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Title: None so Deaf As Those Who Won't Hear: A Comedietta in One Act

Author: Herbert Pelham Curtis

Release date: August 22, 2013 [EBook #43536]

Language: English

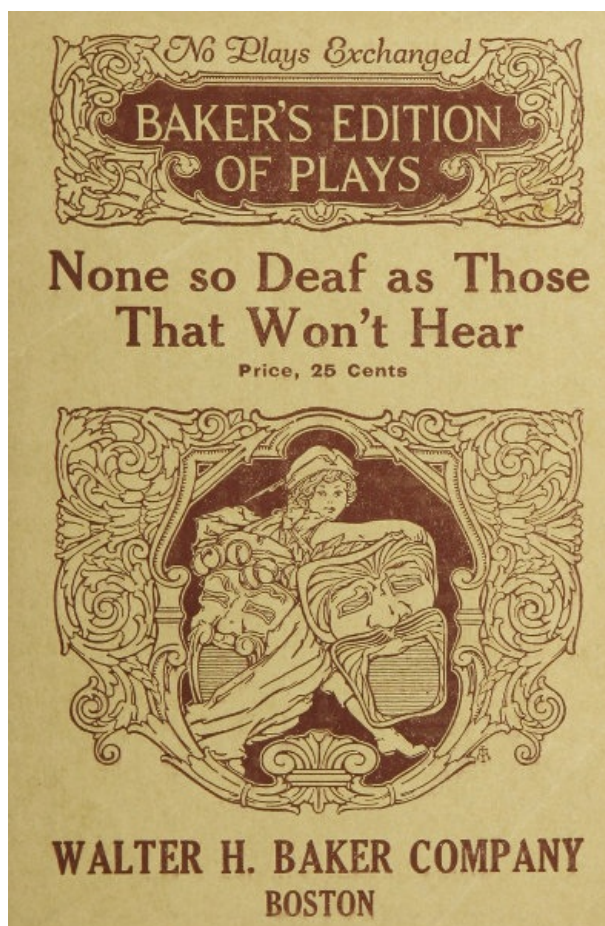
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## None So Deaf As Those Who Won't Hear.



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BAKER, Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

## NONE SO DEAF AS THOSE WHO WON'T HEAR.

[Pg 1]

A Comedietta in One Act.

By

H. PELHAM CURTIS, U.S.A.,

AUTHOR OF "UNCLE ROBERT," "THE PERFECT FOX," "LYING  
WILL OUT," ETC., ETC.

BOSTON

*Walter H. Baker & Co.*

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**DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.**

[Pg 2]

SINGLETON CODDLE.  
WASHINGTON WHITWELL.  
EGLANTINE CODDLE.  
JANE SMITH, A SERVANT.

*Costumes modern and appropriate.*

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**NONE SO DEAF AS THOSE WHO WON'T HEAR.**

[Pg 3]

SCENE.—*A parlor handsomely furnished, looking out on a garden; console in each corner; on one a lamp, a flower-vase on the other; door in flat, and doors right and left; window at right; gun standing in corner at left; table in front, left, with magazines, paper, pens, and ink; at right, front, an easy-chair, and small work-table, on which is a work-basket and hand-bell.*

EGLANTINE (*sits at table, reading*). Oh, what dull trash! (*Throws magazine down.*) Ah, me! I can take no interest even in Trollope. Life is a blank. (*Comes forward.*) Did ever any girl suffer as I do? Nothing to do, nobody to see,—only father to talk to, and he deaf as a post! (*Sits and looks at vase of flowers.*) Well, I'll not stand *this*. These flowers have been here four days. Disgraceful! (*Rings.*) Jane! (*Rings again. Enter JANE with a letter, in flat.*) Jane, how *can* you be so neglectful? Look at these old dead flowers. Throw them away, and get me fresh at once.

JANE. Yes, miss. Your pa is not here, miss?

EGLANTINE (*jumps up*). No. Is it a caller?

JANE. No, miss: a letter.

EGLANTINE. Only a letter! oh, dear! Never any visitors; nothing but letters now, and none of them for me. I shall die, or go mad. (*Sits.*)

JANE. Yes, miss: your pa is a very sot man, and won't never see no company, since he grew hard of hearing, three years ago. (*Takes the flowers from vase.*)

EGLANTINE. O Jane! how can I bear it? Life is so dull, so dull! (*Sobs.*)

[Pg 4]

JANE (*wiping lamp-glass*). Yes, miss. And think of me, miss: took into service for my voice, and obligated to holler at your pa all day long. Holler? Yes; yell and scream, I calls it.

EGLANTINE. Has nothing been heard from that aurist papa wrote to a month ago!

JANE. No, miss; not a word. Dear, dear! I shall be a dummy in six months, I'm sure. I hain't no more voice now than a frog.

EGLANTINE. Ha, ha! It's very sad, Jane. Ha, ha, ha!

JANE. Don't laugh at the misfortunate, Miss Eglantine: 'tain't lucky.

EGLANTINE. Forgive me, Jane: I didn't mean to. I believe I'm hysterical; and no wonder,—shut up by myself like this, at nineteen.

JANE. No wonder you finds it a bit dull, miss. I don't wonder at it,—not a mite.

EGLANTINE. And papa seems resolved to keep me unmarried. Half a dozen proposals already! and he's refused them all.

JANE. Yes, miss; so he have. He says regular, "Not the son-in-law for me." What kind does he expect, I wonder? A angel?

EGLANTINE. I'm afraid so, Jane. And it's got so bad that nobody now has the courage to offer, a refusal is so certain. (*Sobs.*) Or else I'm sure that gentleman who danced the whole evening with me a month ago at Lady Thornton's—

JANE. Yes, miss: I've heard you mention him often.

EGLANTINE. He was dying to offer himself, I'm sure, from the way he looked at me. But somebody has warned him, of course. (*Weeps.*) O Jane, how tedious, how tedious life is!

JANE. Yes, miss; tedious as tedious! But here comes master. Where is that letter? Oh! here it be.

(*Enter SINGLETON CODDLE, door R.*)

CODDLE (*book in hand, from which he reads.*) "Deafness is one of the most distressing afflictions which can attack mankind." Ah! distressing indeed! How true! how profoundly true!

JANE (*shouts in his ear*). A letter for you, sir. (*Holds it before his eyes.*)

[Pg 5]

CODDLE. Ah, Jane! you here? And Eglantine too. (*Takes letter.*) You needn't stick letters into my eye, Jane: you only need tell me you have them. (*Sits.*)

EGLANTINE. Possibly another offer for me. If I could only manage to peep over his shoulder!

JANE. No need, miss. He's sure to read it out. He can't never hear his own voice, and don't know but he's reading to himself. He thinks out loud too; and I knows every thing he has on his mind. It's quite a blessing, really.

CODDLE. (*Puts on glasses; catches sight of EGLANTINE.*) Tut, tut, Eglantine! Go away, child. This is for me, not you. Ten to one it's confidential too! (*Crosses left, and reads aloud.*) "My dear Coddle, I flatter myself I have found a son-in-law to your taste at last,—a nephew of mine, young, well educated, brilliant, and rich. Yours truly, Pottle."

JANE. Didn't I tell you so, miss?

CODDLE. Ah! all very well, all very well, friend Pottle; but not the man for *me*.

JANE. There, miss, just what I told ye.

EGLANTINE. I shall be in despair; I shall go crazy.

JANE. Easy, miss, easy. Don't go into no tantrums. For mercy's sake, calm yourself.

EGLANTINE. Calm myself! When life is the same dull round day after day! Calm myself! When I never see even a strange cat! Calm myself! Oh, I cannot endure it! (*Exit R., furious.*)

JANE (*carrying out the vase*). Poor young critter! Her pa ain't got no sense.—Ugh! you old yaller dog! (*Exit L.*)

CODDLE. Ah! deafness is indeed a distressing affliction. (*Shakes his head. A pause.*) Still every cloud has its silver side. Without my deafness I never could have survived the conversation—God forgive me!—of my poor dear wife. It killed her; for, finding me providentially beyond her reach, her loquacity struck in, and—there she was. But now an inscrutable Providence has taken her from me, (*Sighs deeply*) it would console me to hear a little. The doctors say they can do nothing. Ignorant rascals! I wrote to a fellow who advertises to cure deafness instantaneously by electro-acoustico magnetism, and the impudent impostor hasn't taken the trouble to answer. The whole world seems determined to thwart me. (*Takes book again, and reads.*) "In treating deafness, it should first be ascertained whether the tympanum be thickened or perforated, and whether also the minute bones of the auricular organ are yet intact." (*Sticks little finger in his ear.*) I *think* they're all right. (*Reads.*) "And, further, be certain that the Eustachian tube is free from obstruction." I wonder whether my Eustachian tube is obstructed. I must get Jane to look. I wonder where she is. Jane! (*Rings. Enter JANE L.; drops flower-pot.*) Jane!

[Pg 6]

JANE. He don't hear nothing. It's quite a pleasure to smash things when he's round.

CODDLE. Jane!

JANE (*picks up pieces*). Bah! who cares for you? I'll answer when I'm ready.

CODDLE. Jane!

JANE. Oh, call away! (*Throws pieces out of window.*) Heads there!

CODDLE. Jane! (*Rises.*) I must go for her. (*Sees her at window; shouts in her ear.*) Jane!

JANE (*puts hands to ears*). Mercy!

CODDLE. This is the fifteenth time I've called you. Are you deaf?

JANE (*courtesies*). Yes, old wretch,—deaf when I want to be. (*Both come down.*)

CODDLE. What do you say?

JANE. Pop, pop, pop, old bother! I'd like to wring your bothersome neck.

CODDLE. Yes, fine weather indeed. Look into my ear, Jane, and tell me whether my Eustachian tube is obstructed.

JANE. Eustachian tube? What is the old fool after now?

CODDLE. Look in. Why don't you look in?

JANE (*shouts*). What for, sir?

CODDLE. Eustachian tube.

JANE (*shouts*). I can't see nothing, sir.

CODDLE. What do you say?

JANE. Drat him! (*Shouts.*) I can't see *nothing*.

CODDLE. Jane, I hope you're not losing your voice. You don't speak half so loudly as usual.

JANE (*sulkily*). Perhaps I'd better have it swabbed out, then.

CODDLE. Luncheon's ready, do you say? Rather early, isn't it? Jane, I like you, do you know, [Pg 7]  
because you're such an intelligent creature.

JANE (*shouts*). Yes, sir.

CODDLE. And so much attached to *me*.

JANE (*shouts*). Yes, sir.

CODDLE. Yes: a very faithful, good, affectionate servant, Jane. I haven't forgotten you in my will, Jane. You'll find I've got you down there. I won't say how much, but something handsome, depend on it,—something handsome. (*Sits down, and takes up book again.*)

JANE. Something handsome! Five hundred dollars! I've heard him say so a score of times. He calls that handsome for busting my voice in his service. The old rat! I hate such mean goings-on. (*Cries outside.*)

VOICES. Stop him, stop him!

JANE (*runs to window*). Eh? what's that? (*Gun fired under window.*)

CODDLE. Yes, Jane, you'll be satisfied, I promise you. (*Another gun heard.*) Heaven will reward you for your care of me, my faithful girl. (*Looks up.*) Why, where the devil has the woman gone to?

JANE (*at window*). Good gracious! I say, you feller down there! Lord 'a' mercy! Get away from here! This is private property.

CODDLE (*goes to window*). Why, Jane, you seem quite excited.

JANE (*shouts in his ear*). Man with a gun in your garden, smashing the melon-frames, treading on the flower-beds!—Hey, you feller! Police! (*Noise of breaking glass.*)

CODDLE (*looks out*). The villain is smashing every thing I have in the world! Another melon-frame! Jane, hand me my gun! I'll shoot the rascal! (*Seizes gun, JANE takes up a broom.*) Follow me, Jane; follow me. The infernal scoundrel!

JANE. Drat the impident rogue! (*Both exeunt door in flat.*)

(*Enter WASHINGTON WHITWELL, left, gun in hand. Slams door behind him, advances on tiptoe, finger on trigger—glances around.*)

WHITWELL. Wrong again. Not here. What can have become of the creature! (*Sets gun down.*) He certainly ran into this house! Egad! whose house is it, by the way? Never saw a finer hare in my life. In all my experience I never saw a finer hare! I couldn't have bought him in the market under thirty cents. (*Rises.*) He's cost me a pretty penny, though. Up at six for a day's shooting. Dog starts a hare in ten minutes. Aim! Hare goes off, gun don't. Bad cap. Off I go, however, hot foot after him. He runs into a thicket. Rustic appears. I hail him. "Hallo, friend! A dollar if you'll start out that hare." A dollar for a hare worth thirty cents! say thirty-five. Out he comes; dog after him. Aim again. This time gun goes off, dog don't. Shot him. Worth forty dollars. Total so far, forty-one dollars. Load again. Hare gives me a run of five miles. Stop to rest; drop asleep. Wake up, and see hare not ten yards away, munching a cabbage. Gun again, and after him. He jumps over a fence; I jump over a fence. He comes down on his fore-paws; I come down on my fore-paws. He recovers his equilibrium; I recover mine (on the flat of my back). Suddenly I observe myself to be hunted by an army of rustics, my dollar friend among them,—well-meaning people, no doubt,—armed with flails, forks, harrows, and ploughs, and greedy for my life. They shout; I run. And here I am, after smashing fifty dollars' worth of glass and things! Total, including dog, ninety-one dollars, not to mention fine for breaking melon-frames by some miserable justice's court, say twenty dollars more! Grand total, let me see: yes, a hundred and twenty dollars, more or less, for a hare worth thirty-five cents! say forty. (*Noise outside.*) Ha! no rest for the wicked here. (*Picks up gun, rushes for door in flat—met by CODDLE; runs to door at left—met by JANE.*) Caught, by

Jupiter! (*Falls into a chair.*)

CODDLE. We've got the villain. Seize him, Jane, seize him!

JANE. Surrender, young man, in the name of the Continental Congress. (*Collars him, and takes away his gun.*)

WHITWELL. This is a pretty fix.

CODDLE. How dare you, sir, violate my privacy? knock down my walls? smash my melon-frames? fire your abominable gun under my window, sir?

JANE. Lord 'a' mercy! The young man might have killed me. Oh, you assassinating wretch!

CODDLE. The police will have a few words to say to you before you're an hour older, you burglar! [Pg 9]

WHITWELL. The deuce!

CODDLE. What's your name, sir?

JANE. Ay, what's your name? Tell us that. This is a hanging matter, I'd have you to know.

WHITWELL (*stammering*). My name? er—er—Whit—no—er—mat.

JANE (*shouts in CODDLE'S ear*). He says his name is Whittermat. Furrin of course. Mercy! what an escape!

WHITWELL (*aside*). Good idea that. I'm a foreigner! I'll keep it up.

JANE. Didn't you hear me call to you, you man-slaughterer? Are you deaf?

WHITWELL (*aside*). Deaf! Another good idea. I'll keep *that* up.

CODDLE. What does he say, Jane?

JANE. He don't say nothink, sir.

WHITWELL (*aside*). Now for it. May I ask for a bit of paper? (*Makes signs of writing.*)

CODDLE. What does the scamp say?

JANE (*shouts*). He wants some paper.

CODDLE. Paper! Impudent scoundrel! I'll paper him, and ink him too!

WHITWELL. (*Sees paper on table.*) Ah! (*Sits.*)

JANE. He's going to write some wizard thing. He'll vanish in a flame of fire, I warrant ye!

WHITWELL (*gives paper to JANE*). Here, young woman.

JANE (*to CODDLE*). Take it, sir. I dar'n't hold it. Ugh!

CODDLE. What's this? "I am afflicted with total deafness." Ha, delightful! He says he's deaf. Thank Heaven for all its mercies. He's deaf. Stone deaf!

JANE. Deef!

CODDLE. So you're deaf, eh? (*Points to ears.*) Deaf?

WHITWELL. Third term, by all means. You're right. Gen. Grant, as you say, of course.

CODDLE. Deaf! He is indeed. A Heaven-sent son-in-law! My idea realized! Heaven has heard my prayers at last.

JANE. Son-in-law! Mercy presarve us all!

CODDLE. Delightful young man! I must have a little confidential talk with him, Jane. But don't you go.

JANE. A deaf son-in-law! Lord 'a' mercy! must I have a pair on 'em on my hands! [Pg 10]

CODDLE. My afflicted friend, pray take a chair. (*WHITWELL takes no notice.*) Delicious! he don't hear a sound. (*Louder.*) Take a seat. (*Shouts.*) Seat!

WHITWELL (*bows*). Nothing to eat: thanks.

CODDLE. Charming! Overflowing with intellect. Never again disbelieve in special providences. (*Signs to WHITWELL to sit down.*)

WHITWELL (*points to easy-chair*). After you, venerable sir.

CODDLE. The manners of a prince of the blood! Kind Heaven, I thank thee! (*Both sit.*)

JANE. Deary me, deary me! A pair of posts, like, and nary a trumpet between 'em, except me.

CODDLE (*looks at WHITWELL*). Young man, you look surprised at the interest I take in you.

WHITWELL. No, sir, I prefer shad.

CODDLE. What does he say? (*Jumps up.*) Jane, who knows but he's already married! (*Sits, shouts.*) Have you a wife?

WHITWELL. Yes, sir; always with a knife.

JANE (*shouts*). Have you a wife? A wife?

WHITWELL. All my life? Yes.

JANE (*shouts*). I say, have you a wife?

WHITWELL. A wife? No.

JANE. Drat him! he's single, and marries Eglantine for sartain.

CODDLE. He said no, I thought. (*Shouts.*) Are you a bachelor? (*Shouts.*) A bachelor? Bachelor? (*Projects his ear.*)

WHITWELL. Yes.

CODDLE (*shouts*). What do you say?

WHITWELL (*roars*). Yes! By Jove, *he's* deaf, and no mistake.

CODDLE. He said yes, didn't he? (*Rises.*) A bachelor! Glorious! (*Roars.*) Will you dine with us?

WHITWELL. Lime-juice? with the shad? delicious!

CODDLE. Dine with us?

WHITWELL. With the greatest pleasure.

CODDLE. Haven't the leisure? Oh, yes, you have! We'll dine early. I'll take no refusal.—Jane, dinner at five.

JANE. Yes, sir. (*Courtesies.*) Yah, old crosspatch! with your providential son-in-laws, and your bachelors, and your dine-at-fives. [Pg 11]

CODDLE. No, thank you, Jane; not fish-balls. Curried lamb I prefer. Go, give the order at once.

JANE. Bah! with your fish-balls and your curries. Oh, if it wasn't for that trumpery legacy! Yah! (*Exit L., snarling.*)

CODDLE. Faithful Jane; invaluable friend! What should I do without her?

WHITWELL (*loudly*). My dear sir, is it possible you suffer such insolence?

CODDLE (*shouts*). You're quite right. Yes, a perfect treasure, my young friend. A model, I assure you.

WHITWELL (*aside*). Well, after that, deaf isn't the word for it.

CODDLE (*rises, shuts doors and window, sets gun in corner, then sits near* WHITWELL. *Shouts.*) Now, my *dear* friend, let us have a little talk; a confidential talk, eh!

WHITWELL. Confidential, in a bellow like that!

CODDLE (*shouts*). I wish to be perfectly frank. I asked you to dinner, not that you might eat.

WHITWELL (*aside*). What for, then, I'd like to know?

CODDLE (*shouts*). Had you been a married man, I would have sent you to jail with pleasure; but you're a bachelor. Now, I'm a father, with a dear daughter as happy as the day is long. Possibly in every respect you may not suit her.

WHITWELL (*picks up hat*). Does the old dolt mean to insult me!

CODDLE (*shouting*). But you suit *me*, my friend, to a T; and I offer you her hand, plump, no more words about it.

WHITWELL. Sir; (*Aside.*) She's humpbacked, I'll stake my life, a dromedary!

CODDLE (*shouts*). Between ourselves, sir,—in the strictest confidence, mind,—she will bring you a nest-egg of fifty thousand dollars.

WHITWELL (*aside*). A double hump, then, beyond all doubt. Not a dromedary,—a camel! a backtrian! (*Bows.*) (*Shouts.*) Sir, I appreciate the honor, but I—(*Going.*)

CODDLE. Not so fast; you can't go to her yet. If you could have heard a word she said, you shouldn't have my daughter. Do you catch my idea?

WHITWELL (*shouts*). With great difficulty, like my hare.

CODDLE (*shouts*). Perhaps you may not have noticed that I'm a trifle deaf.

WHITWELL. Ha, ha! a trifle deaf! I should say so. (*Shouts.*) I think I did notice it.

CODDLE. A little hard of hearing, so to speak.

WHITWELL (*shouts*). You must be joking.

CODDLE. Effect of smoking? Tut! I never smoke,—or hardly ever. You see, young man, I live here entirely alone with my daughter. She talks with nobody but *me*, and is as happy as a bird the livelong day.

WHITWELL (*aside*). She must have a sweet old time of it.

CODDLE. Now, suppose I were to take for a son-in-law one of the dozen who have already teased my life out for her,—a fellow with his ears entirely normal: of course they'd talk together in their natural voice, and force me to be incessantly calling out, "What's that you're saying?" "I can't hear; say that again." You understand? Ah! the young are so selfish. The thing's preposterous, of course. Now, with a son-in-law like yourself,—deaf as a door-post,—this annoyance couldn't happen. You'd shout at your wife, she'd shout back, of course, and I'd hear the whole conversation. Catch the idea?

WHITWELL (*shouts*). Fear? Oh, no! I ain't afraid. (*Aside.*) The old scoundrel looks out for number one, don't he?

(*Enter JANE, door in F., with visiting-card.*)

CODDLE (*shouts*). It's a bargain, then? Shake hands on it, my boy. I get an audible son-in-law, you, a charming wife.

WHITWELL (*aside*). Charming, eh? Ah! she with a double hump on her back, and he has the face to say she's charming.

JANE. Oh, dear! we're in for another deefy in the family. (*Shouts.*) A gentleman to see you, sir.

CODDLE. Partridges? Yes, Jane, they'll do nicely. (*Shouts.*) Now, my boy, before you see your future bride, you'll want to fix up a little, eh? (*Points to door, R.*) Step in there, my dear friend, and arrange your dress.

WHITWELL (*shakes his head*). (*Shouts.*) Distress? Not a bit. It delights me, sir. (*Aside.*) This scrape I'm in begins to look alarming.

CODDLE. The dear boy! he *is* deaf, indeed. (*Pushes him out.*) Be off, lad, be off. Find all you want in there. (*Motions to brush his hair, &c.*) Brushes, combs, collars, and a razor. (*Exit WHITWELL, R.*) I felt certain a merciful Providence would send me the right husband for Eglantine at last. Jane, you here yet? Set the table for four, remember. Every thing's settled. He accepts. What have you there? a card?

[Pg 13]

JANE (*shouts*). Yes, sir. Oh, you old botheration!

CODDLE. Good heavens!

JANE. Lawks! what now?

CODDLE. The man himself.

JANE. What man? Land's sake! he'll be the death of me.

CODDLE. In the library at this moment! Dear, faithful, affectionate Jane, wish me joy! The doctor has come at last! (*Exit R. 1 E.*)

(*EGLANTINE enters R. as her father runs out.*)

EGLANTINE. Jane, is any thing the matter with papa? Isn't he well?

JANE. Yes, miss, he's well enough. He's found that son-in-law of his'n,—that angel!

EGLANTINE. Angel? son-in-law?

JANE. That's all the matter with *him*.

EGLANTINE. Son-in-law? Good heavens! Where is he?

JANE. In that there room, a-cleaning hisself.

EGLANTINE. Did you see him? Is he young? Is he handsome?

JANE (*impressively*). You've heard of the sacrifice of Abraham, Miss Eglantine?

EGLANTINE. Certainly.

JANE (*slowly*). Well, 'tain't a circumstance to the sacrifice of Coddle!

EGLANTINE. Jane, what do you mean?

JANE. Maybe you know, miss, that, in the matter of hearing, your pa is deficient?

EGLANTINE. Yes, yes! Go on.

JANE (*slowly*). Alongside of the feller he's picked out for your beau, your pa can hear the grass grow on the mounting-top, easy!

EGLANTINE. Deaf?



JANE. Not deaf, miss; deaf ain't a touch to it.

EGLANTINE. Deaf? it's out of the question! I won't have him! I refuse him! A hundred thousand times I refuse such a husband.

JANE. Quite right, miss. He'd be the death of me. Your pa can't marry you without your consent: don't give it.

EGLANTINE. Never! They don't know me. Cruel! cruel! (*Weeps.*)

JANE. So it be, Miss Eglantine; so it be. I never see the beat on't. Better give him the mitten out of hand, miss.

EGLANTINE. Instantly, if he were here. The wretch! How dare he?

JANE. I'll call him. (*To door. Knocks.*) Mr. Whittermat! I say!—He's furrin, miss.—Mr. Whittermat! (*Knocks furiously.*)

(WHITWELL *comes out of chamber; sees* EGLANTINE.)

WHITWELL (*aside*). Ha! my partner at Lady Thornton's!

EGLANTINE (*aside*). Why, this is the gentleman I danced with at Sir Edward's! What nonsense is this about his being deaf? Jane, this gentleman hears as well as I do myself. What do you mean?

JANE. Does he, miss? Reckon not. You shall see.

WHITWELL (*aside*). How annoying I can't give a hint to Miss Coddle! If that troublesome minx were only out of the way, now!

JANE (*in ordinary voice*). Young man, you may suit Mr. Coddle, and I des'say you does, but you don't suit *here*. So git up and git.

EGLANTINE. Jane!

JANE. Pshaw! Miss Eglantine, he can't hear nary a sound.

WHITWELL (*aside*). You couldn't, if my finger and thumb were to meet on your ear, you vixen! (*To EGLANTINE.*) Miss Coddle is excessively kind to receive me with such condescending politeness.

JANE. Ha, ha, ha! I told you so, Miss Eglantine. He thinks I paid him a compliment, sartain as yeast.

EGLANTINE. Very strange! When I met this poor gentleman at Lady Thornton's, he was not afflicted in this way.

JANE. Wasn't he, miss? Well, he's paying for all his sins now. It's providential, I've no doubt.

WHITWELL (*aloud*). Pity me, Miss Coddle. A dreadful misfortune has befallen me since I had the pleasure of meeting you at the Thorntons'. My horse fell with me, and in falling I struck on my head. I have been totally deaf ever since.

[Pg 15]

EGLANTINE. Poor, poor young man! My heart bleeds for him.

WHITWELL. Ordinary conversation I am incapable of hearing; but you, Miss Coddle, whose loveliness has never been absent from my memory since that happy day, you I am certain I could understand with ease. My eyes will help me to interpret the movements of your lips. Speak to me, and the poor sufferer whose sorrows awake your healing pity will surely hear.

EGLANTINE. Can this be possible?

WHITWELL. You said, "Can this be possible?" I am sure.

EGLANTINE. Yes.

WHITWELL. I knew it.

JANE. The dickens! Can he hear with his eyes? (*Aside.*) I hope old Coddle won't never get that 'ere accomplishment.

EGLANTINE. Oh, how sad! What a misfortune! But a deaf husband! Oh, impossible! (*Exit slowly, I. U., much distressed.*)

WHITWELL (*follows to door*). Stay, oh, stay, Miss Coddle!

JANE (*laughing*). Ha, ha! Don't flatter yourself, puppy. She's not for you, jolterhead!

WHITWELL (*shakes JANE violently*). I'm a jolterhead, am I? A puppy, am I?

JANE. Lord forgive me, I do believe he can hear! (*Drops into chair.*)

WHITWELL (*pulls her up*). Yes, vixen! For you I hear perfectly. For your master, it suits me to be deaf. And, if you dare to betray me, I'll let him know your treachery. I heard your impudent speeches, every one of them.

JANE. Oh, for mercy's sake, Mr. Whittermat, don't do that! My hair would turn snow in a single night! Think of my legacy!

WHITWELL. Silence for silence, then, you wretched woman.

JANE. Certainly, certainly, Mr. Whittermat. Besides, now you ain't deaf no longer, I like you first-rate. I accept your addresses j'yful.

WHITWELL. Lucky for you, you witch.

[Pg 16]

CODDLE (*outside*). Jane!

JANE. Oh, sir, now pray be careful. He's as spiteful as spiteful. If he finds you out, all the fat'll be in the fire.

WHITWELL. Be quite easy, Jane. To win Eglantine I'll be a horse-post, a tomb-stone. Fire a thousand-pounder at my ear, and I'll not wink.

CODDLE (*outside*). Jane, Jane! I say.

JANE. Step into the garden, Mr. Whittermat; and when I ring the dinner-bell, don't you take no notice.

WHITWELL. I'm fly. But ain't I hungry, though, by Jove! Don't forget me.

JANE (*pushing him out C.*). I'll come out and call you. (*Exeunt L.*)

(*Enter CODDLE, R.*)

CODDLE. A miracle! A perfect miracle. Wonderful electro-acoustico-galvanism! I can hear! I can hear! I can hear!

(*Enter EGLANTINE.*)

EGLANTINE (*screams*). Papa, love!

CODDLE (*claps hands to his ears*). Come here, my pet. Give me a kiss, my darling. Wish your father joy. I have a surprise for you, sweet one.

EGLANTINE (*shouts*). I know what it is, papa. (*Sadly.*)

CODDLE. Don't scream so, Eglantine. It's impossible you should know it.

EGLANTINE. Know what, papa?

CODDLE. That I'm cured of my deafness. I can hear!

EGLANTINE. What! Is it possible?

CODDLE. Yes, cured miraculously by that wonderful aurist, with his electro-magnetico—no, no; electro-galvanico—no, no; pshaw! no matter. He's cured me in a flash!

EGLANTINE (*shouts*). O papa! How delightful!

CODDLE (*covering his ears*). Softly, my darling, softly. You kill me! I hear almost too well. You deafen me. My hearing is now abnormal; actually abnormal, it is so acute.

EGLANTINE (*aside*). Perhaps *he* can be cured, then. (*Shouts.*) Dearest papa, you cannot conceive how delighted I am.

CODDLE. Whisper, Eglantine, for Heaven's sake! You, torture me!

EGLANTINE (*shouts*). Yes, papa.

[Pg 17]

CODDLE. Sh—sh—for mercy's sake!

EGLANTINE (*softly*). Forgive me, papa, it's habit. O papa, I've seen him!

CODDLE (*aside*). I hear every word. Seen whom?

EGLANTINE. The gentleman you have chosen for my husband.

CODDLE. Husband? Oh, ah! I'd forgotten him. (*Aside.*) I really am cured!

EGLANTINE. Poor young man! I was miserable at first. I cried, oh, so hard!

CODDLE. Darling, you mustn't cry any more.

EGLANTINE. No, papa, I won't, for I like him extremely now. He's so handsome, and so amiable! I've met him before.

CODDLE. Tut, tut, child! I'll see him hanged first.

EGLANTINE. What? Why, papa, you *asked* him to marry me, Jane says.

CODDLE. Yes, when I was deaf. Now, however—what! marry my darling to a deaf man? Never!

EGLANTINE. O papa, you are cured: perhaps he can be cured in the same way.

CODDLE. Impossible! He's too deaf. I never knew a worse case.

EGLANTINE. The doctor might try.

CODDLE. Impossible, I tell you. Besides, he's gone away.

EGLANTINE. Let's send after him.

CODDLE. Not another word, my love, about that horrible deaf fellow! I asked him to dine here today, like an old ass; but I'll pack him off immediately after.

EGLANTINE (*angrily*). Another offer thrown away! Papa, you will kill me with your cruelty. (*Weeps*.)

CODDLE. Pooh, darling, I've another, much better offer on hand. I got a letter this morning from my friend Pottle. His favorite nephew—charming fellow.

EGLANTINE (*sobbing*). I won't take him.

CODDLE. Eglantine, a capital offer, I tell you. Capital! Young, brilliant, rich.

EGLANTINE. I won't take him! I won't take him! I won't take him! (*Stamps*.)

CODDLE. But, Eglantine—

EGLANTINE. No, no, no, no, no! I'll die an old maid first! I'll kill myself if I can't marry the man I love. (*Exit, weeping*.) [Pg 18]

CODDLE. (*Solus*.) The image of her mother! The villain has bewitched her! And to think I've asked him to dinner! A scamp I don't know, and never heard of, and who came into my house like a murderer, smashing all my hot-houses! Confound him, I'll insult him till he can't see out of his eyes! I'll dine him with a vengeance! And I'll hand him over to the police afterwards for malicious mischief—the horrid deaf ruffian! The audacity of daring to demand my daughter's hand! Deaf as he is! (*Bell heard*.) Ha! what's that infernal noise? A fire? (*Opens window*.) Bah! Jane ringing the dinner-bell. Stop, stop, stop that devilish tocsin! (*Looks down into garden*.) There sits the miscreant, reading a paper, and hearing nothing of a bell loud enough to wake the dead. Detestable blockhead! There goes Jane to call him. Faithful Jane! I long to witness the joy which irradiates her face, dear soul, when I tell her I can hear. She loves me *so* sincerely! (*Calls*.) Jane!—A servant of an extinct species. None like her nowadays. Jane, Jane! (*Enter JANE with soup-tureen*.) I've news for you, my faithful Jane.

JANE. Oh, shut up!

CODDLE. Eh! (*Looks round in bewilderment*.)

JANE (*sets table, puts soup, &c., on it*). There's your soup, old Coddle. Mollycoddle, I calls you!

CODDLE (*aside*). Bless my soul! she's speaking to me, I think. Can it be possible? Mollycoddle!

JANE. If it war'n't for that tuppenny legacy, old Cod, I'd do my best to pop you into an asylum for idiots. Yar! (*Exit, c., meets WHITWELL*.)

CODDLE. Old Cod! So this is her boasted fidelity, her undying affection! Why, the faithless, abominable, ungrateful, treacherous vixen! But her face is enough to show the vile blackness of her heart! I've suspected her for months. After all my kindness to her, too! And the money I've bequeathed her. She sha'n't stay another twenty-four hours in my house. (*Sees WHITWELL*.) Nor you either, you swindling vagabond.

WHITWELL. Hallo, the wind's shifted with a vengeance! (*Shouts*.) Thank you, you're very kind. I accept your suggestion with great pleasure.

CODDLE. Confound his impertinence! (*Bows*.) Very sorry I invited you, you scamp! Hope you'll find my dinner uneatable. [Pg 19]

WHITWELL. What can have happened? Does he suspect me? (*Shouts*.) Very true; a lovely prospect indeed.

CODDLE. Bah! the beast! A man as deaf as this fellow (*bows, and points to table*) should be hanged as a warning. (*Politely*.) This is your last visit here, I assure you.

WHITWELL. If it were only lawful to kick one's father-in-law, I'd do it on the spot. (*Shouts*.) Your unvarying kindness to a mere stranger, sir, is an honor to human nature.

CODDLE (*points*). Take a chair, sir. (*Pulls away best chair, and goes for another*.) No, no: shot if he shall have the best chair in the house! If he don't like it, he can lump it.

WHITWELL. Mighty polite! Ah! I see. He's testing me. I'll humor him.

CODDLE (*returns with a stool*). Here's the proper seat for you, you pig! (*Shouts*.) I offer you this with the greatest pleasure.

WHITWELL (*shouts*). Thanks, thanks. (*Drops voice*.) You intolerable old brute!

CODDLE. Ha!

WHITWELL (*bowing politely*). If you're ever my father-in-law, I'll show you how to treat a gentleman.

CODDLE. His father-in-law! I'll give Eglantine to a coal-heaver first,—the animal! (*Shouts*.) Pray be seated, (*drops voice*) and choke yourself.

WHITWELL (*shouts*). One gets a very fine appetite after a hard day's sport. (*Drops voice*.) Atrocious old ruffian!

CODDLE. Old ruffian! This is insufferable. (*They sit*.)

WHITWELL (*shouts*). Will not Miss Coddle dine with us to-day?

CODDLE. Jackanapes! Not if I know it. (*Shouts*.) She's not well. This soup is cold, I fear. (*Offers some*.)

WHITWELL. Eat it yourself, old foozle. (*Bows courteously a refusal*.)

CODDLE. Infamous puppy! (*Shouts*.) Nay, I insist. (*Drops voice*.) It's smoked,—just fit for you.

WHITWELL (*shouts*). Thanks, no: never eat soup. (*Drops voice*.) Old savage, lucky for you I adore your lovely daughter!

CODDLE. Shall I pitch this tureen at his head?—Jane! (*Enter JANE with a dish*.) Take off the soup, Jane. This gentleman won't have any. What have you there? [Pg 20]

JANE (*shouts*). Partridge and spinach, sir. (*Puts dish on table*.)

WHITWELL (*shouts*). A delicious dish, Mr. Coddle,—my favorite.

CODDLE (*shouts*). Yes? (*Puts partridge on his own plate*.) Jane can't boil spinach. I hate spinach. (*Helps WHITWELL to the spinach*.)

WHITWELL (*rises*). I can't stand this. This is a little too much!

CODDLE (*shouts*). Nothing more? Good! (*Drops voice*.) Get rid of you all the sooner.—Jane, cigars. Give me a Havana; hand Mr. Whittermat a stogy. (*Crosses to R*.)

WHITWELL (*aside, furious*). How much longer shall I stand this?

JANE (*aside to WHITWELL*). Hush! He don't know you hear him. Don't upset your fish-kittle.

WHITWELL (*aside*). Very well. I'd like to drop him into it.

JANE. Hoity, toity! Now see me. We'll have a little fun with the old sheep.

CODDLE. Jane, where are those cigars?

JANE (*takes box from console, and offers it; shouts*). Here they be. (*Drops voice*.) Jackass! tyrant! muttonhead! I hope they'll turn your stomick.

CODDLE (*seizes her ear*). What? You infamous minx! I a jackass? I a tyrant? I a muttonhead? (*Pulls her round*.) I'm a sheep, am I? I'm a mollycoddle, am I? You call me an idiot, do you?

JANE (*screams*). Ah! he hears, he hears.

CODDLE. You'll have a little fun out of the old sheep, will you? You tell me to shut up, eh? Clap me into an asylum, will you? (*Lets go her ear*.)

JANE. A miracle! I'm dead. (*Crosses to L., screaming*.)

(*Enter EGLANTINE*.)

EGLANTINE. Papa! For heaven's sake, what *is* the matter?

WHITWELL (*stupefied*). What, Mr. Coddle! I thought you were deaf. Is it possible you can hear?

CODDLE (*shouts*). Perfectly well, sir; and so it seems can you. I will repeat, if you wish it, every one of those delectable compliments you paid me five minutes since. [Pg 21]

WHITWELL (*to EGLANTINE*). I can't believe my ears. Miss Coddle, has he been shamming deafness, then, all this time?

EGLANTINE (*shouts*). No, indeed. A doctor cured his deafness only half an hour ago.

JANE. Ah! Dear old master, was it kind to deceive me in this fashion? Why didn't ye tell me? Ah! now ye can hear, I love you tenderer than ever.

CODDLE. Tell you, you pig, you minx! I tell you to walk out of my house.

WHITWELL (*aside*). I'll take you into my service.

CODDLE (*loud to WHITWELL*). Come, sir, you too. You are an impostor, sir. Leave my house.

EGLANTINE. Ah, papa! I love him.

WHITWELL. What do I hear? You love me, Eglantine?

EGLANTINE (*shrieks*). Ah-h-h! I forgot you could hear. (*Hides her face in her hands*.)

WHITWELL. Thank Heaven, I can! or I should have lost the rapture of that sweet avowal. Mr. Coddle, I love—I adore your daughter. You heard a moment since the confession that escaped her innocent lips. Surely you cannot turn a deaf ear to the voice of nature, and see us both miserable for life. Remember, sir, you have now no deaf ear to turn. Be merciful.

CODDLE. What, sir! Give you my daughter after all your frightful insults? Never!

WHITWELL. Remember how you treated me, sir; and reflect, too, that you began it. Insults are not insults unless intended to be heard. For every thing I said, I apologize from the bottom of my heart. Ah, sir! be considerate, lenient.

CODDLE (*after a pause*). Do you retract "old ruffian"?

WHITWELL. Certainly.

EGLANTINE. Ah, papa! forgive him. He retracts "old ruffian."

CODDLE. And "brute"?

WHITWELL. Of course.

CODDLE. And "old fozzle"?

WHITWELL. Entirely, sir.

*Eglantine*. Papa, of course he does.

CODDLE (*a pause*). No, Mr. Whittermat, I can't give my daughter to a man I never heard of in my life,—and with such a preposterous name too! No, no. [Pg 22]

WHITWELL. My name is Whitwell, my dear sir,—not Whittermat: nephew of your old friend Benjamin Pottle.

CODDLE. God bless me! Nephew of Ben Pottle! Why didn't you say so before? What did you tell me your name was Whittermat for?

WHITWELL. Some singular mistake, sir: I never did. Can't imagine how the mistake could have occurred.

CODDLE. Well, well, Mr. Whitwell, this alters the case. Your uncle wrote me about you. Extraordinary coincidence! Well, since you heard all *I* said—Ha, ha, ha!

WHITWELL. Of course I did. Ha, ha, ha! For every Roland of mine you gave me two Olivers at least. Ha, ha, ha!

CODDLE. Neither of us deaf, eh? Diamond cut diamond,—ha, ha, ha! Pull dog, pull devil, eh? (*Bursting with laughter. All laugh heartily.*)

JANE. He, he, he! I never thought I'd live to see this happy day, master.

CODDLE. Hold your tongue, you impudent cat! Quit my house. Mollycoddle, indeed!

JANE. O Mr. Coddle, you won't go for to turn off a faithful servant in this way. (*Aside to WHITWELL.*) That legacy's lost. (*To CODDLE.*) Ah, master dear! you won't find nobody else as'll work their fingers to the bone, and their voice to a thread-paper, as I have: up early and down late, and yelling and screeching from morning till night. Well, the house will go to rack and ruin when I'm gone,—that's one comfort.

WHITWELL (*aside to JANE*). The money's yours, cash down, the day of my wedding.

CODDLE. Well, well, Jane, I'll forgive you, for luck. I'm too happy to bear malice. But I wish you knew how to boil spinach.

JANE. I'll learn right straight off, sir.

CODDLE. Well, hang delay, children! I'll engage Dr. Harrold for a week from to-day, and invite all our friends (*to the audience*) to witness the wedding. Church of the Holy Cross, remember. No low church for me. All who mean to come will please signify it by clapping their hands, and the harder the better. Not many refusals here. (*Curtain falls.*)

R. EGLANTINE. WHITWELL. CODDLE. JANE. L.

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## HITTY'S SERVICE FLAG

A Comedy in Two Acts

*By Gladys Ruth Bridgham*

Eleven female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, an interior. Plays an hour and a quarter. Hitty, a patriotic spinster, quite alone in the world, nevertheless hangs up a service flag in her window without any right to do so, and opens a Tea Room for the benefit of the Red Cross. She gives shelter to Stella Hassy under circumstances that close other doors against her, and offers refuge to Marjorie Winslow and her little daughter, whose father in France finally gives her the right to the flag. A strong dramatic presentation of a lovable character and an ideal patriotism. Strongly recommended, especially for women's clubs.

*Price, 25 cents*

## **CHARACTERS**

MEHITABLE JUDSON, *aged 70.*  
LUELLA PERKINS, *aged 40.*  
STASIA BROWN, *aged 40.*  
MILDRED EMERSON, *aged 16.*  
MARJORIE WINSLOW, *aged 25.*  
BARBARA WINSLOW, *her daughter, aged 6.*  
STELLA HASSY, *aged 25, but claims to be younger.*  
MRS. IRVING WINSLOW, *aged 45.*  
MARION WINSLOW, *her daughter, aged 20.*  
MRS. ESTERBROOK, *aged 45.*  
MRS. COBB, *anywhere from 40 to 60.*

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## **THE KNITTING CLUB MEETS**

A Comedy in One Act

*By Helen Sherman Griffith*

Nine female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, an interior. Plays half an hour. Eleanor will not forego luxuries nor in other ways "do her bit," putting herself before her country; but when her old enemy, Jane Rivers, comes to the Knitting Club straight from France to tell the story of her experiences, she is moved to forget her quarrel and leads them all in her sacrifices to the cause. An admirably stimulating piece, ending with a "melting pot" to which the audience may also be asked to contribute. Urged as a decided novelty in patriotic plays.

*Price, 25 cents*

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## **GETTING THE RANGE**

A Comedy in One Act

*By Helen Sherman Griffith*

Eight female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, an exterior. Well suited for out-of-door performances. Plays an hour and a quarter. Information of value to the enemy somehow leaks out from a frontier town and the leak cannot be found or stopped. But Captain Brooke, of the Secret Service, finally locates the offender amid a maze of false clues, in the person of a washerwoman who hangs out her clothes day after day in ways and places to give the desired information. A capital play, well recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

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## **LUCINDA SPEAKS**

A Comedy in Two Acts

*By Gladys Ruth Bridgham*

Eight women. Scene, an interior; costumes, modern. Plays an hour and a quarter. Isabel Jewett has dropped her homely middle name, Lucinda, and with it many sterling traits of character, and is not a very good mother to the daughter of her husband over in France. But circumstances bring "Lucinda" to life again with wonderful results. A pretty and dramatic contrast that is very effective. Well recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

## **CHARACTERS**

ISABEL JEWETT, *aged 27.*  
 MIRIAM, *her daughter, aged 7.*  
 MRS. McBIERNEY, *aged 50.*  
 TESSIE FLANDERS, *aged 18.*  
 MRS. DOUGLAS JEWETT, *aged 45.*  
 HELEN, *her daughter, aged 20.*  
 MRS. FOGG, *aged 35.*  
 FLORENCE LINDSEY, *aged 25.*

## SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Dining-room in Isabel Jewett's tenement, Roxbury, October, 1918.

ACT II.—The same—three months later.

## WRONG NUMBERS

A Triologue Without a Moral

*By Essex Dane*

Three women. Scene, an interior; unimportant. Costumes, modern. Plays twenty minutes. Royalty, \$5.00. An intensely dramatic episode between two shop-lifters in a department store, in which "diamond cuts diamond" in a vividly exciting and absorbingly interesting battle of wits. A great success in the author's hands in War Camp work, and recommended in the strongest terms. A really powerful little play.

*Price, 25 cents*

## FLEURETTE & CO.

A Duologue in One Act

*By Essex Dane*

Two women. Scene, an interior; costumes, modern. Plays twenty minutes. Royalty, \$5.00. Mrs. Paynter, a society lady who does not pay her bills, by a mischance puts it into the power of a struggling dressmaker, professionally known as "Fleurette & Co.," to teach her a valuable lesson and, incidentally, to collect her bill. A strikingly ingenious and entertaining little piece of strong dramatic interest, strongly recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

## Plays for Junior High Schools

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Price</i>
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Mr. Bob	3	4	1½ "	25c
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BAKER, Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

## Plays and Novelties That Have Been "Winners"

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Royalty</i>
Camp Fidelity Girls		11	2½ hrs.	35c	None
Anita's Trial		11	2 "	35c	"
The Farmerette		7	2 "	35c	"
Behind the Scenes		12	$1\frac{1}{2}$ "	35c	"
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