffs for Officer. Large piece of molasses cake for BILLY.

SCENE PLOT.

Act I.

SCENE.—Landscape in 4 G. Wicket fence crossing from R. 3 E. to L. 3 E. with practicable gate C. Set house R. 2 E. with practicable door and steps. Table and two chairs down L. C. Rustic settee up L. Green baize. Lights up. Time, morning.

Act II.

SCENE.—Fancy chamber boxed in 3 G., backed with Landscape in 4 G. Double door C. in flat, open and hung with curtains. Door L. 2 E. Tables down R. and L. C. Sofa up L. Large rocking chair R. near 2 E. Chairs around sides. Medallion carpet. Lights up. Time, morning.

Act III.

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SCENE 1.—Street in 1 G. Practicable door R. C. in flat.

SCENE 2.—Cottage interior in 3 G. Table R. C., with chair. Chairs around sides. Door L. 2 E.

SCENE 3.—Street in 1 G.

SCENE 4.—Woods in 4 G. Mound L. 3 E. Green baize down throughout Act. Lights low. Time, night.

Acts IV and V.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The player is supposed to face the audience. R., means right; L., left; C., centre; R. C., right of centre; L. C., left of centre; D. R. C. in F., door right of centre in flat or back scene; D. C., door centre; 1 E., first entrance; 2 E., second entrance; R. U. E., right upper entrance; L. U. E., left upper entrance; 1, 2, 3, or 4 G., first, second, third or fourth grooves; UP, toward the back of the stage; DOWN, toward the audience.

R. R.C. C. L.C. L.



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THE DEACON.

ACT I.

Scene:—*Garden. Eastville Hotel. Set house R. 2 E., with practicable door and steps. Wicket fence from R. 4 E. to L. 4 E., with practicable gate C. Rustic table and two chairs down L. C. Rustic settees up R. C. and L. C. As curtain rises MATT WHEELER is discovered seated at table L., with newspaper in hand, reading.*

Wheeler. (*reading*) Last evening a bold and daring robbery was committed at the residence of Mrs. Thornton. While she was serving her guests with refreshments, some one entered her dressing-room and removed from her jewel-case diamonds valued at a fabulous price, leaving in exchange perfect specimens of worthless glass imitations. Suspicion points strongly to George Graef, her nephew, as the guilty party. He was seen to enter Davis's pawn shop late last night, after the guests had left his aunt's residence, and pawn something. One of the diamonds was recovered this morning from Davis's store, but he professed ignorance as to the name of the man who left it. Young Graef, though he strongly denies committing the theft, was compelled to leave his aunt's residence this morning. He has been very dissipated of late, drinking and gambling to excess, and it is thought that financial embarrassment tempted him to commit the crime. (*lays paper on table*) Poor fellow! What an inglorious ending for what *might* have been a brilliant career. *Gilded youth*, like the rest of common humanity, when it enters the arena against the sparkling cup, witty companions and fascinating games of chance, must finally succumb.

Enter PETE, L. U. E.; *passes through gate.*

Pete. (*bowing*) Massa Wheeler, missus sends her best 'spects, an' quests de delight ob yo'r pleasure to dinner, sah.

Wheeler. Requests the pleasure of my *company*, I suppose you mean.

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Pete. Yes, sah, I 'spects dat's what she meant. (*aside*) One nebber knows what dese wimmin folks mean by what dey says, no-how.

Wheeler. At what time do you dine?

Pete. (*looking at WHEELER a moment*) Sah?

Wheeler. At what time do you eat dinner?

Pete. When de rest git froo.

Wheeler. What time do the rest usually "get through?"

Pete. I dunno. (*laughs*) Guess when dey gits tired ob eatin'.

Wheeler. You impertinent black rascal! What do you mean by answering me in that manner?

Pete. (*aside*) By golly, he's mad already! (*aloud*) Massa Wheeler, yo' knows jest as well as I do dat I was not sassin' yo'. Yo' axes me at what time I eats, an' I tole yo'. Yo' don't s'pose I eats wid de *quality* folks, does yo'?

Wheeler. I'd not be the least bit surprised if they were to allow you. You have never been taught your true position, nor how to address a gentleman.

Pete. I 'spects I knows how to 'dress dem when I meets 'em.

Wheeler. (*angrily*) What's that?

Pete. Massa Wheeler, it 'pears mighty queer dat yo' an' I can't talk sociably for five minnits widout quarrelin'. I'se agwine to tell missus dat de next time she wants a note sent to you, dat she will hab to seek some oder 'vayance, for I won't take it, suah.

Wheeler. So Mrs. Thornton sent me a note, did she?

Pete. Ob course she did.

Wheeler. Where is it?

Pete. In my pocket.

Wheeler. Why did you not give it to me then, instead of attempting to deliver her message verbally?

Pete. Kase yo' nebber axed me for it.

Wheeler. Give it to me this instant, you black imp. (*PETE gives note; WHEELER hastily reads it*)

Pete. (*aside*) It's mighty plain what kind ob company he 'sociates wid. 'Pears to me he's nebber learned how to 'dress gen'men, eider. (*points to self*)

Wheeler. (*folding note*) Give my compliments to Mrs. Thornton and tell her I shall be pleased to accept her kind invitation.

Pete. (*going*) Yes, sah. An' I'll gib her a message or two dat yo' didn't send her.

Wheeler. (*angrily*) What's that? Off with you! I shall inform Mrs. Thornton of your insolence as soon as I see her.

Pete. Don't worry yo'self. I'll see her 'fore yo' will. (*laughs and exit, gate C. Goes L.*)

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Wheeler. (*angrily*) Confound that piece of ebony! He's enough to irritate a saint. He's been petted by the whole household until he has become worse than a spoiled child. Just wait—(*PETE re-appears softly at gate C., and listens*) until Helen and I are married, and *I'm* his master. I'll teach that grinning jackanapes his true position. (*PETE shakes his fist at WHEELER, and runs off L., smiling*) Why doesn't Daisy come? I must regain possession of that charm and note, otherwise I may have trouble in accounting for their presence wherever they may be. Hang my carelessness!

Enter GRAEF, R. U. E.; *passes through gate and goes down C.*

Wheeler. (*advances and playfully slaps GRAEF on left shoulder*) Graef, old boy, how are you? I was just thinking about you, and regretting that you had got yourself into trouble.

Graef. To what do you refer?

Wheeler. (*lightly*) To that little affair at your aunt's house last night.

Graef. Then you have heard about it?

Wheeler. Why, of course.

Graef. From whom?

Wheeler. I saw a little account of it in this morning's issue (*pointing to paper on table*) of the *Sun*.

Graef. (*surprised*) What! Has it already appeared in print? (*picks up paper and reads to himself while WHEELER is talking*)

Wheeler. Yes, but you need not mind that. All you have to do is to leave town for a few years. Go to some place where you are unknown, carve out a name and fortune for yourself, return here *wealthy*, and this trivial offence of yours will be condoned, at least, if you are not made a hero of.

Graef. (*excitedly, pointing to passage in article*) That's not true. I was not "compelled to leave my aunt's residence." I left of my own free will. I could not remain there after I knew she thought I had committed the deed.

Wheeler. (*soothingly*) Of course not; never mind that article, it's not of much importance. No one believes sensational newspaper reports, anyhow.

Graef. But that does me a gross injustice.

Wheeler. Oh, pshaw, that's nothing. Let it go, and forget all about it. What do you intend doing with yourself now?

Graef. I intend to remain here, turn over a new leaf, make a man of myself, and live down this disgrace.

Wheeler. (*coolly*) Better not.

Graef. Why?

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Wheeler. Because you will not find it a comfortable existence. Persons who know you well, like myself, would pay no attention to the charge preferred against you, but—

Graef. Well?

Wheeler. There are plenty of others who would, and your daily life would be beset by the harassing knowledge of being surrounded by those who doubted your honesty.

Graef. Let them doubt me if they will. The peace and tranquility that innocence imparts to me will more than over-balance that.

Wheeler. Have it as you will. But if you were to follow the advice of a friend, you would do as I suggested, leave this town and that instantly.

Graef. (*suspiciously*) You appear anxious to have me go.

Wheeler. Oh, no; not anxious in the sense you mean. I only wish to save you and your friends unnecessary pain. If you are short of funds, say so and I will advance you any reasonable sum you may require.

Graef. (*coldly*) Thank you. I did not come here to beg assistance. I merely stopped to tell you that under existing circumstances you will have to select some other groomsman; I cannot officiate.

Wheeler. I'm sorry, but as to selecting another, that's out of the question. It's too late. If you remain in town I presume you will be present at our marriage.

Graef. No, that's impossible! (*going*)

Wheeler. It's too bad, old boy; but keep up your spirits. You had better think over my suggestion.

Graef. (*at gate*) Once for all, Wheeler, I tell you, I'll never do it. I'm no coward. Here in this town I was born and raised, and *here* I'll remain and redeem my character. I'll either live down the stigma attached to it, or die in the attempt. Exit *gate C.*, and goes off R.

Wheeler. (*with power*) Curse it! Foiled again! But go he must, or I'll ruin him body and soul. I know his weaknesses, and I'll play upon them until he accomplishes my purpose. (*bitterly*) Oh, to get even with her father and relations has been my prayer for years. (*goes to table L., and sits; picks up paper and pretends to read, but lays it aside as soon as DAISY comes forward*)

Enter DAISY L. U. E.; opens *gate C.* and comes down.

Wheeler. Ah, Daisy, is that you?

Daisy. Yes, sir.

Wheeler. I thought you had forgotten the message I sent you.

Daisy. No, sir, but I could not come any earlier, and I can only stay a moment now. We are very busy at home preparing for the Deacon's arrival. You know Mrs. Thornton expects him to-day.

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Wheeler. Yes, I was aware of it. How does Mrs. Thornton stand her loss?

Daisy. Oh, she feels terribly about it, sir. She has forbidden Miss Helen, Pete and all of us ever to mention the subject to her. Just to think that Mr. George should be guilty of such a thing! But then I don't believe he did do it!

Wheeler. (*affecting surprise*) Don't you? Well, I wish I could think so, too. You know he has been very wild of late.

Daisy. I know he has; but Mr. George would never do a mean thing like that.

Wheeler. (*doubtingly*) I don't know.

Daisy. (*warmly*) Well, I do. But I must be going. What did you wish to see me about, sir?

Wheeler. Did you find a watch charm or note anywhere in your house this morning?

Daisy. No, sir.

Wheeler. I lost them somewhere last night, and I'm pretty sure it was in your house. They are of no use to anybody but me. I prize the charm solely because it was a present from my mother, and the note accompanied it. Now if you find them and return them to me as soon as you possibly can, I'll make you a present of a ten-dollar bill.

Daisy. Oh, thank you, sir. I'll try my best to find them. Is that all? I must hurry back home again.

Wheeler. Yes, I believe so.

Daisy. Be careful when you see Mrs. Thornton and don't say anything to her about her loss or Mr. George. Good morning, sir.

Wheeler. All right, I won't. Good morning. (Exit DAISY, *gate C.*; *goes L.* WHEELER *walks to door steps R. 2 E.*; *stops and faces audience*) If her search proves successful, that will be the easiest ten dollars she ever earned. But suppose it proves fruitless! What then? I should be placed in a very unpleasant position. (*thinks*) Ah, well, it's time to worry when trouble overtakes one. I've often been more sorely pressed than I shall be by this little affair, and come out all right; and I guess I can do it again if the emergency arises. (*turns quickly and starts to enter house*).

Enter READ, R. U. E.

Read. (*at gate outside*) Hist, Matt, are you alone?

Wheeler. Yes.

Read. Then get ready, for the Deacon is coming.

Wheeler. (*off steps, near gate*) Where is he?

Read. Coming up the street, (*pointing R.*) about a square off. We missed the early stage, so there was no one to meet him. I directed him here for information as to Mrs. Thornton's residence. [Pg 12]

Wheeler. Did you ride over with him in the stage?

Read. Yes, there was no one in the stage with us except the Deacon's boy, Billy.

Wheeler. (*disappointed*) Has he a boy with him? That's bad.

Read. Yes, a dull, ignorant, country lout. But he'll not interfere with your plans, for I sent him around the square, and some of the boys will be sure to detain him and have some fun with him.

Wheeler. Did you have any trouble in getting the Deacon to try your lemonade?

Read. (*laughing*) Not a particle. He complained about the heat and the jostling of the stage making him feel sick and giddy; so I pulled out my flask, told him I was subject to just such attacks while travelling, and that I always went prepared for such emergencies, etc. After I assured him that the flask contained nothing but weak lemonade and a harmless ingredient to give it its peculiar color, he nearly emptied it for me.

Wheeler. Did you mix your lemonade according to my directions?

Read. Yes, and if he is not jolly blind drunk inside of a half hour, then I don't know my man. His tongue was beginning to wag when I left him. But I must be off, for the Deacon is nearly here. (*starts to go, but stops near L. U. E. as WHEELER speaks*)

Wheeler. Read, stop a moment. Try and find Walters, and send him here inside of an hour, will you?

Read. You forget that Walters has not returned from—

Wheeler. Hush! Confound it, that's true. It takes him an eternity to do the simplest thing. Never mind, I'll attend to it myself. Get off with you now, quick. (Exit READ, L. U. E. WHEELER *goes down C.*) I'll let the precious booty remain in its hiding place until I start on my wedding tour, then I'll take it along with me. It's safe where it is. (*crosses to chair L. of table*) First I must make the Deacon gloriously drunk. Then ascertain if it be true that he intends to give Helen a wedding present of a check for ten thousand dollars; and, finally, send him to his sister-in-law's in a drunken condition. That will be triumph No. 1. (*sits in chair*)

Enter *the* DEACON R. U. E., *with large umbrella hoisted, fanning himself with bandanna handkerchief. Comes to gate, opens it smiling, a picture of good humor; closes gate, shuts umbrella, and approaches WHEELER.*

Deacon. (*at WHEELER'S side, clears throat*) Are you the landlord of this hotel?

Wheeler. (*pleasantly*) Well, no, not exactly.

Deacon. (*blandly*) Of course not. Excuse me. I knew you weren't the moment I sot eyes on you.

What did I understand you to say you were?

Wheeler. I'm a gentleman, sir.

Deacon. Yes, of course you are. That's just what I thought you were. I'm a gentleman, too. You wouldn't believe it, would you? (*laughs and clears throat*) I'm a *country* gentleman. I live over in Rockford county. Perhaps you have heard tell of me. I'm Deacon Thornton.

Wheeler. (*in joyful surprise*) Indeed! (*rises and shakes DEACON'S hand warmly*) Why, Deacon, I'm *delighted* to make your acquaintance, sir. (*DEACON smiles and appears pleased*) Heard of you, sir? Why, you are known the state over as being the wealthiest and most liberal-hearted gentleman in Rockford county. Is it possible I have the honor of shaking hands with so noted a gentleman as Deacon Thornton?

Deacon. (*appears slightly intoxicated*) None other, I assure you. Excuse me, but may I rest a few moments in that chair? (*points to chair L. of table*) I'll feel more sociable like.

Wheeler. Why, certainly, sir. (*goes to chair, takes out handkerchief and dusts it off. Helps seat the DEACON in it*) You seem to be tired, sir.

Deacon. Yes, I am, and warm, too. (*fans himself with hat*) You see, I've come over here to attend my niece's wedding. (*abruptly*) Say, do you know where Mrs. Thornton lives?

Wheeler. Oh, yes, I'm well acquainted with the family. (*takes seat R.*)

Deacon. That's good. I'll get you to show me her house presently. (*WHEELER manifests a desire, by half rising, to show him immediately*) Not now, sit still. I'm not rested yet. You see, I've never met Mrs. Thornton. She's my sister-in-law. My brother Bill and I had a fall-out when we were young, and never made up afterward. She's Bill's widow. Helen's her daughter, my niece. She's going to be married day after to-morrow. (*the DEACON talks rapidly*) Whew, but it's hot!

Wheeler. Yes, it is warm. (*rising*) Excuse me, but I never thought of it. Perhaps your long ride in the sun has made you thirsty, too. Let me get you some lemonade. It will refresh you.

Deacon. Well, yes, you may, if you will. (*WHEELER starts for door L. 2 E.*) Be sure (*with a wink*) to put a little stick in it. (*rubbing hands*) It gives it *tone*, you know.

Wheeler. Oh, yes, I understand. (*Winking and nodding head. DEACON fans himself with hat, smiling and seeming well pleased. WHEELER, when he reaches steps, pauses, half turning toward audience, takes a white paper parcel from breast pocket and holding it up exclaims, aside*) And I'll put something else in that will soon make your head swim. Exit *through door.*

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Enter DAISY *hastily*, L. U. E.; *passes through gate and goes down C.*

Daisy. Oh, Mr. Wheeler, I forgot—(*perceives DEACON*) Oh!

Deacon. (*rising, appears a little unsteady. Gazes admiringly at DAISY. Speaks to audience*) Blast my buttons! Ain't she a daisy?

Daisy. (*slightly advancing*) Did you speak to me, sir?

Deacon. (*confused*) No—yes,—that is—What's your name, my pretty miss?

Daisy. Daisy Dean, sir.

Deacon. Are you married?

Daisy. No, sir.

Deacon. Wouldn't you like to be?

Daisy. (*demurely*) I—don't know, sir.

Deacon. (*to self*) I'll think the matter over. (*aloud, coaxingly*) Won't you come and give me a kiss?

Daisy. (*looks at the DEACON a moment in amazement, then with emphasis*) No, sir, I won't. (*turning quickly with toss of head, she exits at gate, closes it, looks a moment at DEACON, who follows her retreating form with open-mouthed astonishment, then quickly exits L. The DEACON gradually faces round to audience, with the look of wonderment still suffusing countenance*)

Deacon. Well, it's plain she was not *particularly* smitten with me. (*resumes seat*)

Enter WHEELER, *door 2 E. L., with pitcher, one empty glass, and another glass filled with soda-water. Goes to table and places pitcher and empty glass upon it.*

Wheeler. (*filling glass*) Here we are, with a drink like the nectar the gods used to brew. (*handing DEACON glass*) I can recommend it, for I helped to make it.

Deacon. You will not object if I take off my coat, will you! It's so warm. (*removing coat. WHEELER*

takes it and hangs it over back of his chair. DEACON empties glass)

Wheeler. Certainly not; make yourself at home. (*Refills DEACON's glass, and continues so to do as fast as the DEACON empties it. Sits and sips soda-water while talking. Invest this scene with as much naturalness and life as possible*)

Deacon. As I told you, my brother Bill and I never made up after our first quarrel, but I'm not going to allow that to stand against his widow and daughter. No, sir. (*emphatically*) I intend to do the handsome thing by Helen. She's going to marry a Mr. Wheeler. Perhaps you know him? (*WHEELER shakes head*) No? I'm sorry, for folks say he's a mighty fine gentleman, and rich, too. (*abruptly*) Do you know Amelia?

[Pg 15]

Wheeler. Mrs. Thornton's sister?

Deacon. (*eagerly*) Yes, do you know her?

Wheeler. Oh, yes, very well.

Deacon. (*rubbing hands*) Fine woman, isn't she?

Wheeler. Indeed, she is. I don't know a lady whose *opinion* I respect more.

Deacon. (*slightly hilarious*) Oh, she's bright!—

Wheeler. And so amiable?—

Deacon. (*joyously*) Ain't she kind?—

Wheeler. Yes, I think her the perfect pattern of a saint.

Deacon. Oh, she's angelic, my boy, she's angelic. I'll tell you something, if you'll keep it a secret. I'm in love with Amelia.

Wheeler. I'm not surprised at that, for I can't see how any body can help loving her.

Deacon. Yes, sir, I'm clean gone; and I'll marry her, too, see if I don't.

Wheeler. I hope that you may, with all my heart.

Deacon. Say, I think that you are the nicest fellow I ever met—I do, indeed,—and you have got—to be my—groomsman. Don't say no—for I'll—not—listen—to—it—(*head falls on folded arms resting on table. Maudlin drunk*)

Wheeler. The drug is taking effect. (*takes DEACON's coat from chair, searches pockets, finds large pocket-book, takes check from it and examines it*) Here it is, drawn up and signed. (*starts to put it in his own pocket*) No, I won't, for it will soon be mine at any rate. (*Replaces it and doubles up coat and lays it on table L. of DEACON*)

Wheeler. (*calls*) Deacon, Deacon. (*DEACON rouses up with a start, brushes coat off L. upon floor with arm*) I must leave you now to attend to some business. I will send some one to direct you to Mrs. Thornton's. (*goes R. near door, DEACON protesting*)

Enter POLICEMAN L. U. E.; *passes through gate. WHEELER walks down R. motioning POLICEMAN to follow. Stands R. 1 E.*

Deacon. No, don't go. Don't. All right—I'll—get ready—(*slowly rises, looks for coat. Does not notice WHEELER and POLICEMAN*) Never had so glorious a time—before—(*places hand on head*) Oh,—my—head! Where's—my—coat? (*sees it on floor. Bis. of attempting to pick it up; finally falls in a heap beside it. Picks it up and examines it*) Blast it, some—boy—been—fooling—with it—turned it inside out. (*turns coat*) I've—had—another—sun—stroke—wish—I—was—home—in—bed—I'm—sick—

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Wheeler. (*to officer. Talks through scene*) If you detain that man here for two hours, and then take him to Mrs. Thornton's residence, I will make it well worth your trouble. Will you do it? (*OFFICER bows head*) Very well; now go and assist him. (*OFFICER goes to DEACON, who has coat turned inside out and one sleeve on. OFFICER tries to take it off, but the DEACON protests and finally has his own way*) A pretty plight for one's father-in-law to be in! Perhaps if he knew me he would reconsider the opinion he expressed about me a moment ago. (*smiles*)

Enter BILLY L. U. E., *with large carpet-bag, half crying. Talks as he comes to gate. PETE follows him and beckons L. as though urging others to follow.*

Billy. Now leave me alone. Dog-gone your ugly pictures! I didn't do nuffin to amongst you. (*leans on gate. Faces R. C. PETE sneaks up and pinches him. BILLY kicks and yells. Cries. OFFICER assisting DEACON to feet, sees PETE*)

Officer. Leave that boy alone, you black rascal, or I'll arrest you.

Pete. Well, make him take in his sign, if he don't want de boys to hab any fun wid him. You can't scare me, ole fiddle strings, I knows yo'. (OFFICER *feints to start for him*. PETE *pulls off hat and runs off* L. U. E.)

Deacon. (*authoritatively*) Come here, Billy. (BILLY *opens gate and goes down to* DEACON, *sniffing*. DEACON *looks steadily at him a moment*)

Enter *three lads and lassies* R. U. E., with VIOLINIST. WHEELER *whistles to them softly as they reach gate and beckons for them to enter. They come in; VIOLINIST goes up L. , the rest* R. WHEELER *goes to them and makes a proposition, then exit door,* R. 2 E.

Deacon. Billy, you're drunk! Now don't deny it. Aren't you ashamed of yourself, for disgracing me? Now go to that seat (*pointing up* L.) and stay there until I'm ready to leave. (BILLY *goes to settee up* L. and *sits. Has large placard on back with the words "PINCH ME" printed on it*)

One of the lads goes to the VIOLINIST and speaks to him, then returns R. VIOLINIST *starts playing "I Won't Go Home Till Morning." Villagers form set and commence dancing. OFFICER urges DEACON to become his partner. DEACON consents. Take position. After a few steps the DEACON evinces great gusto. Commences singing, seizes one of the lassies, shoves her partner into his position. Laddie becomes angry, shows fight. Strikes the DEACON, who pulls up sleeves and starts for his assailant. General confusion. OFFICER arrests Laddie and starts toward gate with him. DEACON comes C., singing and dancing. As curtain falls, he suddenly clasps hands to head, exclaiming:*

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Deacon. Oh, my head, my head!

QUICK DROP.

ACT II.

Scene.—MRS. THORNTON'S *sitting-room*. PETE *is seated on rocking-chair* R., *with left leg dangling over arm; has lighted cigar in* R. *hand and occasionally draws it. Is rocking and softly singing "Gospel Train," as curtain rises.*

Enter DAISY L. 2 E. PETE *springs quickly to feet and hides cigar under coat.*

Pete. Golly, but you scared me. I thought it was missus. (*resumes former position, singing and smoking*)

Daisy. You can thank your lucky stars that you were mistaken. (*amazed at PETE'S attire*) For goodness sake, what are you doing rigged out in Mr. George's clothes?

Pete. Why, yo' know missus 'spects her brudder-in-law, de Deacon, dis mawnin', an' some oder company fur dinner, an' as I'se de only male pusson in dis house now, I spruced up to do de honors ob de 'casion.

Daisy. Honors of the occasion! Why, what do you mean?

Pete. When people hab parties an' 'ceptions don't dey always hab somebody to do de 'ceivin'?

Daisy. Of course they do, but you are not such a great goose as to suppose Mrs. Thornton will call upon a black booby like you to meet her guests, are you?

Pete. (*rising hastily and assuming a threatening attitude*) Black booby? Don't yo' say that again! (*contemptuously*) Niggahs always better than poor white trash. I 'spose yo' think if yo' was a man missus would call upon yo', but she'd nebber do dat while I was around, suah. (*resumes seat*)

Daisy. (*soothingly*) There, there, Pete, I did not mean to hurt your feelings, but you get on your "high horse" so often and make yourself so ridiculous that one must say something to save you from being thrown and badly injured.

Pete. Well, it's none ob yo'r bis'nis if dat hoss breaks my neck.

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Daisy. Very well, then, Pete, we will drop the subject. Now, I want to ask you something.

Pete. It am no use, fo' I'll not answer yo'.

Daisy. Yes, you will, for maybe there'll be some money in it for you.

Pete. (*eagerly*) What am it?

Daisy. Did you find a watch charm or a packet of letters anywhere in the house this morning?

Pete. (*sulkily*) No, I didn't, and mighty little good would it do yo' if I did. (*gently draws at cigar*)

Daisy. Mr. Wheeler lost a charm and some letters here last night, and he told me this morning that he would give me ten dollars if I found and returned them to him. Now, if you have found them I'll give you five dollars for them.

Pete. (*straightening up in chair*) Let me see if I 'stand yo' right. Mr. Wheeler lost a charm an' some letters?

Daisy. Yes.

Pete. An' he offered ten dollars to hab dem returned?

Daisy. Yes.

Pete. If I finds dem an' gibs dem to yo' I'se to git five dollars?

Daisy. Yes.

Pete. An' if I gibs dem to *him* I gits ten dollars!

Daisy. Oh, no; he did not say that. He only offered to give *me* the ten dollars. I offered you five for helping me find them.

Pete. (*looks at her a moment*) Oh, yes, I see. I'm sorry I can't help yo'. I'm not such a booby as I look. No, I did not find dem letters. (*pauses a moment*) But yo' needn't worry yo'self about looking for dem. (*settles back in chair and gently draws cigar*)

Daisy. (*angrily*) You mean, horrid, black creature! I believe you have found them and are going to try to get the whole ten dollars. Never mind, I'll tell Mr. Wheeler not to give you a red cent.

Pete. (*indifferently*) I don't care if yo' do; yo'll be none de better off anyhow.

Miss Amelia. (*off L.*) Pete, Pete, where are you? (*PETE springs quickly to feet, and hides cigar under coat with left hand. DAISY crosses to R. of PETE*)

Enter MISS AMELIA L. 2 E.

Miss A. (*stops at L. C.; speaks authoritatively*) Pete, where is Fido?

Pete. I 'clar to goodness, Miss 'Melia, I don't know.

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Miss A. You do. You have done something to my dear little pet. I know you have. (*notices smoke, elevates head, then looks at PETE*) Who has been smoking in this room? (*removes her gaze from PETE, and looks around room overhead. PETE catches DAISY by arm with right hand*)

Pete. (*aside*) Don't tell on me, an' I'll help yo' to find dem letters. (*aloud*) I don't know, Miss 'Melia, guess it's de 'roma from de gem'men's Herbanas ob last night you smell. I don't notice it, do yo', Daisy? (*aside*) Say, no, quick, or I'm a gone goslin'. (*quickly changes cigar to right hand, placing left fingers in mouth, and making a wry face. Goes down R.*)

Miss A. I wish, Daisy, you would have the rooms properly aired after the horrid men leave. Now, Pete, I want you to go and bring Fido to me this instant.

Pete. (*quickly changing from one foot to the other, shaking and blowing his fingers, and keeping up his facial contortions*) I tole yo' I didn't know whar he was. I ain't seen him since last night. (*aside*) Blame de cigar.

Miss A. That's a falsehood, and you know it. (*notices PETE's unrest*) Why, what is the matter with you?

Pete. I stuck a pin clar froo my finger.

Miss A. You wicked boy, it serves you right for telling stories.

Enter HELEN, L. 2 E., *with* FIDO.

Helen. Oh, Auntie, I found Fido down town in this terrible plight, being dragged around by a nasty organ grinder. (*Miss A. springs forward the instant she sees FIDO; tears the hat, jacket and collar off and throws them on floor; gathers him in her arms*)

Miss A. Oh, you dear, abused darling! What a naughty wicked wretch of a man he must have been to treat my poor doggy woggy so shamefully!

Pete. (*aside*) Horrid man, but dear doggy woggy!

Helen. The horrid wretch at first refused to let me have him, but a policeman soon brought him to terms.

Pete. (*aside*) I hope dat police will break his neck! (*occasionally shakes and looks at his fingers*)

Helen. He followed me into the house and insisted upon having either the dog or the money he

paid for him.

Pete. (*aside, grinning*) He needn't tackle dis child fo' de money, fer he done spent it.

Miss A. (*angrily*) Pete, this is some of your work, and I'll see that you are justly punished for it.

Pete. Miss 'Melia, I 'clar 'fore all de world, I nebber harmed a hair ob dat dog. I 'spects Neff Jones done sold him, fo' I seed him only day arter yesterday pintin' to him an' talkin' to some ob de boys. (*scuffle heard off L. 2 E., and door pushed violently open*) [Pg 20]

Enter PEDRO, L. 2 E., *followed by* MRS. THORNTON.

PEDRO. (*enraged*) I'll have ze dog or ze money! (MISS A., HELEN *and* DAISY *scream and retreat up R., and form a column; MISS A. back, with FIDO in her arms, HELEN next and DAISY front. PETE looks scared and slowly edges toward R. 1 E.*)

Mrs. Thornton. (*sternly*) Pete, what is the meaning of this disgraceful scene?

Pete. I dunno. (PEDRO *advances angrily toward PETE, who retreats to extremity of stage*)

Pedro. Zer ze boy zat sold me ze dog.

Pete. Yo' say dat ag'in an' I'll bust yo'r jaw for yo'.

Pedro. Ze money—ze two dollars—I gave ze.

Pete. (*advancing*) Lebe dis house at once, or I'll break yo'r head. (*picks up chair*)

Mrs. T. Put down that chair this instant, Pete. How dare you?

Pete. (*reluctantly drops chair*) He mustn't tell lies on me, den, or I'll do it, suah.

Pedro. Ze money, ze money.

Mrs. T. (*taking purse from pocket, hands PEDRO money*) Now, be off with you. (Exit PEDRO L. 2 E., *muttering to himself indistinctly. PETE starts quickly across stage but is halted at C.*)

Mrs. T. Where are you going, Pete?

Pete. To show him out. (*aside*) Wid de toe ob my boot.

Mrs. T. Never mind, remain where you are. Some of the other servants can attend to him. Now, I wish you to know that my stock of patience is about exhausted. You have tried me the past few months beyond endurance. If you don't turn over a new leaf and behave yourself like other people, I shall be obliged to transfer you to the care of someone who *can* manage you. (HELEN *removes hat and gloves and gives them to DAISY who exits L. 2 E.*)

Pete. I guess I knows to who yo's 'ferrin' to, but he can't manage me. (*aside*) An' he better not try, neider.

Mrs. T. To whom do you think I was referring?

Pete. Why, to dat Mr. Wheeler.

Helen. Oh, mamma, I met Mr. Wheeler this morning, and he said Pete grossly insulted him in delivering the note you sent him just after breakfast.

Pete. Dat's a whopper! (*aside*) He'll not git dem letters now.

Mrs. T. Pete?

Pete. Well, it ain't true, so it ain't.

Mrs. T. What did you say to him?

Pete. I didn't say nuffin'.

Mrs. T. What did you do to him, then?

Pete. I didn't *do* nuffin', neider. I'll tell yo' all about it, missus. Massa Wheeler sassed me in de fust place, called me a black niggah, an' said he' kill me, an' a lot ob bad things. An' den I tole him he was no gemman to talk like dat to a poor orphan cullud boy; den he flared up an' frothed at de mouf, an' shook his fist at me, an' said right dar in public dat when he married Miss Helen, dat he'd teach me my true position.

Miss T. }
Miss A. } How shocking!

Mrs. T. (*indignantly*) Did he really say that right out in public?

Pete. He did dat, sartin'. (*aside*) He's got hisself in a hornet's nest now, fo' suah. Let him blow on me ag'in.

Helen. Mamma, I don't believe a word of it.

Pete. Yo' don't eh? Yo' jest ax any ob dose fellers what was 'round, an' see if dey don't tell yo' de same thing, an' justify me in keepin' up de 'spectability ob our family.

Helen. It's untrue, mamma. Pete made up every word of that story.

Mrs. T. Helen, I cannot believe it possible that Mr. Wheeler would be guilty of such indiscretion.

Pete. Dat's de way. Nobody b'lieves a word I say. I, too, is gittin' tired ob dis lack ob confidence. Some of dese mornin's yo' folks will wake up an' find dis child in de promised land.

Helen. Mamma, it's preposterous to entertain for one moment Pete's account of Mr. Wheeler's conduct.

Mrs. T. I shall interrogate Mr. Wheeler privately, and ascertain from him the truth of the matter. To be guilty of such baseness, I cannot believe it.

Miss A. It's just like the horrid men. They are not to be trusted. Ugh! But I detest them.

Re-enter DAISY, *followed by* WHEELER.

Daisy. Mr. Wheeler. (WHEELER *bows*; *ladies return salutation*)

Pete. (*aside*) Guess I'd better be leabin'!

Wheeler. Mrs. Thornton, it is with the most profound pleasure that I accept the invitation you so graciously extended to me this morning.

Pete. (*aside*) Listen to dat. He's puttin' dem on, now.

Wheeler. I trust my tardiness has not inconvenienced you. A business affair detained me.

Mrs. T. Not in the least. My brother-in-law, whom I desired you to meet, has not arrived yet. I cannot imagine what detained him. We expected him by the early stage, but he did not come. I fear he will disappoint us, for the last stage was due here over two hours ago. (*Door bell off* L. 2 E.) That must be he now.

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Miss A. Oh, dear, the Deacon must not see me in this condition. (*to* WHEELER) Please excuse me, I'll take Fido out and give the dear little pet something to eat. He must be nearly famished.

Helen. (*to* WHEELER) Please excuse me, too, I have some duties to attend to.

Wheeler. (*bowing*) Certainly. (*Exeunt* MISS A. *and* HELEN, L. 2 E. *Door bell rings*)

Mrs. T. Pete, answer the bell.

Pete. Yes, missus. (*going*)

Mrs. T. (*noticing* PETE'S *appearance*) Why, what is the meaning of your being arrayed in that attire? (WHEELER *smiles*)

Daisy. (*laughing*) He imagined he was to play the host this morning and receive your guests. So he dressed himself up accordingly.

Pete. Mind your own bis'nis. Missus wasn't a talkin' to yo'.

Mrs. T. (*warningly*) Pete!

Pete. Well, make Daisy keep quiet. She's always meddlin' wid my affairs. Some day I'll make her wish she'd never been born.

Mrs. T. (*firmly*) Just as soon as you answer the bell, go to your room, change your clothing, and make yourself tidy. I want you to wait on the table at dinner.

Pete. Wait on de table? (DAISY'S *face wears an irritating smile*)

Mrs. T. That's what I said.

Pete. (*in expostulating tone*) But dat's Daisy's work.

Mrs. T. No matter whose work it is, I wish you to do it.

Pete. (*to* DAISY) Dis is yo'r doin's. I'll pour a pitcher ob ice water down yo'r back, see if I don't. I'll git eben wid yo'. (*aside*) I won't wait on de table.

Mrs. T. What's that?

Pete. (*quickly*) I said Daisy would hab to help.

Mrs. T. Go instantly and do as I told you. (*Exit* PETE L. 2 E., *grumbling*; *slams door after him*. WHEELER, *half smiling*, *crosses* R. *and sits*. MRS. T. *sits on sofa*. DAISY *remains standing just R. of door* L. 2 E.) I declare I don't know what to do with that boy. He's growing worse and worse. Oh, Mr. Wheeler, before I forget it, I wish to have a few minutes' talk with you after dinner about

Pete's conduct toward you this morning.

Wheeler. Very well, madam, it will give me great pleasure to comply with your request.

Mrs. T. I do hope that was brother ringing. Do you know, I feel no little anxiety about this meeting.

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Wheeler. I think your daughter told me that you never had met your brother-in-law?

Mrs. T. No; William, my late husband, and he were not good friends. It was the Deacon's fault. In his younger days he was too fond of the wine cup, and when William attempted to warn him of its evils, he became angry, alienated himself from my husband, and refused from that day on to have any intercourse with him whatever.

Wheeler. I think I have heard it mentioned somewhere that he is still a little too fond of the cup at times.

Mrs. T. Yes, I am sorry to say that the habit contracted in youth still clings to him. That is usually the case. But it is only on very rare occasions that he imbibes too much. I believe he is conscientious and tries to do what is right. I do hope and pray that he will not consider this a *rare* occasion, and may remain sober during his stay with us.

Wheeler. It is to be *sincerely* hoped so.

Mrs. T. This visit of his is due entirely to the exertions of my sister Amelia. She met him last year while visiting a friend of hers residing in his neighborhood. A sort of mutual attachment sprang up between them. Where it will end goodness only knows. I fear Amelia is very much in love with him.

Wheeler. Indeed!

Mrs. T. Yes, hence my anxiety that our meeting may prove a pleasant one.

Wheeler. The Deacon is not a bachelor, is he?

Mrs. T. Oh, no. He lost his wife some thirty years ago.

Wheeler. Has he no children?

Mrs. T. Only one daughter. But never refer to her in his presence. He has disowned her. She married against his wishes, and a miserable life she has led. The Deacon is very self-willed, stubborn and self-opinionated, and will listen to no reason when it clashes against his set views.

Wheeler. But, surely if one were to represent to him that his daughter was suffering and needy, he would not refuse to aid her.

Mrs. T. He would, as sure as you are living. Oh, Mr. Wheeler, I know the nobility of your character, how anxious you are to aid suffering humanity; but let me beseech you, as you value Helen's peace of mind and mine, *never* refer to the Deacon's daughter in his presence unless you desire to bring on a storm.

Wheeler. But—

Mrs. T. Hush, I hear him coming. (Mrs. T. and WHEELER rise)

Enter DEACON L. 2 E. *Has a wearied look; still intoxicated; vest unbuttoned, coat mussed up and full of wrinkles, cravat under left ear; general condition "used up." He is followed by BILLY with carpet-bag, PETE expostulating and trying to take it from him. DAISY stands near door* L. 2 E.; MRS. T. *up C.*; WHEELER R. 2 E.; PETE *goes down* L. *with BILLY; appears disgusted.*

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Deacon. (*embracing and kissing DAISY*) My dear, dear sister. I'm rejoiced to meet you.

Mrs. T. (*advancing quickly*) Brother, brother, what are you doing? That is my servant.

Deacon. (*releasing Daisy*) Ah, I made a mistake. My eyesight is bad. Excuse me. (*embraces Mrs. T.*) Tillie, I'm *delighted*, most supremely blest to enfold—(*quickly*) to have the pleasure of folding—meeting you and calling you *sister*. I'm most inexpressibly happy! (*releases her*) Yet as I compare you two, (*looking first at DAISY and then at Mrs. T.*) I can't refrain from saying that I think *your* eye for beauty far superior to my brother's. So she's your servant, is she? (*looking at DAISY admiringly*) She's a beauty! (*to DAISY who stands smiling*) Come, and let me kiss you again.

Mrs. T. (*expostulating*) Brother, brother! (*to DAISY*) Daisy, leave the room. (Exit DAISY L. 2 E., *left hand over mouth, giggling*)

Deacon. (*in injured tone*) Why, what has the poor girl done?

Mrs. T. Brother, my servants are not accustomed to have such liberties taken with them. Permit me to introduce you to Mr. Wheeler, Helen's affianced.

Deacon. (*shaking hands with WHEELER*) I'm *delighted*, sir, to know you will soon have the honor of becoming *my* nephew. It's quite a distinction, sir, and I hope you justly appreciate it. (WHEELER *bows and returns to former position*).

Pete. (*to audience, pointing to BILLY disgustedly*) He's got wimmin's stockings on. (*takes pin from coat, bends it schoolboy fashion, balances it on hand, places it on seat of chair; goes to BILLY and in pantomime asks him to be seated*).

Wheeler. (*aside*) He does not recognize me. So far my plans are working admirably.

Deacon. (*to MRS. T.; appears unsteady, speaks confidentially*) Tillie, Helen's got taste. She has an eye for beauty. (*looks at WHEELER*) He's a fine looking fellow. (*looks at MRS. T.*) Excuse me, but were you and Bill married by candle light?

Mrs. T. Why, no; certainly not.

Deacon. Did he have all his senses?

Mrs. T. (*slightly irritated*) Of course he did. Why do you ask?

Deacon. (*perplexed*) I can't understand it.

Mrs. T. Can't understand what?

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Deacon. (*looks at MRS. T. a moment, then speaks with emphasis*) How in the name of wonders he came to marry *you* and pass by that sweet, lovely being you sent out of the room.

Billy. (*takes PETE'S proffered seat, but instantly springs up*) Oh!

Mrs. T. Why, what is the matter, Pete?

Pete. (*examining chair*) I dunno. I'se jest tryin' to find out. (*picks up pin; conceals bent part, displaying point*) Daisy nebber half dusted de chairs. Jest see, she left a pin on dat chair, an' it stuck Billy. She nebber does her work right. (*lays his hand on BILLY'S shoulder and consoles him*)

Re-enter HELEN, L. 2 E.

Mrs. T. Brother, this is my daughter Helen.

Deacon. (*looks at HELEN*) She inherits her beauty from Bill. Helen, my dear, I'm *delighted* to see you are so pretty. You will kiss your old uncle, won't you? I knew you would. Everything lovely admires *me*.

Re-enter MISS AMELIA, L. 2 E.

Mrs. T. And here is my sister Amelia. But you need no introduction to her.

Deacon. Bless me, no. Miss Amelia, I'm delighted, filled with joy unspeakable to behold you again. (*advances quickly with arms outstretched as though to embrace her. MISS. A. dodges him and crosses R., MRS. T. following her and expostulating. The DEACON stops suddenly, reels and clasps hand to head*) Oh, my head, my head!

Miss A. (*sharply*) Deacon, you're drunk.

Mrs. T. (*startled; expostulating*) Sister!

Miss A. Don't "sister" (*imitating MRS. T.*) me! I can manage him. I never saw the man yet I was afraid of.

Pete. (*aside, quickly*) Dat's so; cross-eyed, bow-legged, big, little, great or small, dey's all de same to her. He's nebber been created.

Deacon. (L.) Miss Amelia, I protest, I sincerely, most emphatically protest against the injustice of your charge. I've had another sunstroke. (*places hand upon brow*) My head, my head! I'm—sick—deathly—sick! (*advances a step C., unsteadily*)

Pete. (*aside*) Yes, he's got de spirits yell infantum!

Miss A. You're beastly drunk. A pretty figure you must have cut, staggering along the streets, disgracing our whole family. (*DEACON in front of sofa, raises his hand deprecatingly*) Now, don't deny it; I'm ashamed of you.

Re-enter DAISY L. 2 E.; *she stands near door.*

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Miss A. (*sharply*) Pete! (*PETE trembles and seems frightened*) Take him to his room, give him a hot foot bath, apply mustard plasters to both temples and back of his neck, drench him with strong soda water, wrap him in woolen blankets—

Deacon. (*sinks to sofa with hopeless expression*) Oh, Lord, kill me at once, and be done with it.

Wheeler. (*folds arms*) Triumph No. 2.

QUICK DROP.

ACT III.

Scene 1.—*A street in 1st Grooves. Practicable door R., in flat. Soft music throughout scene. Time, night.*

Enter MRS. DARRAH *and* NELLIE, L. 1 E.

Nellie. (*complainingly*) Oh, Mamma, shall we never find papa's home?

Mrs. D. (*sadly*) I hope so darling, but you must be patient.

Nellie. I will, dear mamma. But I think papa was real mean to run away and leave us.

Mrs. D. Hush, my child, that is naughty. You must remember that no matter what papa does, you are still his little daughter, and must love him and be good.

Nellie. I am good, and I try to love him. But I can never love him as I love you.

Mrs. D. (*embraces NELLIE*) Heaven bless you, my darling. You are the only treasure left me.

Wheeler. (*back of scene, near door*) You will attend to it, then?

Mrs. D. (*starts as though bewildered*) That voice! (*speaks to herself. NELLIE walks to L. 1 E.*)

Wheeler. (*within*) If you see to it in the morning that will answer.

Mrs. D. (*listens; takes a step nearer the door*) It is he, I cannot be mistaken.

Wheeler. (*within*) All right, I must be off.

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Mrs. D. He is coming out. Nellie, pet, (*NELLIE runs to her*) please run down to the corner, (*points off R.*) and see that no one comes this way for a few moments. (*Exit NELLIE, R. 1 E., MRS. D. follows her until she reaches L. C. behind door in flat where she remains standing*)

Wheeler. (*opening door slightly*) Good night. (*passes out and starts toward L. 1 E.*)

Mrs. D. (*slightly advancing*) George! Husband!

Wheeler. (*starts; turning quickly, recognizes MRS. D.*) What! you here?

Mrs. D. (*tremulously*) Yes, but why that frown? (*pleadingly*) Oh, George, you are not sorry to see me, are you?

Wheeler. (*evasively*) What brought you here?

Mrs. D. The desire to find you—to be with my husband.

Wheeler. (*coldly*) Now that you have found him, what do you propose doing?

Mrs. D. Staying with him and fulfilling my wifely vows.

Wheeler. (*vexed*) I thought we had parted never to meet again.

Mrs. D. (*astonished*) Why, George, what have I done to merit this cruelty? What is the meaning of this? (*with pathos*) In Heaven's name, speak! (*WHEELER hesitates*) Tell me, or my heart will break. (*places hand affectionately upon WHEELER'S shoulder*)

Wheeler. (*removing her hand*) Upon your own head be the consequences of your rash request. (*speaks vehemently*) You have destroyed every vestige of manliness in my character; you have changed my nature and caused me to become a gambler, a thief and a blackleg; with your artful smile you cajoled me into marrying you; taught me to loathe myself, shun society, and spurn my true friends—

Mrs. D. George!

Wheeler. You drove me from home, by convincing me that I did not love you, into scenes of revolting crime and iniquity; and now, after a lapse of over two years—spent in the prostitution of the nobler traits of my character, at the gaming table, in drinking revelries and in fast society—just as the sun is beginning to shed its rays upon a pathway leading to my reclamation, you—*you*, who have been the bane of my life, cross it, and your fitful shadow hisses in my ear, "stop, or I'll destroy you."

Mrs. D. George, let me beseech you to desist. What demon possesses you thus to accuse me, who am innocent of ever having injured you by word, thought or deed. Oh, George, I love you too dearly to believe that you mean the bitter things you have just uttered.

Wheeler. But I do mean them. You alone are responsible for the hatred I bear you.

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Mrs. D. Hate me! I, who sacrificed home, friends, wealth, position and parent for you! (*places hand upon shoulder*) Am I awake, or is this some frightful hallucination? I cannot believe it. George, husband, father of my child, in mercy's name recall your cruel words!

Wheeler. They are too true. I cannot.

Mrs. D. Then you no longer love me?

Wheeler. You force me to say it—I do not.

Mrs. D. Heaven help me then, and protect a discarded wife and fatherless child.

Wheeler. Minnie, the sooner this harassing interview is over the better it will be for both.

Mrs. D. Yes, no doubt of it. I came searching for my lost husband, loving and trusting in him. I have found him, 'tis true, but false to his marriage vows, and doubly false to the common ties of humanity.

Wheeler. Once more, Minnie, let me urge upon you to end this scene. What are your plans for the future?

Mrs. D. I have none. The God of the fatherless must now direct my steps. (*appears stupefied*)

Wheeler. Listen to me then. If you promise to leave this place and never place foot in it again, I will deposit with McGrath, the banker, a sum of money sufficient to support you and Nellie the remainder of your lives.

Mrs. D. Then this is to be our last meeting as man and wife?

Wheeler. (*ill at ease*) It is—

Mrs. D. And thus you ignore your marriage vow to "love, honor and protect" me?

Wheeler. If you are not satisfied, you have the courts to seek for redress—

Mrs. D. In what manner?

Wheeler. By applying for a divorce.

Mrs. D. A divorce?

Wheeler. Yes.

Mrs. D. Then you *are* in earnest?

Wheeler. Was never more so in my life. As a proof of it (*takes pocket-book from pocket, and quickly selecting a couple of notes, tenders them to Mrs. D.*) there is sufficient means to obtain shelter for yourself this night, and to carry you back to your former home in the morning.

Mrs. D. (*haughtily spurns it*) Keep your money! I'll never touch a cent of your ill-gotten wealth. For two long years have I supported myself and my child without assistance from you, and Heaven helping me, I will continue to do so for the future.

Wheeler. Very well, let it be as you please. (*replaces money*) As you have discarded my proffered help and refuse to allow me to aid you, it is needless to prolong this interview. (*going*)

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Mrs. D. (*pleadingly*) George, is there nothing I can do to regain your affections?

Wheeler. Nothing.

Mrs. D. You disown me as your wife!

Wheeler. Merely wish to sever the bonds connecting us, and the sooner you leave this place the better I'll be pleased.

Mrs. D. Your wishes shall be complied with. To-morrow will find me once more in my humble cottage home awaiting the return of my reclaimed husband.

Wheeler. Thank you. Good by. (Exit WHEELER, *hastily*, L. 1 E. MRS. D. *does not notice his absence*)

Mrs. D. But, oh, what a life of wretchedness, misery and woe it will be. (*notices that she is alone*) George, husband! (*goes to L. 1 E., quickly*) Gone! (*returns, stops near C., places hand upon brow*) Left alone in the street, a discarded wife. It is more than I can bear. Nellie—my child—come—(*falls fainting to stage*)

Re-enter NELLIE, R. 1 E., *running*.

Nellie. Here I am, mamma. Why, what is the matter? (*kneels, gently shakes her, half crying*)

Wake up! I believe she's dead. Mamma! Mamma! speak—it's Nellie. (*whistling heard off* L. 1 E.)

Enter PETE L. 1 E. *Stops whistling the instant he sees mother and child.*

Pete. (*speaks as he advances*) Did yo' eber see de like! Git on to dat, will yo'? Why, what's de trouble, little one?

Nellie. Oh, please, sir, help me. Some one has killed my mamma. (*tries to lift* MRS. D.)

Pete. Some one kilt yo'r mammy? Let me see. (*stoops; MRS. D. moans and moves slightly*) She's not dead. She's—she's—toppled over. (MRS. D. *half rises on elbow*)

Mrs. D. Where am I?

Pete. Why here, mum. Yo' needn't be afeared. I'll took care ob yo'. Does yo' feel better, mum?

Mrs. D. How came I here?

Pete. 'Deed, mum, I don't know. P'raps de little one can tell yo'.

Mrs. D. Nellie, you here?

Nellie. Yes, mamma, you called me and I came. Are you sick, dear mamma?

Mrs. D. (*places hand upon brow*) No—yes—It all comes back to me now. Oh, why did I not die—better death than this agony! I suppose I must have fainted.

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Pete. Shall I fetch de doctor fo' yo', mum?

Mrs. D. No, I feel better already. (*attempts to rise. PETE assists her to feet. She reels slightly and places hand to head*) Oh, my head! (*to PETE*) Please take me somewhere, so that I may obtain shelter and rest. I am a stranger here.

Pete. All right, mum. Dar's a fust rate hotel jest around de corner. (*points off* R. 1 E.)

Mrs. D. (*quickly*) No, no; not there. I desire some quiet lodging where my child and myself will not be subjected to the gaze of the curious.

Pete. Well, den, mum, I knows jest de place fo' yo'. It's on one ob de back streets. Dis way, it's not very far. (Exit L. 1 E.)

Mrs. D. (*slowly following*) Come, Nellie, dear, we shall soon be able to tell our sorrows to One who will comfort us. (Exeunt L. 1 E.)

Flats are drawn off disclosing

Scene 2.—*A lodging room, plainly furnished. Door* L. 2 E.; *table* R. C., *with pitcher and water glasses, candle, books, papers, etc. Candle lighted. GRAEF discovered.*

Graef. (*seated, with right arm resting on table*) I suppose there is nothing left for me to do, but lie low in this hiding place and await further developments. It must be hard for a guilty party to have his fellow men stigmatize him as a thief—but, oh, what are his feelings to those of an innocent man's, particularly when one's own flesh and blood prefer the charges. That was a bright idea of Pete's, bringing me that note he found, for it will go a great way toward establishing my innocence. Now, if he is only fortunate enough to obtain those diamonds, and discover who it was that pawned one at Davis's shop, my innocence will be proved, and the guilty party punished. I never gave Pete credit for the acuteness he has displayed in this affair. (*knock*) That must be he, now. Come in.

Enter PETE, L. 2 E.

Pete. Massa George, I found dem (*displaying box*) jest whar de note said dey was—in de hollow ob dat big chestnut tree. (*hands box to GEORGE*) But does yo' t'ink yo' ought to keep dem diamonds here? S'pose de folks finds out yo' is hidin' here, an' gits out a search warrant, an' comes here an' finds dem? Why, yo'd be a goner, suah.

Graef. Never fear, Pete, I'll take good care that they won't be discovered. I can never thank you for what you have done for me.

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Pete. Nebber mind de t'anks, Massa George. When yo's clared yo' name ob all 'spicion, an' can look honest men in de face like de honest man yo' is—den dat will be t'anks enough for me.

Graef. Did you find out who it was that pawned that diamond at Davis's?

Pete. No, sar, but it 'pears to me dat we don't need dat ev'dence. We can make out a cl'ar case widout dat.

Graef. (*musings*) Let me see. Helen's marriage takes place day after to-morrow, does it not?

Pete. Yes, sar.

Graef. At ten o'clock?

Pete. Dat's de time a'pinted—if de groom does not come up wantin'.

Graef. Then you come to me here about eight o'clock in the morning. I'll try to have all my plans arranged by that time. Now, you had better leave me, for your absence may be observed.

Pete. By golly, Massa George, if I didn't done gone an' clar forgot dat I left a lady an' her little gal standin' out dar on de landin'. (*points L.*)

Graef. A lady and child out there? Why, what do they want at this time of night?

Pete. Shelter an' rest, dat's what dey said. I brought dem. Dey am strangers. I found dem on de street, sick an' kinder faint-like. I wanted dem to go to de hotel, but dey kicked an' said dey didn't want folks starin' at 'em, so I brought 'em here to stay fo' de night. De landlady is out, so I tole dem to wait out dar 'till I axes yo' if dey might come in here an' stay until she comes home.

Graef. But, Pete, think of the risk I run.

Pete. (*quickly*) Oh, yo' needn't be 'fraid ob dem blowin'. Dey is *quality* folks.

Graef. (*laughing*) On your recommendation, Pete, they may be admitted.

Pete. (*goes to the door and opens it*) Come in, mum.

Enter MRS. D. *and* NELLIE.

Pete. Dis am Massa George. (*GEORGE bows*)

Mrs. D. Pardon me, sir, for presuming to intrude on your privacy, but I am not well and could not stand upon ceremony.

Graef. Apologies are unnecessary, madam. I am only too happy to place my humble room at your disposal. (*Places chair C. near table. MRS. D. sits. PETE takes NELLIE'S hand and leads her up L. to chair. PETE stands beside her. GRAEF goes to table, pours glass of water and returns to MRS. D., offering it*) Permit me to offer you a glass of water, perhaps it will do you good. I am sorry I have nothing more invigorating to offer. [Pg 32]

Mrs. D. Thank you, sir, you are very kind. (*drinks. In returning glass looks up into GRAEF'S face, smiling faintly*) A cup of cold water given in charity's name often becomes—

Graef. (*interrupting her, grasps her by shoulder and anxiously scans her features*) Minnie, is this you?

Mrs. D. (*startled*) Yes, that is my name. But why do you ask?

Graef. (*eagerly*) Don't you know me?

Mrs. D. (*coldly, shrinking away from him*) No, sir, I think you are mistaken in the person.

Graef. Why, I'm George Graef.

Mrs. D. (*joyously*) My cousin—the one who played with me in my girlish days?

Graef. None other. (*they shake hands*) How happy I am to see you.

Mrs. D. Strange that I did not recognize you at first.

Graef. Stranger it is that I should be so blind; for you have changed but little since I last saw you—some eight years ago.

Pete. By jiminy crickitees! She's some relation ob ours. I's so glad. (*rubs hands gleefully*)

Graef. (*crosses to NELLIE*) And this is your little daughter? Welcome, little coz. (*shakes hands; then retraces steps to MRS. D.'s side*) But tell me, Minnie, what are you doing here? We had heard nothing from you for over three years. (*PETE talks silently with NELLIE, introducing any comicalities he deems necessary to amuse her, so that they do not interfere with the dialogue. He completely absorbs NELLIE'S attention*)

Mrs. D. I came here in search of my husband.

Graef. Your husband?

Mrs. D. Yes. You know father was bitterly opposed to our union, and after George found out that he had disinherited me for marrying against his wishes, he began to gamble and drink heavily. He swore to be revenged upon every member of our family. Oh, what days and nights of torture I was obliged to endure! Finally one evening over two years ago he left me without a word of warning.

Graef. Why did you not inform us of his actions? We surely could have been of assistance to you.

Mrs. D. I preferred bearing my sorrow and disgrace alone; besides I needed no assistance, for the dowry settled upon me by my father when he closed his doors upon me, was ample to support Nellie and myself.

Graef. Still, by our sympathy we might have alleviated your sufferings, which must have been intense.

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Mrs. D. They were—words fail to describe them. If I had been anything but a loving faithful wife they would not have been so hard to bear. (*weeps*)

Graef. (*consolingly*) There, never mind. I hope there are brighter days in store for you. Are you aware that your father is in town?

Mrs. D. (*alarmed*) No. For mercy's sake don't let him see me. It would kill me in my present condition to meet his gaze now, after the fulfilment of his prophecy in regard to George.

Graef. I believe he never met your husband, did he?

Mrs. D. No, we were married away from home. But he *knew* him by reputation, and warned me against him. None of my relatives ever met him. Where is my father?

Graef. At Auntie Thornton's. He came on to attend Helen's wedding. But have no fear of seeing him, you are safe here.

Mrs. D. (*looking around room*) But, George, what are you doing here? I thought you made Auntie's house your home.

Graef. (*confused*) Yes—I did once—but— Some other time I'll tell you my story. It would only distress you to hear it now. Tell me more about your husband. Have you never met or heard anything about him since he left you?

Mrs. D. Not until this evening.

Graef. (*surprised*) This evening! Why, what do you mean?

Mrs. D. That I both met him and heard him to-night!

Graef. Where did you meet him?

Mrs. D. On the street.

Graef. Impossible! For I know every creature in this town.

Mrs. D. Perhaps you do not know him by his right name. If you know every creature in this town, tell me if you ever (*takes photograph from pocket and hands it to GRAEF*) met a man who resembled that? He is my husband.

Graef. (*takes photo; starts*) What! he your husband?

Mrs. D. He is. You know him then?

Graef. Yes, alas, too well!

Pete. Massa George, yo' sartinly will hab to 'scuse me now, fo' I must be goin'. I hab a 'pintment wid Billy de Deacon's boy. I'se gwine to hab more fun wid him to-night dan a bushel basket would hold. (*walks toward the door, but stops when GEORGE speaks to him*)

Graef. Very well; don't forget *my* appointment. But wait a moment. (*walks across to him and hands him photo.*) Do you know who that is?

Pete. (*laughs*) Yo' jest bet I does. But won't he look different when he has his head shaved, eh? (*with a knowing wink. Exits. GRAEF crosses over to MRS. D.'s side*)

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Mrs. D. What did you mean a moment ago when you said you knew my husband "too well?"

Graef. I cannot tell you now, the story is too long. How long do you intend to remain with us?

Mrs. D. I return home in the morning.

Graef. (*quickly*) No, no; you must not. You *shall* not.

Mrs. D. (*surprised*) Why not?

Graef. For several reasons. First you must hear *my* story in the morning. Then learn how well your husband is trying to keep his oath in regard to injuring your relatives, and, lastly, you may be needed as a witness against him. You are safe in this house and no one will know of your presence.

Mrs. D. Why, what has he done?

Graef. You shall hear in the morning. Sufficient is it for you to know he's the blackest-hearted villain that ever went unhung. Come, let us find the landlady and see about lodgings for you. Come, Nellie.

Scene 3.—Street in 1st grooves.

Enter PETE, L. 1 E., *with lighted lantern, followed by BILLY carrying a spade over left shoulder.*

Pete. Now, if yo's 'fraid, say so, an' I'll git one ob de boys to go along.

Billy. I'm not a bit afeared. But it's so dark. Are you sure we'll get any money?

Pete. Ob course. Didn't I tell yo' I dreamed last night whar dar was more dan free hundred potsfull hid?

Billy. Yes, I know you did, but do you think the folks who own it will let us have it?

Pete. We's not gwine to ax 'em. 'Spects dey's all dead, anyhow. Dar won't be nuffin' to keep us from gittin' it, 'less de spirits put in dar 'pearance.

Billy. (*frightened, drops spade*) Spirits!

Pete. Yes, yo's not afraid ob dem, are yo'? I's often played wid dem behind de kitchen door (*aside*) in mince-pie season.

Billy. Oh, no, I'm not afeared. (*trembles*)

Pete. What's yo' shakin' fo'?

Billy. I'm not very well.

Pete. Kind o' weak-like, eh?

Billy. (*doubtingly*) Yaas.

Pete. Want somet'ing to make yo' strong, does yo'? (*takes small flask from breast pocket, drinks, then passes it to BILLY*) Try dat, it's nervin'. (*aside*) Den if he sees somet'ing, dar'll be spirits widin an' spirits widout. (*BILLY takes flask and drinks. PETE watches him, and as the fluid disappears, grows uneasy*) Hole on, dar.

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Billy. (*removing flask a moment, but tightening grasp*) That's what I'm doing. (*hands flask back empty*)

Pete. Feel better, don't yo'?

Billy. Yaas.

Pete. I should t'ink so. (*places flask in pocket. Takes up lantern*) Come on, now, we's no time to lose. Exit, R. 1 E.

Billy. (*picking up spade*) I'm ready. Exit, R. 1 E.

Flats are drawn off disclosing

Scene 4.—Wood in 4th grooves.

Enter PETE R. U. E., *followed by BILLY.*

Billy. Aren't we most there? (*peal of thunder*) I'm afeared it's a going to rain.

Pete. What ob dat? Can't we 'ford to git wet to be independent de rest ob our lives? (*looks round; places lantern up C.*)

Billy. Do you know where we are?

Pete. Ob course I do. We's mighty nigh de place.

Billy. You don't say so! Kin you see it? (*alarmed*)

Pete. (*looking off L. 2 E.*) Yes, I do. (*flash of lightning, followed by loud clap of thunder*)

Billy. (*jumps and screams*) Oh!

Pete. What's de matter? Am yo' hurt?

Billy. (*trembling violently and confused*) No—yes—Oh, Pete, let's go home.

Pete. Look dar! Dar! What's dat? (*points off L. 3 E. Lightning and loud peal of thunder*)

Billy. Whar? (*looks off L. 3 E. Drops spade, screams and starts running off R. 3 E. PETE catches him by coat tails. BILLY struggles violently to release himself*)

Pete. (*coaxingly*) Don't leab me, Billy. Nuffin, will hurt yo'.

Billy. (*frantic with fear*) Let go of me. Let go of me! (*turns on PETE and strikes him several blows rapidly. PETE falls and BILLY stumbles over him. Practice this scene well*)

Billy. Oh, Lord, I'm dead—dead—

Pete. (*springing to feet and assuming a pugilistic attitude. A thunder clap brings BILLY to feet, thoroughly frightened. Faces PETE who advances upon him enraged*) What did yo' do dat fo', eh? Say? What did yo' do dat fo'?

Billy. (*backing*) Was that you?

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Pete. Ob co'rse it were, an' I'se gwine ter lick yo' for it, too.

Billy. I thought it were a spirit. What did you see?

Pete. Why, de mound whar de money is hid. Yo's a big coward, an' I's a great mind to knock de stuffin' out ob yo'.

Billy. Don't Petey, please don't. I didn't hurt you. I'll not get scared again. Whar's the money?

Pete. (*mollified, pointing to L. 3 E.*) Thar! an' if yo' don't git to diggin' fo' it, I'll lam yo' so bad dat de Deacon won't know yo' when yo' git home. (*BILLY starts toward mound, manifesting great fear. When near it, a clap of thunder causes him to drop the spade again and shake violently. PETE grabs him by the arm. BILLY again picks up spade. PETE pushes him forward, talking as he does so*)

Pete. We'll be richer dan missus an' all her relations. I jus' bet dat dar's more money in dat pile dan all de Deacon's mules kin pull.

Billy. (*hanging back*) Let's go home and get the mules, then.

Pete. No, yo' don't. If we git mor'n we kin tote, we'll jest 'phone fer help. So go to work. (*thunder and lightning to continue throughout scene, at intervals. BILLY throws earth off L. 3 E.*) Dat's good. Now, go at it right, shubble fast. (*BILLY strikes iron pot*) Now, yo' struck it, suah. Work quick. (*the second time spade strikes pot, a rattling of chains overhead is heard*) Hurry up, Billy, I'll go an' see if anybody is coming. (*BILLY reaches down for pot. PETE starts toward R. 3 E. As he reaches C. a gun is fired from R. 3 E. and PETE, with a groan, falls with head toward L. As gun is fired chains fall to stage off L. 3 E. BILLY lifts large iron pot from earth as sound of gun is heard. He sees PETE fall and, throwing hat off, he picks up pot with both hands kicks spade aside, and, half bent, starts for R. 3 E. on a run. When near entrance, he is met by figure enveloped in a sheet. Screaming with fright he retraces his steps and is met at L. 3 E. by another figure. Starting up C. a third figure arrests him. Screaming, he stands a moment bewildered. Figures close in around him. Rushing to side of PETE, he drops pot and falls to knees, clasps hands, eyes roll, fright wig stands on end, lips work convulsively as in prayer. Red lights from both sides.*)

SLOW DROP.

ACT IV.

[Pg 37]

Scene.—MRS. THORNTON'S *sitting-room, same as Act II. As curtain rises DAISY is discovered C. with broom in left hand, pointing with right hand to small pile of bits of paper, dust, etc., on floor. Dust pan on floor. PETE down C.*

Daisy. Hold the dust pan! Don't you hear what I say?

Pete. (*indifferently*) Ob co'rse, I do. I'se not deaf.

Daisy. (*stamping foot*) Then do what I tell you. (*PETE makes grimaces at her*) Don't you intend to do it?

Pete. No, do it yo'self. Yo'r not my boss.

Daisy. (*seizing dust pan and brushing paper, etc., into it vigorously*) It's well for you I'm not!

Pete. (*tantalizingly*) What does yo' t'ink yo'd do, if yo' were?

Daisy. (*dropping dust pan*) What would I do? I'll show you! (*rushes at him with broom upraised. Drives him around stage, repeatedly striking him on head with broom until he reaches C. again*) Now, I hope you are satisfied. If I had my way I'd give you a sound thrashing and send you to bed to keep poor Billy company. (*going*) Ain't you ashamed of yourself for playing that horrid joke upon him last night! You know you hid that iron pot yourself and made him believe that you dreamed there was money buried there. Never mind, sir. Some day you'll meet your match and get paid back for all of your badness.

Exit, *door* L.

Pete. (*laughing*) I wonder if dat gal thinks she hurt my head. I'd butt ag'in a stone wall wid it all day for fifty cents. Poor Billy! He's not feelin' well to-day. He ran against a tree las' night, an' bruised hisself mighty bad. So he stayed abed. But he didn't blow on me. He knowed better. Said he fell from a tree an' hurted hisself. I's takin' his place an' lookin' after de Deacon's interests. De Deacon is takin' a nap. I was to call him at 2 sharp. He had a 'ticular 'pintment wid Miss 'Melia. It must be nigh about dat time now. (*starts to go*) No, I won't call him, eider. I'll let de ole man sleep while he can. (*footsteps, L.*) Oh, Lor', here comes Miss 'Melia now. Exit, c. *door*

Enter MISS AMELIA, L. 2 E.; *goes down* C. PETE *re-appears at door C. and listens.*

Miss A. I declare, my heart's all in a flutter. The Deacon has requested a private interview. I know he is going to propose. I feel it; I am sure of it; and, oh, dear, I know I'll refuse him. What shall I do! (PETE *shakes finger at her in a knowing way and disappears*) The dear man has eaten scarcely anything since he entered this house. He sits at the table pretending to eat, but all the while he is looking at me, and wondering if I love him. His eyes literally devour me with their lustrous flame of love—

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Enter DAISY, L. 2 E. MISS AMELIA *is startled.*

Daisy. Miss Amelia, Mrs. Thornton would like to see you a moment in the dining-room.

Miss A. Tell her she must excuse me. I'm engaged for the next half hour.

Daisy. Yes, ma'am. (*going*)

Miss A. Daisy.

Daisy. Ma'am?

Miss A. (*affectedly*) How am I looking to-day?

Daisy. Most charmingly.

Miss A. Do you really think so?

Daisy. Indeed I do. To see you now, no one would suppose you were a day over thirty. (*aside*) Horrid thing! She's fifty if she's a day.

Miss A. I fear you are a flatterer. Now, you don't think I'm too old to marry, do you?

Daisy. Why, no ma'am. Lots of people get married who are much older than you. (*aside*) And big fools they are, too.

Miss A. That will do, Daisy. You are a nice, well-behaved girl. So sensible.

Daisy. Thank you, ma'am. (*going*)

Miss A. Daisy, stop a moment. If you see the Deacon enter this room, please be sure and see that we are not disturbed for the next half hour, and I'll make you a present of that handsome silk dress of mine I saw you admiring yesterday. (*goes R.*)

Daisy. Oh, thank you. (*aside*) Handsome silk dress! It's as ugly as sin and as old as the hills. I wouldn't be seen in such a delapidated affair. Ugh! (Exit *hastily*, L. 2 E.)

Miss A. I wonder what detains the Deacon. I'm sure it's after 2 o'clock. I do hope he'll come right to the point, for I know I can't stand any long preamble. (*fidgety*) I do wish he would come. Hark! I hear his footsteps now. (*Goes to sofa, sits R.*) I'll pretend I'm offended because he kept me waiting. Oh, dear, I know it's coming; I feel frightfully nervous.

Re-enter PETE *backward, dressed in DEACON'S suit, with spectacles on.*

Miss A. (*glances around as PETE enters*) It's he! (*bows head on right arm of sofa and remains in that position; PETE advances slowly, imitating the DEACON'S shuffling gait and clearing of throat. Takes seat beside MISS AMELIA*)

Pete. Amelia, dearest! (*Coughs and makes wry face. Aside*) She's skeered! (*aloud*) I guess yo' know fo' what I wanted to see yo'? (*pause*) Yo' love me!

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Miss A. (*in muffled astonishment*) Oh, Deacon, how—

Pete. Now, don't say yo' don't, fo' I know yo' do. (*archly*) I've seen yo' castin' eyes at me on de sly. (*aside*) What shall I say next! Oh, yes. (*clears throat; aloud*) Yo' can have me, I's willin'. (*aside, disgustedly*) She don't know how to lub. (*aloud*) Does yo' doubt my love fo' yo'? Go ask the dear little stars if I don't whisper yo'r name to them every mornin' an' at noon. (*pause*) Does yo' still doubt me?

Miss A. No—no—only—

Pete. (*aside*) She's gittin' up courage. (*aloud*) Only what, dearest? (*gradually edges to side of Miss A.*) Don't be afraid to speak, I'll not hurt yo'. Don't yo' lub me just a little wee bit?

Miss A. No—yes—I mean that—

Pete. (*tenderly*) Yo' mean that yo' will marry me if I'll wait a little while! Oh, but you are a darling! (*places arm around Miss A.'s shoulder and attempts to raise her head. Miss A. makes faint resistance*) Look up, Birdie, and give me one little kiss to seal the bargain. Just one.

Miss A. You are irresistible! (*gently inclines head toward PETE with face averted. Gushingly*) Do you really and truly love me?

Pete. With all my heart!

Miss A. Then kiss me. (*turning quickly as in act of kissing, sees PETE, but does not recognize him. Falling in corner of sofa, she screams. PETE jumps up and quickly exits D. C.*) Help! help! murder—help!

Re-enter DAISY, L. 2 E.; *she has common apron on, sleeves rolled up, hands covered with dough and arms bearing flour marks; followed by MRS. THORNTON and HELEN, both wearing common aprons.*

Daisy. For goodness' sake, what is the matter?

Miss A. (*in hysterics*) Oh—oh—oh—I've been frightened nearly to death. Oh, dear, oh!

Mrs. T. By whom?

Miss A. A tall colored man. He sat down on the sofa beside me. Oh, dear, I shall die, I know I shall. (*MRS. T. and HELEN approach and try to quiet her. DAISY goes to D. C. and peers behind curtain*)

Miss A. He was dressed in one of the Deacon's suits.

Mrs. T. In my brother's clothes? Impossible!

Miss A. He was, I tell you. He escaped out of the balcony window. (*points to D. C.*)

Daisy. Oh! (*screaming, runs to group. All appear frightened, and scream*)

Helen. Did you see him?

Daisy. No—but—I thought I did.

Helen. Auntie, I believe you fell asleep and had a bad dream.

Miss A. Asleep! I've not closed my eyes this blessed day. I saw him as plainly as I see you. The ugly wretch! Oh, oh!

Mrs. T. Daisy, go and find Pete and send him for a policeman. This matter must be investigated.

Daisy. Yes, ma'am.

(Exit, L. 2 E.)

Helen. (*going to door, L., listening*) I think I hear uncle moving about his room. He'll soon be down and will help us search the house.

Miss A. Oh, for goodness' sake, help me to get away before he comes. (*MRS. T. and HELEN assist her to rise, and start with her toward L. 2 E.*)

Miss A. No, no, not that way. I might meet him. Take me out along the balcony way. I'd rather meet that horrid colored man again than the Deacon in my present condition. Oh, dear, it was a terrible shock! Terrible!

(Exeunt, D. C.)

Re-enter PETE, L. 2 E., *disguised as Miss A.; wears a similar wig etc.*

Pete. (*C., imitating Miss A.'s manner*) I declar', my heart's flutterin' like all creation. I have a 'pintment wid de Deacon. I knows he's gwine to ax me to marry him. Oh, dear, I shall faint! I knows I shall, but I can't refuse him. (*takes seat on sofa*) Hark! I hear footsteps. 'Tis he, by Jerusalem! I'll 'tend I'm mad wid him for not comin' sooner. (*bows head on L. arm of sofa, conceals feet under dress, pulls curls over side of face, and hides hands under chin*)

Enter DEACON, L. 2 E., *smiling blandly.*

Deacon. How lovely she appears. Still waiting for me. While I have been sleeping, she, like the grand noble creature that she is, has been patiently waiting my coming, no doubt considering each moment an hour. What a beautiful picture the sentiment of love in woman presents! (*goes to sofa, sits R.*) Have I kept you waiting long, my darling? It was not my fault. Pete forgot to call me. You'll forgive me, my love, won't you? (*edging nearer*)

Pete. (*in muffled tone of voice*) I—I—don't know.

Deacon. Oh, yes, you will. I know you will. Amelia,—you will let me call you by your beautiful first name, won't you?—ever since my wife died, I've been looking for another angel to take her place. I have at last found her. Can't you guess who it is? (*pause*) I mean you. Oh, Amelia, I love you—love you dearly, tenderly, most devotedly. Do you doubt me?

[Pg 41]

Pete. No—no—only—

Deacon. Only what, my love? (*draws close to PETE'S side*) Don't be afraid to tell me. Hereafter I expect to help you bear all your trials and sorrows. What a blissful abode of love our home will be. (*tenderly*) You surely love me a little, don't you?

Pete. No,—yes—I mean that—

Deacon. (*placing arm around PETE*) Oh, you precious darling! You mean that in time you may be able to love and marry me. I'm the happiest man on earth. (*tries to pull PETE gently toward him. PETE resists faintly*) Nothing is now wanting to make my earthly lot a foretaste of the bliss of Paradise, but one little kiss from your sweet lips, and the coveted honor of leading you to the altar. You won't refuse me the boon of one kiss, will you, dear? (*attempts to raise PETE'S head*)

Pete. (*yielding*) Yo' are puffed'ly irresistible! (*rests head upon the DEACON'S shoulder; keeps face well averted*) Do yo' really and truly love me?

Deacon. (*warmly*) As truly as the sun shines.

Pete. Then kiss me. (*quickly turning, he throws both arms around the DEACON'S neck and gives him a loud kiss. Springing to feet, he exits quickly* D. C.)

Deacon. (*rises bewildered*) Ah—oh—what—what's this? The huzzy! (*takes handkerchief from breast pocket and wipes lips*) Ugh! The infern—(*calls loudly*) Pete! Pete! Daisy! Pete! Where in the mischief are they? Why don't they come! Pete! Pete! Pete! (*walks excitedly* R.)

Re-enter MRS. T., HELEN, MISS A., and DAISY, L. 2 E.

Mrs. T. Why, brother, what is the matter? Are you going mad?

Deacon. (*angrily*) No—yes—I am mad. Madam, what do you mean by allowing your colored cook the freedom of this house?

Mrs. T. (*in amazement*) Why, brother, I have no colored cook.

Deacon. You have! Now, don't say again you haven't, for I know better. If she ain't your cook, she fills some position in your house, which is all the same.

Helen. Why, uncle, there's not a colored woman in this house.

Miss A. Deacon, I fear you have been indulging again, and you promised me so faithfully never to touch another drop. Oh, dear, the depravity of mankind is distressing!

Deacon. Heaven preserve me! Hold your tongues, every one of you. Don't you suppose I know a colored woman when I see one! I've been most infern—grossly insulted by one.

[Pg 42]

Mrs. T. Where?

Deacon. Why, in this room.

Mrs. T. }
Helen. } In this room?
Miss A. }

Deacon. Yes, in this room. Upon that very sofa. (*pointing to sofa*) Only a moment ago there was a colored woman sitting there arrayed in one of Miss Amelia's dresses.

Miss A. In one of my dresses!

Deacon. Yes, and she looked just like you.

Miss A. (*in horror, raises her hands*) Like me!

Deacon. Like you, until she turned her face toward me. She escaped out that window. (*pointing to* D. C.)

Miss A. (*to* MRS. T.) Sister, I believe this house is haunted!

Mrs. T. There certainly is something going on that I cannot understand. (*to* DAISY) Did you send Pete for that policeman?

Daisy. No, ma'am, I could not find him.

Helen. That's just like him. He's never around when he's wanted.

Miss A. Sister, something must be done, or I'll not sleep in this house to-night.

Mrs. T. (*to DAISY*) Go and see if Pete is anywhere around now, and if you find him send him for an officer at once.

Daisy. Yes, ma'am.

(Exit, L. 2 E.)

Mrs. T. Brother, are you sure you saw a colored woman?

Deacon. Didn't I tell you I did? Do you think I'm blind? Confound it! (*wipes lips with handkerchief*) I saw her too plainly for comfort. I wish I had her now. I'd wring her neck off. Blast her buttons!

Miss A. Deacon, I fear you are forgetting yourself.

Mrs. T. Brother! Brother!

Deacon. That's nothing, I feel like saying——

Miss A. (*quickly*) Don't! Please don't, Deacon.

Re-enter PETE *hurriedly*, L. 2 E.; *appears short of breath. Fans himself with hand.*

Pete. What's de mattah? (*to DEACON*) I heard yo' callin'. I was out in de orchard pickin' some apples an' I run myself out of bref. I t'ought de house was a-fire.

Deacon. Why didn't you call me when I told you to?

Pete. I did. I called yo' ag'in an' ag'in, an' yo' said, all right. I t'ought yo' wus awake. 'Spect yo' must agone to sleep ag'in.

(MRS. T., *and* HELEN *cross* R.)

Mrs. T. Pete, did you see a colored man or woman pass out of that window this afternoon?

[Pg 43]

Pete. (*in astonishment*) Why, no, missus. Dar was none passed out, fo' I were jist over dar (*pointing*) in de orchard, right opposite de window, an' nobody could pass out widout 'tractin' my 'tention. (PETE *goes to* D. C. *and looks out. The DEACON crosses* L. *near* MISS A.)

Mrs. T. It's very strange. I can't account for your vision, brother, upon any other grounds, than that you were dreaming.

Deacon. (*angrily*) Then you think I didn't see a colored woman at all——

Miss A. And that my eye-sight failed me, too——

Deacon. And I'm telling a falsehood——

Miss A. And that I'm not to be believed? Oh, sister, sister! (*clasps hands. Noise heard off* L., *as of some one crying. PETE crosses up* L. C.)

Re-enter DAISY, *hurriedly*, L. C.

Daisy. (*angrily*) Pete, you horrid wretch, what did you mean by putting that cat in poor Billy's room. You know how mortally afraid he is of them.

Pete. I didn't put no cat in his room.

Daisy. You did, for he saw you open his door, and he's scared almost out of his wits.

The curtains at D. C. *are pulled violently aside, and in rushes* BILLY.

Billy. (*screaming with fright*) Take him away! Take him away! (*goes down* C. *Has left eye covered with cloth, left arm in sling, black patch on right cheek and nose swollen. Has on night-shirt and long white stockings. All the ladies scream. Mrs. T. springs to support HELEN in her arms; MISS AMELIA faints in the DEACON's arms*)

MRS. THORNTON *and* HELEN R.; DEACON *and* MISS AMELIA L.; DAISY *and* PETE *up* C.

Deacon. Thank Heaven! At last I enfold thee!

ACT V.

Scene.—MRS. THORNTON'S *sitting-room, same as Act IV.* MISS AMELIA *seated on sofa, the DEACON beside her; PETE looks in upon them from behind curtain C., grinning.*

Deacon. In a short time, my love, Helen will be the happy bride of Mr. Wheeler. Oh, that I could persuade you to become my blushing bride at the same time. (*places arm around her, and looks at her fondly*)

Miss A. (*half-playfully*) I declare, Deacon, the more one sees of you the more impressive your silliness becomes. The bare idea of a man of your age desiring to marry, is simply ridiculous.

Deacon. Perhaps it is, my darling, but let me enjoy the happiness of living over my youth again. I feel fifty years younger this morning than I did last night before I obtained your consent to bless my declining years with your sweet smile. But when we come to consider our age, and the subject of marriage in connection with it, it certainly does appear as though *both* of us were silly geese.

Miss A. (*amazed and offended*) Sir!

Deacon. (*confused*) I beg your pardon. I did not mean to refer to your age. I—I—meant my own. That was what I was thinking about. (*tenderly*) As I look at you, you appear as fresh and bright as a lass of sixteen.

Miss A. (*reassured, gushingly*) Oh, Deacon, I can't believe you mean that.

Deacon. I do though.

Pete. (*at D. C.*) Look out, de parson am coming! (*MISS A. and DEACON start, then separate. PETE enters and goes R. At same instant*)

Enter PARSON BROWNLOW, L. 2 E.

Deacon. (*rises, faces PETE, enraged*) How dare you enter my—our presence unannounced! What do I care if the parson has come! (*MISS A., catching sight of PARSON B., who stands L. amazed, with uplifted hands, tugs at the DEACON'S sleeve to attract his attention*) If a dozen of them come, are they any better than any body else? If ever you enter my presence again so abruptly, old as I am, I'll cane you within an inch of your life.

Miss A. Deacon, Deacon, do be still. You are disgracing yourself and mortifying me. Just look! There stands Parson Brownlow listening to every word you say.

Deacon. Hang the Parson! I'll—(*sees the parson*) I beg your pardon, sir, I was not aware of your presence. You must excuse my unseemly passion. I have been greatly irritated by that black rascal standing there. (*pointing to PETE*)

[Pg 45]

Parson B. What, Pete in trouble again! (*to PETE*) What have you been doing now?

Pete. (*in injured tone*) I weren't doin' nuffin'. De Deacon dar was a-spoonin', (*the DEACON frowns and starts for PETE, but is detained by MISS A. catching him by the arm. PETE starts to run up R.*) an' cause I warned him of your approach to keep yo' from catchin' ob him, he got mad.

Miss A. There, Pete, that's enough. (*to PARSON B.*) It was a little misunderstanding, that is all. (*DEACON manifests a desire to reach PETE. To DEACON*) Deacon, do be still. I think I hear the bride and groom coming.

Enter MRS. THORNTON *and guests, if any, R. 2 E. They take places. MRS. T. down L., guests up L. and R.; MISS AMELIA, DEACON and PARSON cross R.; PARSON stands R. of MISS A.; PETE goes up R. near curtain. Orchestra plays a wedding march. After a few bars enter HELEN D. C., arrayed in bridal robes, leaning on the left arm of WHEELER. Take positions directly in front of L. 2 E. door. PETE makes a low salaam as they enter, but shakes fist at WHEELER as he crosses to position. PARSON takes book from pocket, steps in front of contracting parties, and proceeds with ceremony as music ceases. PETE peeps out D. C.*

Parson. (*reading from book*) We are gathered together here in the presence of this company to join together this man and woman in the holy bonds of matrimony. If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace—(*during the delivery of this, PETE manifests uneasiness and occasionally glances around at D. C. When GRAEF enters he displays joy by rubbing hands gleefully*)

Graef. One moment, Parson. I forbid this marriage.

Wheeler. On what grounds?

Graef. Aunt—Helen—you are being imposed upon!

Wheeler. (*angrily*) What is the meaning of this interference, sir?

Graef. (*to HELEN*) That man has a wife living.

Wheeler. 'Tis false! As false as he who makes the accusation. (*to HELEN, angrily*) You will not allow yourself to be influenced by the base charge of a common thief, will you?

Graef. Helen, I ask no one to believe my simple word. I have proof amply sufficient to convince you of the truthfulness of my assertion. (*to WHEELER*) Do you deny my charge? [Pg 46]

Wheeler. I do, and challenge you to produce your proof.

Enter MRS. DARRAH, D. C.

Graef. (*to WHEELER*) It is here. Do you know this lady?

Wheeler. (*surprised*) Minnie!

Graef. You know her then?

Wheeler. You here?

Mrs. T. (*to GRAEF*) Who is that woman?

Graef. Uncle's daughter, (*the DEACON'S back is turned toward Mrs. D.*) and your would-be son-in-law's wife.

Mrs. T. (*to WHEELER*) Is this true?

Wheeler. I cannot deny it. (*bows head. Mrs. T. catches HELEN by arm and supports her to sofa as Mrs. D. speaks. PARSON B. closes book and crosses to R. of MISS AMELIA*)

Mrs. D. Alas, it is too true! But I remain such only until the courts sever our relation. (*goes to sofa and helps comfort HELEN, after casting a longing glance at the DEACON who still stands with back toward her*)

Wheeler. (*hisses through clenched teeth, to GRAEF*) So I have you to thank for this humiliation, have I?

Graef. Yes, and it is a pleasure I have been anticipating for the past two days.

Wheeler. Then you prepared this plan for my exposure?

Graef. I did.

Wheeler. Have you the effrontery to tell me to my teeth that you deliberately prepared my downfall?

Graef. (*coolly*) I have.

Wheeler. Then, you miserable cur, I'll be revenged. (*rushes at GRAEF who retreats a little. PETE draws huge butcher knife and runs to GRAEF'S side*)

Pete. Pull on him, Massa George, pull on him, I'se wid yo'! (*holding knife aloft dramatically. At sight of knife MISS AMELIA has slight attack of hysterics, throws both arms around the DEACON'S neck and chokes him. The DEACON struggles to release himself. PARSON B. stoops behind MISS A. and tries to make her dress shield him. Wheeler stops suddenly*)

Enter OFFICER, L. 2 E.; approaches WHEELER softly.

Graef. He's not worth the effort, Pete. Officer, arrest that man.

Officer. (*seizing WHEELER from behind*) George Darrah, I arrest you for the crime of theft. (*WHEELER struggles. GRAEF helps OFFICER handcuff him. The DEACON unloosens MISS A.'s arms, when her head falls upon his right shoulder. The DEACON supports her drooping form by placing his right arm around her waist. Mrs. T. rises*) [Pg 47]

Wheeler. What is the meaning of this indignity?

Graef. You will soon know. (*to Mrs. T.*) Aunt, there stands the George Graef who stole your diamonds!

Pete. Say, Massa George, what do yo' think his picture will look like now, arter it's took, eh? (GRAEF *smiles*. PETE *crosses to* PARSON B. *and makes feint to stab him with knife*. PARSON *sinks almost to knees, manifesting great fear*. *Aside*) He kin teach others how to die bravely, but he skeers when deff comes nigh him.

Mrs. T. (*to* GRAEF) I don't understand you.

Graef. George Darrah, there, known to you as Mr. Wheeler, is the thief you thought was myself. (*to* WHEELER) Do you require *proof* to that effect?

Wheeler. Yes, if you possess it.

Graef. (*taking watch charm from pocket*) Do you recognize that charm?

Wheeler. No, I never saw it before.

Pete. Dat's a whopper!

Graef. (*taking paper from pocket*) Perhaps you will deny also ever having seen this note with your name attached to it. (*folds note so that signature only is seen, and shows it to* WHEELER) Is that your signature?

Wheeler. No, it's a forgery.

Pete. By crickitees! I'se not a circumstance to dat feller in lyin'.

Graef. Aunt, this charm and note were found by Pete just outside of your dressing-room door the morning after the robbery. He, thinking they might lead to a clue, brought them to me. From the contents of this note I learned who committed the theft and where the diamonds were secreted.

Wheeler. Will you let me see that note?

Graef. With pleasure. (*walks to* WHEELER, *unfolds note and holds it up for him to read, talking as he does so*) Pete visited the place where the diamonds were hidden, and brought them to me. I will give them to you in a moment. Are you through? (*to* WHEELER. *Takes small package from pocket and hands it to* MRS. T.) There they are.

Wheeler. Mrs. Thornton, that note is supposed to be written by me. In it I am made to state the *hour* I was to commit the robbery, and the *place* where I would hide the diamonds, so that my confederate could find them. Now, do you think if *I* planned the affair and had an accomplice, I would be likely to write him a tell-tale note, and allow it to fall into an interested party's hands to be used against me?

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Pete. Did yo' eber hear de like?

Mrs. T. Well, hardly, but how do you account for the note explaining where the diamonds were hidden?

Wheeler. That's plain enough to me. There stands the man (*looking at* GRAEF) who *took* the diamonds; there stands the man who *returned* them, and *there* is the man who wrote that note and trumped up this charge to shield himself at my expense.

Graef. You infamous scoundrel! (*advances upon* WHEELER)

Pete. (*excitedly*) Pin him, Massa George. I'd nebber stand dat, suah!

Mrs. T. (*looks reproachfully at* GRAEF) Can it be possible!

Graef. Aunt, for heaven's sake, believe not that black-hearted villain. In one moment I'll convince you of his guilt beyond question. This morning, Davis the pawnbroker, came to my room of his own free will, and told me that that man (*pointing to* WHEELER) was the one who left one of your jewels at his shop, and that he was to pay Davis three hundred dollars to keep that fact a secret. Is that sufficient for you?

Pete. (*aside*) Ob his own free will, did he? I guess I skeered ole Davis nigh about to deff. I tole him we knew who gave him dat diamond an' I was on my way to git an officer to 'rest him as a 'complice.

Wheeler. The lying scoundrel! I'll get even with him for that, and with *you* (*to* GRAEF) and you, (*to* MRS. T.) and with all of you.

Mrs. T. Off with you. I no longer doubt your guilt. Officer, remove him instantly from our presence. (*exeunt* OFFICER *and* WHEELER, L. 2 E. MRS. T. *goes to* GRAEF) George, can you ever forgive me for my unjust suspicions? I will do anything in my power to make retribution to you for your sufferings.

Graef. Then extend to Minnie, there, your niece, a welcome worthy of her. (MRS. T. *goes to sofa, grasps* MRS. D.'s *hand, takes seat beside her and engages her in conversation*. HELEN *rises and approaches* GRAEF) Innocence requires no retribution from those who suspect her.

Helen. Cousin, no one can ever be more grateful to you than I am for the life of misery you have saved me from. What could have been that *fiend's* motive in trying to bring disgrace upon us all,

baffles my comprehension.

Graef. His desire to be revenged upon Minnie and all her relatives, for the fancied insult he received in uncle's disinheriting her for marrying contrary to his wishes, has been the motive that actuated him. (PARSON, MISS AMELIA and DEACON cross to GRAEF)

Parson. (*shaking GRAEF's hand*) Bless you, my son, bless you.

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Miss A. George, you are a son worthy of your mother. I always said you would yet make a man of yourself—

Graef. (*interrupting*) There, there! you are all showering your thanks upon me and forgetting Pete, to whom most of the glory belongs.

Pete. Yo' just bet it does. I'se done my share ob keepin' up de 'spectability ob de family.

Helen. Yes, Pete, you have, and we are all very grateful to you for it.

Pete. (*bowing*) T'ank yo'.

Deacon. (*advancing and extending hand*) George, my boy, you will at least let me extend to you my hearty congratulations. You have acted nobly.

Graef. (*refusing hand*) Excuse me uncle, but—

Deacon. Why! why! what's the matter? Refuse to shake hands with me? Why—ah—I can't understand it.

Graef. Pardon me, uncle for my plainness of speech. But I'll never shake hands with a father who has disowned his motherless child, until he forgives her and acknowledges her as his own flesh and blood.

Pete. (*aside*) Dat's de noblest t'ing he ever said or done.

Minnie. (*rising*) George!

Graef. I can't help it, Minnie. I mean it. (*the DEACON turns back*)

Pete. Dat's right, Massa George, make him toe de scratch.

Enter NELLIE, D. C.

Nellie. Where's mamma? Oh, there you are! (*runs to her*)

Graef. (*approaches DEACON; lays hand upon his left shoulder*) Uncle, your daughter and child await your forgiveness.

Deacon. (*doggedly*) I have no daughter!

Pete. Miss 'Melia, please come here a minnit. (MISS A. goes to PETE, who is down R.) Yo' tackle de Deacon, he'll refuse yo' nuffin'.

Miss A. Go long with you! (*returns to former position*)

Parson. Brother, the good book says, "Forgive, and we shall be forgiven." (MRS. D. and NELLIE approach DEACON and kneel at his L. side)

Mrs. D. Father, I ask your forgiveness, not for myself, but for this innocent child's sake.

Pete. Now, go for him, Miss 'Melia, an' yo'll fotch him, suah.

Deacon. Rise, my child, for inhuman would be the man who could refuse the pleadings of a kneeling child. You are forgiven. (*tenderly kisses the brow of MRS. D. She and NELLIE rise*)

[Pg 50]

Miss A. Oh, Deacon, Deacon!

Pete. (*aside*) She's jealous!

Miss A. How noble you are.

Pete. (*elevating eyebrows and opening mouth*) Oh, dat's what she means!

Graef. (*grasping the DEACON's hand*) Now, uncle, I'll shake hands with you and thank you, too, for the nobility of character you have shown. Though there will be no marriage bells ringing in this house to-day, yet I'm sure there will not be a happier gathering of loved ones to be found in this wide, wide world.

Pete. But t'ink ob de good things we'll miss!

Deacon. (*gleefully*) Who says there will be no marriage-bells sounding in this house to-day? Parson, step right down. (*motioning down C. Enter BILLY, D. C., with huge piece of cake in hand, eating. His disfigurements are slightly less than in Act 4. Stands up C.*) Where are you, Amelia, my love?

Miss A. Oh, Deacon, don't be so silly! (*holding back. All smile*)

Deacon. Come along, my love. Don't keep the Parson waiting, come along. (*take positions down C. PETE runs to NELLIE and places her beside MISS A., while he goes to DEACON'S side. MRS. T. and HELEN up L.; GRAEF and MRS. D. up R.; BILLY up C., eating*)

Pete. Let de band play fo' we's all ready fo' de dance. (*PARSON opens book and steps in front of MISS A. and the DEACON as the curtain falls*)

CURTAIN.



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ACT I. THE HOME OF THE LIGHT-HOUSE KEEPER.—An autumn afternoon.—The insult.—True to herself.—A fearless heart.—The unwelcome guest.—Only a foundling.—An abuse of confidence.—The new partner.—The compact.—The dead brought to life.—Saved from the wreck.—Legal advice.—Married for money.—A golden chance.—The intercepted letter.—A vision of wealth.—The forgery.—Within an inch of his life.—The rescue.—TABLEAU.

ACT II. SCENE AS BEFORE; time, night.—Dark clouds gathering.—Changing the jackets.—Father and son.—On duty.—A struggle for fortune.—Loved for himself.—The divided greenbacks.—The agreement.—An unhappy life.—The detective's mistake.—Arrested.—Mistaken identity.—The likeness again.—On the right track.—The accident.—"Will she be saved?"—Latour's bravery.—A noble sacrifice.—The secret meeting.—Another case of mistaken identity.—The murder.—"Who did it?"—The torn cuff.—"There stands the murderer!"—"Tis false!"—The wrong man murdered.—Who was the victim?—TABLEAU.

ACT III. TWO DAYS LATER.—Plot and counterplot.—Gentleman and convict.—The price of her life.—Some new documents.—The divided banknotes.—Sunshine through the clouds.—Prepared for a watery grave.—Deadly peril.—Father and daughter.—The rising tide.—A life for a signature.—True unto death.—Saved.—The mystery solved.—Dénouement.—TABLEAU.

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ACT II. ON THE BATTLEFIELD.—An Irishman's philosophy.—Unconscious of danger.—Spies in the camp.—The insult.—Risen from the ranks.—The colonel's prejudice.—Letters from home.—The plot to ruin.—A token of love.—True to him.—The plotters at work.—Breaking the seals.—The meeting of husband and wife.—A forlorn hope.—Doomed as a spy.—A struggle for lost honor.—A soldier's death.—TABLEAU.

ACT III. BEFORE RICHMOND.—The home of Mrs. De Mori.—The two documents.—A little misunderstanding.—A deserted wife.—The truth revealed.—Brought to light.—Mother and child.—Rowena's sacrifice.—The American Eagle spreads his wings.—The spider's web.—True to himself.—The reconciliation.—A long divided home reunited.—The close of the war.—TABLEAU.

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ACT II.—St. Clare's elegant home.—The fretful wife.—The arrival.—Little Eva.—Aunt Ophelia and Topsy.—"O, Golly! I'se so wicked!"—St. Clare's opinion.—"Benighted innocence."—The stolen gloves.—Topsy in her glory.

ACT III.—The angel child.—Tom and St. Clare.—Topsy's mischief.—Eva's request.—The promise.—Pathetic scene.—Death of Eva.—St. Clare's grief.—"For thou art gone forever."

ACT IV.—The lonely house.—Tom and St. Clare.—Topsy's keepsake.—Deacon Perry and Aunt Ophelia.—Cute on deck.—A distant relative.—The hungry visitor.—"Chuck full of emptiness."—Cute and the Deacon.—A row.—A fight.—Topsy to the rescue.—St. Clare wounded.—Death of St. Clare.—"Eva—Eva—I am coming."

ACT V.—Legree's plantation on the Red River.—Home again.—Uncle Tom's noble heart.—"My soul ain't yours, Mas'r."—Legree's cruel work.—Legree and Cassy.—The white slave.—A frightened brute.—Legree's fear.—A life of sin.—Marks and Cute.—A new scheme.—The dreadful whipping of Uncle Tom.—Legree punished at last.—Death of Uncle Tom.—Eva in Heaven.

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ACT II.—Winter quarters.—Colonel Hastings and Sergeant Tim.—Moses.—A message.—Tim on his dignity.—The arrival.—Playing soldier.—The secret.—The promise.—Harry in danger.—Love and duty.—The promise kept.—"Saved, at the loss of my own honor!"

ACT III.—Drawing-room at Falconer's.—Reading the news.—"Apply to Judy!"—Louise's romance.—Important news.—Bertha's fears.—Leamington's arrival.—Drawing the web.—Threatened.—Plotting.—Harry and Bertha.—A fiendish lie.—Face to face.—"Do you know him?"—Denounced.—"Your life shall be the penalty!"—Startling tableau.

ACT IV.—At Uncle Toby's.—A wonderful climate.—An impudent rascal.—A bit of history.—Woman's wit.—Toby Indignant.—A quarrel.—Uncle Toby's evidence.—Leamington's last trump.—Good news.—Checkmated.—The telegram.—Breaking the web.—Sunshine at last.

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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.

author. ~~Threatrical~~ Managers wishing to produce it should apply to
author. Theatrical Managers wishing to produce it should apply to

JAMES REED, a friend of Darrah's, H. C. Lewis.

JAMES READ, a friend of Darrah's, H. C. Lewis.

and played by Reed. Officer in Act IV, by Violinist.

and played by Read. Officer in Act IV, by Violinist.

life would be beset by the harrassing knowledge of being surrounded

life would be beset by the harassing knowledge of being surrounded

I'll let the precious booty remain in it's hiding place until I

I'll let the precious booty remain in its hiding place until I

Daisy. Oh, Mr. Wheeler, I forgot----(percieves DEACON) Oh!

Daisy. Oh, Mr. Wheeler, I forgot----(perceives DEACON) Oh!

(dicks up pin; conceals bent part, displaying point) Daisy nebber

(picks up pin; conceals bent part, displaying point) Daisy nebber

Graef. (interrrupting her, grasps her by shoulder and anxiously

Graef. (interrrupting her, grasps her by shoulder and anxiously

Miss A. I fear you are a flatterer. Now, you don't think I'm

Miss A. I fear you are a flatterer. Now, you don't think I'm

Miss A. That will do, Daisy. You are are a nice, well-behaved

Miss A. That will do, Daisy. You are a nice, well-behaved

this morning than I did last night before I obtained you consent

this morning than I did last night before I obtained your consent

Officer. (seizing WHEELER from behind) George Darrah, I ar-

Officer. (seizing WHEELER from behind) George Darrah, I arrest

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