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C O M R A D E S.

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

BY

GEORGE M. BAKER.

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PRINTED, NOT PUBLISHED.

1877.



COSTUMES.

[3]

Royal. Age 35. Act I. Velvet breakfast jacket, light pants, dark vest, dark curly wig slightly sprinkled with gray, dark mustache, and side whiskers. Act II. Dark suit, thin travelling "ulster," slouch hat. Act III. Dark mixed suit.

Matt. Age 45. Act I. Ragged suit, with army cap, full gray ragged beard, rough gray wig; red nose, and general make up of a drunkard. Act II. Riding coat, light pants, riding boots, wide collar rolled over coat, open at throat; neat gray wig, long gray side whiskers; face clean shaved, a little florid, whole appearance neat. Act III. 1st dress. Old ragged army overcoat, buttoned at throat, slouch hat, whiskers and wig as in act II, but chin rough and dirty, nose red, general rough appearance. 2d dress, on last appearance, same as in act II, chin clean and smooth; general appearance the same as in act II.

Marcus. Age 24. Act I. Genteel riding suit, with boots and whip. Act II. Darksuit, and travelling overcoat or ulster. Act III. Handsome mixed full suit. Hair and mustache natural.

Simon. Age 25. Act I. Fashionable "loud" spring suit, red neck-tie, white hat, red wig. Act II. Dark pants, green apron, short green jacket. Act III. Light pants, blue coat with brass buttons, black hat, large gold chain, diamond pin *a la* Tweed; dark pants and white gaiters.

May. Act I. Tasty morning dress, with pretty morning cap. Act II. Afternoon dress, muslin; apron and gloves on entrance. Act III. Evening dress, handsome and tasty.

Bessie. Three dresses of the same character to contrast with May.

Nancy. Act I. Balmoral Petticoat, calico dress, pinned up; sleeves rolled up. Act II. Neat muslin dress, with apron. Act III. Brown dress, white collar and cuffs.

CHARACTERS.

[4]

ROYAL MANNING.

MATT WINSOR, a tramp.

MARCUS GRAVES.

SIMON STONE, a Jack at all Trades.

MAY MANNING, "Roy's Wife."

COMRADES.

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Room in ROYAL MANNING'S home. Doors C., open to garden; long window in flat; L., with curtains, draped back, stand of flowers before it; upright piano against flat, R., of door, at which BESSIE is seated, playing, back to audience. Mantel, R., with fireplace. ROYAL standing in chair hanging a sabre (sheathed) above the mantel. Table L., C., MAY seated L. of it, sewing. Chair R. of table, hassock near it; ottoman back near window. Doors 1 and 3 entrance R.; door 2d entrance, L. Flowers in vase on mantel; whole scene tasty and comfortable. Music at rising of curtain,—“The Dearest Spot on Earth to me is Home, Sweet Home!”*

ROYAL. There, May, we'll hang this relic of my warrior days above the mantel, to remind us, that now I have become a husband, the sword is beaten into a ploughshare.

MAY. Very appropriate, now you have become a husbandman.

ROY. Good, very good! Wedlock has sharpened your wits. Yes, I am the happy husband of the best little wife ever erring man was blessed with. Oh, blissful state of matrimony! why did I not become your naturalized citizen before? (*Steps from chair*). There, old friend, rest in peace! no more shall we in fellowship dash upon the enemy; no more, hand in hand, encounter the perils of the battlefield, the glory of triumph, the shame of defeat. Oh, rest in peace, old dog of war, until you grow rusty with honorable age!

MAY. How very pathetic! You have pronounced the eulogy. Bess, a dirge would be appropriate just now.

BESS. Yes. How would “Old Dog Tray” suit the occasion?

ROY. Very bad. A biting sarcasm (*Looks at sabre*). Rather ornamental. Hey, May? (*Sits in chair, R. of table.*)

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MAY. It has a wicked look. It makes me shudder.

ROY. Indeed! then down it comes. (*Rises.*)

MAY. No, let it hang. I only fear that, like its master, it may occasionally have martial fits, and then—

ROY. Fits! Well, what then?

MAY. My poor vases would fall beneath the sword.

ROY. Never fear; like its master, 'tis securely tied to your apron-string. How time flies! 'Tis ten years since my old friend and I closed our campaign.

MAY. And just three months since we closed our campaign—

ROY. Of courtship, yes, and massed our forces for the battle of life. Yes, yes. Then I captured the heart, which, for two years, I had so valiantly attacked.

MAY. Valiantly, indeed. 'Twas with fear and trembling, you, the veteran warrior, approached the citadel.

ROY. Which was longing to surrender.

MAY. No; I'll not confess that.

ROY. But you do not regret it, May? You are happy here?

MAY. Happy, Roy? I never dared to dream of so much happiness. I, a poor sewing-girl, earning my living with the needle, have now a home any lady might well be proud of, and a husband—

BESS. Ahem!

ROY (*rising*). Hallo! Little Pitcher's ears are wide open. (*Crossing to mantel, and leaning against it*). What's the matter, Bess?

BESS (*swinging round on stool*). Can't you speak a little louder, you two? It's so provoking to only hear the ripple of a conversation which you know will be sure to end in a smacking breeze.

ROY. I was not within saluting distance. (*Aside.*) I wish I had been.

BESS. Then I should have had a full report of your conversation. Ha! ha! ha! you two have been married three months, and have not yet finished your courting. Remarkable vitality! I thought love-making ended at the altar.

ROY. Remarkable ignorance, Bess. But you are young and green. Did you, indeed?

BESS. Yes; and that the flame of love was extinguished when the husband, poor man! was obliged to rise, on a cold, frosty morning, to build the fire.

ROY. That only adds fuel to the flame.

BESS. That the fountain of affection ceased to flow, when he had to go a mile to draw a pail of water.

ROY. Liquid nonsense. You are alluding, of course, now, chatterbox, to our first effort at housekeeping; but all that is over; everything is nicely arranged, and we can now bask in the warmth of domestic fires.

BESS. If the chimney doesn't smoke,—which it does, you know, awfully.

ROY (*crossing to chair R. of table*). Hang the chimney! You'd put a damper on anything. May, what shall we do with this girl?

MAY. Let her scoff. It will be our turn soon; her fate is approaching.

BESS (*jumping up*). Did you hear his step?

ROY. Ha! ha! ha!

"By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes."

BESS. It's Marcus, and you have told me. (*Exit C.*)

MAY. Stop! stop! Bess! I hear nothing.

ROY. Let her go; no doubt she'll meet Marcus, and, having found him, she'll *mark-us* no more. Do you know, May, I'm getting anxious about that young man.

MAY. He's a very agreeable fellow, seems honest, and is fast winning the affections of Bess.

ROY. Yes, I know all that you know; but what we don't know is what bothers me. When, in pursuit of happiness, I made my way to the humble but comfortable residence of the late Mrs. Bradley, you being the attraction, I found this young man paying court to Bess in the parlor, while I emulated his example by making love to you in the sitting-room.

MAY. They were well called suite (*soot*) er rooms, ha! ha! ha!

ROY. Allow me to correct your pronunciation for suite (*sweet*) er, rooms, they must have been, with two pair of lovers. Well, Mrs. Bradley died. You must have a home; there was nothing to hinder, and we were married, came here, and brought Bess with us, a welcome addition to our household.

MAY. Dear girl! She is the light of our house.

ROY. Well, I cannot exactly agree with you, having a star of the first magnitude before my eyes. As a matter of course, Mr. Marcus Graves follows. I don't object to that, but I do object to his secretiveness. Who is he? He seems to have no relatives, no friends: at least he never speaks of them.

MAY. You know his business?

ROY. Yes. He's a drummer.

MAY. A military man. Then you surely should like him.

ROY. A military man—not exactly, our military drummer—musters his men to battle with the rattle of his sheepskin; your civil drummer, with the rattle of his tongue, taps the sheepskin of the men he musters, and too often makes enemies in his own ranks, with short and poor rations not up to sample. Yes; I have become the natural protector of this young lady, and should know something about this ardent suitor who never speaks of marriage.

MAY. To be sure you should. Well, why don't you?

ROY. What! Pin him in a corner, and, like a stern parent, ask him who are his parents, and what are his intentions.

MAY. And what then?

ROY. Ten to one he'll fly into a passion, tell me it's none of my business, and quit the house in disgust.

MAY. Somehow, Roy, I have faith in Marcus Graves.

ROY. Because Bessie loves him. Oh, the warm cloak of affection covers a multitude of sins!

MAY. For the world I would not bring a pang to her dear heart! Her mother, for fifteen years, was the dearest friend I had in the world. When the war broke out, my father went to battle. We were all in the West then. What ever became of him I never knew. No doubt he died for his country as bravely as he went forth. My mother—

ROY. Deserted you! Fled with your father's friend! It's a sad story, May. Don't speak of it.

MAY. Yes: I was left to the care of strangers. And this kind neighbor, Mrs. Bradley, took pity upon me. She was poor; but, hard as was her lot, I was treated as her own child. O Roy! she was a mother to the friendless little stranger! Heaven knows I am grateful! All the tenderness she bestowed upon me I have tried to repay in love for her child. In days of poverty, Bess and I shared our crusts together; and now that fortune has blessed me with prosperity, her happiness is more than ever, with your dear help, to be the aim of my life. Comrades in adversity should be comrades in prosperity.

ROY. Right, Mary. For her happiness we will strive together. Comrades! ah, that brings back the old days, May! But I forget; you do not like to have me speak of them.

MAY. You do not mean that, Roy. Am I not proud of your war record? Do I not glory in your triumphs, there where brave men fought and fell.

ROY. That old sabre, if it had a tongue, could tell wondrous stories. Ah! old fellow! you failed me once. In those old days I had a friendship for a man in our regiment, with whom I made a queer compact, something after the manner of yours and Bessie's. He saved my life one day. 'Twas at Antietam, we were swooping down upon the enemy,—a cloud of horsemen with flashing sabres. Just as we reached the foe, my horse stumbled and fell. I thought my time had come. But between me and a descending sabre rode my comrade. I was saved. That night in camp we renewed our friendship, and, in jovial mood, vowed that whatever good fortune should be in store for us in the future should be shared between us. We were both poor—nothing but our soldier's pay. The war ending, we parted. He went West in search of friends. I come here, to find my only friend, my father, dead, and, to my surprise, a small fortune awaiting me. Poor fellow! I often wonder if he fared as well. (*Rises, goes R.*)

MAY. And you have not seen him since?

ROY. No: one of these days I mean to hunt him up.

MAY. To share with him your fortune?

ROY (*comes to back of her chair, hand on table; looks at her*). If he be poor, yes; for I shall still be rich. He could not claim my chief treasure, my pearl above price,—you (*stoops to kiss her*).

(*Enter Bess, C.*)

BESS. Ahem!

ROY (*starting up, and crossing to R.*). Bother that girl! Well, what now?

BESS. I smell smoke, and where there's smoke there must be fire.

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ROY. Not where you are. You're a capital extinguisher.

MAY. Did you find him, Bess?

BESS. No. 'Twas a false alarm. Oh, dear! why don't he come?

ROY. Poor dear! how sad! Hasn't seen him since last night—no, this morning; for I'll be hanged if the sun wasn't rising when I got up to fasten the door after him!

BESS. Yes, your father's son. What a shame—

ROY. You're right. I nearly caught my death.

BESS. To talk so! You know he left the house before ten.

ROY. This morning, yes. Quite time to be moving.

MAY. Roy, don't torment her. See how anxious she is!

ROY. As anxious as a cat to seize a poor little mouse, that she may tease it.

BESS. Oh, you wicked wretch! You know we never quarrel. (*Goes L.*)

(*MARCUS runs in C., riding-whip in hand.*)

MAR. Oh, here you are, Manning! Call your chickens under their mother's wing; fasten up the hen-roost; barricade your pigpen; call out your troops, and plant your biggest guns upon the ramparts. The enemy is at your door!

ROY. Halloo! Halloo! What's the matter?

MAY. Enemy! what enemy?

BESS. Marcus, have you been drinking?

ROY. I told you he was up late. Well, old fellow, who is the enemy?

MAR. The terror of housekeepers! the devourer of cold meats! the robber of the clothes-line! Hush! "take heed! whisper low"—the tramp.

ROY. Oh!

BESS. Ah!

MAY. Indeed!

MAR. Yes. I met a true type of the fraternity half a mile below. He stopped my horse, and begged money. I always make short work of these fellows, so tossed him a quarter and rode on. He turned into that shanty set apart for the entertainment of man and beast, and no doubt will pour entertainment down his throat in beastly style. So look out, Manning. He may pay you a visit.

ROY. 'Twill be a short one, then; and I'll give him no quarter.

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MAR. Well, how are you all, particularly my bonny Bess? (*Shakes hands with her, L.*)

ROY. Half a mile below. Did he look rough?

MAR. Rough, but good-natured. Dress ragged, face bloated, figure plump. These fellows thrive on their pickings these pests.

ROY. Don't say that, Marcus. The fellow may have been unfortunate.

MAR. Unfortunate? Bah! What's misfortune but a roll in the dust?—jump up, shake yourself, and

you're as good as new. I've no patience with a man who wants vim—something on the side of his face—you know—cheek!

ROY. Yes: a quality which tramps (*aside*) and drummers (*aloud*) possess in a wonderful degree. (*BESS goes up to piano.*)

MAR. For my part, I never allow myself to be staggered by the blows of fate. When they come, I take a long breath, and hit out straight from the shoulder.

MAY. When did you hear from your father, Mr. Graves?

MAR (*confused*). Eh,—my fa—yes—oh, yes! That is—not lately.

MAY. He was well when you heard?

MAR. Oh, yes, beautiful—that is hearty—he wishes to be remembered to all my customers—my friends, I mean.

(*Goes up to piano.*)

ROY (*coming to table*). May, what are you doing?

MAY. Pinning him in a corner. You men are so afraid of each other. Woman's curiosity knows no fear. We've found out one thing: he has a father.

ROY. Yes, and one other: he's afraid of him. Did you notice his hesitation?

MAY. Yes. There's some mystery about that father, which I mean to fathom.

ROY. But not now; give him time. You staggered him—after his boast, too. He didn't strike out well. Come, let's go into the garden. The young people want to be left alone. (*Goes up.*)

MAY (*rising*). Yes. I want you to look at my heliotropes; they're just splendid! (*Goes up and places arm in Roy's.*)

ROY. All right. Good-by, Bess. Don't catch cold. There's a smacking breeze coming.

BESS. And another going. Good-by.

(*ROY and MAY exit C.*)

(*GRAVES comes down slowly and sits in chair R., of table. BESS watches him without speaking.*)

GRAVES (*slowly*). Now what possessed Mrs. Manning to speak of my father? A subject to which I have never alluded. Can she mistrust me? Egad! she nearly took away my breath. My boasted boldness vanished like a flash. (*BESS rises, takes a wisp of hay from mantel, and comes behind him.*) And yet I've nothing to be ashamed of,—only a mystery. Mystery! why should I have a mystery here? (*BESS tickles his ear with the wisp. He brushes it off quickly.*) Confound it! it's hurting me. This girl loves me, and I love her. I've only to speak and she is mine. (*BESS tickles him. He brushes it off.*) Hang it! I'm tormented with doubts. But confession is a sure road to favor. I'll make a confidant of Bessie. If anybody else should tell her I should be (*BESS tickles him again*) stung with shame. Yes, I'll meet it (*BESS puts her arms round his neck and brings her face round as he speaks this*) face to face.

BESS. Dreaming, Marcus? (*Sits on hassock at his feet, back to audience.*)

MAR. Why, Bess, what a brute I've been! Yes, dreaming, Bess, of a happy future, I trust, in store for you and me. Do you ever dream of that time?

BESS. Not I. When the skies are bright above us, why should we seek to peep even in dreams beneath the horizon when we know not what storms may be gathering there to roll over the brightness of the present?

MAR. Yes; but the cautious mariner is ever alert for the faintest signs of the coming storm.

BESS. Well, I am not a mariner, and my umbrella is always at hand.

MAR. Bess, can't you be serious?

BESS. I don't know. Try me.

MAR. Bess, I love you.

BESS. A failure, Marcus. That pleases me.

MAR. And you are to be my wife?

BESS. Another, Marcus. That delights me.

MAR. Yes, Bess; I know my love is returned. For three years we have been all in all to each other; and now, Bess, I tell you I am unworthy of your love.

BESS. You, Marcus! Now, you surprise me!

MAR. You trust me fully? You would go with me to the altar hand in hand, beyond the altar to death itself—

BESS. To death itself, Marcus!

MAR. And yet, on my part, there has been no confidence; into my past life you have had no glimpse. You took me, a stranger, to your heart,—never questioned me; and, beyond the interchange of affection, myself, my fortune, and my home are strangers still.

BESS. Blind, Marcus! Blind, are you? My woman's curiosity sought in the beginning to know you; my

heart's instinct probed you, to know if you were worthy. I found you polite, chivalrous, charitable, with a heart open to every cry of distress, a hand ever ready to proffer assistance. Oh, I tried you deeply, as your purse can show! I found you true, noble, sincere. I had no right to question further.

MAR. But you must know me, Bess.

BESS. When you please, Marcus.

MAR. Then patiently hear me; for on your judgment rest my hopes of future happiness.

BESS. Indeed! Now, Marcus, I *am* serious.

MAR. Bess!

(*Enter SIMON STONE, C., quickly.*)

SIM. Beg your pardon! Don't rise—I may be right. I may be mistaken—Don't rise. Is this the abode of Miss Nancy Nipper?

BESS (*rises quickly. MARCUS sits still*). Yes. Nancy is in the kitchen.

SIM. Oh, made a mistake! Yes, yes. Can you point out the position of the culinary department of your dwelling?

BESS. I will call her in. Take a seat.

SIM. Ah, thank you. (*BESS exit R. I. E.*) Here's my card. Gone! gone without it, and I went to the expense of getting up that card for the express purpose of having it placed in the hands of Miss Nancy Nipper. Says I, "Simon, don't be shabby. Go, like a gentleman. Spare no expense."—and it's useless. (*Comes down R., turns, and sees MARCUS in chair.*) Halloa, Mark!—Mark, the perfect man.

MAR (*rises*). Si, old fellow where in the world did you drop from? (*Gives hand.*)

SIMON (*takes hand and shakes it*). Well, in truth, Mark—But stop. I interrupted a *tete-a-tete*. There was a young lady sitting on that hassock. O Mark, this is too bad! I'm in the way. Good-by (*starts for door*).

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MAR (*detaining him*). Stop, stop, Si! it's all right. But why are you here?

SIMON. I—why—well—Look here, Mark, I know I'm in the way. I'll come again (*starts for door*).

MAR (*detaining him*). No, no; it's all right, Si. I see—you're in love with our Nancy.

SIMON. Our Nancy! Our—Good gracious, Mark! You don't mean to say that you are aspiring to the affection of that damsel?

MAR. Ha, ha, Si! You need not fear. When I said our Nancy, I meant our girl—help, you understand.

SIMON. Oh! Ah! Then you are one of the family.

MAR (*confused*). Well, no. Not exactly.

SIMON. Oh, I see. Don't blush, but I'm sure I must be in the way. I'll come again (*starts for door*).

MAR (*detaining him*). Simon, stop. If you leave this room we are enemies.

SIMON. But, Mark, I might blast your prospects, were it known that you and I—

MAR. Were friends, dear friends; that you were the only one who reached out a helping hand to me a destitute stranger, when I entered yonder city, five years ago.

SIMON. None of that, Mark. Don't be shabby; helping hand, indeed, to a loft in the sixth story, a bed on a heap of rags, and dry bread washed down with water.

MAR. Divided your substance with me. Sim, when I forget your kindness, may I be as hungry as I was then.

SIMON. Yes; but, Mark—

MAR. Hush. Here comes Miss Bess.

SIMON. Then I'll just step outside (*going*).

MAR (*detaining him*). Not a step.

(*Enter BESS, R. I. E.*)

BESS. Nancy will be here in a minute. Mr.—

MAR (*coming down L., leading SIMON, the right hands clasped*). Bess, Miss Bradley, allow me to present a very dear friend,—Mr. Simon Stone, my chum.

BESS. Indeed (*offering her hand*). Mr. Stone, you are very welcome here.

SIMON (*takes hand*). Ah—yes; thank you. Thank you—very kind (*goes L.*). Chums. Chums,—before her, too. There's nothing shabby about that.

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MAR. We'll leave you, Simon, to your friend; but don't go until I've seen you again.

BESS. Oh, no. You must stop to dinner.

(*BESS and MARCUS exeunt, C., arm in arm.*)

SIMON. Yes, thank you, much obliged. Well, now, that's hearty; pretty as a picture, and he, there's nothing shabby about him. Now, for Nancy. Won't her eyes glisten when she sees me in this stunning get-

up. I never did care for dress, but when I made up my mind to look after Nancy again, I said to myself, "Simon, don't be shabby; do the thing in style;" and here I am, bran' new from top to toe, from shampoo to shining leather, but with the same old heart inside of me, advancing double-shuffle to the tune of "Nancy is my darling."

(Enter NANCY, R. I. E.)

NANCY. Now, I'd like to know who—Good gracious! it's Simon Stone.

SIMON. Nancy, it is. Simon, your Simon. How dye do (*offers hand*).

NANCY. Well, I declare! rigged out like a dancing-jack. You extravagant dog!

SIMON (*turning round*). Gay, ain't it. Cut to order by an artist, (*turns round*); look at the "elegance of expression" in the back of that coat, and the *tout ensemble* of these pantaloons. That's what he called 'em, and I know they're there, for I paid for 'em. Nothing shabby about me.

NANCY. Well, and what brings you here?

SIMON. Love, Nancy. Devotion, Nancy. Affection, Nancy—

NANCY. Rubbish! Are you a fool? Don't you know better than to bring such things here on a washing-day?

SIMON. Washing-day! Confound it, Nancy! I'm fated to call when you are in the suds.

NANCY. Because you always manage to come on a Monday, when I am up to my ears in a tub.

SIMON. Monday—washing-day. That's why somebody says cleanliness comes next to godliness.

NANCY. Simon Stone, what is your present occupation?

SIMON. Nancy, at present I am a humble but earnest worker in the confectionery business. (*Takes box from left coat pocket.*) Have a gum-drop? (*Offers paper.*)

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NANCY. No. Confectionery, indeed!

SIMON (*puts back paper*). Nancy, the first time I ever approached you in humble admiration of your grace and beauty—try a peppermint. (*Takes paper from his pocket and offers it.*)

NANCY (*folding her arms and turning her head*). No.

SIMON (*puts back paper*). I was a butcher,—an honest but bloody butcher. You turned up your nose at the scent of blood.

NANCY. Because I knew you wouldn't stick to it.

SIMON. I turned my back upon the slaughtered beeves, and in that higher sphere, the milky way, sought to win your love. You politely but firmly assured me I couldn't *comet* in that line.

NANCY. I detest the whole race! Milk and water men! I'd like to scald them.

SIMON. Cremation would suit them better. My next venture was in the slippery walks of butter and cheese.

NANCY. Anything but a butter man.

SIMON. So I found out, when I attempted to slide into your affections in that role. You told me to cheese it. I understood you, and I sought a higher sphere. I embarked in the electric line, and went out into the highways and by-ways to introduce lightning-rods.

NANCY. Well, I found no fault with that.

SIMON. No; but I did.

NANCY. Why didn't you stick to it?

SIMON. Well, Nancy, (*takes box from breast pocket*). Have a little taffee?

NANCY. No.

SIMON (*puts paper back*). The fact is, lightning-rods don't agree with me. I started out in high hopes, one bright morning, espied an unprotected dwelling, rushed boldly up, rung the bell, notwithstanding a gigantic mastiff lay at my feet, evidently occupied in catching flies. Gent came to the door. In glowing speech I introduced my business. He rubbed his chin, said, "I don't know," and looked at the dog. I found he did know, when he further remarked, with emphasis, "Rover, here's another rod man." The dog gave a growl and rose. An electric shock was communicated to my being, and I calculated in one brief minute how many rods I should have to clear before reaching my rods outside. Then I left, closely attended by the dog. I didn't own these clothes then; if I had my loss would have been greater, especially in that part of my wardrobe which the artist designated as *tout ensemble*. I gave up that business in disgust.

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NANCY. Well, what next?

SIMON. Then I sought the confectioner's emporium. Said I, here's a sweet occupation, and a candid young man can win more lasses' favor in this line than in any other. Nancy, you would adore me could you see me in a white apron, pulling molasses candy over a hook (*with gestures*), with a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether!

NANCY. Simon Stone, you are a fool!

SIMON. Nancy, I know it, or I should not be running after you, when I've been snubbed time and time again. Nancy, dear Nancy, look upon me with favor this time. (*Takes box from pocket behind.*) Accept this

slight but sweet offering of affection. (*Presents it.*) Real French candy—made it myself.

NANCY (*taking box*). Do you mean to stick to this business, Simon?

SIMON. To be sure I do, and it's an awful sticky business I tell you—specially setting down into a pan of hot, cooling candy when you aren't particularly tired.

NANCY. Well, Simon, if I thought I could trust you.

SIMON. You can, Nancy, you can. O Nancy, quit this scrubbing existence and work for me alone!

NANCY. I'll think about it when you find the soap.

SIMON. I have found it in the confectionery line.

NANCY. Well, Simon, I must confess I rather like that.

SIMON. Do you Nancy. Eurekey, I've found it at last! (*Takes paper from pants pocket.*) Try a chocolate drop, Nancy. (*She takes it.*) You make me so happy. It's just the nicest business you ever looked upon. Rows and rows of shelves filled with all that's sweet to the tooth—and profitable to the dentist. And then the girls, Nancy, you should see the girls.

NANCY. The what?

SIMON. Girls. Pretty girls that tend behind the counters, dealing out sugar plums, and—and lozengers, and—and kisses, with eyes full of fun and mouths full of candy. Oh, it's just glorious! Ha! ha! ha!

NANCY (*sternly*). Simon!

SIMON (*sobered*). Well, Nancy?

NANCY. Do you ever look at the girls?

SIMON. To be sure I do. I've often received a kiss from them.

NANCY. Simon!

SIMON. Sugar ones, Nancy.

NANCY. Very well, Simon, very well. I'm perfectly satisfied.

SIMON. Oh, Nancy! then you—

NANCY (*furiously*). I'll have nothing more to say to a man who so debases himself as to associate with lozengers and lollypops, sugar plums and pretty girls, with eyes full of candy and mouths full of kisses. Good morning, Mr. Stone.

SIMON. Where are you going, Nancy?

NANCY. Back to my washing. The business won't suit, Simon.

SIMON. What! are you going to snub me again? (*Angry.*) Hang it, Nancy Nipper! I'm not going to be treated in this shabby manner! Take me now, or you lose me forever. It's the last time of asking.

NANCY. I'm glad of that. 'Twill save much trouble.

SIMON. Then give me back my French mixture. There is nothing shabby about me; but if I can't have your affection, you shan't have my confectionery.

NANCY (*throws box at him*). There!

SIMON (*picks up box*). Good day, Miss Nipper. You've nipped my prospects of having your sweet self; but I've got a sweet thing left in the sugar and molasses line, and I don't mean to give it up.

NANCY. Go back to your sweet things, your pretty waiter girls. Go, sir!

SIMON. I will, you cruel, heartless, scrubby thing! and if ever I face you again with an offer of my heart —

NANCY. Be sure to come on Monday; for then I always have plenty of hot water.

SIMON. Bah! I hope you'll live and die an old maid, Miss Nipper. Them's my compliments to you, and there's nothing shabby about me.

(*Exit C.*)

NANCY. Good riddance, Simon. Wonder in what new freak of business he'll appear next.

(*Enter MAY C.*)

MAY. Ah, Nancy, you've had a visitor! Nice-looking, clever young man, I should say. (*Seats herself at her sewing L. of table.*)

NANCY. Clever! he's too clever. Thinks he knows a great deal; and I think he knows more by this time. They're all clever enough to come offering their affection; but, till he can offer something more substantial, he'll find I'm clever enough to keep single. (**MATT** *staggers in from L. to door C. and leans against side of door L.*). Good gracious! here's a tramp. (*Goes R.*)

MAY (*rising alarmed*). A tramp!

MATT. 'Scuse me (*hic*). Somesin' to eat—four days since I tasted noth—*hic*—in. Somesin' for a brave sol—*hic*—dier, who flought and fed for his country. (*Hic.*) Tha's me.

NANCY. Go away; clear out. 'Sh! nothing for you, you beast!

MATT. 'Scuse me (*hic*). Here's gratitude! Where's your pat—*hic*—rism? Us brave fel—*hic*—lers,——that's me. I'm one on 'em. Fit and fled (*hic*), and won the gl—*hic*—ory. Look at your waving (*hic*) cornfields. We shaved 'em. Your princely pal—*hic*—aces. We protected 'em. And now you (*hic*) 'sh! and would give us noble de—*hic*—fenders of the soil noffin' (*hic*) to keep the door from the (*hic*) wolf. (*Staggering down to chair R. of table, hand on back of it.*) 'Sgraceful; 'scuse me; 'sgraceful. (*Hic.*) No offence; but it's 'sgraceful. (*Sinks into chair.*)

NANCY. You ugly bear! Leave this house quick, or I'll scald you!

MATT. 'Scuse me (*hic*), young woman. I'm 'dressing my con—*hic*—'sation to your superior of—*hic*—ficer
—

MAY. Silence, sir! You are intruding here. If you want something to eat, follow Nancy and she will provide for you.

NANCY. If I do, I hope 'twill choke him.

MATT. Oh, that's Nan—*hic*—cy, is it? Nan—*hic*—cy, my regards. I salute you, Nan—*hic*—cy! I'm a poor old soldier, deserted by his (*hic*) country; but I've an eye for beauty (*hic*). Sorry you haven't any, Nan—*hic*—cy.

MAY. Nancy, speak to your master.

NANCY (*starts for door*). That I will, quick!

MATT (*rising and stopping her*). Don't trouble yourself, Nancy. I'm unfor—*hic*—'nate, but I'm (*hic*) polite. Stay where you are. (*Sinks into chair.*) This company's good 'nuff (*hic*) for me. [20]

MAY. Oh, where can Roy be? This fellow terrifies me!

MATT. 'Scuse me. I'm a patriot. (*Hic.*) This is what a man gets for servin' his country. (*Hic.*) When the battle's over, turn him adrift. (*Hic.*) Why didn't they make me Pres—*hic*—ident as well as that other fellow? I fit and fed (*hic*), and he fit and run (*hic*) for President. 'Sgraceful shame! (*Hic.*) 'Scuse me.

(*Enter MARCUS followed by BESS.*)

NANCY. Ah, here's somebody'll make you run.

MAY. O Mr. Marcus! Mr. Graves!

MAR. Halloa! what's this? The tramp! (*Comes down.*) Here, fellow, you start!

MATT (*turns and looks at him*). 'Scuse me (*hic*), are you anybody in par—*hic*—ticular?

MAR. Leave this room at once. Do you hear?

MATT. 'Scuse me. I'm com—*hic*—fortable; make yourself at home.

MAR (*striking him with whip*). Scoundrel, begone, I say.

(*ROYAL enters C.*)

MATT (*rising*). Ha! it strikes me that you struck (*hic*) me. (*Hic.*) I don't keep no accounts. So let that settle (*hic*) it. (*Strikes at MARCUS. ROYAL comes down, seizes him by nape of neck, and throws him on floor L. halfway up.*)

ROY. Lie there, you scamp!

MATT (*staggering to his feet*). Ha, surrounded! then I'll die game (*hic*), I will. (*Rushes at Roy; they grapple, and stand looking into each other's faces. Chord.*)

ROY. Matt Winsor.

MATT. Here. (*Hic.*) Hold on a minute. Yes, it's Roy (*hic*), Roy Manning, as I'm a *shinner*!

ROY (*grasping his hand*). My old comrade, Matt. Heaven bless you! It is, it is.

MATT (*shaking his hand*). Yes it's him, glory (*hic*), old boy; we've marched together, slept together, fought together, now let's take (*hic*) a drink together.

ROY. Not now, Matt; you seem to have taken a little too much already. May, this is my old comrade, of the war.

MAY (*turning away*). His comrade?

BESS (*comes down L.*). May, he's drunk. [21]

MATT (*comes down*). 'Scuse me, ma'am, we were sweethearts in the camp (*hic*), you're his sweet—*hic*—heart now; but you can't love Roy any better than I did in those (*hic*) gay old days (*hic*), and now an ungrateful (*hic*) republic turns her noble 'fenders out to starve.

ROY. Not quite as bad as that, Matt. I've enough and to spare. Come with me.

MATT. Hold on a (*hic*) minute, Roy. Who's the chap with the whip?

ROY (*C.*). Mr. Marcus Graves.

MATT. 'Scuse me (*hic*), what did you say his name was? Oh! Mr. Tombs. We've met before.

MAR (*R.*). Yes, once before to-day, when I tossed you a quarter. Sorry you made such bad use of it.

MATT. So am I (*fiercely*). I wish I had turned and flung it in your face.

MAR. Sir.

ROY. Matt.

MATT. He struck me, Roy—me, an old soldier of the (*hic*) republic. 'Sgraceful. I'm going to pay off that score. We met once—before this day.

MAR. I never saw your face before.

MATT. Indeed. (*Hic.*) My face is one to be remembered.

NANCY (*enters R.*). That's so. It has no beauty to speak of. (*Aside.*) Paid off that score.

MATT. Once before, in the prisoner's dock. I as a vagrant (*hic*), you as a defaulter.

ROY. A defaulter! Matt.

MAY. Gracious heavens!

BESS. No! no! 'tis false.

ROY. Matt, you are crazy.

MATT. Am I? What says Mr. Graves?

ROY. That it is false.

GRAVES. Unfortunately it is true.

MAY. True?

BESS (*flinging herself into MAY's arms*). O May!

ROY. And you dare to enter my house, you,—a felon?

MATT (*staggering down and sitting in chair R. of table*). 'Scgraceful! (*hic*) 'mong respectable people (*hic*) like me.

MAR. Hold, Mr. Manning! hear, before you condemn. I am innocent of crime. Five years ago I was employed in a house in Chicago as book-keeper. A large sum of money was found missing, and I alone had access to it. I was arrested, and placed in the prisoner's dock. No proofs could be found to convict me, so I was discharged. I was innocent. The cunning rogue had so covered his tracks that the real culprit could not be detected. I was requested to resign my situation, which I did.

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ROY. And you took no steps to make your innocence clear?

MAR. Unfortunately, no. I knew I was innocent, and, anxious to keep the matter from my father, Hon. Lucius Graves, of Wisconsin, I came East, hoping that in time my innocence would be admitted, and I should be recalled.

ROY. And your father?

MAR. Believes I am still in Chicago.

ROY. And without a word of explanation, with this stigma upon your character, you have won the affections of an inmate of my household? Mr. Graves, I am a just man; when you can clearly prove your innocence, you will be welcome. Until then, my doors are no longer open to you.

MAY. O Roy!

BESS. He is innocent; I know he is innocent!

ROY. Let him be proved so, and no one will give him warmer greeting. But when a man's character is attacked, to turn his back upon the enemy and fly without striking one blow for his reputation is a mark of cowardice which no soldier can pardon.

MAR. I understand you, sir; and, bitter as are your words, I thank you for them. You have shown me my duty. Bess, darling, be of good heart. I will return to claim you. You know I am innocent; but I will not appear until the world shall know the truth. Farewell!

(*Exit C.*)

BESS. (*Throws herself into MAY's arms.*) O May May! this is cruel!

MAY. Cheer up, cheer up, my darling; all will yet be well.

MATT. (*Hic.*) Bless my soul. I've done it. (*Rises.*) Good-by, Roy, (*offers hand*) ole fellow! Glad you are prospering, though an ungrateful country did turn me adrift.

ROY. No, Matt, you wander no more. Do you remember our compact at Antietam? Whatever fortune the world had in store for us should be shared together.

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MATT. Yes; I'll stick to it, Roy. I'll share with you mine, the spoils of the tramp, crusts, (*hic*) kicks, and all.

ROY. I'll share something better with you, a comfortable home, friendship,—a far better life for you, old wanderer!

MAY. His home here!

NANCY. Then I'll give notice.

MATT. Roy, old comrade, you are jesting. I shall disgrace you.

ROY. Then out of my disgrace shall a man be born again. As we fought together for the old flag, we'll fight again. I see a victory to be won, a loyal heart to be reclaimed from the clutches of the enemy. I will

lead, old comrade; will you follow?

MATT. To victory or death, Roy, hand in hand. (ROY *clasps hand in C.*)

MAY. Royal, are you mad?—this wretch in our happy home! Why, why is this?

ROY. Your counsel, May. Comrades in adversity should be comrades in prosperity.

TABLEAU.

ROY and **MATT** *hands clasped*, **C. MAY** *with her arm about BESSIE'S waist* **L. NANCY R.** *hands on her hips.*

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

[24]

SCENE—*same as in act I. Table as before. Arm-chair R. Sewing-chair L. Arm-chair a little back of mantel. Flat as before. Entrance same. Flower-stand ditto. NANCY discovered dusting table with a long-handled feather duster.*

NANCY. It's most time to hear from Mr. Manning. Two days since we've had a letter. Queer freak that was of his'n, turning Mr. Marcus Graves out of doors, and all at once starting off west to bring him back. (*Dusts at back.*) Couldn't have been because Miss Bess was pining away, because she isn't. Her appetite is good; and, when love doesn't affect that, there's no use in worrying. (*Dusts piano.*) She's just as happy all day riding about with Matt Winsor as she was with the other. And what a change in him. Came here, six months ago, a drunken tramp; and now he's as spruce and clean and shiney as our copper boiler,—and so jolly and pleasant, too. And so eager to help, one can't help liking him. I'm sure Miss Bess does. (*Dusts at mantel.*) Look out, Mr. Graves; I wouldn't give much for your chance three months from now, if you leave the field to the tramp.

(*Enter C., MAY, in apron and gloves, a trowel in her hand; followed by SIMON, who carries a flower-pot containing a geranium. He keeps his back to NANCY.*)

MAY. You may place that geranium on the flower-stand. (*SIMON goes to stand and busies himself there.*) That's all I shall need at present. Thank you. Anybody been here, Nancy?

NANCY. No marm. Mr. Manning hasn't come yet.

MAY. You are mistaken, Nancy; had I meant him, I should not have said anybody, for he is *everybody* to me. Ha! ha!

NANCY. Well, then, there hasn't been nobody here.

MAY. That's better, Nancy. I'll run and get rid of my apron and gloves, for fear *somebody* might happen in.

(*Exit door L.*)

NANCY. Poor thing! She's just as anxious to hear from her husband as she can be. I know the symptoms. There's that good-for-nothing Simon Stone. I've not seen him since he took to the candy business; but I'd just give all my old shoes to hear the sound of his voice once more.

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SIMON (*sneezing very loud*). Ah-chah!

NANCY (*R. starting.*) Good gracious! It's that new gardener come to-day. If he sneezes like that among his flowers, he'll have everything up by the roots. Look here, sir, that won't do!

SIMON (*turning round*). Why not, Nancy, is it washing-day?

NANCY. Mercy! It's Simon Stone!

SIMON. It is, Nancy. Your Simon. Come to my arms. (*Advances with arms outstretched.*)

NANCY (*thrusts the duster straight out before her. SIMON puts his face among the feathers*). Hands off!

SIMON (*spits and sputters*). Phew! Pooh! Nancy, do you want to strangle me?

NANCY. I don't mean you shall strangle me. What are you doing here?

SIMON. Humbly, but earnestly, I trust, about my business.

NANCY. The candy business?

SIMON. No, Nancy; the saccharine and treacle elements have been eliminated from my existence.

NANCY. What's the meaning of that outlandish stuff? Can't you speak English?

SIMON. Yes; I've cut the sugar and molasses. In that line I burned to distinguish myself, but I burnt too much candy in trying to do it. So my employer requested me to cut stick.

NANCY. Sticks of candy?

SIMON. No, no, myself—leave, varmouse.

NANCY. Oh! you were discharged.

SIMON. Yes; I went off and became a policeman.

NANCY. A policeman! Simon, I always told you you would come to some bad end!

SIMON. Well, the end of my career, in that line, was rather bad. Ah! but Nancy, you should have seen me in my uniform, brass buttons, and shield. You would have been proud of me, had you seen me on my beat with my billy.

NANCY. Billy who?

SIMON. Ignorant female! My weapon of defence; the stick with which I terrified old apple-women and young news-boys.

NANCY. Why didn't you show yourself? I don't think you needed any *other* stick to frighten them.

SIMON. Nancy, I was a hero on parade; but when it came to stepping into a row, I must say I felt more like knocking under than knocking over. In fact, my conscience became very tender on that point, one night, on having my billy taken away from me by a burly butcher, and being impressed, yes, several times impressed, with its hardness as he whacked me over the head with it. The situation struck me so forcibly, to say nothing of the billy, I quietly resigned my office, and retired to the humble but more healthy walks of life.

NANCY. Well, Mr. Stone, what next?

SIMON. Mr. Stone! Nancy, don't be hard on me; call me Simon, *pure* Simon, *simple* Simon. Do! O Nancy! you are my life, my love! Do come to my arms! (*Advances with arms extended.*)

NANCY (*advances duster as before*). Stand back! I prefer my own arms!

SIMON (*spits and sputters*). Ah-choh! You'll smother me with dust!

NANCY. Then behave yourself. Go on with your next occupation.

SIMON. It is that honorable profession in which our first great ancestor won renown.

NANCY. By sticking to it,—which you will never do.

SIMON. And yet, for love of you, cruel Nancy, I've sought this lowly occupation. The Lady of Lyons inspired me.

NANCY. Who's she? One of the candy-girls?

SIMON. Candy-girls? Nancy, have you forgotten the play?

NANCY. Oh! she was the young woman in spangles, that went in among the lions at the menagerie. Pretty lady she was.

SIMON. Nancy, I blush for you.

NANCY. Well, I blushed for her. She had no chance herself, with such daubs on her face.

SIMON. Nancy, you're wrong. "The Lady of Lyons" is a play in which a gardener, Claude—somebody, falls in love with a beautiful lady. I went to see it, Nancy; and the way that young feller made love was amazing. You'd never believe he knew anything about rutabagas and cabbages. It give me an idea, Nancy. Says I, Simon, woo Nancy in that particular metre when you meet her, and victory is yours. (*Strikes an attitude.*) "Nancy, I mean Pauline, bright angels have fallen ere thy time—"

NANCY. What! you saucy scamp! (*Chasing him round table, beating him with brush.*)

SIMON. Stop! Don't! Quit! Nancy, that's what the feller said in the play—Claude, you know.

NANCY. Don't you ever use such language as that to me, if you do I'll scald you.

SIMON. Now don't let you and I get into hot water because we are under the same roof. You shall have the prettiest flowers, Nancy, in the garden, if you'll only smile upon me. O Nancy! (*Strikes attitude.*) "If thou wouldst have me paint the home—"

NANCY. Paint! are you going to be a painter now?

SIMON. No, Nancy, that's what Claude said.

NANCY. Bother Claude! stick to your gardening. Do that for six months, Simon, and I'll marry you.

SIMON. Will you, though? then I'll stick to it forever. Nancy, seal the bargain with a kiss. (*Advances.*)

NANCY (*presenting brush as before*). Some other time.

SIMON (*shaking his head, and walking off L. without touching brush*). Thou *dust* not tempt me.

NANCY. Now, Simon, quit your nonsense and tell me, where's Marcus Graves?

SIMON. The young man has gone West.

NANCY. And you know nothing about him?

SIMON. Haven't heard a word from him. By the by, Nancy, who's the gent that sticks so close to Miss Bessie?

NANCY. You'd never guess, Simon; that's the very identical tramp that stopped here six months ago,—the very day you called—

SIMON. Yes, washing-day. Well, Nancy, you must have given him a scrubbing. It seems to me he had something to do with Marc's sudden departure.

NANCY. Everything. He denounced him as a defaulter; and, on his account, Mr. Manning turned Marcus Graves out of his house.

SIMON. Indeed!

NANCY. Yes. You see he was Mr. Manning's comrade in the war! and he thinks the world of him.

SIMON. And he accused Marc, the noblest fellow in the world. I'd like to get even with him for that. Is he married?

NANCY. No; but I shouldn't wonder if he and Miss Bessie made a match of it.

SIMON. Poor Marc! What's the fellow's name?

NANCY. Matt Winsor.

SIMON. Matt! Matt! Stop a moment! (*Takes memorandum book from his pocket, and turns the leaves rapidly.*) H. I. J. K. L. M. Here it is—Matt Winsor. Ha! ha! ho! ho! He's mine! He's mine!

NANCY. And what's all that, Simon?

SIMON (*strikes book*). That, Nancy, is my savings bank. Little bits of information that I picked up as a policeman, and preserved for future use. Nancy, look at me! I'm going to astonish you. So the tramp's sweet on Miss Bessie, is he? Nancy, I'll astonish him. Ay, the whole world shall be astonished. (*Strikes attitude, and spouts.*)

"And thou, Pauline, so wildly loved, so guiltily betrayed—all is not lost. If I live, the name of him thou hast once loved shall not be dishonored; if I die amidst the carnage and the roar of battle, my soul shall fly back to thee." (*Approaches her as before.*)

NANCY (*advances brush as before; he runs upon it*). What are you talking about?

SIMON (*sputtering*). Pooh! Pah! That's what he said,—Claude, you know.

NANCY. Hang Claude!

SIMON. Hush! (*Looks around.*) Nancy, can you keep a secret?

NANCY. Try me.

SIMON. Without opening your lips?

NANCY. Try me.

SIMON (*throws his arm about her, prisoning her arms.*) There, keep that, Nancy. (*Kisses her, and runs up C.*)

NANCY (*fiercely*). You horrid wretch! (*Chases him up to door C. beating him with brush. He exits C.*)

NANCY (*coming down wiping her mouth*). Well, this is a new business to him, and I hope he'll stick to it.

(*Exit I. E. R. Enter MAY Door L.*)

MAY. What can keep Bess so long? She went off riding with Matt two hours ago. She seems very fond of him. (*Goes up to door, looks off, and returns C.*) I don't like that. For Roy's sake I have endeavored to make this man's stay with us pleasant, and though I can never forget his rough introduction, I have no reason to complain of his conduct since. He is gentle and obliging, has not tasted a drop of liquor since that day, and in every way shown himself to be at heart a gentleman. (*Sits in chair R. of table.*) And yet I have some good reasons for complaint. He claims so much of Roy's time. The hours he spent with me here are now given to Matt, smoking in the garden, fighting their battles over again, I dare say. I'm afraid I'm a little jealous of that; and then his fondness for Bess, and her fondness for him. Ah! there's grave cause for anxiety there. Roy laughs at me when I speak of it; but suppose they should fall in love with each other? Roy says he's much older than she. He forgets there is almost as much difference in our ages as there is in theirs. I don't like it. I believe Roy would be pleased to have them marry; but not I. No! no! Oh, if Marcus Graves would only return!

Bess (*outside*). Ha! ha! ha! fairly beaten. Victory, victory (*runs in C. down R.*). Oh, May! such a glorious victory. I've distanced the bold cavalryman on a clear stretch of five miles. Ha! ha! ha!

(*Enter Matt. C.*)

MATT. Cleverly done, little one. I tried my best, but for once, you have fairly beaten me. Ah, Roy's wife, —the little one is a capital horseman. If ever I go to war again she shall be enlisted in the same company.

BESS. Not I. There's better company at home. Only think of it; Roger beat Rollo, fairly outstripped him. He never did such a thing before.

MATT. The gallant fellow knew the soft caress of a pretty little hand, would reward his efforts. Who wouldn't do his best for that?

MAY. And the other gallant fellow was too polite to snatch victory from those pretty hands.

MATT. No, no. No favor was shown.

BESS. Not a bit. You should have heard our cavalryman shout, and seen him ply the whip. Mercy! I thought a troop of horse was coming down upon me.

MATT. Yes, I was a little noisy I confess. For a moment the old feeling was upon me. The swift pace, made my blood whirl. I saw before me not you, brave little one, but the enemy, in line of battle; the roars of cannon filled my ears, the smoke of battle my nostrils. The old cry came to my lips. Down on them! Death to the foe! Charge. (*Goes R.*)

BESS (*comes to C.*). Goodness, gracious! what a noise.

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MATT. I beg your pardon; I hope I didn't swear.

BESS. Make your mind easy, with the discharge of that terrific "charge;" there could be need for nothing more explosive.

MATT. Ah, well, it's hard for a dog to forget his old tricks. I wish I could mine. I'm a rough fellow at the best. It's a new life for me, this quiet home, you so kind and friendly, Roy's friendship,—No, no; that's not new. Heaven bless him: he's the same old comrade of the battle days. I know I must be in the way here.

BESS. You are the best old fellow in the world (*gives hands*), and I love you dearly.

MATT. Love *me*?

BESS. As if you were my own brother. There sir, there's a confession: make the most of it.

MATT. I wish I deserved it, little one; but it makes me (*wiping eyes*) very—that is—its—too much. (*Aside.*) Confound it, I shall blubber (*Aloud.*) Any news of Roy, Mrs. May?

MAY. No: I hoped you might have been to the office.

MATT. To be sure, and I galloping after this young Will-o'-the-Wisp. Oh, it's shameful, but I'll go at once. If we only have Roy back what a jolly day this will be. You shan't wait long, Roy's wife. Good-bye little one. (*Goes out c.*)

BESS (*goes R.*). I challenge you to another race, to-morrow morning.

MATT (*turns*). I accept.

BESS. Five miles.

MATT. A straight course.

BESS. Mind, no favor.

MATT. All right. Shake hands on it.

BESS (*gives hand*). There you have it. Now to the Post Office,—charge.

MATT. Ay, charge for liberty, or—

BESS. A letter. Don't forget the letter.

MATT. All right, little one: I'm off. (*Exit.*)

BESS. Isn't he splendid, May? I never saw a man I liked so well.

MAY. Ah! have you forgotten Marcus Graves, Bess?

BESS. Eh? Hasn't he forgotten me?

MAY. I think not. At any time we may have news of him. You know Roy is now seeking him, for your sake.

BESS. He's very kind. (*Aside.*) Now what's the matter with her, I wonder?

MAY. And this man, Matt Winsor, caused his dismissal.

BESS. Poor fellow. He didn't mean any harm. And I'm sure it is for the best.

MAY. Suppose he should never return?

BESS. Well, then, I should try and make the best of it.

MAY. Bess, do you know this man loves you?

BESS. Marcus Graves? well, he ought to.

MAY. No, this man, Matt Winsor.

BESS. (*Aside.*) Ah! the cat's out of the bag. (*Aloud.*) Good gracious! Has he told you so?

MAY. No, but I read it in every glance at his eye, every flush of his cheek. Oh! Bess, Bess, you must not encourage this.

BESS. Encourage,—I—well I never. Didn't I tell him I loved him as a brother.

MAY. Suppose he should some day tell you he adored you?

BESS. 'Twould be just like him. Soldiers adore, Civilians love. I prefer adoration, its a longer word, and of course contains more of the language of love.

MAY. Suppose he should ask you to marry him?

BESS. Suppose, suppose anything you like. (*Cross to door L.*) I'm going to change my dress.

MAY. And you withhold from me your confidence, Bess, Bess, this is not right.

BESS. May, don't lecture me. Do let me enjoy myself, 'twill be time to warn when the grub brother turns into the butterfly lover. (*Aside.*) She dares to doubt my love for Marcus. I'll plague her well for that.

(*Exit door L.*)

MAY (*rising*). 'Tis as I feared, she is learning to love this man; this tramp, who, in some unaccountable manner, fascinates the whole household. Roy delights in his company. Bess is happy at his side; even Nancy, the man hater, almost worships him, while I feel magnetized by his presence; and yet he robs me

of my husband's society. But he must not win my Bess, there's too much at stake, an accident might rouse the slumbering curse of his former life, and then what a fate would be hers. Oh, no, she must be saved from that, though I make an enemy of my husband's comrade. But how? (*Sits R. of table.*) How?

(*Enter SIMON C.*)

SIMON. I beg your pardon.

MAY. Well what is it; anything the matter in the garden?

SIMON. No, everything is flourishing there: I've weeded out all that's unsightly and unwholesome; but there's something wrong here in the house.

MAY. In the house,——what do you mean?

SIMON. Mrs. Manning, gardening has not been the sole occupation of my life. Before I entered your service I was a policeman.

MAY. Well?

SIMON. Now, a policeman picks up a great many things in the course of his experience, and, in my short career, I have gained a morsel of information that may be useful to you.

MAY. I do not understand you.

SIMON. Mrs. Manning, I was a short time ago, one of the humble instruments that rescued an unfortunate woman from the beastly brutality of a ruffian. I say one, the other was my billy. She was a poor fallen creature, who, in a drunken brawl was cruelly beaten. As I said, *we* rescued her in an almost dying condition. She was taken to Belleview hospital. As this was the only real service I performed during my brief career, I was interested in her case, and frequently called to see her. I was told she could not live. In the kindest manner possible for a policeman, I informed her of the fact. In return she told me she was a wife and mother, that her husband still lived.

MAY. I do not understand how this can interest me. I pity the poor woman. Can I help her?

SIMON. You can help her to find her husband.

MAY. I?

SIMON. Yes, for you know him. She gave me his name,——Matt Winsor.

MAY. Matt Winsor? impossible! he has told me he has no wife.

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SIMON. Then he's a villain. I have told you all I know. The woman is dying. Let him know that, and if he denies her, then—

MAY. Why have you told me this?

SIMON. Because he wronged my warm friend Marcus Graves. Drove him from this house. I want to see him treated as he treated Marcus.

MAY. Enough! you may go. (*Simon turns, and goes up.*) Stay. I may want to speak with you again. (*Simon goes up to plants, and busies himself trimming them.*) Drive him from this home. My husband's friend. Wretch, he deserves no pity. I'll fling his perfidy in his teeth. He dare to love Bess? Ah, I have the power to save her. Heaven be praised.

SIMON. He is here.

MAY. For the last time, I am determined.

(*MATT runs in C.*)

MATT. No letter, Roy's wife, and that's the best news I could bring. For as he has not written 'tis a proof he's on the road home. Dear old boy! How glad we shall all be to see him. (*Pause.*) Ah! what's the matter?

MAY. When a spy is caught in his enemy's camp, what is done with him?

MATT. He's strung to a tree, without judge or jury.

MAY. When a rogue is caught playing the honest man, in a peaceful and loving family, what should be his fate?

MATT. He should be turned adrift, and shunned forever more.

MAY. Right (*rising*). You have sentenced yourself. This house is no longer your home.

MATT. No longer—my home;——why—what is this?

MAY (*rises*). Matt Winsor, listen to me. You entered this house a miserable, drunken vagabond. You were tenderly cared for, because you were our Roy's comrade. We trusted you, confided in you, and you—like a viper—turned and stung the hand that fed you.

MATT. No, no; 'tis false. I have repaid trust with trust.

MAY. Indeed! As you repaid the trust of that poor woman now dying in Belleview Hospital. (*Enter BESS L.*) Your wife.

MATT (*agitated*). My wife—my wife?

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MAY. Ah! your agitation is confession, and yet you told me you had no wife. Wretch! you dare not face my husband's flashing eye, with this infamy known to him. You drove a noble fellow away by your accusations. Think you Roy, who could not bear his presence, will suffer a greater criminal to rest

beneath his roof. And what greater criminal can there be than he who deserts his wife: his trusting wife?

MATT. Stop, stop, I say. You must not make me hate you, for you are Roy's wife. My friend's wife. Taunt me not. I will go out into the cold world once more. It's only a step, and I am the outcast, the tramp, again.

BESS (*runs to MATT*). No, no, you must not go. Roy will soon return.

MAY. Let him face him if he dares. (*Goes R.*)

MATT. Fear not, I will not face him. I told you, Bess, I was not wanted here. I have come between man and wife. A part of the affection which should have been all hers has gone out to the man who, in auld lang syne, tried to be a true friend. Let it pass. For all your kindness to me, accept my thanks. I shall trouble you no more. (*Goes up to C.*)

BESS. Oh, Matt! Don't leave us. (*Gives hands.*)

MATT (*kissing them*). It is right, little one, we have been very happy, too happy for so poor a wretch as I. Roy's wife, hear me before I leave your house. I spoke the truth to you. I have no wife!

SIMON (*comes down*). That's a lie, and I can prove it.

MATT. Ah! this is your work.

SIMON. I own it. There's nothing shabby about me. (*Goes R. back.*)

MATT. I spoke the truth. Years ago I went to battle for my country, leaving at home my wife and child. Oh, how I loved them, bitterly I knew when returning from my first campaign, I found my wife had fled with my dearest friend, leaving our child to the care of strangers, who had taken her far, far away. In vain I sought her. She was gone. Oh, Bess, if you have found any tenderness in the rough soldier's heart, thank this for it; for out of grace and gentleness I had fashioned an image of my lost child which you resembled, little one.

MAY. Oh, what do I hear?

MATT. Heaven bless you. Heaven bless all beneath this roof; and heaven help the poor wanderer now. (*Goes out door C.*)

BESS. Oh Matt, Matt, stay with us.

MAY. Matt, Matt, come back. (*Cross to L.*)

MATT (*turns in doorway*). No; you have driven me out, as I drove out another. We are quits. (*MAY sinks into chair R. of table.*)

(*Exit C.*)

SIMON. He's gone. (*Comes down R.*)

(*Enter NANCY. R. I. E.*)

BESS. Oh May, how could you be so cruel! (*Falls into MAY's arms.*)

MAY. I thought it my duty, Bess.

NANCY. Who's driven out now?

SIMON (*comes down*). Matt Winsor; and I did it, Nancy.

NANCY. You? 'Twas a shabby trick.

ROY (*outside*). May, May. Home again.

MAY. Roy, Roy, at last. (*Jumps up.*)

(*Enter ROY C.*)

ROY. Ah, my darling. (*Catches her in his arms.*)

MAY (*runs into his arms*). Oh, Roy.

ROY. Bless you, sweetheart: it's good to meet you once again. And Bess bright as ever, give me a kiss.

BESS. A dozen. (*Kisses him.*)

ROY. That's sweet; and, in return, I've brought you something nice.

BESS. Good news? (*Goes R.*)

ROY. Yes: in the original package. Come in Marcus.

(*MARCUS runs in C.*)

MARCUS. Bess, my darling.

BESS (*runs into his arms*). Oh, Marcus.

ROY. Yes; we've had excellent luck: just at the last moment, too. We had about given up in despair when the excellent but thick-headed senior partner of the concern, happened to pull out a drawer in the safe, and there, closely packed behind it was the missing bills. Marcus was a hero, at once. I had hard work to bring him away; but here he is. Ah, Nancy, how are you? (*Goes R. and shakes hands with her. BESS and GRAVES comes to L.*)

NANCY. Hearty, thank you sir.

ROY. And this is my new gardener (*shakes hands with him*). How does the garden flourish?

SIMON. Splendidly, thank you, sir.

ROY (*returns to C.*). Well, and how has my little wife spent the dull days?

MAY. Trying her best to kill time, and bring this happy day nearer.

ROY. Well, I'm rejoiced to find you are well, and Matt—where's Matt? He surely should be on hand to give his comrade a merry welcome. (*All stand silent.*) How's this, where is he? Is he ill?

MAY (*with an effort*). He is gone, Roy.

ROY. Gone? what, left the house?

MAY. Oh, Roy, he is unworthy of your regard. He has deceived us. He has a wife living.

ROY. Indeed! How did you hear this?

SIMON. I, sir, was the humble instrument of his exposure.

ROY. Oh, you were.

SIMON. I was told by a poor, dying woman that he was her husband, and I thought it my duty to inform Mrs. Manning of his duplicity. It was a painful duty, sir, but I never shirk my duty. In that line there's nothing shabby about me.

ROY. Oh! then it's my duty to inform you that your services as gardener here, will no longer be required.

SIMON. Oh! (*aside*) here's gratitude.

NANCY. Serves you right, Claude Meddlenot.

ROY. And so poor Matt, in shame, took himself off?

MAY (*confused*). No—Roy—you're not quite right there; for I—I—drove him away.

ROY. You,—May;—you drove the man, who once saved your husband's life, from his house?

MAY. I,—forgive me, Roy,—I thought I was right. (*Goes towards him.*)

ROY. Don't come near me. Driven my old friend out? Do you know what that means?—disgrace for him, shame for me. He will die in the gutter. No, no; it shall not be. I'll not eat or sleep until I find him.

MAY. Oh, Roy, you will not leave me. (*Throws herself upon his neck.*)

ROY. For his sake, May, yes. Do not hold me. You have done a fearful wrong, as you will one day learn. (*She unfolds her arms and staggers to mantel.*) My brave, old comrade. You have struggled hard for a better life. Strike out, struggle on. You shall not sink. I will save you yet.

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(*Runs out C.*)

MAY *staggers down to chair R. of table, face on table. BESS runs and leans over her. MARCUS, C. watching them. NANCY R. points up stage, and SIMON, with a woeful face, looks at her.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

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Scene as before. Fire burning in fireplace. MAY in armchair before fire, half turned toward audience, gazing into the fire. Light on her from fire. BESS at piano playing, "Tis the last rose of summer." MARCUS has arm on piano, looking down at her. Study lamp lighted on table, L. C. ROY seated L. of table reading paper. Curtains at windows down. Chair R. of table, as music ceases:—

MARCUS. Thank you, Bess. "'Tis the last rose of summer," to-night we pluck: the last of our delightful courtship, to be replaced with orange blossoms, fit symbols of the fruits of happiness, we shall then garner for the future. Ah, Bess, what blissful days are in store for us.

ROY (*eyes on paper*). Poor devil.

MARCUS. Eh? Did you speak to me, Manning?

ROY. Not I. "One more unfortunate" here (*tapping paper*). Found dead in a doorway, with an empty bottle smelling strongly of "laudanum" beside him,—wrapped in an army overcoat. Ah, so they go. Fighting bravely the enemy of their country in war, overthrown by the enemy in peace.

MAY. Oh, Roy, could it have been—

ROY. No one we have an interest in, I hope, May.

MAY. I was thinking of—

ROY. One whose name is no more spoken here. I know to whom you allude, May. It was not him.

MAY. Then you have news?

ROY. I can give you no tidings of him. When three months ago I returned from my search, we agreed to forget him. Let us abide by our compact. It can be no pleasure to you: 'tis painful to me (*rises*). When a man forgets all the obligations of friendship, withholds confidence from his sworn comrade, and

deliberately acts a lie, he no longer holds a place in honest hearts.

MAY. Oh, Roy, so bitter.

ROY (*crossing to her chair*). To you, May, I owe it all. You, with your clear, woman's vision, pierced the mask and disclosed the deception (*bitterly*). I thank you. (*Goes up to window and looks out.*)

MAY. Bitter, bitter. I have wounded his dear heart by my folly. Will he ever forgive me?

ROY (*comes down*). It's a blustering night. (*Rests hand on back of MAY's chair.*) That's a glorious blaze, May. Pity I cannot stay and enjoy it.

MAY. Are you going out?

BESS. Not to-night, Roy?

MARCUS (*comes down to chair vacated by Roy, and takes up paper*). "There's no place like home," Manning.

ROY. Right, Marcus: especially if it's somebody's else home, with a particular attraction in the shape of a pretty girl. Now, don't press me to stay, for you know you and Bess are dying to be alone.

MARCUS. Gammon.

ROY. Rather say backgammon, for with two that makes home a *par-o-dice*. There's but one will miss me.

MAY. Oh, Roy, must you go?

ROY. 'Tis Wednesday night: my evening out.

MAY. 'Tis Christmas eve, and to-morrow is——

ROY. The anniversary of our wedding, May. Did you think I had forgotten that?

MAY. No, not forgotten it, Roy, but on the eve of——

ROY. Such a glorious anniversary, you think I should remain at home. No, May, duty calls me,——a religious duty,——which I would not disregard even for the sake of your dear company.

MAY. Roy, you are withholding confidence from me. You will not tell me why you go, where you go? Is that right?

ROY (*laughing*). Ha! ha! ha! Inquisitive female. No, it's all wrong; but that I may right it I go, and you may have the blaze all to yourself. Imagine yourself Cinderella among the embers, and wish the fairy godmother would drop down the chimney to keep you company. Now tell me what would be your first request?

MAY. That my husband would have no secrets I could not share.

ROY. That's a very sensible request. What next?

MAY. That in our midst, home again, she would place the wanderer,——your comrade,——Matt Winsor.

ROY. May!

MAY. With all my heart I wish it, Roy. That man's fate, the possibility of what he may have become, terrifies me. Think you I cannot feel how that wild act of mine has shadowed your existence. When he left, driven from your doors by me, something went out of our happy life, I would give the world to reclaim.

ROY. May, do you doubt my love for you?

MAY. No, no; not that Roy. Not one look of reproach: not one word, for what I have done, ever tender, thoughtful, patient. Oh, Roy, I do not deserve it. (*Covers face with hands.*)

ROY. May, you shall know all (*walks to table*). No, no, the secret is not mine. I must be patient; she must suffer. (*Marcus looks up at him from paper*). Well, what's the matter with you?

MARCUS. Manning, old fellow, I'm afraid you're going over to the enemy. (*BESS comes down back of table.*)

ROY. It's about time, when the enemy——as you style her——is a sweet, little woman, stung with remorse, and the attacking forces men, strong men, who ought to be ashamed of themselves: I don't like it.

MARCUS. Then strike your flag at once. There's only one thing to prevent it.

ROY. What's that?

MARCUS. Your promise.

BESS. What in the world are you talking about——you two?

ROY (*turning away*). Bah! that girl would break up a council of war, with her sharp ears and inquisitive tongue. (*Goes over to MAY's chair. BESS talks with Marcus in dumb show.*) Look up, May. I must go; but this night shall be the last. Before you sleep you shall know all, and I will ask forgiveness for my cruelty. Come, get my coat: that's a dear. Time flies. I must be off.

MAY (*rising*). You will return early?

ROY. As I always do. (*Exit MAY, door L., ROY, hand on back of armchair watches her off.*) 'Tis a hard lesson, wife of mine, but through the tears, I see the smile, and behind the clouds, the sunlight, that shall bring lasting peace forevermore. Halloo, you two whispering? I don't like that.

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BESS. Third parties seldom do. I like it: that's enough.

ROY. And so does Marcus. He looks as happy as though to-morrow were to be a holiday for him.

BESS. 'Twill be a holy day, for us.

ROY. You're to be married, to-morrow: to be enslaved. Ah, what will become of you two?

BESS. We two will become one, that's all.

MARCUS. Yes, the sum total of my bliss will be a unit.

ROY. How you *cypher* that. Matrimonial figuring by addition makes two one, subtracts sweets from added blessings, and multiplies comforts by dividing labors. That's the slate from which nothing can be wiped, but by fractures. Well bless you my children. I hope you will be as happy as May and I, and never quarrel.

BESS. And have no secrets—

ROY. Ahem! (*Aside.*) From you, impossible.

BESS. And have no going out of nights. Hey, Marcus.

MARCUS. Most certainly not.

ROY. "Hark, from the *graves* a doleful sound." Charity calls me out.

BESS. Charity begins at home.

ROY. And ends there; but if it be true, it's line of duty, between the beginning and the ending, describes a circle that, like the equator, embraces the whole world.

MARCUS. That's very good, Manning.

BESS. But you've no right to break the home circle, and leave your poor wife here alone.

ROY. Alone? Nonsense! when she has you and Marcus to amuse her.

MARCUS. Oh, we're going to have a game of billiards.

ROY. Billiards, a *cuerious* game for lovers. But there's lots of "kisses" in it. Hey, Bess?

BESS. Oh, I could scratch you.

ROY. I'll have a "run" before you do. Here's May. (*Enter door L. with Roy's coat and hat.*) Thank you. (*Takes coat and puts it on.*) You won't be lonesome?

MAY. No, indeed.

ROY (*takes hat from her.*) That's right. Bess and Marcus are going to play billiards. You don't play, you know; but you can count.

MARCUS. Yes; (*aside*) one too many.

BESS. Of course; (*aside*) and spoil the game.

ROY. I've been giving the young people a lesson on charity. Bess believes it begins at home, and now she has an excellent opportunity to prove her theory, by forgetting that "two is company, and three is none." Good-bye. (*Kisses MAY, and exits C. MAY follows him to door.*)

MAY (*turns back and stops C.*) I shall know all to-night. He said it. I am content. I doubt not I shall laugh at my folly, when I know the truth: only a little shadow flung across the brightness of our home, so hard to bear? Heaven pity those to whom the sunlight never comes. (*Exit door L.*)

BESS (*feebly*). May, May, you're not going? (*Louder.*) Why, Marcus, she didn't hear me.

MARCUS. No wonder; the call was very faint. I'll call her. (*Rises and goes to door L.*)

BESS (*runs up and brings him down C.*) No, no. I don't think she cares for company.

MARCUS (*putting his arm around her waist*). I'm sure we do not, Bess.

BESS. Marcus, what do you suppose sent Roy out to-night?

MARCUS. Well, I think I could guess.

BESS. Oh, you could. Isn't that splendid? Tell me, quick.

MARCUS. Ah! but it's a secret.

BESS. Oh, dear! now you are beginning to be mysterious. Remember sir: we are to have no secrets.

MARCUS. Quite right; and as you are not to learn this, we shall have no secrets still—

BESS (*pouting*). Marcus, you're as bad as Roy.

MARCUS. If I am no worse than that estimable man, then you will receive a treasure to-morrow.

BESS. Take care, sir: "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

MARCUS. Don't be alarmed: you shall have the treasure, Bess. Never mind the cup; the lips will satisfy me (*kisses her*) now, and to-morrow my cup of happiness will be full.

BESS. Ah! but I may change my mind before to-morrow.

MARCUS. Twenty times, if you like? but to-morrow you will only change—your name.

BESS. And my dress. You haven't asked me what I am to be married in.

MARCUS. I know,—in church.

BESS. Oh, provoking! have you no curiosity to know how your bride will look?

MARCUS. I know you will look lovely. Let others admire the setting, I shall have eyes only for the jewel. Come, a game of billiards. (*Goes to table.*)

BESS. Shall I call May?

MARCUS. No, I'll call Nancy (*strikes bell on table*) to light the billiard room. May will find us when she needs us. (*Enter NANCY, R. I. E.*) Nancy, be kind enough to light the billiard room, will you?

NANCY. My gracious! you're not going to play billiards, to-night?

BESS (R. C.). And why not, Nancy?

NANCY. And going to be married, to-morrow? (*Crosses stage to I. E. L.*) Well, I never! Better be preparing your minds with something solemn. The book of Job, now, will prepare you for trials, and there's a heap of comfort, at such times, in the book of Revelations. (*Exit I. E. L.*)

MARCUS. Well, our good Nancy takes rather a gloomy view of marriage?

BESS. Yes, poor thing; she's no such happiness to look forward to. I think she's a little ashamed of her conduct to Simon Stone. He's not been near her for three months.

MARCUS. Since he threw up gardening, on so short a trial. But Simon loves her still, I'm sure. (*Enter SIMON, C.*) He'll turn up in good time. There's nothing shabby about Simon Stone.

SIMON. You may bet your bottom dollar on that, every time. How are you Mark?

MARCUS. Holloa! speak of the—

SIMON. Don't mention him (*gives hand*): we can't say any good of him. (*Turns to BESS.*) Miss Bess, your most obedient (*bows*), allow me, in feeble words, but heartfelt gush, to congratulate you and Mark on the happiest day of your life,—to-morrow.

BESS. Oh, thank you.

SIMON (presenting box). With hopes and wishes, for loaves and fishes: that is, prosperity.

BESS. Thank you (*opens box*). Diamonds? Oh, Mr. Stone, you are too generous. (*Comes to MARK at table: he looks at them.*)

MARCUS. Why, Si! old fellow, this is a princely gift. What is your calling, now?

SIMON. My what is it?

MARCUS. Your trade?

SIMON. Bother trade! Don't speak of it. I'm above all that, you know. I'm in the Ring now.

MARCUS. The Circus Ring?

SIMON. Do I look like an acrobat?

MARCUS. The Prize Ring?

SIMON. Prize humbug! Do I look like a bruiser? No, Mark: I'm a member of one of those mysterious rings, you know, which surround the government, keep it in its place, without which this glorious union would go to smash. Where's Mr. Manning? I must see him at once.

BESS. He's out, but will soon return.

SIMON. Then I will wait.

MARCUS. Look here, Simon, it's rather queer that you want to see Mr. Manning. I should say Nancy would suit you better.

SIMON. Nancy?—what Nancy?—which Nancy?

BESS. Nancy Nipper, to be sure: have you forgotten her?

SIMON. Oh—ah—yes—yes, I remember there was a young thing, rather smart, somewhat attractive, about here; but when one gets into "rings," hob-nobbing with senators and nabobs, one forgets these (*snaps fingers*) these little trifles. Nancy? yes, yes.

MARCUS. Well, I'm rather glad to know that you are not in pursuit of her this time, for, between you and me, Nancy has a chance to make a good match now, with one who is dying for her.

SIMON (excitedly). You don't mean it! Dying is he? I'll finish him! After Nancy—my Nancy! Who is he?

MARCUS. Ha! ha! ha! he's a man who's got above trade, you know: a member of one of those mysterious rings, you understand. Ha! ha! ha! Si,—old fellow,—it won't do: I can read you. You're on the old trail. (*Comes to I. E. L.*) Come, Bess.

BESS. Oblige me by making yourself comfortable, Mr. Stone. (*Crosses to MARCUS.*)

MARCUS. Yes; and forget those (*snaps fingers*) little trifles. Ha! ha! ha! (*BESS and MARCUS exit I. E. L.*)

SIMON (stands c. looking after them). Ha! ha! ha (*mockingly*)! I'm on the old trail, am I? Can't pull wool over his eyes. He's right. Nancy is the *dear* I'm hunting: the Nipper that will satisfy my thirsty spirit. They do say money is one of the sinews of war, the strongest and the mightiest to win. If that's so, I'm on my

muscle. That's a glorious old blaze. Simon, make yourself comfortable (*sits in arm chair*). She told me to, and when a pretty girl asks a favor, there's nothing shabby about me. (*Sits before fire, warming his hands, chair with back to L. Enter NANCY, L. I. E.*)

NANCY. I declare, I'm mortified. To see that couple billing and cooing, and she a little thing, who's only just left her dolls, a-going to be married, and I scrubbing along in single blessedness, because I hadn't the sense to take Simon Stone when I had the chance. Plague take the fellow! no doubt he's given me up, when if he had only stuck to it he might have seen (*crosses to fireplace*), with half an eye, I was dying to throw myself (*seizes back of SIMON'S chair, whirls it round, and bounces into his lap, as she speaks this*) into his arms. (*Screams, jumps up, and runs L.*) Mercy sakes! who's that?

SIMON. Needn't rise on my account, Nancy.

NANCY. What?—no—yes—it is. Why, Simon?

SIMON. Why Simon? because I was christened so, I 'spose, Nancy. Well, how are you? You see I'm down here on a little business with Mr. Manning. Didn't think of seeing you. 'Sposed you must be married and settled before this, Nancy.

NANCY. Do you mean to say that you are not here on purpose to see me?

SIMON. You don't suppose a fellow is made of *injury* rubber, to bounce up after he's been thrown, and run after the same girl that bounced him, do you? No, Nancy; when I quit gardening so suddenly, I made up my mind that chasing you was not a business that would pay to stick to.

NANCY. Good riddance, Mr. Stone.

SIMON. Thank you, Nancy. Just at that point in my hitherto unfortunate career, Uncle Brim died, and left me a legacy.

NANCY. Who's Uncle Brim?

SIMON. Uncle Brimer Stone. We called him Brim, for short—Brim Stone; pretty good name for him, for he was a regular old Satan,—well, he left me a thousand dollars.

NANCY. A thousand dollars?

SIMON. Exactly. Now, says I, Simon, you've been a rolling stone long enough. You've got a nest egg: sit still, and see what will come of it.

NANCY. Well, what did?

SIMON. Calker Goodwin, the broker, came and wanted to borrow it: a genial fellow after he found I had the money, though he did cut me a week before; but then legacies, like death, level all distinctions.

NANCY. And you let him have it?

SIMON. No; declined with thanks, as the editors tell the poets. Then he told me of a good investment. "The Iris."

NANCY. Irish what?

SIMON. "The Iris,"—a silver mine,—somewhere or nowhere, it don't matter which. The stock was way down: eighty cents. Cal said it would rise in three days: bade me go in and win. So in I went, invested my thousand in Iris, and in three days it was way up to ten dollars, in three weeks to forty; then I got scared.

NANCY. Scared?

SIMON. Yes; the thing looked too big. I said to myself, some poor fellow will get into this, 'twill bust and up goes his all. And then I'd been reading about rich men's not being able to enter the eye of a camel, you know; and says I, I'll be no party to any such business. There's nothing shabby about me. I'll sell out. Sold the next day at forty, and three days after the Iris was all in my eye: it busted.

NANCY. But you didn't.

SIMON. No, Nancy; I made forty thousand dollars. I've got it now, and it's the thing I mean to stick to —

NANCY. Why, Simon, you're a rich man.

SIMON. Oh, so-so, so-so. You wait until we get our railroad, though.

NANCY. Our railroad?

SIMON. That's one of my rings. I'm in lots of 'em.

NANCY. Where does this railroad run?

SIMON. Into my pockets, if government will help it. You see it's not laid out yet, but the papers are in proper trim for a grant.

NANCY. Grant! what's he got to do with it?

SIMON. Oh, you're simple, you are: it's no use to talk to you of these great schemes. Can I do anything for you, Nancy?

NANCY. What do you mean?

SIMON. Well, I'm not proud, Nancy; and when I look at you, the memory of departed days is strong upon me.

NANCY (*tenderly*). O, Simon.

SIMON. And if there's any young man you want to boost into a business that would suit you—

NANCY (*sternly*). Simon!

SIMON. I'd like to help him to a start. I can't forget your helping me to a good many.

NANCY (*fiercely*). Simon Stone! you're just as hateful as you can be. You've got money, and now come here to put on airs before me. I knew you when you didn't know where the next meal was coming from: when you hadn't a whole rag to your back. Keep your money, and make the best of it. I'll have nothing more to do with you. (*Crosses to R. I. E.*)

SIMON. Where are you going, Nancy?

NANCY. To the kitchen, where I belong. I'm no fit associate for a member of the ring.

SIMON (*rising*). Then I'll go too.

NANCY. Indeed! a dirty kitchen is no place for a member of the ring. (*Exit R. I. E.*)

SIMON. They're in all kinds of dirty business anyhow. Don't think, then, that will prevent me. Well, I've made her about as mad as I dare. She's a smart girl, Nancy is, and she'll find that, with or without money, there's nothing shabby about me. (*Exit R. I. E. MAY runs in front door L.*)

MAY. Roy. Roy, where?—I must have dreamed, when I threw myself upon the bed. Such a horrid dream. Where are they all? (*Looks off L.*) There's a light in the billiard room, and Marcus and Bess are there. I'll go to them (*goes to I. E. L.*). No, how happy they look; I should be in the way. Dear Bess; tomorrow takes her from me, and gives her to another. May she be happy! She will never know my foolish fears for her made so much mischief. (*Goes slowly to chair at fireplace, stands with her hand on back of it, looking into fire.*) And to-night I shall know all. Ah, Roy, my husband, you know not how those simple words comfort me. In their fulfilment I feel there is a power to lift a burden hard to bear. (*Sits in chair, half turned to fire.*) And to-night I dreamed of him—the outcast. (*Soft music, MATT WINSOR opens door C. softly, catches hold of side of doorway and steadies himself, appears drunk.*) I thought he appeared before me in all his rags, as once he came (*MATT staggers to ottoman near window, catches at top of it and steadies himself eyes on the fireplace*), wretched as then, the same drunken look in his eyes. (*MATT staggers to table in same way.*) Oh, how I trembled as he fixed his eyes upon me and said:

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MATT. Roy's wife (*hic*), how are you?

MAY. Ah, 'tis he. (*Sinks back into chair.*)

MATT. 'Scuse me. You did (*hic*) n't 'spect me.

MAY. Oh yes, yes, you are very welcome: we have sought you—Roy has. I longed for you to come to tell you how sorry I am for the wrong I did you.

MATT. No such thing (*hic*): you did me no wrong. I de (*hic*) ceived you, and you turned me out like a dog—a stray dog—just what I was. What right had I 'mong hones' folks.

MAY. The right every man has to recognition when he attempts to shake off the shackles of habit, and be a man again.

MATT. Jes' so; but you see it's no use (*hic*). I fell again.

MAY. O Matt—Roy's comrade—tell me you forgive me.

MATT. Well, you lis (*hic*) 'n to me. You told me to go to my wife—my deserted wife (*hic*). I went; she died in my arms. (*Serious, forgetting himself.*) Poor woman! she had fallen by the way. I couldn't raise her, but I did the best I could; I made a pillow of the breast where beat a heart that once was all hers. She died there: died like a child sinking to rest. (*Weeps.*)

MAY (*surprised*). Why, Matt!

MATT (*quickly assuming drunken manner*). Well (*hic*), she died—she did. Poor Mary Randall!

MAY. Randall? (*Rises.*) No, no, that was my name before I married Roy.

MATT (*hic*). Was it? 'twas mine before I met Roy. That's something you didn't (*hic*) find out.

MAY. Oh, heavens! if it should be! Well, well, go on.

MATT. That's all: she (*hic*) died.

MAY. But tell me of yourself. Who are you?

MATT. A tramp (*hic*) now; a soldier once; a happy husband and father (*hic*) long ago.

MAY. A father?

MATT. Yes, I went to war, left them in a happy home; came back in a year to find the mother flown, the child (*hic*) gone with strangers. Then I went—I went to battle again to sell my life cheap (*hic*); no use, I couldn't die. I changed my name—the name she had disgraced—and met Roy. You know the rest (*hic*). It's only a tramp's story (*hic*). Who cares for him?

MAY. But the child?

MATT. Oh, I've found her (*hic*): she's all right.

MAY. Thank heaven! my fears are groundless.

MATT. Yes, I found her, indeed, happy: a child to be proud of; but how could I face her (*hic*)? I, a

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drunkard and a tramp.

MAY. Oh, she would forgive everything: run into your arms, and weep with joy upon your breast.

MATT (*rises.*) Would you do that?

MAY. I?

MATT. Would you, surrounded by luxury and comfort, happy in the love of a kind husband, would you take that man to your heart, present him to your husband?

MAY (*rises.*) I?

MATT. Yes, you: May Manning,—once May Randall—you who turned me from your doors—ponder well; for all the wretchedness and shame that clings to me, is part and parcel of—your father.

MAY. Ah! (*Staggers to table and falls into chair R. of it, her face on her arm on table. MATT passes to back of chair at fireplace, and with hand upon it looks at her.*) I have told you the truth. As I am, I have come to you, the father to his child. I go. If you, remembering what I am, what I have been, and what I may yet become, desire my presence, seek me. If you would escape the shame which must come with the exposure, forget me, and my lips are closed forever. (*Looks at her tenderly, opens his arms, and is about to step towards her, stops, shakes his head, and steals out door R. 3d E.*)

MAY (*after a short pause raises her head, and falls back in chair*). Oh, shame! misery! disgrace! I, that could not warmly greet my husband's comrade when he came, because of pride; who turned him from these doors, jealous of the kindly heart that turned to him, have found my punishment at last. "If you would escape the shame," he said, "forget me." (*Rises.*) My father? no! no! Come shame, come disgrace, the wanderer shall find rest, the father find a champion in his daughter's love. (*Goes L. Enter ROY C.*)

ROY. Ah, my darling. You see I've kept my word.

MAY (*runs up and throws herself on his breast, C.*). O Roy, Roy, never so welcome. O Roy, I am so happy. (*Weeps.*)

ROY. Well, well, little wife, tears are not signs of happiness. Let me get off my coat. (*MAY turns and comes to table. ROY removes coat and throws hat and coat on ottoman, then comes down to chair at fireplace, and watches her, hand on back of it. MAY stands at table looking down.*)

ROY (*aside*). She bears it bravely. (*Aloud.*) Well, May, now for my promise: to tell you the mighty secret. (*Comes toward her.*)

MAY. No, Roy, hear me first. (*Falls on her knees.*) Hear my confession. (*Enter BESS and MARCUS, L. I. E.*)

ROY (*quickly raising her*). Hush, wife! listeners.

MAY (*steps back in line with door, 3 E. R.*). I care not: hear it all. (*ROY goes to mantel.*) One whom I thought dead, one whom my mother wronged, comes now in want and wretchedness, not to claim my duty as he has a right, but with a nobleness that puts to shame my pride, to seal his lips, that, with a word, could make me blush before the world. Do you hear me, Roy?

ROY. I am listening, May.

MAY. Then seek him. It may be in dens of vice, among the fallen and debased; but seek him, and when you find him say, I wait with loving heart to greet him home,—his home for evermore.

(*Enter MATT, door 3. E. R.*)

MATT. You need not seek him: he's here.

MAY (*throwing herself into his arms*). My father!

MATT. My child! My dear, dear daughter!

MAY. Roy, you hear.

ROY. Yes: I've heard too much. The weighty secret is out at last. Matt, old fellow, you organized this campaign: after your treatment here, you have a right to revenge; but to me it has been a meaner battle than ever I hoped to engage in.

MATT. 'Twas but to test a daughter's love, Roy. "All's fair in love and war."

MAY. Then *you* have been deceiving me. O Roy!

ROY. I couldn't help it. 'Twas Matt's work: we've all been engaged in it.

MARCUS. Yes: all of us.

BESS. Well, I never; it's the first I've heard of it.

ROY. It's the first time, then, your ears have been off duty.

BESS. They're not trained to secret service. (*Runs up to MATT.*) O Matt, I'm so glad to get you back. (*Shakes hands with him.*)

SIMON (*outside R.*) Come along, Nancy, I'll make it all right.

ROY. Ah, who have we here?

(*Enter SIMON and NANCY, arm in arm R. I. E.*)

SIMON. Mr. Manning, I came down here as a bearer of dispatches.

ROY. Ah, for me?

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SIMON. To you; but not for you. (*Steps up to MATT.*) Mr. Randall, I was guilty of a mean act towards you once.

MATT (*gives hand*). Never mind, Simon: you've been a good friend since.

SIMON. Well, but I do mind: it weighed upon me. I don't like to be shabby, and so, as I'm in the ring, I'm bound to wipe that out (*gives packet*). There, sir, is a commission as postmaster; it's a good one. I've influence, you know. If you don't like it, and want something better, just say so; I'll fix it for you, for I'm in the ring—in the ring. (*Struts down to NANCY, R.*)

NANCY. You told me you'd have nothing more to do with rings.

SIMON. Did I? Well, I'll keep my word; but there's one more ring we can't do without. (*Takes ring from his pocket and puts it on her finger.*) This, for instance, is our engagement ring.

NANCY. Why, it's a diamond, Simon.

SIMON. It is, Nancy—a buster. This shall be followed by the wedding ring, and then the teething ring.

NANCY (*claps hand over his mouth*). Simon Stone!

SIMON (*takes her hand and draws it through his arm*). You shall have them all, Nancy. There's nothing shabby about me. (*ROY goes up to L. of MAY.*)

ROY. Well, little wife, are you satisfied?

MAY. Can you ask it, Roy? (*Gives him L. hand.*)

MATT. Ah, old fellow, the dear one was hardly pressed; she fought bravely, and won a peaceful victory. To her be all the glory.

MAY. She has stepped between the comrades of old days only, I trust, to be the link that binds them closer. (*Gives R. hand to MATT.*) Hereafter, in the battle of life, we three march in line, joy and sorrow, victory and defeat, to one, to all. Comrades in prosperity, comrades in adversity, ever true, sworn comrades.

(*Exit SIMON, NANCY, R. MATT, MAY, ROY, C. MARCUS, BESS, L.*)

CURTAIN.

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Transcriber's Notes

A table of contents was added as a navigation aid.

Some typographical errors have been corrected:

Page	Printed	Correction	Extract
3	hat	hat,	slouch hat, whiskers and wig
3	Petticoat	Petticoat	Balmoral Petticoat, calico dress
8	Roy	ROY.	ROY. What! Pin him in a corner
10	Your	You're	ROY. You're right. I nearly
12	its	it's	it's hurting me. This girl loves me
13	their	there	there has been no confidence
15	[...]	(...)	(<i>BESS and MARCUS exeunt, C., arm in arm.</i>)
15	bran	bran'	bran' new from top to toe
16	busines	business	the confectionery business
17	pant's	pants	Takes paper from pants pocket
19	MATT ((MATT	(<i>MATT staggers in from L.</i>)
20	MAT.	MATT.	MATT. 'Scuse me.
21	your'e	you're	you're his sweet— <i>hic</i> —heart now
21	condemn	condemn.	before you condemn.
25	her.)	her.	duster straight out before her.
25	N ANCY	NANCY	NANCY. A policeman! Simon
29	R	R.	(<i>runs in C. down R.</i>).
30	one.	one,	not you, brave little one,
30	C	C.	BESS (<i>comes to C.</i>).
30	R	R.	BESS (<i>goes R.</i>). I challenge
31	cats	cat's	Ah! the cat's out of the bag.
31	Twould	'Twould	'Twould be just like him.
31	L	L.	(<i>Cross to door L.</i>).
32	unaccountable	unaccountable	in some unaccountable manner
32	her's	hers	a fate would be hers
32	condition	condition.	almost dying condition. She
36	C	C.	ROY (returns to C.).
41	Aside,	Aside.	Ahem! (<i>Aside.</i>) From you,
41	Hark	"Hark	"Hark, from the graves

42	C	C.	(<i>turns back and stops C.</i>).
42	BESS,	BESS.	BESS. Oh, dear!
46	NANCY,	NANCY.	NANCY. But you didn't.
46	Nancy.	Nancy?	anything for you, Nancy?
47	anyhow	anyhow.	dirty business anyhow.
47	is is	is	She's a smart girl, Nancy is,
48	Matt Winsor	MATT WINSOR	MATT WINSOR opens door
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	Roy's wife (<i>hic</i>), how are you?
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	You did (<i>hic</i>) n't spect me.
48	spect	'spect	You did <i>hic</i> n't 'spect me.
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	MATT. No such thing (<i>hic</i>)
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	de (<i>hic</i>) ceived you
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	but you see it's no use (<i>hic</i>).
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	Well, you lis (<i>hic</i>) 'n to me.
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	deserted wife (<i>hic</i>). I went;
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	Well (<i>hic</i>),
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	something you didn't (<i>hic</i>) find
48	hic	<i>hic</i>	That's all: she (<i>hic</i>) died.
49	hic	<i>hic</i>	A tramp (<i>hic</i>) now;
49	hic	<i>hic</i>	and father (<i>hic</i>) long ago.
49	hic	<i>hic</i>	mother flown, the child (<i>hic</i>)
49	hic	<i>hic</i>	sell my life cheap (<i>hic</i>);
49	hic	<i>hic</i>	You know the rest (<i>hic</i>).
49	hic	<i>hic</i>	It's only a tramp's story (<i>hic</i>).
49	hic	<i>hic</i>	Oh, I've found her (<i>hic</i>):
49	hic	<i>hic</i>	but how could I face her (<i>hic</i>)?
50	L,	L.	(<i>Goes L. Enter</i>
50	C	C.	C.). O
50	(<i>Weeps</i>).	(<i>Weeps</i>).	(<i>Weeps</i> .)
50	R	R.	3 E. R.). I care not:

Centered stage direction on page [20](#):

(ROYAL *enters* C.)

Added *Exit* and parens to stage direction on page [52](#):

(*Exit* SIMON, NANCY, R. MATT, MAY, ROY, C. MARCUS, BESS, L.)

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK COMRADES: A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS ***

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