

NO PLAYS EXCHANGED.

BAKER'S EDITION  
OF PLAYS

*Mrs. A. H. Chick*

FORCED TO THE WAR



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BOSTON

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By GRACE L. FURNISS,

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Price, . . . . . 15 cents.

## SYNOPSIS:

SCENE I. Introductory. Going to school. Hookin' apples and hookin' Jack. Jokes and jollity.

SCENE II. The old "deestrick skule" house. The schoiars assemble. Calling the roll. Excuses. The new boys—"Julius Call and Billious Call." The stuttering boy. The infant class. "This is a warm doughnut; tread on it." The arithmetic class. "Why does an elephant have a trunk?" A history lesson. One reason why George Washington's birthday is celebrated. A visitor. Somebody's "ma." A very delicate child. Some fun about pickles. A visit from the school committee. A school examination in "history, filosepsy, quotations, flirtations, an' kerdriles." Head to foot. A very bad spell. Blackboard exercises. A motion song. A crush hat. More fun. A boy's composition on "boys."

Walter H. Baker & Co., 23 Winter St., Boston.

R. H. TURNER,

BOSTON

MASS.

Hotel Gloucester,  
Gloucester Place

## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

LUTHER MARATHON . . . . .	<i>A retired merchant.</i>
MARK WHIFFLES . . . . .	<i>Marathon's friend and confidential clerk.</i>
ALBERT MENTON . . . . .	<i>Hiding from justice.</i>
HARRY BLANFORD . . . . .	<i>A skeddaddler.</i>
JOHN SAMPSON . . . . .	<i>A farmer.</i>
SIMON SAMPSON . . . . .	<i>His son.</i>
JAKE MEGGS } . . . . .	<i>Sub-runners.</i>
HUMPHREY } . . . . .	
SMOOTHY } . . . . .	
OLD HARDING . . . . .	<i>A specimen of hard times.</i>
OFFICER, JAILOR, ETC., ETC.	
GRACE MARATHON . . . . .	<i>Mr. Marathon's niece.</i>
NANCY SAMPSON . . . . .	<i>Mr. Sampson's wife.</i>
EMMA SAMPSON . . . . .	<i>Mr. Sampson's daughter.</i>

## COSTUMES TO SUIT THE TIMES.

### PROPERTIES.

#### ACT I.

- SCENE I.— Table, chairs, ottoman, books, papers, safe, R. U. E. Lamp, sofa, etc., etc.  
SCENE III.— Pistols, umbrella, dark lantern, valise with Irish costume, wig, etc., etc.  
SCENE IV.— Dinner-pail, books, etc.  
SCENE V.— Settee, chairs, broken fish-pole, gun, flowers.

#### ACT II.

- SCENE I.— Bar, bottles, glasses, shelves, table, chair, revolver.  
SCENE III.— Same as in Act I., Scene I., also blankets, fuse, powder-can, dark lantern, tools, knife, revolver, gun-cotton for lightning, torpedo for blowing safe, etc., etc.

#### ACT III.

- SCENE II.— Chairs, sofa, table, books, etc., etc. Furniture plain.  
SCENE III.— Bench, small stand, lighted candle, stool, file, bars for window.  
SCENE V.— Bottle, handkerchief and vial, revolvers, tier of bunks and timber for breaking trap.

#### ACT IV.

- SCENE I.— Same as in Act I.  
SCENE III.— Bear-trap, meat, gun, revolvers, knives, etc., etc.  
SCENE IV.— As in Act I.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

LESTER MERRISON  
MRS. WHITNEY  
ALBERT BARTON  
LESLIE BARTON  
JOHN BARTON  
MRS. BARTON  
(Mrs. Barton)



LESTER MERRISON  
MRS. WHITNEY  
ALBERT BARTON  
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JOHN BARTON  
MRS. BARTON  
(Mrs. Barton)

# SYNOPSIS.

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## ACT I.

- SCENE I.—Interior of Marathon's cottage, Derby Line, Vt. Story of the will. Mark Whiffles' threat. Uncle and niece. Menton's fear. Story of the forgery. Song.
- SCENE II.—Street. Whiffles' plot to kidnap Albert Menton.
- SCENE III.—Derby Line covered bridge. Harry Blanford, the skedaddler. His capture by the sub-runners. Forced song and dance. His release. Attempted kidnapping of Albert Menton. Timely interference of Harry. General fright and defeat of the sub-runners. Picture.
- SCENE IV.—Highway on Barnston road. Harry Blanford as an Irish soap pedler. He encounters Sim Sampson, and practises his Irish dialect. Sim's anger. "By gosh! you call me a fool, an' I'll throw a stone at ye."
- SCENE V.—Mr. Sampson's door-yard. His opinion of "niggers." Mrs. Sampson's opinion of skedaddlers. Harry Blanford again. Mrs. Sampson feels insulted. Emma's courage. Scene closes with general dance, and ends in confusion.

## ACT II.

- SCENE I.—Line House bar-room. Half of room in Canada, the other half in Vermont. The three sub-runners. Old Harding. He is recognized as a deserter. Whiffles' surprise. Joining the plotters. The scheme to rob Luther Marathon. Old Harding's curse.
- SCENE II.—Street. Interview between Mark Whiffles and Harry Blanford.
- SCENE III. Same as in Act I., Scene I. The two wills. Uncle and niece. The last farewell. Grace Marathon's terror. "It is not the storm, uncle, it is not the storm." The good-night kiss. The storm. Robbery and assassination. Whiffles the murderer of Mr. Marathon. He is recognized as Albert Menton. Old Harding steals the wrong will. Whiffles' threat. "Another step and you are a dead man." Tableau.

## ACT III.

- SCENE I.—Highway. Harry Blanford and Emma Sampson. He learns of the murder. His vow. "I'm going to sift this matter to the bottom if it ruins my soap business in doing it." Emma surprised.

SCENE II.—Interior of Sampson's cottage. Mr. and Mrs. Sampson. Mrs. Sampson angered at being reproved. "I can have my tongue cut out, I suppose." Interview between Mark Whiffles and Grace Marathon. Mock sympathy. Whiffles' plan to release Menton from jail. The acceptance.

SCENE III.—Cell in Irasburgh jail. Mark Whiffles and Albert Menton. Choice between the gallows or the war. Menton breaks jail. Harry Blanford five minutes behind time.

SCENE IV.—Heron swamp, south of Newport.

SCENE V.—Interior of smugglers' hut in Heron swamp. The secret trap. Menton in hiding. The drugged wine. Whiffles' perfidy. Harding's remorse. The interruption. Harry Blanford again. Attempted rescue of Menton. Overpowered. The sub-runners triumphant. Whiffles' threat. "Another step and that pit shall be your grave." Tableau.

#### ACT IV.

*(One year is supposed to have elapsed between third and fourth acts.)*

SCENE I.—Mr. Sampson's door-yard. Mark Whiffles and Grace Marathon. The proposed wedding. Menton supposed to be dead. Sim and the dog. Mr. Sampson's opinion of the murder. Blanford, Harding, and Menton the guilty parties. Their sudden disappearance. Sim and the mouse. Sim's punishment. "It's time that some o' ther superfluous nonsense were taken out on ye."

SCENE II.—Highway. Menton's return from the war. He hears the conversation between Mark Whiffles and Jake Meggs. Sunshine after shower. "Thank God! a ray of hope swells within me." Off for Jeffry's woods.

SCENE III.—Jeffry's woods, north of Stanstead. Sim's bear-trap. The deserters. Refuge in the trap. Sim again. New kind of bears. Sim not to be fooled. "By gosh! if you ain't the soap pedler, then I'm a liar." The murderer's name. Disturbed again. The bear-trap once more a hiding-place. Sim and the sub-runners. Fleeing from danger. Sim and Whiffles. Whiffles fastened in the bear-trap. His release by Albert Menton. Face to face. Whiffles' cowardice. Fight between deserters and sub-runners. Death of Jake Meggs. Harding's death wound. "My God! I am stabbed." Tableau.

SCENE IV.—Interior of Marathon's house, same as Act I., Scene I. The dove in the eagle's claw. The song. The apparition. Emma's pride. Sim and his new-found friend. Whiffles' terror. "I must escape, or the gallows awaits me." Grace Marathon's joy. Sampson, Harding, and others. Whiffles held at bay. Mrs. Sampson's astonishment. Harding's story of the crime. The lost will. Whiffles' arrest and suicide. Happy at last. Death of Harding. Tableau.

THE END.

# FORCED TO THE WAR.

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—MR. MARATHON'S *apartment*. MARATHON *discovered seated at table, c. Lighted lamp, books, papers, etc., on table. Room well furnished. Large safe in left-hand corner, back. Window R. C., with curtains. Folding-doors open c. Music at rise of curtain. Enter MARK WHIFFLES, L. I E., preparatory to going out.*

MARATHON. I would speak with you a moment, Mark.

WHIFFLES. Certainly, Mr. Marathon, I await your pleasure.

MAR. You are aware, Mark, after toiling nearly thirty years in the Mercantile Department, I at last have entered my name upon the lists as a "retired merchant." But I have not forgotten you, Mark. As you have been my chief clerk for over ten years, and have proved yourself trustworthy and honorable, I feel it my duty to compensate you, in a measure, for your valuable services. Here is a check for five thousand dollars, which you will please accept, and also my best wishes for your future welfare. (*Gives check.*)

WHIFF. Really, Mr. Marathon, this is unexpected. I do not deserve —

MAR. Not another word, Mark. Faithful attendance to duty should always be rewarded, and I only regret I cannot double the amount. At present I am unable to do so. When these troublesome times are over, I shall endeavor to assist you in a more generous manner. For the time being I have thought best to keep my money under my own supervision. I have at this moment thirty thousand dollars in that safe. (*Pointing to safe.*)

WHIFF. Ah! you startle me. Is it not a little risky, Mr. Marathon?

MAR. Not so risky as the banks, I think, at the present day. I sleep in the adjoining apartment, and the least noise

is sure to attract my attention. Besides, outside from myself, no one knows of its existence, unless it is my niece, and you at the present moment. Speaking of my niece, Mark, you do not succeed in diverting her mind from this Menton?

WHIFF. No, Mr. Marathon, I must admit I do not. (*Aside.*) Curse the day she ever set eyes upon him.

MAR. You remember my conversation with Grace relative to this Menton? Well, in a moment of anger I made a will bequeathing all of my property to you.

WHIFF. Ah!

MAR. That will still exist. It is in that safe. But I have repented of my folly. No child of my own could be more dutiful to me in other respects than Grace, the offspring of my sister's unlucky marriage. I promised that sister on her death-bed that Grace should be tenderly cared for, and she shall. I was in hopes to see her united to you; but if she chooses another, I must submit. Next week I shall make a new will bequeathing everything to her at my death. (*Rising.*) Now, Mark, if you will excuse me a moment, I will get a letter which I wish you to take to the office. (*Exit L. 3 E.*)

WHIFF. Thirty thousand dollars in that safe. A will bequeathing all of his property to me. Next week that will to be substituted by another. Deserted by Grace, and this money goes to Menton. Stop! supposing something should happen. If Marathon should die before a week? That thirty thousand dollars would be mine, and Grace would be penniless. I know this Menton well. A check was forged — the guilt was charged upon him — he fled — has drifted at last to Canada. He remembers me not. One word from my lips and I could send him from this house in irons. Ha! a thought. This night he is to visit Grace — is no doubt already upon his way. If, on his return — on the line bridge — he should be kidnapped — charged with his crime — offered all of his bounty to go to war — would he not accept? It shall be done. These men out of the way — this property mine — Grace penniless — she must accept my proffered hand. Ah! Luther Marathon, you little know with whom you have to deal. True, I served you faithfully for ten long years; but it was for a purpose. D'ye think that now, when the jewel is already within my grasp, that I will submit, like an ox to the yoke, and behold it pass from me? Give up my chances for this paltry check of five thousand dollars? Never! no — never. Hark! a step. (*Enter MARATHON L. 3 E.*)

MAR. There, Mark, if you will drop this letter into the



office you will oblige me greatly. (*Gives letter.*) And remember, Mark, this house is to be your home even after you have found other employment. You will be always welcome inside of its doors. Now let me detain you no longer.

WHIFF. Mr. Marathon, you are very kind. Believe me, I thank you with all my heart. I will gladly call upon you whenever an opportunity offers; (*aside*) and, curse you, one will offer sooner than you are aware of. (*Exit C.*)

MAR. So strange Grace should form such a dislike to Mark Whiffles. Ah, there is her step now. Dear child, how she has endeared herself to my heart. (*Enter GRACE L. 1 E.*) Grace, my child, how happy you look.

GRACE. Why should I not, dear uncle, when all is done for me that could be done if I were your own daughter.

MAR. True — true, you are to me as a daughter — as dear to me as if you were my own child. (*Kisses her, and seats himself in chair, C.*) Grace, draw up that ottoman and sit at my feet; I would speak with you. (*GRACE sits at his feet.*)

GRACE. Well, uncle? (*Looking into his face.*)

MAR. You are expecting Albert Menton; is it not true?

GRACE. It is, uncle; he should have been here ere this.

MAR. Grace, I wish you would banish that man from your thoughts. He does not reveal his true character. Can you not, think you, cherish an affection for Mark, and let this Menton go?

GRACE. Uncle, I believe Mark to be a bad man. I cannot tell you why, but I believe it. As for Albert, I love him, and I believe I am loved in return.

MAR. Ah, Grace, what is love issuing from a heart stained with crime. For aught you know, he may be some scoundrel.

GRACE. No, no, uncle. Only the last time we met he took me by the hands and said: "Little girl, there is a cloud hovering over my head. Whatever it may be, believe me, I am innocent. Whenever that cloud is removed, and I can stand before you in my own true light, then I shall claim you as my own; but not till then — not till then." Uncle, these were his very words, and I believe them.

MAR. Well, child, I suppose it is natural you should; but if he is the true and noble man you take him to be, why does he not explain his situation. I dislike a man who shields his birth and covers up his past like an ex-convict.

GRACE. Uncle, he will. Indeed, he has promised to do so this very night. Trust your Grace a little longer, and if

there is cause to regret, I will bid him to come here no more.

MAR. Spoken like my own obedient child. Well, so be it; but remember appearances are very deceitful—very. Ah, there is his step. (*Both rise.*) Well, good night, my child. I will retire to my room, and let you settle this matter between yourselves. I trust, though, you will think better of Mark. Good night. (*Kisses her, and exit L. 3 E.*)

GRACE. Good, kind uncle. I hope his opinion of Mark may never be changed through that man's unworthiness. (*Enter ALBERT MENTON, C.*) Ah, Albert, I have been anxiously awaiting you. Why, how pale you look! I hope nothing has happened?

MENTON. Nothing, Grace, nothing; but (*looks anxiously around*) did I not hear a step as I entered the hall?

GRACE. Only uncle's, Albert, as he went to his room; but you are agitated; you tremble. There surely has something happened.

MEN. No, Grace, nothing has happened. I only saw suspicious characters hovering about the bridge as I crossed it.

GRACE. Suspicious characters?

MEN. Yes, men whom I believe to be my enemies.

GRACE. Your enemies?

MEN. Grace, you do not understand me. When I cross that bridge, I do it at my peril. Only my love for you bids me cross it at all. I believe I am watched—am even now a marked man. If I am not mistaken, it was Jake Meggs and Humphrey who were skulking near the bridge as I crossed it.

GRACE. What! those sub-runners?

MEN. Even so, Grace. I should not have seen them had not the moon for an instant passed from behind a cloud and shone full in their faces. Those faces were too familiar for me to have been mistaken.

GRACE. And what, think you, was their object?

MEN. That I shall have to explain. First, sit you down at my feet so you can look into my face and know I speak the truth. (*MENTON sits C. GRACE sits at his feet.*) There, that will do. Now listen. Twelve years ago, in the city of Portland, I befriended a man. A man whom I took to be a friend. We were schoolmates together. We grew up together from childhood. Though just the opposite in character, we formed an attachment for each other that seemed hard to be broken; but—oh, the falsity of friendship! Could I have read his false heart, I would have cast him from

me as I would a viper, loathed him as I would an adder that crawls at my feet. One day he came to me and asked me to do him a kindness. Would I take a check to the bank, get it cashed, and return him the money. I did so. That check was a forgery. When charged with the crime, and I asserted my innocence, that man turned against me. He, the companion of my youth, the man whom I cherished as a friend, cursed me, and left me to my fate. I was thrown into prison, from which I managed to escape. Since then I have drifted around the world, scarcely knowing where night might overtake me, until at last I took up my abode in Canada. Something leads me to mistrust that these men are acquainted with my secret. How, I know not. For this reason, Grace, you can see how easy it is for them to injure me if they so desire.

GRACE. Is there no one who can swear to your innocence ?

MEN. Yes, there was a man, wayward in his habits, but honest and good-natured at heart. He was in the room when the check was handed me to be cashed ; but on that day he disappeared, and I have been unable to find a trace of him since. Could he be found, and led to speak the truth, I could face the world again, and not appear like some criminal hiding away from justice.

GRACE. And he who gave you the check ? What became of him ?

MEN. I know not. He left Portland a few days after the event. Since then I have known nothing of his whereabouts.

GRACE. And your parents, Albert ?

MEN. My parents ? Grace, I have no parents. My widowed mother died of a broken heart soon after my arrest. I could not see her when she died ; could not press her lips with a farewell kiss ; could not tell her, even, that I was innocent. I know not where she is buried, or what disposition was made of her property.

GRACE. Albert, do not despair. You are a man, and as such should be able to bear a man's misfortune. All will turn out for the best in the end. Though the whole world turn against you ; though they brand you as a thief, and put upon you the convict's garb, even then I will take you by the hand and believe in your innocence.

MEN. God bless you, Grace, for those noble words. Still you do not know what it is to be looked upon as a criminal ; to feel that you are an outcast from society ; that at any moment you are liable to be tapped upon the shoulder, and hear it said, " You are my prisoner." (*Covers his face with his hands.*)

GRACE. Albert, there is One who watches the sparrow in its flight. He will watch over you, and guard you in your trouble. Trust Him, Albert, and all will yet be well.

MEN. Oh, that I might heed the wisdom of your words.

GRACE. Albert, be cheerful. Drive away this feeling of despair. Come! I will sing to you.

MEN. (*looking up*). Yes, sing to me my favorite song. It will help to scatter the gloom and lift this burden from my heart. You have not forgotten the words?

GRACE. No, Albert, or their sentiments either; for, believe me, they speak the language of my heart.

SONG. — "I have loved thee — love thee still."

(*During song MARK WHIFFLES appears at C., pauses a moment, and then slowly passes out of sight.*)

When kind friends have all departed,  
Scattered like the leaves and gone;  
When you wander, lonely hearted,  
In this wide, wide world alone;  
When you feel like one forsaken,  
And thy heart is cold and chill;  
Then, oh, then, let joys awaken —  
I have loved thee — love thee still.

Winds may pierce, and storms may beat thee,  
Dark clouds hover overhead;  
New misfortunes daily greet thee —  
Every rose a thorn instead.  
Tempted, tried, thy lot may grieve thee,  
And thy cup of sorrow fill;  
Yet, despair not, for believe me,  
I have loved thee — love thee still.

As you wander, sad and lonely,  
Down life's dark eventful way,  
Trials, destined for thee only,  
Will surround thee day by day;  
But be brave and cheerful ever,  
Harbor not one thought of ill,  
For my thoughts have left thee never —  
I have loved thee — love thee still.

(*Scene closes.*)

SCENE II. — *A street. Enter MARK WHIFFLES, L. I E.*

WHIFF. I heard her singing, — and to him. Saw her even as she sat at his feet and gazed lovingly into his face. There is no chance for me while he is ever present. He

must be disposed of — he shall. Av! this very night as he crosses the bridge, he shall be waylaid, charged with his crime, and forced to enlist. Even now Meggs and his companions are lying in wait for some unsuspecting victim to pounce upon. They shall be sought out, informed of Menton's secret, and put upon his track. Then, before to-morrow's sun shall streak the eastern sky with red, Grace Marathon shall be without a lover, and I shall have the inside track. (*Exit R. I E.*)

SCENE III. — *Canada side, Derby Line covered bridge. Houses R. and L. Gulf seen between bridge and houses, left-hand corner. Lighted street lamp R. Night. Enter HARRY BLANFORD through bridge. He carries valise, umbrella, etc. Wears stove-pipe hat tilted back.*

HARRY. Well, I'm here. (*Sets down valise and umbrella.*) I fancied I should be when Uncle Sam called for volunteers. I prognosticated it tu at the beginning of the war. Somehow since that fight at Stone River, I've yearned for Canada like a mother for a lost child. (*Sub-runners steal across stage at back.*) The question is — Hark! (*Listens.*) I thought I heard a step. Holy Moses! if it should be those horrid sub-runners. Why, it won't bear thinking about. I must — (*listens*) yes — I must have been mistaken. Great Scott! I wouldn't have been startled so for a seat in Congress. It has just doubled me right up. I'll light a cigar and calm my perturbed spirit. (*Lights cigar.*) Can't imagine, though, what occasioned that sound. It might have been the wind rattling the loose boards on the bridge. Perhaps it was the (*sub-runners advance*; MEGGS grasps HARRY by the shoulder) devil.

MEGGS. No; one of his sarvents, if you please.

HARRY. I — I say, gentlemen —

MEGGS

HUMPHREY } (*together*). Gentlemen! Ha! ha! ha!

SMOOTHY }

HARRY. P-pardon my mistake. I considered the term inappropriate myself. (*MEGGS tightens grasp.*) No, no — I meant — I should have said —

MEGGS. Yer don't knw what yer should have said.

HARRY. N-no, I presume I don't; but I — I say, wouldn't you be kind enough not tu grasp my shoulder so tightly? It hurts, don't you know.

HUMPH. Oh let up on him, Meggs. He darsn't run. If he does, I'll give him the taste o' somthin he won't forget in a week.

SMOOTHY. Yes, we'll —

MEGGS. Hold yer light, Smoothy. Pint it into his face, can't ye? There! — purty fair face you've got, mister?

HARRY. Yes, thank you for the compliment. Here — have a cigar. (*Gives cigar.*) Have another. Take these and pass them tu your friends. Perfectly free — paid for them with individual scrip, don't you know. Here — take another for yourself.

MEGGS. Well, I swow! you're a trump.

HUMPH. A regular genuine specimen of a trump.

SMOOTHY. You're a trump.

HARRY. Yes, I'm so considered in my native town. Should be happy tu have you call upon me at any time when convenient. Visitors admitted at half-past three. I declare (*feeling in pockets*), I had a card —

MEGGS. Hang yer card. If you've anything else about you that's interesting, jest trot it out.

HARRY. Oh, certainly; a match? (*Producing match.*)

MEGGS. Hang yer match. Here, pard, sarch his pockets for valuables. Hold your light, Smoothy!

HARRY. Mercy, no; here — I'll save you the trouble. (*Turns his pockets wrong side out.*) There! are you satisfied?

MEGGS. Pooh! he hasn't enough about him to keep a mouse from starving.

HARRY. No, you're correct. I'm absolutely poverty-stricken. Sticks right out now, — don't it. By the way, gentlemen, as I may be intruding upon your valuable time, I will continue my journey.

MEGGS. You will, hey? Where you going?

HARRY (*aside*). Goodness! that's a poser. (*Aloud.*) Why, I'm going — going — Why, I'm going — (*Aside.*) Where the deuce am I going.

MEGGS. Where'd you cum from?

HARRY. Come from? (*Aside.*) What shall I say now. (*Aloud.*) Come from? Why, I — I — Well, the truth is, gentlemen, I've been ejected from a small-pox hospital. Sorry tu inform you, but you compelled me, don't you know.

SMOOTHY. Oh, Lord! I'm sick.

MEGGS. Hold your light, Smoothy. Now look a-here; we don't want to hurt yer feelings, and pra'aps it wouldn't be perlite to tell yer that yer lie; but we don't want no more o' this behind the screen sort o' talk. Yer a skedaddler, that's what ye are, out and out. So yer might jest as well own up, or we'll toss yer over that railing quicker'n lightning. Yer understand?

HARRY. Well, I've a comprehensive idea as tu what you mean; but say, you wouldn't du it now, would you? Anyhow, tu save hard feelings between us, I'll endeavor tu explain. (*Aside.*) What the deuce shall I say. (*Aloud.*) My friends, I — I — Well, you see, the fact is, gentlemen, I used tu be a commercial traveller. Failed up for want of cheek. Must have cheek, you know, or you can't be a drummer. After that I launched out as an Irish comedian. Troupe busted and went tu smash. I've got my paraphernalia in this valise. Am now on my way tu Canada. Call it skedaddling if you like — perhaps on the whole it is. My intentions now are tu go into the soap business. Quite a stupendous fall from lofty Parnassus, but times are peculiar, don't you know. I — I hope my explanations are satisfactory, gentlemen?

SMOOTHY. Lord! I thought he wur a bounty jumper.

MEGGS. Hold yer tongue, Smoothy. (*To HARRY.*) Well, pra'aps they'll do. Anyhow, to prove it, you kin give us a bit o' yer skill.

HARRY (*aside*). Great Cæsar! I'm undone now for a certainty. (*Aloud.*) Er — er — wouldn't some other time du as well? I'm feeling a little indisposed this evening. This excitement, don't you know —

MEGGS. Shell out your toggery and put it on. Here — I'll help yer. (*Opens valise.*) Kinder hurts yer feelings now, don't it? Well, keep cool; yer kin warm up in the first act. Hold yer light, Smoothy. (*Finds wig.*) What's this? A scalp without any head in it, sure's you're born; and here's the togs that go with it. Come, now! off with yer duds and into these at once.

HARRY. Gentlemen, I insist! Surely you would not? Why, the thing is impossible.

MEGGS. Off with 'em; d'ye hear?

HARRY. Certainly; but — but —

MEGGS. Pard, jest show him the gulf that yawns on the other side o' that railing. (*They grapple HARRY and drag him toward C. L.*)

HARRY. Don't! now don't! Gentlemen, I am at your pleasure, I am, upon my word. If I can render you any assistance I am willing tu du it, don't you know. (*They release him.*)

MEGGS. Then get out of them togs and into these at once. Come!

HARRY. Oh, certainly! (*Aside.*) This is worse than fighting for Uncle Sam. (*Slowly takes off coat and vest, folds them up, and puts them in valise. Pause. Aloud:*)

I—I hope a further disrobement is not necessary, gentlemen? Really this is embarrassing, don't you know.

MEGGS. In plain words it don't make yer feel at home. Pra'aps it don't. Sort o' feel better, won't yer, when yer get these togs on. Here, on with yer coat, while I sort o' regulate this head gear. (HARRY *dressed up as an Irishman.*) Hold yer light, Smoothy. There! now you look like a respectable individual. What's yer rôle?

HARRY. Er—er—what, gentlemen?

SMOOTHY. Did yer hear it? Gentlemen again.

MEGGS. Hold yer tongue, Smoothy. (*To HARRY.*) I say, what's yer rôle? What's yer particular part in the play?

HARRY. Oh, as tu that, I used tu take the proceeds at the door. As the proceeds were comparatively light sometimes, I used tu indulge in a song for recreation. Nothing like singing tu drive away the blues, don't you know.

MEGGS. Well, now, listen a minute. We don't want to harm yer, because we've got bizness. We jest want yer to give us a specimen o' yer skill, and then yer kin travel. Do yer tumble?

HARRY. Oh, I partially incline, so tu speak. Indeed! I feel that I must. It is a part of the programme, don't you know. Of course your part of the contract will be fulfilled at the end of the entertainment?

MEGGS. Sartin! we'll do the han'some by yer if yer does yer duty. Won't we, pards?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life we will.

SMOOTHY. We will.

(*Irish song and dance.* MEGGS and HUMPHREY L. SMOOTHY R., *holding lantern.* *At end of song HARRY is cheered by sub-runners.*)

HARRY. Thank you; thank you, gentlemen. You are very kind. Indeed! I did not expect any bouquets. I suppose I am now at liberty tu depart?

MEGGS. Sartin! that's part o' the programme, ain't it, pards?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life it is.

SMOOTHY. It is.

HARRY. Well, then, I will continue my journey. Sorry tu leave you, but I feel that I must. (HUMPHREY and SMOOTHY *assist him with valise.*) Thank you! thank you! my friends. Hope tu be of assistance tu you sometime. Good evening. *Au revoir.* (*Exit L. I E.*)

MEGGS. Of all skedaddlers that feller takes the cake; but now for bizness. I'm thinking it's purty near time for



Menton to cross the bridge. If we gets the shiners we've got to make this job succeed. Yer understand? No squeal-in', yer know, or we're out a cool thousand. We kin hide at the ends o' the bridge, and when he approaches be prepared to stop him. I'll do the talking, and if he resists, be prepared with the weapons. Yer understand?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life we do.

SMOOTHY. We do.

MEGGS. Well, then, as he's liable to approach at any minute, jest conceal yerselves, and keep quiet. Keep yer ears open, and when I whistle be prepared to do yer duty. (MEGGS *hides* L. 3 E. HUMPHREY and SMOOTHY R. 3 E. *Slow music. Enter* MENTON *cautiously through bridge, watching his surroundings.*)

MEN. I did expect, while crossing the bridge, to find enemies concealed; that, at each moment, from some dark and hidden recess, they would pounce out upon me like an eagle upon its prey. Happily I am disappointed. The bridge is crossed, and no enemy has appeared. Perhaps my heart, inured so long to this sepulchred existence, is becoming cowardly; that, in each leaf that stirs, or blade of grass that rustles beneath my feet, I imagine dangers that never existed. Well, one can read my heart, and, I believe, sympathizes with my sorrows. Ah, Grace, would you, if the maracles were on my wrists, and the whole world adjudged me guilty, would you take me by the hand and believe in my innocence? You said it, Grace, and your words are still ringing in my ears. (*Starts off L., when whistle is heard, and sub-runners enter and cut off his retreat.*) How, now! what means this insolent intrusion?

MEGGS. It means that yer might jest about as well make back tracks across that bridge fust as last.

MEN. Why so? Am I at your mercy, think you?

MEGGS. Well, jest about the same I should cakerlate, under the present circumstances. Oh, we know yer, and that yer are a forger, too; and that yer escaped from jail, and that a reward is offered for yer.

MEN. (*aside*). Ha! these men know all this? (*Aloud.*) What care I for your accusations. They are false—false as your own black hearts. Then, if they were true, I fear you not, for I am on Canadian soil.

MEGGS. Well, we are three to one, so I kinder cakerlate the soil won't help yer much. Come! if yer don't want us to hurt yer, you'll go back without any trouble. We don't want to send yer to jail, so we'll make yer an offer. If you'll enlist for the war, we'll give ye yer bounty, minus a couple o'

hundred, and keep mum about the forgery. What d'ye say?

MEN. I say that I scorn both you and your offer. Let me pass.

MEGGS. What! will you cause us to use force? (*They draw pistols.*)

MEN. Let me pass, I say, or I'll — (*Wrenches pistol from MEGGS' hand and knocks him across stage. Turns and knocks SMOOTHY down. At the same time he is seized by HUMPHREY, who is assisted by MEGGS. As MENTON is overpowered, HARRY BLANFORD rushes in from L. I E. He encounters SMOOTHY, who is trying to escape, and knocks him across stage.*)

HARRY. Pardon this familiarity, but it is a polite way I have of ending an acquaintanceship. (*Turns and strikes MEGGS over head with umbrella.*) Sorry tu disfigure your countenance, but I'm obliged tu du it, don't you know.

(*MEGGS turns upon HARRY, who knocks him down and threatens him with umbrella. MENTON forces HUMPHREY across stage, L., and stands over him with cocked pistol. SMOOTHY is kept down by HARRY, as is also MEGGS. Picture.*)

SCENE IV. — *Highway. Enter SIM SAMPSON, L. I E., carrying dinner-pail, books, etc., etc.*

SIM. Darn the school, I say. It's nothin' but study, study, all the hull time. What's it amount ter, I wonder. I ain't er-goin' ter Parliament? Wouldn't if I knew ever so much. Dad says ter be a George Wash or a Franklin Benjamin I've got ter study; an' so I have to duff into it like a piston-rod forced by steam. Don't amount ter shucks — books don't. I'm smart enough already. Teacher said last winter if I kept on I'd know mor'n him an' the school put together, and I believe it. Gosh! I know what I'll do. I'll run away, an' go to sea, an' be a Sindbad. No, I won't either. I know what I'll do now. I'll sit down here an' pretend ter be deaf; an' the first man that comes along axing questions, I'll string him off a lot of answers that'll make him sick. (*Sits down c., back.*) Let's see; he'll say fust, "Good mornin', Sim, what's you doin'?" I'll say, "Whittlin', er course." Then he'll say, "What yer whittlin' for?" I'll say, "For fun, what d'ye s'pose?" Then he'll ax me why I don't go ter school. I'll say, "'Cause I don't want ter." Then he'll say, "Don't you know you're getting late?" I'll say, "Don't care if I am." Then he'll tell me if I don't go

pretty quick the teacher'll lick me. I'll tell him it's none of his bizness if he do. He'll say, "I wouldn't give shucks for such a boy as you are," like as dad does. I'll say, "If you don't, somebody else will." Then he'll — (*Looking off, R.*) Oh, by thunder! here comes a chap now. I'll be a whittlin' like sixty, an' pretend not ter notice him. (*Takes out jack-knife and whittles.*)

(HARRY BLANFORD, *as an Irish soap-pedler, enters R. I E. He carries valise and umbrella. Sees him.*)

HARRY (*aside*). Now here's an opportunity tu practise my Irish brogue. (*Aloud.*) Arrah, there! top of the morning to yez, my lad.

SIM. Lad? Where'll you get your young men, I wonder. (*Aside.*) Oh, by gosh! I forgot. (*Aloud.*) Whittlin', er course.

HARRY (*aside*). Perhaps he did not fully comprehend me. I'll try again. (*Aloud.*) Och! and I sed, top of the morning to yez.

SIM. For fun, what d'ye s'pose?

HARRY. Fun? (*Aside.*) Great Scott! the boy appears tu be ignorant. I'll make another attempt. (*Aloud.*) Bad luck to you for a dirty blackguard, why don't you spake English. What might I be afther calling you by name?

SIM. 'Cause I don't want ter.

HARRY. 'Cause I don't want ter? Be jabbers! I niver heard that name before. Faix! I'm thinking no Teddy O'Rourke or Dennis O'Conner iver supported a handle loike that. It's genuine Canuck, it is, or else my name's not Larry O'Calligan. Let me ax you, my darling, don't you want a cake of soap? I've an illigant line of sand soap, bar soap, tar soap, soft soap, and soap that'll make your face shine like a glass bottle. Come, now, spake up, and not be afther sitting there loike a lazy hathen.

SIM. Don't care if I am.

HARRY (*aside*). Well, I'm coming to the conclusion that the boy's a consummate fool. I'll try once more. (*Aloud.*) What the divil ails ye, Pat? Are you blind in one ear and deaf in the other, that you can't see at all, at all? Faix! I'm thinking it's out of your head it is. Let me ax you, can you kape a secret?

SIM. None of your bizness if I do.

HARRY (*aside*). Why, I'm astonished. That boy ought tu be sent to an idiotic asylum. I'll launch out once more. (*Aloud.*) Where's your manners, you spalpeen? Thunder and ounds! if you don't be afther ondressing me loike a gentleman, I'll batter you over the head with a shillelagh. Can you understand that, you dirty blackguard?

SIM. Well, if you dont, somebody else will.

HARRY. You can bet your swate life they will ; and if I didn't have the disposition of a saint I'd do it meself. You're a fool.

SIM (*springing to his feet*). By gosh ! you call me a fool agin an' I'll throw a stone at ye.

HARRY. Bad luck to you, my darling, if you tries it on ; but be aisy now. Let's make up, and divil of a sowl will know that we quarrelled. Sure and don't you think I could be afther selling your mither a cake of soap ?

SIM. No, I don't. You'd better keep away from ma, you had. She jest hankers ter get arter a skedad. She'd make mince meat of you in about five minutes. Oh, you'd laff your teeth out ter hear the way she goes for Menton when he comes a-courtin' Grace. Grace, you see, is marm's sister's gal, an' lives with Uncle Marathon, across the line. Al's afraid ter see her there much, 'cause he's a skedad ; at least, so ma says. So Grace comes over ter our house visitin', and Menton happens around.

HARRY (*aside*). Quite a family history. (*Aloud*.) Sure and you don't be afther telling me this for a fact ? Och ! it's meself that had a knockdown to this same gintleman only the last night that iver was. Oh, he's a swate crathure, he is, paid my lodgings at the hotel, and gave me a shilling ter put in my pocket. So your ma don't be afther loiking him ?

SIM. No, she don't ; but, say ! if you're a friend of Al's, I'll stan' by ye. He's a trump, he is. Allus brings me fish-hooks or suthin' when he comes a-courtin'. We live down there in the holler. Better not come, though, till arter school. (*School-bell heard*.) Gosh ! there goes the bell for recess now. I'll get a lickin', I'll bet a dollar. I don't care ! I'm goin' a-fishin' to-night, an' if I don't catch a whoppin' string er trout, then I'll make things blue. Good day, Irishy. I've got ter run like thunder to get in with the boys. (*Runs off*, R. I E.)

HARRY. Well, if Canada isn't a land of peculiarities, then I'm mistaken. Here I've had tu sing, and dance, and fight, and now must run the risk of being scalped. Even my turnin' into an Irishman is no protection. Let's see ! my name now is Larry O'Calligan, the Irish soap-pedler. Now, there's a name a man should be proud of. Well, I'm going tu circulate around in this neighborhood until near night, and then waltz down into the valley. If I've got tu die, why, die I must ; but I'm going tu du it facing the enemy. (*Exit* L. I E.)

SCENE V. — MR. SAMPSON'S *door-yard*. *Set house L. 3 E. Settee left of door. Fence across stage, 5 G. Gate C., opening upon highway. Outhouses, etc., R. Fields and mountains in the distance.* MR. SAMPSON *seated upon settee, holding newspaper and pipe.* MRS. SAMPSON *standing in doorway.* SIM *seated on ground, mending fish-pole, R. 2 E.* MARK WHIFFLES *seated L. 1 E. He is dressed in hunter's costume, carries gun, etc.*

MR. SAMPSON. As I wur a-sayin', Mr. Whiffles, I ain't partically down on niggars; but it seems ter me as if, with a leetle cakerlation, they might 'a' been freed without sech a tarnal fuss. Now, why didn't the gov'ment sorter buy up the critters, an' ship 'em to Africa, where they b'long. Wouldn't it have saved the country a heap o' trouble, an' been cheaper in the end, don't you think?

WHIFF. Really, Mr. Sampson, in a financial point of view, your assertion cannot be doubted; but there were many barriers against it. In the first place, history informs us —

MR. S. I don't care a continental 'bout history. The p'int is, why they didn't do it afore the rebs fired on Sumter, an' set the blood of the hull nation to bilin' like a kettle of soap. Why didn't they do it afore the war, Mr. Whiffles?

WHIFF. I believe the question was agitated.

MR. S. Then, agin, what are they goin' ter do with the pesky critters arter they free 'em? I mean, if they do free 'em, for I'm consarnedly afeered they won't — I say, what are they goin' ter do with 'em?

SIM. Blow 'em up with gun-powder. I would.

MR. S. Look a-here, Simon, when we want eny of your advice, we'll ax it. Now, I was a-goin' ter say that I consider a niggarr jest as good as a white man; but whether he's worth all this tarnal fuss, or not, is a question I hain't chewed on long enough ter decide. One thing is purty sartin: Uncle Sam will need recruits purty soon, an' where'll he get 'em? Where'll he get 'em, Mr. Whiffles?

MRS. SAMPSON. Pretty question to ask. Let him take the skedaddlers who are sponging their living out of us, and proving themselves a nuisance to Canada.

MR. S. Now look a-here, Nancy, your nose allus did go up at a skedaddler — allus, eternally. I an't got no particilar love for some on 'em myself; still, I don't know why a skedaddler can't be a man like as anybody else can. Anyhow, you'd better not judge 'em too harshly; for, like as not, our darter may marry one some time. So you'd better be keerful — be a little keerful, Nancy.

MRS. S. Emma marry a skedaddler? Let her do it if she dare. Let her think of it if she dare. Why, I'd turn her out of the house. I only tolerate Menton here because you insist upon it. Do you hear? Because you insist upon it, Mr. Sampson. Grace is a fool to speak to him. (*Looks off, R.*) Mercy sakes! if he isn't coming down the road now; and Grace is with him. I'll into the house at once. (*Exit into house.*)

WHIFF. (*aside*). Menton coming here, and with her? My plans have been frustrated, then. Curse the luck! something has happened. Well, I must put on a bold front, and appear unconcerned.

(*Enter MENTON and GRACE through gate, c. As they approach, WHIFFLES rises and bows.*)

MR. S. (*rising*). How de do? how de do? Glad ter see ye, both on ye. Have some cheers, won't ye?

GRACE. No, I thank you, uncle; for one, I prefer standing. It is not an extremely long walk over to the farm, and I am not at all fatigued. (*Crosses to MARK.*) Ah, Mark, I perceive you have a gun with you. Have you made a large capture?

WHIFF. Well — no, Miss Marathon, I must admit I have not. While taking a stroll for my own amusement, I perceived your uncle, and so called to indulge in a pleasant chat.

MR. S. You see, Mark and I sorter like ter arg'e on some p'int, an' on some p'int we sorter don't. You know, Menton, it's jest the same with us. How is Mr. Marathon, Grace? Purty contented, is he, now he's out o' bizness?

GRACE. Yes, uncle is generally contented. His health of late, though, has been quite miserable. He did think of riding over to visit you this morning; but felt too indisposed. Ah, Simon, what are you working at?

SIM. Mendin' gosh-darned ole fish-pole.

GRACE. Is it broken?

SIM. Should say 'twas — smashed all ter thunder.

GRACE. Why, how did that happen?

SIM. Oh that darned old — er — er — that — er — gun chap tumbled over the fence on ter it. Might 'a' knowed 'twould 'a' broke — darn 'im!

MR. S. Simon! don't let me hear eny more sech talk as that. Mr. Whiffles didn't break it o' purpose; besides, the pole an't worth whimperin' about, anyhow.

SIM. Well, 'twas good enough ter catch trout with, I guess, an' now 'tain't fit to kill snakes.

MEN. (*crosses to R.*). I tell you, Sim! slip over to the

Plain this evening, and purchase a new pole, and to-morrow night I'll go trouting with you.

SIM. By thunder! I'll do it. I'll go now. Where's my hat? Darn it! where is it? Oh, I left it in the house, er course! (*Exit into house.*)

WHIFF. I perceive that the evening is fast advancing. I wish to capture a hare, if possible, and so will take my departure. I wish you joy, Mr. Menton, on your return walk to the Line. Pleasant evening for a stroll. (*Crosses to R.*) Good evening, Miss Marathon. I probably shall reach home before you. Good night, all. (*Exit R. I E.*)

MR. S. Well, Whiffles seems ter be in a tearin' hurry, somehow! Sorter ill at ease arter you come. An't kinder jealous of ye, is he, Grace?

GRACE. Why, certainly not. How can you imagine such a thing?

MR. S. Well, I dunno. Sech a purty face ought ter affect him somehow. Ha! ha! sorter affected Menton here, I cakerlate. Hey, Menton?

MEN. Not the face, Mr. Sampson, so much as the heart; though I am not proof against a pretty face.

GRACE. You gentlemen choose to flatter. (*Retires up stage.*) Hark! I hear singing. Look! look! there comes Emma and others down the road. Why, who is that at their head? (*All look off, R. U. E.*) See how grotesquely he is dressed. Do you see him, Albert?

MEN. Certainly, Grace. (*Aside.*) He is the very man who saved me at the bridge.

(*HARRY, decorated with flowers, and carrying valise, is seen approaching from highway, followed by EMMA and others. They enter through gate, laughing, and station themselves at different points of the stage. HARRY approaches front.*)

HARRY. Now, this is what I call — (*Perceives MENTON.*) Great Scott! there's the chap I rescued at the bridge. He must not expose me. (*Crosses to MENTON. Assuming his Irish dialect.*) I beg your pardon, sir; but I'm afther thinking I've seen yez before. Faith, and I remember the time well enough. Oh, murder! kape it a sacret, and if Larry O'Calligan don't stand by yez, may he niver again see ould Limerick, the place where he niver wur.

MR. S. I say, Emma! *Emma!* Where did you run across this? Some museum lost one of its show figgers?

EMMA. Oh, pa! you mustn't. He's splendid. We met him down at the old elm tree. Oh, you ought to have seen him! Why, he's been singing to us, and dancing for us, and

we decked him with flowers to pay for it. Oh, Grace! you ought to have been there. You lost lots of fun.

HARRY (*imitating*). Yes, ma'am, you ought to have been there. Faith, and I've been a combination concert, an opera, ballet de sham, and Queen of the May for the whole party. You lost a moighty fine thing, I can tell yez. I've kicked out an Irish jig, sung Rory O'More, tried ter kiss the prettiest girl, and, by my sowl, I can hardly remember what else. Oh, you lost lots of fun. (*Aside.*) Holy Moses! there was an Irish speech long enough for a mainmast.

MRS. S. (*in doorway*). I should like to know what this racket's about? Why, who's this? Land sakes alive! what is it? What do you want here? Who are you?

HARRY (*aside*). Great Scott! the lamb is in the jaws of the lioness at last. Well, here goes! (*Aloud.*) Faix! and who am I, is it, you're axing? Och! and my name is Larry O'Calligan, at your service, ma'am. I'm a philosopher, yes, ma'am. It's meself can rade what's passing in your own swate mind as aisy as a cat can jump. You're thinking of soap, ma'am. It sticks right out as plain as the nose on your face. You nade it, ma'am. Only fifteen cents for a cake of tar soap, bar soap, sand soap —

MRS. S. Mercy sakes! hear the fool talk. Mr. Sampson, I insist upon his leaving these premises at once. Do you hear? I insist upon it.

EMMA. Oh, mother! you mustn't talk so. He's real nice. He's just as jolly as can be. Oh, you should hear him sing once. He's splendid!

HARRY. Sing tu her? Oh, murther!

MRS. S. Splendid, is he? Be falling in love with him next, won't you? You're a fool! I insist upon his leaving the place this minute.

HARRY. Thunder and ounds! will you hear that now!

GRACE. Why, aunt, he isn't dangerous?

MRS. S. No, he isn't dangerous. Neither are some other skedaddlers I know of. Their room is better than their company, though.

MEN. (*aside*). A thrust at me, I suppose.

MRS. S. Mr. Sampson, are you going to do as I tell you? I insist upon that fellow leaving the place. Do you hear, Mr. Sampson?

MR. S. Sartin! sartin! I an't partically deaf as I knows on; but I kinder cakerlate he kin stay.

HARRY. Faith, and what will the ould woman say tu that, now?

MRS. S. Oh, you do, do you? Run in opposition to my



wishes, will you? Open an asylum for skeddaddlers next, I suppose? Mr. Sampson, you're a fool! (*Exit into house.*)

MR. S. Sartin! sartin! it an't the fust time you've called me a fool; so I cakerlate I kin stand it.

HARRY. Oh, murther! if that wasn't a narrow escape, then my name's not Larry O'Calligan. It is meself that is kilt entirely by that ould woman's blarney. And she wants me to lave the place, is it? Oh, bother, did she say that! Bad luck ter her! where are her manners I should like ter know.

EMMA. Oh, father, ask him to sing. He's just jolly.

HARRY. Great Scott! have I got tu run the gauntlet again?

MR. S. Well, I kinder cakerlate, as you seem ter be runnin' the machine, you'd better ax him yourself.

MEN. I think she lacks the courage.

EMMA. Oh, Mr. Menton, you're too bad. I just as soon ask him as not. Mr. Soap Man, won't you please—won't you be so kind—I mean—won't you just favor us with a song? Papa wants to hear you ever so much.

ALL. Oh, yes, a song! a song!

HARRY. A song, is it, you're axing for? Oh, by the Shamrock of Ireland what shall I sing now. It's up a stump I am entirely. Hould on! hould on! don't be afther spaking or breathing till I tell yez. A beautiful thing has got into my noodle, and bad luck ter me if I lose it.

(*Sings song. At end of song, they shout: "Bravo! bravo! another! another!"*)

HARRY. Is it another you're axing for? Oh, murder! it's kilt for more songs I am entirely. When it comes to dancing, though, bless your swate faces, I'm wid you. I'm a whole fiddle and string band when it comes ter kicking it out. (*Dances.*)

ALL. Form for a dance! Form for a dance!

HARRY. Och! and now I'm wid you. Hould this valise, ould gentleman, and I'll be afther calling yez a trump. It contains soap. Divil of a cake can you take without my missing it before it's half gone, so you'd better not try it. (*Gives valise to SAMPSON.*) Arrah! and now I'm ready. (*To EMMA.*) Faith, and is it wid me you are going to dance, my darling?

EMMA. Oh, yes! and I'm going to stand next to you, Grace. (*HARRY and EMMA, first couple; MENTON and GRACE, second. Rest back.*)

HARRY. All ready. Whooper up the music and let the jig commence. Keep your peepers on that valise, ould gin-

tleman, or may the devil fly away wid yez. Address partners. Aim! — fire! — bang!

(*Music. A dance. As it proceeds, MR. SAMPSON becomes elated, and dances down c., carrying valise. The valise breaks open, and HARRY'S stove-pipe hat and soap fall upon ground. SIM enters from house, puts on stove-pipe hat and dances in chair, L. I E. MRS. SAMPSON, in doorway, looking on in amazement. Confusion. Curtain falls.*)

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## ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Bar-room. Half of room in Canada, the other half in Vermont. Bar-keeper behind counter. Lighted lamp on counter. Bottles, decanters, etc., etc., on shelves back. The whole place bears a wretched appearance. MEGGS, HUMPHREY, and SMOOTHY discovered in conversation right-hand corner front. JACK HARDING, dressed in the ragged remnants of a soldier's suit, is seen sleeping in chair extreme L. Music.*

MEGGS. Now look a here, pards, if we makes this job succeed, we've got to carry a sober hand. We lost on t'other one, and by doing it lost a thousand dollars in clean cash. Now, I can't stand these ere reverses. It's a-wearing my pocket-book clean out of my recollection; and if this second job pans out a failure, I shall be a genuine bankrupt, sure's you're born. You understand?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life, we do.

SMOOTHY. We do.

MEGGS. Well, then, listen a minute. Whiffles will be here purty quick to give us the particulars of what he wants. In the fust place, I kin tell yer that there's a purty good chance of getting pulled. So, if you've any qualms of conscience, you'd better keep out of it — that's all. If we succeeds, we've got a plump five thousand dollars to divide atween us. Now, what d'ye say?

HUMPH. I say that I'll stick to yer closer than a brother.

SMOOTHY. I say —

MEGGS. Yer needn't say anything about it, Smoothy. Yer a coward, and always was; but hark'ee! — one of yer hain't got a shinplaster about yer clothes, have yer? I'm getting purty considerable kind of dry.

HUMPH. Nary plaster, pard; and, what's more, the sight of one would surprise me mor'n a shock of palsy.

SMOOTHY. Say! strike that snoozer over there for the drinks. Lórd! he snores loud enough to burst a blood-vessel.

MEGGS. Smoothy, give us a holt o' yer hand. Yer a trump. I ought to 'a' thought of that afore. He's a deserter. Yer kin see that plain enough by his dress. Now, yer hold yer breath a minute, and I'll ask old gruffer here if he objects to a little fun. (*Crosses to bar.*) I say, landlord, who is that covy over there?

LANDLORD. Don't know. Been here for three hours. Slept like a log all the time.

MEGGS. Say, wouldn't mind my touching him up for the drinks, would yer?

LANDLORD. Certainly not. Anything that does honor to the bar does honor to me. That's my motto, and mum's the word.

MEGGS. Well, don't see too much, and if he's game we'll divvy with yer every time. (*Crosses to HARDING and grasps him by the shoulder.*) Come, my sleeping beauty, rouse up yer and look at yer friends.

(*Enter WHIFFLES, R. 2 E.*)

WHIFF. Ah, good evening. Hallo, Meggs, whom have you struck now?

MEGGS. That's what I was a-going to find out. Sorter guess, though, when you come to analyze it, that you'll find it a bounty jumper, or else a purty good specimen of a deserter.

WHIFF. Deserter? Well, really! let me speak to him. Here, landlord, give these parties what they want to drink, at my expense. (*Sub-runners all rush to bar. WHIFFLES shakes HARDING.*) Come! rouse up here and show yourself.

HARDING (*half awake*). What do you want?

WHIFF. Want you to wake up.

HARD. Do, hey? Who are you?

WHIFF. Who am I? Why, your friend, to be sure.

HARD. Friend?—Humph! (*Rousing up.*) I never had a friend. I don't know what a friend is. Go away. I never harmed you, did I? Let me alone. (*Settles back.*)

WHIFF (*aside*). That voice—have I not heard it before? Surely I must be mistaken. (*Aloud.*) Look here! you have slept long enough. (*Pulls him from chair. HARDING staggers over to L.*) Now show yourself. I want to look at your face.

HARD. Want to look at my face, do you? A face bearing the prints of hard times. A face that carries the traces of poverty and wretchedness in its every feature. Well, if you can be benefited by looking into such a haggard, bloated, dissipated face as mine, why — look! (*Chord. HARDING turns and faces WHIFFLES, who staggers back in surprise.*)

WHIFF. Jack Harding! you here? I thought you were in the war.

HARD. I have been in the war, and sent there by you.

WHIFF. By me? What do you mean?

HARD. I mean, to rid yourself of my presence, you first got me intoxicated, and then sold me. Sold me as a substitute, to keep your miserable carcass out of the field.

WHIFF. Did you not consent? Was it not of your own free will?

HARD. No; you made me wild with drink. You robbed me of my reason. When that reason returned, I was a soldier. A soldier fighting the battles you should have fought, and suffering what you should have suffered.

WHIFF. Well, am I to blame for that? I paid you to take my place — paid you well. Now, why are you here?

HARD. I deserted. Can such a besotted wretch as I make a good soldier, think you? I am not afraid to fight; but I wanted liberty. For that liberty I have hidden away in swamps, lived on the bark of trees, been chased and even shot at; but now I am free.

WHIFF. Harding, look here. I need your assistance. You aided me in the past; do so again. You want money; you shall have it. First, step across the room, and let me introduce you to those already in my employ.

HARD. No; where I stand I am free. When I cross this room I am in your power. I am sober now; and while I am sober, your influence over me will be of but little avail.

WHIFF. Harding, you wrong me. I will give you my word, as a gentleman, that I intend you no harm. I tell you I need your assistance. Come! let us drink together, as in olden times.

HARD. No.

WHIFF. Why not?

HARD. Because I know the consequences of drinking when in such company as yours.

WHIFF. Harding, look here. Take this revolver. (*Hands him revolver.*) When first you see one movement on my part to do you the least injury, shoot me through the

heart. You assisted me in the past; I paid you for it. You went as my substitute to the war; I paid you for it. Recollect, if you are in my power when you cross this room, I am in your power as the man who forged the note in Portland ten years ago. Is this not proof enough to convince you that I intend you no harm?

HARD. No; the man who will send his best friend to prison for a forgery which he himself committed is not to be trusted.

WHIFF. For the matter of that, neither is the man whose tongue can be bribed to keep him there. But away with this nonsense. I have given you the privilege of taking my life on the first exhibition of treachery. Is that not enough? Come! you are thirsty. One glass will revive your spirits and give you courage. You are out of money, out of friends, and out of a lodging place. All these you shall have if you will put confidence in me and render me the assistance I require.

HARD. You — you tempt me.

WHIFF. No, I do not. I ask you as a friend and one who is willing to pay you. Come! let us drink. You will — I know you will. (*Crosses to bar.*) Landlord, set up the drinks for the crowd; and, mind, let it be the best liquor.

HARD. (*aside*). I am that man's slave. He can draw me with the magic influence of his voice, even as the magnet draws the needle. Can charm me with the subtle glance of his treacherous eyes, even as the rattlesnake charms the fluttering bird before it. I have been his tool in the past, and something inwardly whispers that I shall be it again. If he does prove false, though, I will take him at his word. I will shoot him through the heart. (*Puts revolver in his pocket.*)

WHIFF. Come, Harding, the glasses are filled. (*HARDING goes to bar.*) Now let us drink as old friends. (*All drink.*)

MEGGS. Yer seem to be on purty good footing with our partner here?

WHIFF. Yes. He is a friend of mine, and must so be considered by you. Mind — he is one of us; and the first who attempts him harm incurs my displeasure.

MEGGS. And he ought to have it. If he is a friend of yours, he is a friend of ours, and as such we will stand by him. Won't we, pards?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life we will.

SMOOTHY. We will.

WHIFF. Landlord, here is a "V." There will be no others

in to-night, for the hour is already late. Just retire, if you please, and leave me the keys of the bar. (*Winks significantly.*) You understand?

LANDLORD. Certainly, sir; certainly. Mum's the word. Them as does honor to my bar does honor to me. That's my motto every time. Help yourselves, gentlemen. The best liquor is in the blue bottle on the top shelf. (*Exit c. door.*)

WHIFF. (*going behind bar*). Now to business at once. The job for which I need your assistance is no less of an undertaking than to rob the safe of Luther Marathon of thirty thousand dollars. Now, recollect! I do not rob the safe for the money; that is already mine by a will. That will is in the safe, and must not be disturbed. This money, however, must be taken and found in the possession of Albert Menton. See?

MEGGS. Well, I ain't werry dull as to what you mean. Yer mean so long's the money's yours yer ain't particklar about dividing with us. Yer want to have it found in Menton's hands, have him convicted, and then the money goes back into the safe. That is, providing there's anything left of it after we get through.

WHIFF. Exactly! You have comprehended my motive to a letter.

MEGGS. Well, now, s'posin the old man should take it into his head to make a new will after the money had been returned. Wouldn't you sorter wish you'd hung to the boodle after you'd got it?

WHIFF. I am coming to that now. If he lives — mark me — if he lives, that will is to be replaced by a new one bequeathing all of his property to his niece. *Now, there shall never be a new will.*

HARD. Which means, I suppose, that we must murder the old man.

WHIFF. Hush! I did not say murder. The old man is in ill health. When he finds he is robbed, the shock may be so sudden as to kill him.

HARD. And if it don't kill him?

WHIFF. Leave the rest to me. I only ask you to rob the safe. For your assistance in this matter I will divide five thousand dollars between you. All I ask is that you will swear eternal secrecy in this matter, and not expose me.

MEGGS. Yer can cut out the heart of Jake Meggs afore he goes back on a friend. Ain't that so, pards?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life it is.

SMOOTHY. It is.

WHIFF. Very well. To you, Mr. Harding, is reserved the job of placing this money in Menton's room where it can be readily found. If there should be blood in this matter — mind, I say blood — traces of that must be left there also. Am I understood?

HARD. I understand you, sir.

WHIFF. Very well. As all is arranged, let us drink. (*All drink.*) Meet me at eleven o'clock to-morrow night, at the Line bridge, on the Vermont side. I shall disguise so as to represent Menton as near as possible, and, if seen, will be taken for him. (*Going.*) Now, don't forget the hour or the place. (*Exit R. 2 E.*)

MEGGS. Good-by, pard; glad to have yer jine us. Give us a holt o' yer hand.

HUMPH. Wouldn't mind giving yer a shake myself.

SMOOTHY. Nor I. (*All shake hands, and exeunt R. 2 E., except HARDING.*)

HARD. Once more the octopus has twined its arms around me, and, unresisting, I am drawn downward to my doom. Shall I fly from this temptation? No; I want gold — gold I must have. With it I can satiate this horrible craving for drink. I am not all wicked — in here? I even shuddered when that man talked so lightly of blood; but I need the money. Yes, I will keep my promise. I will help rob the safe. I will place the money in Menton's room. I will help to convict him. I will do more than this. Aye! if life and strength be given me, I will not only assist in robbing the safe, but I will steal that will. (*Picture.*)

SCENE II. — *A street. Night. Enter WHIFFLES, R. 1 E.*

HARRY BLANFORD enters, L. 1 E., carrying valise. They run against each other, C.

WHIFF. Can't you mind where you're going?

HARRY. The same ter yourself, sir. Bedad! how could I tell but yez was a lamp-post, I'd like to know.

WHIFF. You should be able to distinguish a lamp-post from a human being. A man with half an eye could do that.

HARRY. You may say that, sir; but I have the illigant misfortune of being blind in one eye, and partially cross-eyed in the next; and I tell yez between the tu complaints there's the divil ter pay sometimes, or I'm no judge of accidents.

WHIFF. (*crosses to L.*) Well, keep out of my way next time — that's all.

HARRY (R.). Hould on! hould on! Don't be afther hurrying off until I spake wid ye. I would like ter be axing yez a question.

WHIFF. Well, speak quick; what do you want?

HARRY. My name is Larry O'Calligan, if you plaze, and I'm looking for work.

WHIFF. Well, what's that to me?

HARRY. Faith, and good luck ter your honor, I didn't know but you might be afther giving me a job.

WHIFF. No; clear out, or I'll give you a job you don't want. The army is the place for such vagabonds as you.

HARRY. The army, is it? Oh, divil fly away with the army and the loikes of it. Why are you not there yourself, sir?

WHIFF. That is my business.

HARRY. Right you are there, sir, and no mistake. But — whist! I've a more delicate question for yez than I've asked at all, at all.

WHIFF. Well, out with it, then; I've no time to be loitering here.

HARRY. Oh, be aisy, now, and not hurry me so fast. You make me miserable, sir.

WHIFF. Well, well, to the point!

HARRY. I'm coming ter that, sir, niver fear; but first let me ax you — have you a family, sir?

WHIFF. What's that to you?

HARRY. Because, sir, I've one of the swatest lines of soap there is in the country — yes, sir. Won't you have a cake, sir? Your family needs it. I've sand soap, bar soap, tar soap —

WHIFF. Go to the devil. (*Rushes off, L. I E.*)

HARRY. All right, sir; yes, sir. (*Assuming his usual voice.*) Well, I've disposed of him anyhow. Confound his picture! he expressed his feelings in a way that sounded like a cracked fiddle. Perhaps he didn't like my vernacular. Great Scott! didn't I nearly expose my dialect when the old gentleman broke that valise. The soap was scarcely packed, and the stove-pipe hat stowed away, when I was taken over the head with a broom in the hands of the old woman. I got another clip as I went through the gate, and thanked my stars I didn't get any more. Well, there's a house yonder with a light in it, and I'll strike it for a hotel. To-morrow I'll promenade north into the French settlements, and if my Irish vernacular don't take, I'll "vat you may call it in Dutch," don't you know. (*Exit R. I E.*)



SCENE III.—*Same as Act I., Scene I. Night. Thunder and lightning distant. Lighted lamp on table. MR. MARATHON seated at right of table, perusing will.*

MAR. At last my new will is duly signed and witnessed, and all that I possess goes to my niece at my death. My first will was made in a moment of foolish passion, which sober after-thought convinced me was wrong. If Grace insists upon wedding this Menton, it is she must suffer the consequences, and not myself. She shall not have it to say, though, that her Uncle Marathon did not do his duty by her, even though she disregarded his wishes. I will now destroy the old will, and put this new one in its place. I am getting old and feeble, and liable at any moment to pass away; so the sooner these things are attended to, the better. (*Goes to safe, which he opens.*) There! I will place this new will on the top shelf, where it can be readily found in case it should be needed. (*Takes out old will.*) Here is the old will. I will hold it over the blaze of the lamp, where I can see it consumed. I shall then know it can do no harm. (*Goes to lamp, and is about to burn will as MENTON and GRACE enter from R. MARATHON hurriedly folds will and goes to safe.*) Never mind; to-morrow will do as well. (*Replaces will, closes safe, and advances C.*) Ah, Mr. Menton, are you not departing earlier than usual?

MEN. Somewhat, sir. I perceive that a storm is brewing in the west, and the sooner I return to my lodgings the better.

GRACE. I have been prevailing with him to remain over night. Don't you think he had better, uncle?

MAR. As he chooses, my child,—as he chooses. We have ample room, and his wants shall all be attended to; but of course he knows his own business best.

MEN. I think it is better that I should return, sir. I would gladly remain if it were possible, as Grace here is fully aware.

GRACE. But you know, Albert, there is danger in crossing the bridge. Only this morning they found a murdered man on one of the steps of a house close beside it, and it is surmised that sub-runners committed the deed.

MEN. Yes, Grace, but I am armed. I carry this knife about me (*showing knife*), and consider it an ample protection. (*Aside.*) I will not tell her of my last adventure.

MAR. Well, Mr. Menton, you must act your own pleasure. (*Lightning and thunder.*) I perceive, though, that

the storm is fast approaching. This may prevail upon you to remain, although you have no fears for other dangers. However, you can settle it between yourselves. (*Sits at table, R.*)

GRACE (*down C. with MENTON*). Will you not remain, Albert?

MEN. No, Grace, I cannot. It is necessary that I should return. Fear nothing, my girl; I will outstrip the storm and all dangers, and reach home in safety.

GRACE. But I have fears to-night, Albert, that I never before experienced. I feel some impending danger hovering over us; something that whispers we shall never meet again.

MEN. Fear nothing, Grace. Whatever happens will be for the best. You will not desert me, and I have no fears for aught else.

GRACE. Still, Albert, it would kill me to have you taken from me.

MEN. Grace, all will turn out for the best in the end. Those are your words, I believe; I have not forgotten them. Good night. If I would outstrip the storm I must make haste. Soon I shall meet you again; and when I do, I shall expect to see the same sweet smile that so often hovers around your lips. Good night, my girl, and may the angel of sleep guard you in your slumber.

GRACE. Good night, Albert. (*They embrace. MENTON passes out C. GRACE gazes after him.*) Oh, why am I haunted with this terrible fear. This inward something that whispers he is to be taken from me. (*Crosses to table.*) Uncle, do you not feel gloomy to-night? As if some dire calamity was close at hand?

MAR. No, my child; what is there to fear?

GRACE. Oh, I don't know, uncle. I am wretched to-night — miserably wretched; and this wind — how it moans! (*Crosses to window and looks out. Flash of lightning.*) Mercy! what a flash! The storm will surely o'ertake him ere he reaches home.

MAR. You are nervous to-night, my child. Come! do away with these idle fears. With the rising of to-morrow's sun your heart will be as light as ever, and you will laugh at the terrors that haunt you to-night. There is no harm in the approaching storm, either to Menton or yourself.

GRACE. It is not the storm, uncle, — it is not the storm. It is a presentiment that something is going to happen. I feel that a shadow hangs over us which is going to darken our whole future.

MAR. Do away with these fancies, child; they are as nonsensical as dreams. Had you not better retire? Sleep will banish these harrowing fears, and in the morning you will rise as bright as the lark.

GRACE. Yes, uncle, I will go to my room; but not to sleep. I cannot sleep until the storm is past, and the bright stars shine forth, and I can see the shadow of the mountains in the west. Let me kiss you before I retire. (*Approaches and kisses him.*) Good night. (*Exit L. 2 E.*)

MAR. I did not dare tell her that my own heart was troubled. That I experienced a feeling of impending danger, such as I never felt before; but so it is — so it is. I wonder if the windows are well secured. (*Goes to window, R. C.*) Whiffles told me he should not return to-night; that business detained him. (*Draws curtain and looks out of window.*) It is indeed a dark night (*lightning and thunder*), and the lightning is most vivid. (*Fastens shutters and closes curtains.*) Well, I will retire to the cloisters of my own room. In the morning I will destroy that will; and, by doing it, feel that I have undone an act which might, in the future, have caused shame to have rested upon my memory. (*Music. MARATHON takes lamp, passes to C., turns and carefully inspects the room, then slowly exit L. 3 E.*)

(*Pause. Dark stage. Slow music through rest of scene. The curtains are slowly seen to part at window, R. C., and WHIFFLES, disguised as ALBERT MENTON, is discovered looking into the room. Lightning and heavy thunder.*)

WHIFF. All right, lads. Follow me, and make as little noise as possible. (*He enters window, followed by HARDING and sub-runners. All are disguised. They inspect the room, and then cross to safe. HUMPHREY carries blankets to cover the safe, MEGGS a portmanteau, and SMOOTHY a dark lantern.*) All is as quiet as the grave in here, though the elements are warring without. Have you the necessary tools, think you?

MEGGS. Don't yer fret about the tools. I cut my front teeth years ago, and calculate I ain't no novice. Ain't that so, pards?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life it is.

SMOOTHY. It is.

MEGGS. Now, p'int yer light, Smoothy, and we'll attend to business. (*SMOOTHY holds lantern, MEGGS and HUMPHREY drill door to safe. HARDING watches R., and WHIFFLES down C. Time must be allowed for drilling safe, etc., etc.*) There! I kinder guess that hole went clean through. Now, for the powder. (*Movements of blowing powder*

through hole.) Jest hand me that fuse, and the thing's done. (*Inserts fuse through hole.*) Now, pile on the rugs, and if we don't blow that door clean into the middle of next week, you kin chalk me down for a liar. Are yer ready?

WHIFF. All ready. Now, mind! when the explosion takes place, secure the contents, and make your retreat. Remember, though, *that the will is not to be disturbed.* Now, fire away.

(MEGGS lights fuse, and all retreat down to R. I E. The safe is blown with torpedo back of curtain. When the explosion takes place all rush forward. As the sub-runners secure the money, HARDING grasps the will and passes down front.)

HARD. They can take the money, and Jack Harding can take the will. (*Hides will about his person.*)

(*As sub-runners cross to window, WHIFFLES, with drawn knife, remains near L. 3 E., as if watching for some one.*)

WHIFF. (*aside*). Curse it! why does he not come forth? Has this noise not disturbed him? He shall never live to see daylight; I will kill him in his room first. Ah, he comes! (MARATHON and GRACE with lighted candles rush in at almost the same instant. WHIFFLES darts forward and stabs MARATHON with knife.) Take that, curse you.

MAR. Oh, my God! I am stabbed, and by you. Albert Menton, you are my murderer. (*Staggers and falls, C. L.*)

GRACE. Oh, no! no!—don't say that! Albert? Oh, Father in Heaven! it is—it is. Albert, you have killed him and me. (*Swoons. As she is falling, HARDING, who is overcome with remorse, starts up C.*)

HARD. My God! I can't stand this! Lady! lady! he is not— (WHIFFLES turns upon him with drawn revolver.)

WHIFF. Back—back, I say, or you are a dead man!

(GRACE upon floor near L. I E. MARATHON dead, L. C. WHIFFLES, C., with drawn revolver pointed at HARDING, who has retreated over to R. SMOOTHY in window. MEGGS and HUMPHREY near window in attitudes of surprise. Tableau.)

SMOOTHY

HUMPHREY MEGGS

MARATHON

WHIFFLES

HARDING

GRACE

R.

L.

## ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Highway.* Enter HARRY BLANFORD, L. I E.

HARRY. Who would think it took so much heroic bravery to exist in this country without being annihilated. Here I am, just out of Sherbrooke jail. Merely because — I say merely, and really, and only because I happened to wear a wig, and got mixed up on my Irish vernacular. They said that no one but a down-east Yankee ever used the expressions “tu” and “du”; and so they took me for a spy, they did. I’m beginning tu think it takes a courageous and self-sacrificing man tu be a skedaddler. I can’t stand it. It’s wearing on my constitution, don’t you know, and if to-morrow’s sun don’t find me among the wood-clad hills of Maine, it will be because I’ve been kidnapped by some sub-runner, or arrested for trying to create an insurrection against the Canadian government. (*Starts off, R., and is met by EMMA, who enters R. I E.*) Whist! be aisy now, my jewel; don’t be afther being in such a hurry.

EMMA (*crosses L.*). Oh, you mustn’t stop me! I can’t remain here a minute.

HARRY. Oh, bother the rush that you’re in. Hould on till I ax yez a question. Is your mother in illigant health?

EMMA. Oh, I don’t know! I can’t tell you! I mustn’t stop. Oh, Mr. Soap Man! haven’t you heard the dreadful news?

HARRY. Faix! it’s nothing but dreadful news I’ve heard for the past eight days. Why, I’ve been in jail —

EMMA. No — no; not that. I mean about Mr. Menton. Oh, it’s awful! and to think that it should be him. Oh, I can’t believe it!

HARRY. Thin the dirty blackguards have cotched him, have they? Well, now, I’m not surprised at all, at all. It was my own beautiful self who got him out of a divil of a schrape only eight days ago; but what have they done with him, my darling?

EMMA. Oh, they’ve put him in jail. Only think of it; but — I mustn’t remain another minute.

HARRY. Put him in jail? What the divil is he in jail for?

EMMA. Then, you haven’t heard. Oh, Mr. Soap Man! he has murdered Uncle Marathon.

HARRY. What! (*Drops valise and starts forward astonished.*)

EMMA. Oh, mercy! you frighter me. I mustn't remain another minute. (*Starts off.*)

HARRY (*forgetting his dialect*). Wait! Look here!—Great Cæsar! it is impossible. What! he whom I rescued at the bridge, a murderer? I'll not believe it. I tell you I'll not believe it.

EMMA. W-why! why, Mr. Soap Man! your voice isn't the same. I'm surprised. I mustn't remain another minute.

HARRY (*aside*). Thunder and Mars! I forgot my dialect. (*Aloud.*) Say! hould on, now—don't be afther being scat. It was startled I was entirely; and when I'm startled I sometimes spake Greek, and sometimes English. This time it happened to be English. But—murther! it's confused I am entirely. Is it bamboozling me you are, or are you spaking the truth? Out with it now, for I'm in a divil of a flusteration.

EMMA. Oh, I don't know what you call it; but he's killed Uncle Marathon. They broke into his safe and stole his money. The officers tried to make him tell who was with him, but he wouldn't. Oh, Mr. Soap Man! isn't it awful?

HARRY. Knock me on the head wid a shillelagh if it isn't; but how did they know Menton committed the murder?

EMMA. Oh, Grace saw him. She stood right beside him when he stabbed dear uncle with a knife. Then she fainted. And to think he didn't run away! Why, in the morning they asked him to go over the bridge, and he went right over. Then they arrested him. When they searched his room they found the money all hid away and his knife all covered with blood; but I mustn't remain another minute. (*Starts off.*)

HARRY. Hould on now; come back wid ye. (*Aside.*) Great Scott! I'm thunderstruck. (*Aloud.*) Where is the girl Menton was a-courting?

EMMA. Grace? Oh, she's at our house now. You wouldn't hardly know her, she's so pale and white, just like a ghost.

HARRY. I would like tu spake wid her a minute.

EMMA. Oh, mercy—no! Mother would tear your eyes out if you went near the house.

HARRY. By my sowl, I shall not be afther going, thin. Tell her for me, though, that I'm going tu see Menton before twenty-four hours, or my name's not Larry O'Calligan. Tell her also that there's a set of dirty spalpeens in this vicinity

worse than any skedaddler that was iver born. And don't you forget tu say —

EMMA. Oh, Mr. Soap Man! I must go now. I can't remain another minute.

HARRY. Be aisy, will you, and hear what I'm saying tu yez. Tell Miss Grace for me that, when I'm started, I'm a whole detective force with the agency thrown in; and that I'm going tu sift this matter tu the bottom if I ruin my soap business in duing it. (*Picks up his valise and crosses to R. Assuming his usual voice.*) And as a final clincher you tell her she can't tell no more by the personal appearance of a man than you can by judging me tu be an Irishman, because I wear a wig and talk the Irish vernacular. Now, I'm off. (*Lifts his wig from his head and exit R.*)

EMMA. Oh, mercy! how he's frightened me. Why, isn't he what he is, or is he something that he isn't? I'm all of a tremble. He was kind of pretty, too. There! I mustn't remain here another minute. (*Exit L.*)

SCENE II. — *Interior of Mr. SAMPSON'S house. A plain but well furnished apartment. A couch, R. Table, chairs, etc., etc. Plain pictures on wall. Entrance R. C. MR. and MRS. SAMPSON enter, talking, R. C.)*

MR. S. Now, look a-here, Nancy, what's the use o' talkin' like that. It don't bring your brother back, and, besides, it's jest a-breakin' that poor gal's heart. You are only a-heapin' coals on to the fire every time you do it.

MRS. S. (R. I E.). Of course I am. I'm always doing something out of the way, in your estimation. Your brother hasn't been murdered, Mr. Sampson. My poor brother has; and at the hands of a skedaddler — the miserable wretch! Still, you would insist upon having him around. You would insist upon it!

MR. S. Well, Nance, what's done can't be undone. I've been purty well deceived, that's a fact. Still, there an't no use a-talkin' agin him in her presence, when you know every word goes clean through her heart like a knife.

MRS. S. She had no business to have gone with him, then.

MR. S. Well, she did go with him, and loved him, too, an' I don't know as I blame her. That an't no reason, though, that you should harrer her feelin's, when you know she is tortured enough already.

MRS. S. No, of course not — of course not. Can't use my tongue in my own house, I suppose! My advice is of

no account — oh, no. She would be headstrong. She would insist upon going with him, contrary to my wishes, and now you can see the consequences. It is no worse for her to suffer than it is for me.

MR. S. Sartin! sartin! there an't no doubt about that. It's nat'rul you should feel bad — both on ye. What I find fault about is you sorter don't realize what effect your words may have upon her feelin's. I say, you sorter don't realize it.

MRS. S. I can have my tongue cut out, I suppose. However, here she comes. (*Music. GRACE enters, L. C., and slowly advances front.*) Are you feeling rested, child?

GRACE. Quite rested, dear aunt; but — oh! this weight upon my heart. Will it ever be lifted, think you?

MRS. S. Yes, child; only banish that wretch from your thoughts — (*Crosses to L.*)

GRACE. Oh, don't! don't! (*Sinks upon lounge, and buries her face in the cushions.*)

MR. S. There it comes again. It is mighty strange, Nance, you can't keep quiet. You allus slop a dish over afore it's half full. (*Crosses to lounge.*) There, there, Grace! It's hard — mighty hard; but you must try and cheer up, if possible. Reverses will come, you know, an' you must be prepared to meet 'em. (*GRACE lifts her face from the lounge.*) That's right! look up. I can't bear ter see you feel so.

GRACE. Oh, Uncle Sampson, you do pity me, don't you? Tell me that you pity me!

MR. S. Pity you, child? Well, I kinder reckon I do. Why, there an't nuthin' under God's heaven Nance or I wouldn't do ter make ye happy an' comfortable, if possible.

MRS. S. (*L.*). Just as if she didn't know that before.

GRACE. Yes, uncle, you are kind to me — both of you. Still, it don't remove this burden from my heart. It don't place me back a happy child in my old home. It don't bring my dear Uncle Marathon back to me. It don't! — it don't! Oh, Heavens! it don't —

MR. S. There — there; don't try ter say it — don't try! I know how you feel; at least, I kin sorter imagine. Still, when our idols prove false, we must crush 'em; crush 'em if you torture your own heart in doin' it.

SIM (*C. L.*). Say, Grace, that ere Whiffles is outside, an' he says he wants ter see you alone. Here's his card. (*Gives card.*) By gosh! I wouldn't see him if I was you.

GRACE. Yes, it may relate to my uncle's affairs. Tell him I will see him. (*SIM exit C. L.*)



MR. S. Well, Grace, Nance an' I'll go out an' sorter leave you to yourselves. Whiffles can talk to you better than I can, an' perhaps he can cheer you up a little ; but if there's anything you want, an' I can get it, you shall have it, if it takes a ten-acre lot to settle the damages. Come, Nance.

MRS. S. I can kiss you if I won't bite you, I suppose ?

GRACE. Oh, certainly, dear aunt. (MRS. SAMPSON *kisses her and exit with MR. SAMPSON L. 2 E.*) What can Mark want, I wonder ? Can it be that, knowing my situation, he has called to renew his former proposals ? Oh, no — no, it cannot be. (*Enter WHIFFLES, R. C.*) Ah, Mark, you wished to speak to me. Please be seated. (*Both sit.*)

WHIFF. Miss Marathon, knowing your unhappy situation, I have called to offer my sympathy, and see if there is aught I can be of avail.

GRACE. You are very kind, sir ; but at present I am in want of no assistance. Still, as my father's friend, I thank you for your generous offer.

WHIFF. You doubtless remember, Miss Marathon, the day I asked for your hand in marriage ?

GRACE (*rising*). Sir ! if you are come to renew those proposals, believe me, the time and the opportunity are very much out of place.

WHIFF. Really, Miss Marathon, you do not understand me. I am not here as a lover ; neither am I here to taunt or torture you. Neither have I tortured you, I believe, since the day you refused me your hand. Though that refusal wrung my heart at the time, and I have not ceased to love you, I am too much of a gentleman, I think, to renew them at the present time, and especially under such unfavorable circumstances. No, Miss Marathon, I am here as your friend ; and I will prove myself as such, if you will please be seated and listen to my conversation.

GRACE. Very well, sir ; I now will listen. (*Sits.*)

WHIFF. I repeat, then, that you are doubtless aware of the time you refused me your hand. You also are aware of your uncle's anger on account of that refusal, and the conversation that ensued in which he threatened to leave you penniless at his death. His anger went to such an extent, even, that he actually made a will, and that will was duly signed and witnessed. That will bequeathed all of his property to me. Nay, do not start ; as yet, I have not finished. Well, I did not know of this until a few weeks ago, when, one evening as I was passing through his room, he detained me and told me of the circumstance. I gave the matter no thought at the time, for I imagined, after his excitement had passed,

he would repent of his folly and destroy the will; but I learned this morning from the managers of your uncle's estate that such is not the case. A will has been found, however, in which I am mentioned as the sole heir. Of course, this puts me in possession of his property.

GRACE. And you now come here to taunt me with my poverty.

WHIFF. No; to prove to you that my motives are sincere, I intend that every jot and tittle of that estate shall be made over to you. It is yours by right, if not by will. Understand me, I am not doing this for your hand, or for any particular favor, but merely because I consider it a duty.

GRACE. Mr. Whiffles, I will not doubt your sincerity; but if my uncle has seen fit to make you his heir, as such you must remain.

WHIFF. I beg your pardon, but I intend to do nothing of the kind.

GRACE. You must, Mark. I can manage to exist without it. I will not touch my uncle's property unless willed to me directly by his own hand.

WHIFF. Very well. We will let that matter rest for the present. Just now I would speak to you upon a more delicate theme; therefore, prepare yourself to be calm. I would speak of — of Albert Menton.

GRACE. Oh, Mark! as my uncle's friend, as my friend, if you are such, do not — oh, do not mock my sufferings by referring to him.

WHIFF. Miss Marathon, what I say will not only benefit you, but Mr. Menton.

GRACE. Oh, can this be true? Then tell me; is there no way to avert his terrible doom?

WHIFF. Yes, there is a way, but it is dangerous to those concerned. It is of this I would speak. Are we in danger of being overheard?

GRACE. We are quite alone. Speak freely, and keep me no longer in suspense.

WHIFF. Well, then, with outside assistance, he can be helped to break jail. Then, in proper disguise, he can enlist for the war.

GRACE. Will he do this, think you?

WHIFF. It is policy.

GRACE. But who will undertake so dangerous a calling?

WHIFF. I will.

GRACE. You — you, Mark? Are you indeed such a friend to me as this? Then may Heaven bless and reward you; but tell me — will they not allow me to visit him?

WHIFF. I must object to this, Miss Marathon, for what I have planned is to be executed immediately. If you have any message, though, I will willingly be its bearer.

GRACE. Then tell him, Mark, tell him for me, that I believe in his innocence.

WHIFF. Indeed! is it possible?

GRACE. Mark, listen to me. On the night of the murder, just as I fainted, one of the robbers sprang forward and, pointing at Albert, said: "Lady, he is not," and I heard no more. Oh, what did he mean?

WHIFF. Well — really — I — (*Aside.*) Curses light on Harding! He shall suffer for that act. (*Aloud.*) You have not mentioned this before?

GRACE. No, for what good would it have done? Still, it haunts me. In it I see something I cannot fathom — something that whispers of his innocence.

WHIFF. Really, Miss Marathon, be not too hopeful. There is not an atom of proof in his favor. However, I will bear him your message. More than this: I will assist you with any means in my power. Believe me (*rising*), before two days are past, Albert Menton will once more be free. I have friends to consult in this matter, so must hasten to meet them. Make yourself as comfortable as possible, and, if in want of further assistance, call upon Mark Whiffles. (*Bows and exit R. C.*)

GRACE. Can it be I have been deceived in Mark? Is he really in earnest? Oh, I hardly know what to think. Am I acting right by consenting to the escape of one believed to be my uncle's murderer? Yes — yes! for I believe him to be innocent. Albert, I will not believe you guilty of murder. Oh, no, I will not! for I loved you — love you still! (*Throws herself upon lounge. Curtain.*)

SCENE III. — *A prison. Grated window L. C. A small stand with lighted candle. ALBERT MENTON discovered seated on stool, C.*

MEN. Once more has evil destiny chosen me as her own, and I am imprisoned here, the victim of an adverse fate. Not one to whisper to me a comforting word or intercede in my behalf. Even she whom I adored, worshipped even, as only man can worship woman, condemned me with her own lips, and now ignores my presence. Oh! why am I thus doomed to affliction? It does seem as though Providence dealt unkindly by me. First, imprisoned for a forgery I never committed, and now incarcerated here for a crime

which no man can be more innocent of than am I. (*Rising, and pacing cell.*) Some one hath done this? Did I dare whisper who, and had him within my grasp, I would wring the secret from his dastardly heart. (*Noise of bolts being withdrawn.*) Some one approaches. Soon my trial will take place, and then, with other prisoners, I shall be taken to Windsor. God grant it may be Grace who now comes to bid me a last farewell.

(*Enter guard and MARK WHIFFLES, R. As MENTON perceives them, he turns and crosses, L.*)

WHIFF. (*to guard*). Here is gold. I would speak with the prisoner alone.

JAILOR. Very well, sir. Ten minutes is the time allotted. When it expires I will notify you. (*Exit R.*)

WHIFF. Mr. Menton, I am sorry to see you in this uncomfortable position.

MEN. I ask not your sympathy, sir.

WHIFF. I have called upon you, Mr. Menton, at the bidding of one who perhaps may be dearer to you than a friend.

MEN. If I have a friend, sir, they will call upon me themselves, and not bid others to perform that duty.

WHIFF. Sickness may have prevented them. Prostrated over this great calamity, they have chosen me for their advisor; and it is through their earnest solicitations I am here. Of course, I refer to Miss Marathon.

MEN. If you come from Miss Marathon, sir, I am prepared to listen; but first tell me — does she still adjudge me guilty of this terrible crime?

WHIFF. Really, sir, I am sorry to inform you that such is the case. However, she would assist you.

MEN. Assist me? How can one who is already my accuser, and who still believes me guilty, render me any assistance. Your words are mockery.

WHIFF. She wishes you to escape.

MEN. Escape? Does she look upon these walls as frail fabrications that will crumble at the slightest touch? Does she imagine these bolts and bars to be slender reeds, that will bend and break in the slightest wind that blows? Tell me! does she think these doors will open as opened the doors to the prophet of old, and unmolested let me pass through them? Why, sir, to escape is impossible.

WHIFF. Not impossible, with the assistance of friends.

MEN. Well, who are my friends?

WHIFF. I am.

MEN. You — you my friend? Sooner would I believe

you gloried in my unhappy lot than judge you in that capacity. Sooner take you for an enemy who would use your influence against me than judge you in the light of friend. *You are no friend to me.*

WHIFF. Those are harsh words, Mr. Menton; but, sympathizing with your unhappy situation, I overlook them. I have but a few moments to spare, so must be brief. Whether you are innocent or guilty of this terrible crime is not for me to decide. This much is certain — the chances are against you. Unless some unforeseen event occurs, you must certainly hang. Now for the love which Miss Marathon cherished for you — in the past — you must accept of what I am about to propose. The gallows are hideous to her; therefore she desires you to escape. For this reason, knowing me to be her friend *and yours*, she has chosen me as the instrument to work your freedom.

MEN. (*mechanically*). Then she no longer loves me?

WHIFF. How can she, with the consciousness of your guilt so deeply impressed upon her heart.

MEN. (*abstractedly*). True — true, I did not think of that.

WHIFF. Now, to continue. The plan for your escape is already arranged. Even now I have parties stationed within close proximity of the jail. You will be notified of their presence by a gentle tap upon the window, which you must be listening for. Immediately upon that signal being given, you are to file away the bars of your window, and deliver yourself into their hands. I have with me the necessary tools which you may require. (*Producing file concealed about his clothing.*)

MEN. No more. Knowing my own innocence I am resigned to my fate. Better die ignominiously, and die innocent, than escape and never enjoy the blessings of freedom. Then again, with this stigma resting upon my name, I would not leave this cell even if liberty — sweet though it may be — was within my very grasp.

WHIFF. Think of your condition!

MEN. I have thought upon it, sir; therefore am I content. Escape? Why should I escape? Where would I go? Where would I hide? Where would I find safety when once these doors had closed against me?

WHIFF. That is already arranged. The war now in progress requires more men. Even now a demand has been made at Washington for recruits. In disguise you can enlist as a substitute, and enjoy the liberties of a soldier. Far better, if you must die, to die in the service of your country,

than at the end of a hangman's rope, with shame forever resting upon your memory.

MEN. You tempt me, sir. I had not given the war a passing thought; but tell me — is Grace cognizant of all this? I mean, is it her desire that I go into the field?

WHIFF. It is. Otherwise, you would be worse off than in your present condition.

MEN. True — true; but am I to depart without a word from her lips? Without a last touch of her hand? Without a last look even into her eyes?

WHIFF. Really, Mr Menton, such is her request.

MEN. Very well! if such is her request, I obey. Do with me as you will, it matters but little to me. I am a victim of fate; therefore, will I be led by it. For the rash words I have spoken to you, I ask your pardon. I was too hasty. Give me the tools — I shall be ready at the given signal. (*Takes file from WHIFFLES.*)

JAILOR (*entering R.*). Your time has expired, sir.

WHIFF. I attend. (*To MENTON.*) Can I be of any further assistance to you, sir? A bearer of some message or parting word?

MEN. Yes; tell Miss Marathon for me that as God is my witness I am as innocent of murder as the babe that smiles upon its mother's knee. Tell her also, if you will, that I forgive her of all intent to do me injury; although it was her accusations that placed me in my present condition. You will tell her, sir?

WHIFF. Believe me, your wish shall be attended to. (*Aside.*) In a way you little dream of. (*Exit with jailor, R.*)

MEN. Is that man a friend to me, or is his heart as treacherous as was the friend of my youth. Surely he must have come from Grace, or why should he risk his liberty at the expense of my own. Everything seems like a wild dream. Oh, Grace! how the words you have uttered thrill to my very soul. "Though the whole world adjudge you guilty, and the manacles are on your wrists, even then I will take you by the hand and believe in your innocence." Ah! the test has come, and I am deserted; accused even by the very lips that once whispered to me of love. (*Low tapping heard at window.*) Hark! the signal. His words, then, were the words of truth. Well, nothing can be worse than the scaffold, so I will obey it. To remain is certain death, and if I escape, time may punish the guilty, and the world shall know that I am innocent. (*Goes to window and files away a bar, which he drops upon the floor. Chord.*) So far I am suc-

cessful. (*Files away another bar. Chord.*) Another bar dissevered, and I shall escape. (*Drops third bar upon floor. Chord.*) 'Tis done. Now I shall soon know if there be a worse fate in store for me than the prison cell. At least, its limits cannot exceed death. (*Slowly passes through window, which is removed from the outside. A pause when the voice of the guard is heard off R.*)

JAILOR (*without, R.*). The hour is late; but if you insist upon seeing the prisoner, I shall try and accommodate you.

HARRY (*without, R.*). Well, if you will, now, you will render me an unbounded favor. Should have come earlier, if possible, but I couldn't, don't you know.

JAILOR (*without, R.*). All right, sir; this way. (*Enter JAILOR and HARRY BLANFORD, who is dressed as in first act. Guard discovers cell empty.*) Why, what means this? The prisoner gone — escaped! By Heavens! 'tis too true. (*Discovers bars upon floor.*) Here are the bars upon the floor; and the window is open. I must give the alarm. (*Rushes off R.*)

HARRY (*bewildered, C.*) Now this is what I call a rather cold reception. Walk ten miles to visit a friend, and then have them close up house and migrate to parts unknown. A rather soft and castor-oil way of insinuating you are not wanted. Great Cæsar! I wonder if he locked that door. (*Crosses to door, which is fastened.*) He has, upon my word. Now this is a pretty predicament. Thunder and Mars! who knows but I'm liable to be hung and quartered. I can't stand it. It is ruinous to my health, don't you know; and so long as I am after the game I might as well follow the scent. (*Crawls through window as scene closes.*)

SCENE IV. — *A wood. Night. Enter, from R., JAKE MEGGS, HUMPHREY, and SMOOTHY, followed by JACK HARDING, MARK WHIFFLES, and ALBERT MENTON.*

MEGGS. I say, pards, I'm kinder thinking that that shanty must be somewheres in this vicinity, though I'm blowed if I kin tell exactly where.

HUMPH. If I remember right, you'll find it over that spruce knoll there to the left.

SMOOTHY. Yis, I kin see a glimmer of it among the trees already. Oh, Lord! I'm glad it don't lighten as it did the night we run Bill Sykes —

MEGGS. Hold yer tongue, Smoothy. Yer talk altogether too much for your own interest; besides, it ain't werry per-lite to be raking up the past afore company.

WHIFF. Tell me, Meggs, is this shanty you speak of a perfectly secure retreat? I mean, is it not liable to be searched, and the prisoner found?

MEGGS. Ha! ha! ha! he wants to know, pards, if that shanty's secure. Mr. Whiffles, the devil himself couldn't find his young uns in that shanty when once you'd stowed 'em away. Now listen, and I'll tell yer. This ere shanty was built long afore the war was thought of. Me and my pards yere have kinder used it as a smugglers' retreat. There's a trap door in the centre of the room, that opens into an underground apartment. That's where we stow the goods, yer know; boat 'em up the bay in the night, and secrete 'em in here. Now yer couldn't find that door in the brightest day that ever shone, unless yer knowed how. Jest put yer friend into that room, and close the trap, and he's as secure as a dog in his kennel.

MEN. Is it necessary, gentlemen, for me to take such a step?

MEGGS. Well, it ain't much of a step when you get used to it. I kin tell yer they'll search for yer high and low for the next few days, so you'd better keep shady.

WHIFF. Believe me, Mr. Menton, you shall be used like a gentleman. It is not very pleasant, I admit; and, at the earliest opportunity, you shall be removed from your uncomfortable position.

MEN. It is well, sir; do with me as you will — I am in your hands.

MEGGS. Yer friend kinder remembers, I guess, when me and my pards yere gave him a surprise on the bridge. Well, we was working for yer bounty then, and now we are working to please a certain young woman as loves yer. I see there's a streak o' light in the east, so we'd better move on. The sooner we get him stowed away, the better it will be for all concerned. (*All exeunt L., but HARDING.*)

HARD. Curse their black hearts! Through trying to convert good out of evil, I stole the wrong will, and so ruined the gal. Drunkard though I be, and a miserable wretch, yet that man shall know of the hellish web that is weaving around him, if Jack Harding is given an opportunity to tell it. (*Exit L.*)

SCENE V. — *Interior of smugglers' retreat, Newport swamp. Door R. C. in flat. Tier of bunks L. C. Trap door C. Room old and wretched in appearance.*

MEGGS. Now follow me and I'll take yer into the front parlor. (*Enter JAKE MEGGS, HUMPHREY, SMOOTHY,*



WHIFFLES, ALBERT MENTON, *and* HARDING.) Kinder seems like home; don't it, pards?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life it does.

SMOOTHY. It does.

MEGGS. As time won't permit of much visiting, we'd better proceed to business at once. In the first place, here's the trap. Don't open by a ring, yer see, but by a spring that locks it when it's down. (*Opens trap.*)

MEN. Must I descend into that retreat? Better return to my cell, I'm thinking, than be caged in a windowless pit more loathsome than the hulks.

WHIFF. Believe me, sir, it shall only be for a short season. As soon as it can be done, and safely, you shall be removed to other quarters. Things down there are not so bad as appearances would indicate; are they, Meggs?

MEGGS. Well — no. There's plenty of food, and a heap of smuggled goods. Mighty dark, though, and kinder lonesome. Howsomer, if his conscience don't trouble him, I kinder guess the darkness won't make him fidgety. All he's got to do is just make hisself at home and keep cool.

MEN. I have no terrors for the darkness, gentlemen, if your motives toward me are sincere. It is the crime-stained criminal that makes the coward, and leads him to quiver and quake in dark and lonely places. Conscious of my own innocence, I can sleep sweeter upon a damp and mouldy pallet in that black hole than the murderer of Mr. Marathon, were his couch of the softest down, and in some radiant palace. Shall I descend, gentlemen?

WHIFF. (*aside*). His words cut to the quick. (*Aloud*). Yes, descend at once. Ere this, no doubt, the pursuers are upon our track. We will fasten the trap above you, and then scatter to different points of the wood. This will delude and throw them off the track. All is ready.

MEN. I trust you, gentlemen. (*Slowly descends ladder. Music.*)

HARD. (*who has remained, R. Aside*). Better trust the devil; he'd prove a worthier friend.

MEGGS. If yer wants a candle, there's one on a barrel-head in the left-hand corner. You'll find the matches close beside it.

SMOOTHY (L.). An' a pack er cards just on t'other side er the matches.

MEGGS. Hold yer tongue, Smoothy.

MEN. I shall find all I require, no doubt, which will be but little. You will remember my message, Mr. Whiffles?

WHIFF. Your message shall be delivered, sir, never fear.

MEN. Then am I content. (*Disappears beneath trap.*)

WHIFF. (*closing trap and standing upon it. Chord.*)  
There! curse you!

MEGGS (*sarcastically*). Will yer deliver his message?

WHIFF. (*advancing front*). Yes, I'll deliver his message — in a way he little dreams of. A message that shall read "Death," killed in battle. A message that shall speak of guilt, of shame, of humiliation. A message that shall make her loathe him with disgust. She trusted me, believing me to be her friend. Thinking, even, I would return the wealth, which no power shall take from me. To make her that friend I undertook this scheme, and gained her confidence. This man trusts me because I have risked my freedom in securing his escape; but, were it not for the consequences, that dungeon into which he has descended should not only be to him a place of refuge, but a tomb.

HARD. Well, what next?

WHIFF. What next? Is it for you, with your cowardly heart, to taunt me, and ask "What next?" Was it not you who nearly exposed me at the robbery of the safe? You whose cowardly tongue I checked at the point of a pistol? What next? Were it not for my promise to you, the next thing would be to return you to the company from which you so cowardly deserted.

HARD. And I have so little respect for your promise that I shall not be surprised if it occurs at any moment.

MEGGS. Come, no more o' this. We'd better get out o' here afore we gets hemmed in. Time enough to pass hot rolls when there ain't so much fire in the grates.

WHIFF. Yes, I was too hasty. Here, Harding, take this and let its contents wash my words out of your memory. (*Gives him bottle.*) Take your station near the highway, and keep watch. The rest of us will scatter to different points of the wood.

HARD. (*aside*). Yes, I'll keep watch; but your words are not forgotten. (*Exit C. L.*)

WHIFF. That man must be disposed of. He is dangerous. The liquor I gave him is partially drugged, and will stupefy him. In that state you can easily run him into service, and secure his bounty; but come, let us depart.

MEGGS. Jest lead the way, then, and we'll follow yer without a struggle. Won't we, pards?

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life we will.

SMOOTHY. We will. (*All exeunt C. L.*)

(*A pause. Slow music. HARDING appears at C. L., looks cautiously in, then slowly advances down front.*)

HARD. He called me a coward, and he spoke the truth. He talks to me as a man would talk to the lowest brute, and like the lowest brute I cringe and wince beneath his curses. Only a coward would do this; therefore, am I a coward. More than this: I have seen him stain his hands with blood, the guilt of which was charged upon another. I have seen that other, branded by the world, go down almost broken-hearted to his cell. I have seen him, noble and sublime in his innocence, deny the charge that was laid upon him. I have seen the idol of his heart condemn him upon testimony which she believed to be sincere, and then fainting, have seen her borne silently away. I have seen all this. And yet my tongue was mute. Now my hour has come. If my lips were sealed when they should have spoken, they shall now speak when they should be sealed; for maddened at my words, he may strangle me for my dastardly silence. Here is the bottle Whiffles gave me. (*Takes bottle from his pocket.*) One drink of its contents will give me courage, after which I will descend into that pit, and on my bended knees confess the truth, and ask his pardon. (*Drinks and crosses to trap. Music.*) I saw them touch the spring, or I would not be able to open the trap. (*Stoops down to open trap, when HARRY BLANFORD appears at C. L. HARDING surprised.*) My God! they have returned. (*Perceives HARRY.*) Who are you?

HARRY. Who am I? Great Scott! I've got tu that point I hardly know myself; but—say! are you the owner of this ranch?

HARD. Well, supposing I am or am not?

HARRY. Now, look here, just you draw your answers a little more on the polish. It's contrary tu my nature tu be snapped up like a trout over a civil question. I can't stand it, don't you know.

HARD. Well?

HARRY. Well! In the first place, I've tramped enough in the last twenty-four hours tu make a man homesick. In the second place, what I've tramped after wasn't tu be found. It had vanished—shot right out through the grates, and took the grates with it.

HARD. What do you mean?

HARRY. Mean? I mean that I've been tu see Albert Menton, the murderer, and he's broke jail—gone—escaped—skedaddled.

HARD. What did you want of Albert Menton?

HARRY. Is that any of your particular business? Howsomever, I don't mind telling you that he's a particular friend of mine.

HARD. A friend of yours?

HARRY. Certainly he is; and what's more, I don't believe him guilty of murder any more than I am.

HARD. (*drawing nearer*). Young man, are you telling me the truth?

HARRY. Truth? Great Hercules! You don't mean to insinuate that I'm a liar, do you?

HARD. Listen to me. If you say Albert Menton is not a murderer, *you speak the language of my own heart*.

HARRY. Great Cæsar! you don't say so. Here! give me your hand. (*Rushes to HARDING and grasps him by the hand*.) Blast it! you're a trump. Kind of a diamond in the rough, don't you know.

HARD. Don't be complimentary, young man, for I don't deserve it. (*Aside*.) Something about that liquor affects me strangely. (*Aloud*.) If not too inquisitive, I should like to know why you are here?

HARRY. Well, the fact is, in taking a short cut across the country from the jail, I got mixed up in this cantankerous swamp, and so stumbled upon this shanty. On my way back to Canada, don't you know.

HARD. Another thing. What would you have said to Albert Menton had you seen him?

HARRY (*who has unintentionally gotten upon trap*). Said to him? (*In a loud voice*.) I would have said that Harry Blanford believed in his innocence. I would have said that he intended to bring the right murderer to justice, if he raked the earth from centre to circumference to do it.

MEN. (*pounding upon trap*). Open! open the trap!

HARD. (*staggering L.*). My God! I am exposed.

HARRY. Great Cæsar! a voice from the grave? What means this? Speak, old man; what does this mean? Curse you! why don't you speak? (*Crosses to HARDING*.) Open your lips or I'll strangle you. (*Grasps him by throat*.) HARDING, *overcome by the drugs, staggers backward and falls L. C.*) Mercy on me, he's dead. Why, I'm thunder-struck. (*Returning to trap, and calling loudly*.) Say! who are you? Tell me if you are dead or alive? (*Aside*.) Blast it! if I don't believe it's a spirit.

MEN. (*below*). I am alive. It is I who am charged with the murder of Mr. Marathon. Open the trap and let me out.

HARRY. Heavens and earth! you here? Where's the trap? Where is it? (MENTON *pounds on door*.) That's right! pound away. Wait! I'll smash in the door. (*Rushes to upright bunks, tears out crosspiece, and returns to trap*.)

Now I'll let you out, or annihilate the whole shanty. (*Both pound on trap.*)

(WHIFFLES and sub-runners enter C. L.)

WHIFF. Ha! you here? Down with him! Chloroform him! Away with him at once! (*Sub-runners rush upon HARRY, who retreats over to L., using his club for a weapon.*)

HARRY. Back — back, I say! or I'll spatter your brains around the shanty.

MEGGS. Oh, no, yer won't, my beauty. We've got yer this time, so yer might as well knuckle and give in. (*HARRY is seized by sub-runners. They struggle over to R.*) Where's yer handkerchief, Smoothy? Dose it, and stick it into his face, can't yer? (*HARRY is held by MEGGS and HUMPHREY. SMOOTHY, assisted by WHIFFLES, holds handkerchief over his face.*) We'll have yer quiet as a lamb in jest about a minute.

HARRY (*struggling*). Curse you! you've got the upper hands; but — but — (*Overcome by the chloroform, he sinks back helpless in their arms. In the meantime MENTON has forced trap, and emerges through the opening. WHIFFLES turns and levels revolver at his head.*)

WHIFF. Another step, and that pit shall be your grave.

(*Situation of characters: HARRY, supported by MEGGS and HUMPHREY, R. SMOOTHY, R. I E. MENTON, standing in trap, C. WHIFFLES, with revolver pointed at MENTON, R. of C. HARDING upon floor, L.*)

WHIFFLES

MENTON

MEGGS HARRY HUMPHREY

SMOOTHY

HARDING

R.

L.

TABLEAU AND CURTAIN.

[Lapse of one year between third and fourth acts.]

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## ACT IV.

SCENE I. — MR. SAMPSON'S door-yard, same as in Act I.  
Enter GRACE MARATHON and WHIFFLES from cottage, L.

WHIFF. I have the rooms arranged precisely as they were at the time of your uncle's death. By doing this I fancied

they would be more apt to meet the wishes of her who is so soon to be their fair possessor.

GRACE. You are very kind, Mark. Would I were worthy to fill them with the sunshine they deserve. I fear I can never make you happy, Mark.

WHIFF. Really, Miss Marathon, do not let your heart be troubled. It is I who will take the responsibility. Your presence will make me happy, if nothing more.

GRACE. Be not too sure, Mark. You know I can never love you as I ought.

WHIFF. Love will come after marriage; at least, I will take the chances. I shall send for you at an early hour, as you may wish to make some necessary changes. Then again, I would see you alone before the guests arrive for the wedding.

GRACE. Ah, yes, the wedding. Do you know, Mark, I can hardly make it seem possible I am to be your wife? It seems more like a dream than a reality.

WHIFF. Which is not at all strange. However, when once again surrounded by familiar scenes, these vague fancies will soon pass away. My love shall be a shield to guard you against those memories of the past. Now farewell for a few short hours. (*Takes her by hand. She walks with him to gate, and watches him off R.*)

GRACE. Forget the past? Ah! he little dreams that in my heart are thoughts that never can be erased. Memories that will awaken at times and fill my whole soul with anguish. Oh, Albert, your presence is ever before me. Your every thought is woven into my affections, and though I would forget you, I find it impossible. One year has nearly elapsed since they told me of your death. One year — and now I am to be the bride of another. Not the bride of love — oh, no; but the bride of circumstances. Feeling it my duty, now the idol of my heart has been taken from me, I obey the mandates of a murdered uncle's wish. Yes, I shall wed the object of my uncle's choice. One whom I esteem and honor with respect, but can never love. Oh, that I might die ere the hour ever arrives that shall make me his wife. (*Exit into house.*)

SIM (*off R.*). Ste-boy! Bite him! Take hold of him. Bite his darned head off! (*SIM backs in from R. His hat is torn, one suspender hanging, and his whole appearance is ragged.*) That's right, go for him! Don't leave enough of him ter bait a fox-trap with. (*Enters through gate.*) Oh, by gosh! that was just fun. (*Laughing.*)

(*Enter MR. and MRS. SAMPSON and EMMA. MRS. SAMPSON remains in doorway.*)

MR. S. What's just fun, you rascal? What have you been doin' now? What's all this racket about?

SIM. Oh, I set Tige on that "galoot" that just went from here. He pulled my ears, he did. There goes Tige behind the barn now. (*Whittles.*)

MRS. S. Mr. Sampson, will you allow that boy to call Mr. Whiffles a "galoot"? Will you allow it, Mr. Sampson?

MR. S. Simon, what did you use that unmannerly tarm ter Mr. Whiffles for? What hed you been doin' ter give him occasion ter pull your ears?

SIM. I only done so (*makes up faces*) ter 'im!

MRS. S. Been making up faces, have you? And at Mr. Whiffles, above all things. Mr. Sampson, that boy should be severely punished.

EMMA (L.). Oh, ma! I'm glad he done it.

MRS. S. Glad he done it, are you? Encourage your brother in misdemeanors, will you? For mercy's sakes, what will happen next, I wonder.

MR. S. Simon, you sit down on that bench, an' don't you move until I tell ye.

SIM. I don't want ter.

MR. S. Start! or I'll take you across my knee in about half a jiffy.

SIM. Say, let me go over in Jeffry's woods and finish my bear-trap. I've got it a'most done.

MR. S. You take that seat — do ye hear?

SIM (*shuffling to seat*). Well, I don't care. I'll have my revenge if I die for it; so now, I will.

MR. S. Not another word.

SIM. Well, he's a —

MR. S. Squat! an' if you speak agin for five minutes I'll horsewhip ye. (*SIM sits down reluctantly.*) Strange, boys can't mind as quick as they used ter. When I was young —

MRS. S. That will do, Mr. Sampson. I've known you from a boy, and you minded no better than other boys. You wasn't no smarter either, in my estimation.

MR. S. My present position will show that; however —

MRS. S. Mr. Sampson, do you realize this is Grace's wedding day?

MR. S. Well, I kinder cakerlate I do; an' I tell ye it hurts my feelin's.

MRS. S. Hurts your feelings, does it? You don't think she could better herself, do you?

EMMA. Oh, ma, I do; for she don't love him a bit. I wouldn't marry a man unless I loved him. (*Aside.*) Oh, dear! how mysteriously that soap-man disappeared.

MRS. S. She'll come to it soon enough. Let her get married, and she'll soon forget that other wretch. Besides, she is going back to her old home. Nothing like a good home and a good husband, in my estimation.

MR. S. That's the reason, I s'pose, why things are so pleasant round here. Howsomever, that gal an't goin' ter forget Menton in a hurry. Her hull life was bound up in him; an' I tell ye, if she had the least idea he was a-livin', Whiffles might whistle afore she'd hev him.

MRS. S. Land sakes! you don't think she would marry a murderer, do you?

MR. S. No, I don't; but so long as Menton was alive she would remain single. You know she don't believe him guilty, although her own confession caused his arrest. Now there was a mystery surrounding that affair I couldn't see into myself—especially about his breakin' jail. That showed guilt on the face of it.

EMMA. Mr. Whiffles seems to know all about it?

MR. S. Yes, Mark was posted. Menton wrote ter him once from the seat o' war. That was how Mark knew where he was, and that it was he who was killed at Petersburg. You remember readin' it in the newspapers.

EMMA. Oh, pa! perhaps Albert wasn't guilty after all.

MRS. S. Of course not! of course not! You will insist upon making a fool of yourself, like that foolish cousin of yours.

EMMA. Well, why didn't they catch the others, then?

MR. S. Emma, your mind an't quite deep enough ter comprehend sich things. In the fust place, Menton was a comparative stranger in this part of the country. Of course, he acted like a gentleman while he was here—far as we knows on; but there was a mystery connected with hisself he didn't want ter explain. Even Grace admitted that. Now, you remember that chap who peddled soap here a year ago?

EMMA. Oh, I guess I do. (*Aside.*) I wish I could see him now.

MRS. S. The miserable wretch!

MR. S. Well, just about the time Menton broke jail that chap disappeared; also another chap I've heerd 'em talk about at the Line. Now, I kinder think them chaps helped him do the deed, then helped him break jail, an' arter that they all skedaddled together.

EMMA. Oh, pa! that soap-man was real nice.

MRS. S. Of course he was. Every murderer is nice, in your estimation.



SIM (*jumping up*). Oh, by gosh! there goes a mouse.

MRS. S. For mercy's sakes!— where?

SIM. Right over there! don't you see it? There he goes under the steps. Now he's under Emma's feet.

EMMA. Get out! get out! (*Rushing round stage.*) Get out, I say. Kill it, do!

SIM. Scooter, sis, he's arter yer. Whooper up! there he goes! (*EMMA and MRS. SAMPSON rush into house.*) Oh, by gosh! that was just fun. (*Laughing.*)

MR. S. What was just fun?

SIM. Why, I never see'd a goll-darned mouse.

MR. S. You didn't— hey? Well, now I'll kinder see if you kin feel one. (*Takes SIM over his knee.*) It's high time some of this superfluous deviltry was taken out of ye. (*Spanks SIM, who cries "Don't! don't!" as scene is closed in.*)

SCENE II.— *Highway. Set trees L. 2 E. Fields and mountains in the distance. SAMPSON'S farm-house seen off R. C. Enter ALBERT MENTON from L. He is dressed in officer's uniform.*

MEN. Once more I gaze across the fields upon Sampson's house that is seen in the distance. Something whispers to me that Grace is there; and yet I dare not cross the intervening space that lies between us. Oh, it is hard to live like this— to know my own innocence, and yet feel that the hand of man is against me. I sometimes think that the guilty are triumphant; an in such cheerless moods I feel how desolate I am become, how totally lost to the world and all its pleasures. I asked for a furlough for three short weeks, and for what? That I might catch one glimpse, if but for a passing moment, of her who lit my life with the only sunshine it e'er possessed. Hark! some one approaches. I must not be seen. Once recognized, the prison awaits me. (*Crosses down L.*) This tree will afford abundant shelter. I will hide behind it, and wait until the stranger passes. (*Hides behind tree, L.*)

(*Enter WHIFFLES from L.*)

WHIFF. All is working as satisfactory as I could wish. In a few short hours the proud and haughty Grace Marathon will be my bride. It was a deep and hazardous game to play, but I cast the dice and won. If only some stray bullet would find its way to Harding's heart, I would have no reason to expect danger from the others. Indeed, it would be a pleasure to me to see this Menton cringe when he heard his

promised bride had become my wife ; but he will not return — he dare not. With his new-found friend, and the treacherous Harding, he nearly escaped me at the hut in the Heron swamp ; but at the point of a pistol I convinced him of his mistake. Ha! ha! how he wilted when I gave him the choice of two alternatives : the war, or a grave in the cellar beneath him. Well, a year has passed since, bewildered and half dazed with drugs, we enlisted them into the field. Menton did not dare resist, and so enlisted of his own free will. Hello ! here comes Meggs, and in a hurry, too. What can he want, I wonder ? More money, I suppose. That always seems to be his particular request when I see him. (MEGGS *enters from R.*) Well, what do you want ?

MEGGS (R.). Now, look a here ; is that the way to address a particular friend when you happens to meet him ? One as has stood by yer as I have, and never shown the white feather ?

WHIFF. Well, you would, no doubt, if you wasn't continually hushed up with greenbacks. I've paid you for your services — paid you well. Still, you will insist upon extorting money from me when you know you don't deserve it.

MEGGS. Who asked yer for any money ?

WHIFF. You have ; or at least you will if I give you time. Yet, only two weeks ago I helped you sub Hawkins' hired man, from whom you derived fifteen hundred dollars. Now, what have you done with that ?

MEGGS. Say ! do you take me for a blasted fool as don't know his own business ? Haven't I helped yer to an estate of over fifty thousand dollars, while I'm plodding around with only a few coppers of the last haul in my pockets ? Didn't I give a lawyer a couple o' hundred to prove that the dummy stole, when he didn't, and so get him to enlist ? Didn't I divvy with my pards, and didn't we have a tarin' old time together ? Aren't you going to get into trouble agin, and won't yer be mighty glad to have old Meggs get yer out of it ?

WHIFF. (*crosses R.*). What do you mean ?

MEGGS (*crosses L.*). Listen a minute, and I'll tell yer. In the fust place, I s'pose yer going to get married to-night — married to a gal as don't love yer.

WHIFF. Well, what's that to you ?

MEGGS. Nothing, only I have some doubts about that are wedding being allowed to proceed.

WHIFF. Man ! what do you mean ? What are you driving at ?

MEGGS. I mean that there's a purty good chance of no l'idge-room being at the wedding.

WHIFF. I do not understand you, sir? (*Aside.*) What the devil is up now!

MEGGS. Well, that aren't strange, seeing as how you aren't posted. Now, if I should enlighten yer, I'm thinkin yer hair would rise up like quills upon the back of a porcupine. Howsomever, I'm willing to assist yer—that is, perviding I receive the proper equivalent.

WHIFF. Meggs, for Heaven's sake keep me no longer in suspense. If I am in trouble, out with it. Money shall be yours. Only tell me the truth.

MEGGS. Then you won't faint or grow white around the gills if I tell yer?

WHIFF. Faint—no! Do you take me for a snivelling woman? Out with it!

MEGGS. Well, then, Harding and that cussed Yankee are over in Jeffry's woods. They've deserted. Smoothy runned across them this morning.

WHIFF. The devil!

MEGGS. Just what I said when he told me; but what yer going to do about it?

WHIFF. Do? Why, get them out of the way, of course. (*Aside.*) Curse the luck! am I to lose in the hour of victory? (*Aloud.*) Meggs, you must remove those men. They are dangerous. You must get them out of the way before six o'clock to-night—do you hear?

MEGGS. Well, I'm allus ready to oblige a friend; but there's a risk, you know. Now, to cover that risk—

WHIFF. You shall have two thousand dollars to place those men where they will trouble me no more. Harding especially.

MEGGS. It aren't enough.

WHIFF. Well, how much?

MEGGS. Five thousand is little enough.

WHIFF. It is too much. However, prove to me at six o'clock that they are disposed of and the money is yours. (*Aside.*) Curse them! they are bullet-proof. (*Aloud.*) Shall it be done?

MEGGS. Yer kin bet yer life it will. It's a sharp dog as kin slip through the fingers of Jake Meggs when he gets the right scent. I must consult my pards, so I'm off. (*Exit R.*)

WHIFF. Stay! I'll go with you for a short distance. (*Aside.*) That girl shall be my wife if the devil stands in the way. (*Exit R.*)

(MENTON emerges from behind tree.)

MEN. So that is their game, is it? Well, if it isn't frustrated, then am I indeed a doomed man. Thank God! for

the first time in years a ray of hope swells within me. The black clouds are passing away, and the warm sunlight streams through. Some kind Providence has sent these men back to be my deliverers; I feel it—I know it. Though forced to enlist without knowing the fate of those who acted in my behalf, we again shall meet, and that bad man shall get his just deserts. I must warn them of their danger. I will hasten to Jeffry's woods by a short cut, and put them on their guard; after which, I will seek out her who is so soon to be the bride of another. Oh, Grace! you shall be saved from this demon—this monster in human form, and once more nestle in my arms as joyful, merry, and light-hearted as in the days gone by. (*Rushes off, R.*)

SCENE III. — *A wood. Set trees R. and L. Large bear-trap L. 2 E., opening in front with sliding door. Timber over door. At opening of scene the door is raised. Meat on the inside for bait. HARRY BLANFORD and HARDING, ragged and haggard looking, and dressed in remnants of soldier's clothing, discovered C.*

HARRY. Say, Harding, this is worse than a rebel prison. Where are we, anyhow?

HARD. I'm thinking we have crossed the Line, though, in the darkness, I was unable to determine. We had better remain secluded until night, and then look to our surroundings.

HARRY. And for something tu eat, tu. Say, aren't you hungry?

HARD. I have known the cravings of hunger before this!

HARRY. Great Scott! so have I; but it didn't reach such mammoth proportions as now. Hungry? Why, I could sit down tu the poorest hotel hash that was ever hashed, and feel happy. I could eat the hardest biscuit that was ever baked, and digest it as easily as sweet cream. Hungry? Why, words are not adequate tu express the sweet and honey-like appreciation I have for fodder.

HARD. Brace up, young man, brace up. It needs courage in this world to exist.

HARRY. Brace up? For Heaven's sake what shall I brace up on—an empty stomach? Look at these rags! Look at the thinness of these legs! Look at the shrivelled-up and dried-beef appearance of this once noble form, and see if it don't bring the tears intu your eyes! Brace up? I tell you the war and pancakes are more preferable than this horrible

hankering after eatables. It's wearing on my constitution, don't you know.

HARD. You won't die at present. never fear. Look at me! This is the second time I have run the gauntlet, and I still live. Where you have been hours without food, I have been days; but I do not find fault with an all-wise Providence, or grumble over the hardships I endure.

HARRY. That's all right; but I tell you it doubles me right up. Anyhow, I feel doubled, and I can't help it. Let me get my fingers hold of those skunks who run us into war, though, and I'll show you that I've a hunk of Yankee grit left yet. Oh, it's here, if it is half starved.

HARD. (*who has discovered trap*). Well, I'm glad to hear it; but what kind of an affair do you call this? (*Walking around trap*.)

HARRY (*looking it over*). It's either a log house, or a bear-trap, and I hardly know which. Say, here's a door, and — hold on! I've struck a bonanza, sure's you're born. Genuine beef or mutton, I don't know which. No sin to rob a bear-trap, you know, when you're in a starving condition. (*Takes meat from inside of trap*.) Here, I'll divide. I'm no hog, if I am hungry. Poverty and generosity go together, don't you know. (*Divides meat with HARDING*.)

HARD. Yes, so should raw beef and rock-salt. However, this isn't so bad after all.

HARRY. No, but it's slightly tainted, for all that. (*Noise outside*) Hark! some one's coming. For goodness sake, what shall we do?

HARD. Hide, and mighty quick, too.

HARRY. Yes, but where shall we hide. Hold on! here, — into this bear-trap, and I'll follow you. (*HARDING enters trap*.) Look out for the spindle, or down she comes. Now, I'm after you, as the tail said to the cat. (*Enters trap*.)

(*SIM heard singing off L.*)

SIM (*singing*).

In the prison cell I sit,  
Thinking, mother dear, of you,  
And the bright and happy home so far away;  
And the tears they fill my eyes,  
Spite of all that I can do;  
Though I try to cheer my comrades and feel gay.

(*Enters with gun. Discovers tracks.*)

SIM. Now, who in thunder's been here. Some one has, 'cause here's tracks. If they've stolen a bear out of that

trap there's goin' ter be a row. Here the tracks are leadin' right up ter the door; and — (*peers into trap*) mighty thunder! (*Rushes over to R. Turns and points gun at trap.*) Oh, I — I ain't afraid. I guess I'll go home, though; dad may want me for suthin'. (*Starts to back off.*) By gosh! I won't. I'll know what's in that trap if I get a lickin' for doin' it. (*Advances cautiously with gun pointed toward trap.*) Say, now, you just wobble out er that, 'cause I'm a-goin' ter shoot.

HARRY (*in trap*). Don't! now, don't! you might hurt us, don't you know.

SIM. Then come out, an' darned quick, too; 'cause this ere gun's liable ter go off. Are you comin'?

HARRY. Why, certainly we are; don't be in such a pucker. I say, Harding, hadn't you better take the lead? I'm a little bashful, don't you know.

HARD. Besides being a coward — eh? Well, follow me. (*They emerge from trap. HARRY keeps behind HARDING.*) Now, young man, what do you want?

SIM (*bewildered*). By gosh! I don't know. Say! who be you anyhow, and how came you in my bear-trap?

HARD. As to who we are, it is a matter of no particular importance to you. As to being in the trap, it was only for a short season of rest. Have you any objections?

HARRY (*behind HARDING*). As my partner observes, it was only for a short season of rest. We didn't want the trap — could make a better one myself, don't you know.

SIM. Say! By gosh! I've heerd that voice afore.

HARRY. No, I think not. This isn't the voice; at least, it isn't the voice it used tu be. Don't you notice how piping it is, and sharp and shrill? Well, sonny, that is caused by hunger. The voice I used tu support in this section was strong and full of volume, and slightly tinged with the Irish vernacular. No, sonny, it's me, but it isn't the same voice.

SIM. Well, you don't talk Irish, an' your head ain't red; but if you ain't the soap-pedler, then I'm a liar. I'm Sim.

HARRY. I want tu know! Great Scott! are you Simon? Here, let me take hold of your hand. Simon, this is my friend. He's a soldier besides being a gentleman. So am I. Is your ma pretty well?

SIM. I reckon she is. Oh, she just hankers arter you! She'd make you wilt if she had holt of ye.

HARRY. Then for mercy sakes don't suffer her tu get a hold. Simon, du you know we've been tu war?

SIM. Shouldn't wonder if I did. You and t'others helped

Menton out er jail, an' then all enlisted together. Menton's dead, though.

HARRY. You don't say so! Great Cæsar!

HARD. Young man, who told you of this?

SIM. Well, Whiffles, principally.

HARD. Then I believe Whiffles is a liar.

SIM. That's nothin'; I almost 'a' knowed it afore.

HARRY. Yes, sir; as my friend observes, he's a liar. An abominable and cantankerous liar. Through him we are reduced tu this delicate state of almost cobweb transparency. Don't our blood boil with indignation? I shouldn't wonder if it did. It is at caldron heat; but we shall be revenged: aye! revenged — fearfully and wonderfully revenged.

HARD. Harry, this excitement is too much. In your present emaciated condition, you are liable to burst a blood-vessel, and the consequences would be disastrous. Sit down while I propound to him a few questions.

HARRY. Perhaps, on the whole, as I'm feeling a little shaky in the knees, I had better follow your advice. This trouble is wearing on my constitution, don't you know. (*Sits down in door of trap*).

HARD. In the first place, young man, is Mark Whiffles in these parts?

SIM. I should say he was. He's goin' ter marry Grace to-night.

HARRY. Great Cæsar!

HARD. Does Miss Marathon still believe that Menton murdered her uncle?

SIM. Godfrey mighty, no; she thinks the sub-runners done it. As Menton's dead, though, an' they all advise her ter marry Whiffles, she's a-goin' ter. I wouldn't, though, if I was her.

HARD. Is this Whiffles rich?

SIM. Should say he was. Marathon willed him all he'd got. He lives in uncle's house, in grand style. That's where the weddin's goin' ter be, 'cause he wanted it there.

HARD. Listen a minute, young man, and I'll give you a bit of surprise. I believe you to be our friend, and so think we can trust you. In the first place, do you believe Menton murdered your uncle?

SIM. No, I don't. It was those sub-runners — darn 'em.

HARD. If I should tell you the murderer's name, would you assist in his capture?

SIM. Would I? By gosh! you just point him out ter me, an' see if I wouldn't.

HARD. And try to prevent this wedding ent. we allowed it to proceed?

SIM. Prevent it? Why, I'd knock it all to slivers; but say, who is it?

HARD. *It is Mark Whiffles!*

SIM. Gosh all hemlock! Why — I — now — say. (*Voices off L.*) Hark! some one's a-comin'.

HARD. Then we must hide again.

HARRY. It's all very well to say "hide again"; but where shall it be?

SIM. Here, scooter into this bear-trap. I'll pretend ter be a-fixin' it, an' they won't think nuthin'. (*HARDING and HARRY enter trap.*) By Gosh! I'm knocked all in a heap. (*Works about trap and sings, "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching."*)

(*Enter MEGGS, HUMPHREY, and SMOOTHY, L. 3 E.*)

MEGGS. I say you.

SIM. Well, say it — who cares?

MEGGS. Yer hain't seen anybody lurking round these woods since you've been here, hev you?

SIM. If I hed, I guess I should er known it.

MEGGS. Answer my question.

SIM. Answer *what* question?

MEGGS. Hev yer seen er couple o' ragged chaps pass along here in the last hour or so?

SIM. Wus one kinder slim an' gander-shanked, an' looked as if a crowbar had struck 'im in the stomach?

SMOOTHY. Yes, that's him — that's him to a T.

SIM. Wus t'other sort o' hogshead shaped, with a nose like a strawberry blossom, and a face as spotted as a second-handed checker-board?

SMOOTHY. Yes, yes, that's the other — the identical chap.

SIM. Were they ragged, an' hungry lookin', an' shaky in the knees, an' —

MEGGS. Yer needn't trouble yerself to explain any further. The question is, hev you seen them?

SIM. Well, s'posin' I have?

MEGGS. Look a here, you youngster, if you don't answer my questions a little more perlately, I'll thrash yer.

HUMPH. You jest bet yer life he will.

SMOOTHY. He will.

SIM. By Gosh! if you try it, I'll holler ter dad. He'll knock your heads off in about half a jiffy.

MEGGS. Oh, yer dad's here, is he?

SIM. Well; I reckon he is; an' he ain't afraid of you, nuther.

MEGGS. How long yer been here?

SIM. Been here ever since I comed, er course.

MEGGS. And you hain't seen any one pass since you've been here?



SIM. Didn't say I hadn't seen any one.

SMOOTHY. I say, Meggs, hadn't yer better thrash —

MEGGS. Hold yer tongue, Smoothy! (*Discovers tracks.*) Look a here, you youngster, who made these tracks?

SIM (*aside*). Oh, by Gosh! (*Aloud.*) Why, them's the tracks of the fellers as just went from here.

MEGGS. How long ago?

SIM. How do I know — I hain't got a watch!

MEGGS. Which way did they go?

SIM. Oh, they kinder shied off there ter the right. Went like sixty, too. They didn't see me, 'cause I hid.

MEGGS. Now look a here, boy, if we finds you've been a-fooling us, we'll come back and skin yer alive. I'd thrash yer now, only I hain't got time. Come, pards — if we makes this job succeed, we must be a-moving.

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life we must.

SMOOTHY. We must. (*All exeunt, R. 3 E.*)

SIM. Go ter thunder — darn ye! (*Goes to door of trap.*) Say, come out an' scooter quicker'n blazes. Them chaps 'll be back here in half a minute, an' the deuce 'll be ter pay.

HARRY (*emerging from trap, followed by Harding.*) Where, in the name of Christopher Columbus, shall we go?

SIM. Scooter off there ter the left. In about a hundred rods you'll find a couple er fir-trees, fallen across each other. Hide in the tops till I call for ye.

HARDING. Some enemy has seen and betrayed us; but they shall be robbed of their prey. Come; we have no time to waste.

HARRY. No, or tu eat either. (*Exit HARDING, L. 3 E., followed by HARRY.*)

SIM. What'll happen next, I wonder! I've got ter get out er here, 'cause when them chaps see their mistake, they'll come back an' knock my head off. Gosh! how mad he was 'cause I wouldn't answer his questions. (*Looking off, R.*) Holloa! I'll be darned if Whiffles aint a-comin' down the path. He'll lick me 'cause I set Tige on 'im, I'll bet a cent. I don't care — let 'im lick. I know what I'll do. I'll pretend ter know a lots about him, an' won't tell 'im unless he helps me on this trap. Then I'll get 'im on the inside an' spring the door on 'im. Here he comes! (*Works on trap, and whistles.*)

(WHIFFLES enters, L. 2 E.)

WHIFFLES. Ah, Simon, working on your trap?

SIM. Sorter.

WHIFFLES. Nice affair! splendid! I say, Simon, have

you seen any one lurking in these woods while working here?

SIM. Yes; see'd a chipmunk 'bout a minute ago.

WHIFFLES. Ah, yes, pretty good! Ha! ha! I mean a couple of men who resemble tramps.

SIM. Oh, a couple er ragged chaps! Yes, I see'd an' talked with 'em. Say, they know you!

WHIFF. (*aside*). The devil! Can it be they have exposed me? (*Aloud.*) Ah, is that so? What did they say?

SIM. Tell you what! Help me on this trap a minute, an' I'll tell yer all about it. Oh, you'd give a heap ter know.

WHIFF. (*aside*). Curse their traitorous hearts! (*Aloud.*) Very well! I'll assist you on the trap, though, of course —

SIM. Jest hop inside there, then, 'cause I'm in suthin' of a hurry.

WHIFF. (*hesitating*). Really, is it necessary —

SIM. Oh, hop in! there ain't nuthin' there that'll bite. I want you ter lift on that lever, while I boost on the outside. (*WHIFFLES enters trap.*) That's right. Well, them chaps said — (*Lets door drop.*) Holloa! you're pinned now, sure's you're born. Say! I can't open this door, if I go to blazes.

WHIFF. Open it, you young rascal, and let me out.

SIM. I can't do it, I tell ye. There's a big log across the top, an' I can't lift it. (*Starts off, R.*) Say! I'll run home an' fetch dad.

WHIFF. Here — come back! This is some trick of yours. Open this door, or when I do get out, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life.

SIM. Yes, I s'pose you will. Say! if you don't get out in time for the weddin', what'll I tell 'em?

WHIFF. Hang the wedding! Let me out of this trap.

SIM. Couldn't think of sech a thing, nohow. Say! (*Peeking through bars in door.*) What a splendid bear you'd make — all but the fur. Well, I'm goin' now. I'll tell 'em, at the weddin', that you had the cramps an' couldn't come. (*Takes gun and exit R. I E.*)

WHIFF. Curse the boy! I should have known better than to have trusted him. Here I am imprisoned, and no possible way of getting out, unless assistance arrives. Am I to be duped? If Meggs should happen along, all would yet be well. Hark! I hear the sound of footsteps. This may be a trick of that young cub, and he is now coming back.

(*Enter MENTON, L. 2 E.*)

MEN. I have given the woods a thorough searching, and yet cannot find them. I could not have been mistaken — they said Jeffry's woods; and surely these are the woods re-

ferred to. I will follow this path to the opening, and see what I can discover beyond. (*Starts to go off, R.*)

WHIFF. (*aside*). That voice sounds familiar, though I cannot locate it. I must get out of this, so will ask his assistance. (*Aloud.*) I say, friend!

MEN. (*aside, startled*). Ha! discovered? I will die before I give myself up a prisoner.

WHIFF. Pardon me; but I am in a sad predicament. Having entered this trap out of curiosity, the door accidentally dropped and left me imprisoned. If you will kindly assist in liberating me, you will oblige me greatly.

MEN. (*aside*). A human being in trouble? It is risky, but I will make the attempt. (*Approaches trap. Aloud.*) A little patience, and I will set you at liberty. (*Unfastens and raises door.*) There! now you can issue from your uncomfortable prison. (*MENTON steps back. WHIFFLES issues from trap and confronts him. Chord.*)

WHIFF. Albert Menton!

MEN. Yes — Albert Menton. He whom you have so cruelly misused and treated. Does my presence startle you?

WHIFF. I — I thought you were in the war?

MEN. I have been in the war; but I have returned. Returned to expose you, and show you to the world in the light of your own true character. Charles Eastman, you have run your day of riot; I will now run mine.

WHIFF. What do you mean?

MEN. I mean that I know you to be a forger, and, I believe, a murderer. I mean that I know you to be a villain of the deepest, darkest dye. A man for whose crimes I have suffered more than a thousand deaths. Now my hour of retribution has come. We are alone. Here, then, with these solemn trees for our witnesses, I will meet you hand to hand, and foot to foot, and my wrongs shall be avenged. (*Draws two knives from inside of his coat.*)

WHIFF. My God! would you murder me?

MEN. Murder you? — no. Think you I carry your dastardly heart in my bosom, and would creep cat-like upon my unsuspecting victim and slay him? I am not of your stamp. Villain though you are, and not worthy the name of dog, I will place you upon equal footing with myself, and fight you to the death.

WHIFF. But I have no desire to fight.

MEN. What! you, who have dogged me through life, hounded me like the hunted fox, not face me in the hour of my revenge! I swear you shall fight! (*Advancing and offering knife.*)

WHIFF. Back — back, I say. I do not wish you harm! Let me but pass, and I will do all in my power to shield you and give you your just rights.

MEN. What! you will not fight?

WHIFF. I cannot fight you, Menton. Let me pass. I wish you no harm!

MEN. (*dropping knives and grasping him by the throat.*) Coward! villain! incarnate fiend! (*Drags him c., and forces him upon his knees.*) Only my sense of manhood prevents me from tearing your dastardly heart from your bosom. You it is for whom I have suffered the name of felon — have lived within the gray of prison walls — have slept upon a pallet of straw — and have suffered the name of murderer. You it is who sent my mother broken-hearted to the grave — robbed me of my home, and tore from my bosom the only woman I ever loved. You it is who, to meet your hellish ends, took me from my prison, under the guise of friend, and sent me powerless to the war. You have done all this, and more. Aye — I believe you have murdered. Did I know it, these hands would not loose their hold until you were safe in irons, or they had crushed the breath out of your miserable carcass. Go! (*Throws him over to R.*) I will no longer pollute my fingers with the touch of such a coward!

WHIFF. (*rising to his feet.*) Menton, you will be sorry for this. Good day! we shall meet again. (*Aside.*) I will set the bloodhounds upon his track. (*Exit R. I E.*)

MEN. Go! and may my curses follow you. Oh! it was hard to spare his life; but, thank Heaven, I did it. I am not guilty of shedding his blood, even though he deserved to die. The hour of night is drawing nigh, and he will proceed to the scene of the wedding. Could I but see Harding — but, no! I dare not wait. I will hurry to the house — defeat his design — and trust in Providence for the rest. God grant I may succeed. (*Exit R. I E.*)

(*Pause. HARDING rushes in from L. 3 E., followed by HARRY. Music.*)

HARD. It is no use! we cannot escape them! They are close upon our tracks, and we must fight it out. If you are possessed of true Yankee grit, now is the time to make it known.

HARRY. Well, it's hard tu fight on an empty stomach — mighty hard; but if I must — then fight it is. I wish I was in Texas, though.

MEGGS (*outside*). After them, pards. Remember we must succeed, if it takes blood. (*Sub-runners rush in from L. 3 E. HARDING and HARRY draw knives as they approach.*) Surrender, or ye're dead men.

HARD. Never! if we must fight, it may as well be here as in the South. We are ready.

MEGGS. At them, pards; we can soon disarm them.

HARRY. If you du, may I never again see the State of Maine.

(*Fight. HARDING is borne to the ground by MEGGS and HUMPHREY. HARRY rushes upon SMOOTHY, who hides behind trap. HARRY turns, and is confronted by HUMPHREY. HARDING throws off his adversary, rises to his feet, and is again set upon by MEGGS, who is stabbed and falls dead R. 2 E. HUMPHREY throws HARRY over to L., and, turning, stabs HARDING in the side. HARDING cries: "Oh God! I am stabbed!" and sinks upon stage R. of C. HUMPHREY is seized by HARRY, and hurled upon stage, C. HARRY stands over him with raised knife. SIM and MR. SAMPSON rush in from R. I E. SIM perceives SMOOTHY L. I E., and rushes upon him with gun. SMOOTHY drops upon his knees, and throws up his hands. HARDING is supported by MR. SAMPSON.*)

(*Situation of characters: MEGGS dead upon ground, R. HARDING, supported by MR. SAMPSON, R. of C. HUMPHREY, C., kept down by HARRY, who stands over him with up-raised knife. SIM, C. L., pointing gun at SMOOTHY, who is kneeling L. I E.*)

(BEAR-TRAP)

MEGGS	MR. SAMPSON	HARRY	SIM
	HARDING	HUMPHREY	SMOOTHY
R.			L.

SCENE IV.—*Apartment in MARATHON'S house, same as in Act I. Apartment well lighted. Enter MARK WHIFFLES and GRACE MARATHON, L. I E.*

WHIFF. And everything is arranged as you yourself would have arranged it?

GRACE. Everything. Indeed, it seems as if nothing had been misplaced. Still, Mark, can I ever live here with the awful scene of that night always before me?

WHIFF. Only accustom yourself to the place, and believe me that scene will soon pass away. You are shortly to become my wife; for this reason I would have you as merry and light-hearted as you were wont to be in days gone by.

GRACE. Ah, Mark, that can never be. The arrow that pierced my heart has entered too deeply to permit me to be

like my former self. Still, Mark, I shall endeavor to make you happy, if possible.

WHIFF. Do that and I am content. (*Crosses to window and looks out. Aside.*) Would that I knew if Meggs had succeeded. (*Aloud.*) Grace, it will be some moments yet before the guests arrive. I would have you sing me one of your favorite songs. (*Returns to the side of Grace.*)

GRACE. If it will please you, Mark, I will undertake the task; but my heart is too full to do the song justice. What shall I sing to you, Mark?

WHIFF. Let it be your favorite song. The one you have sung so often in the past (*aside*) — to another.

GRACE. Ah, yes, my favorite song. (*Song same as in Act I. Positions the same. During song, Menton appears at C. He pauses a moment, then slowly passes from sight. As he disappears, Grace suddenly springs to her feet.*) Oh, Heavens! what has taken possession of me? I — I —

WHIFF. Miss Marathon, you are excited. Pray permit me to ask you the cause?

GRACE. I — I don't know, Mark. Something whispered that Albert was near me. I certainly felt his presence in this very room.

WHIFF. Banish such thoughts from your mind. (*Aside.*) I tremble with an inward fear I cannot resist. (*Aloud.*) In your imagination you are determined to see him, and you almost fancy that you do; but you should not give your imagination sway. It is I who need your thoughts at the present moment — not one who is dead.

GRACE. True — true, Mark. I was wrong — very wrong; but the picture was so vivid. Why, I could almost swear he stood in this room and gazed upon me whilst I was singing; but I will think of him no more. Here comes Emma — I can tell her prattle above all others. (*GRACE and WHIFFLES, L.*)

(*EMMA and MRS. SAMPSON enter, C. EMMA, gaudily dressed, comes down front, and walks around stage. MRS. SAMPSON remains down C.*)

EMMA. Oh, Grace! don't I look just splendid! If it was only a dance, now, how I could step it out! (*Waltzes round stage.*) My! wouldn't it be jolly! — change partners, ladies' chain, up and down the centre, and all that. But, tell me! don't you think I look pretty, Grace?

GRACE. There is no need of telling you that, little cousin; your own looks would indicate it.

EMMA. Oh, yes, I know; but I want to look more than

pretty. (*Crosses to WHIFFLES.*) Oh, Mr. Whiffles, what do you think of my new dress? (*Poses before him.*)

WHIFF. Nice affair — elegant!

MRS. SAMPSON. If there is one thing above another I do detest, it is pride. Where that child takes it from is more than I can understand. It isn't from me — that's certain!

EMMA. Oh, ma, when you was young you was proud as Lucifer! I know you was. Even this afternoon you primped and puckered before the glass a long while before we started. I didn't think of such a thing. (*Crosses to R.*)

MRS. S. Emma, you have said enough.

(*Sim rushes in, c.*)

SIM. Well, I've come. Hope you ain't put out 'cause I didn't come afore. Hello, Whiff, how long since you've been discharged? (*Whiffles shrugs his shoulders and appears nervous.*) Well, you needn't speak unless you want ter — don't know's I care.

MRS. S. Simon, where is your father?

SIM. Oh, he's sorter joggin' along. He ain't so young as he used ter was — dad ain't. Got a crank in his left knee, an' sech like. He'll be here, though, don't fret. I say, sis, you can't guess who I've fetched ter the weddin'?

EMMA. Oh, mercy! — no; who is it?

WHIFF. There are none to attend this wedding, young man, only invited guests.

SIM. No, I s'pose not. Well, I reckon I can bring a friend if I want ter. Say, can't I, Grace?

GRACE. I think Mark will have no objections if he is a particular friend. Still, he should have been invited.

SIM. Well, hain't I invited him, I'd like ter know. I'll jest trot him in, an' if you don't like him, I'll trot him out. I want ter introduce him ter sis. (*Exit, c.*)

GRACE. Who can he be, Mark?

WHIFF. Really, I have not the remotest idea. (*Aside.*) Can he have brought Menton here? If so, I am doomed.

EMMA. Oh, mercy! here they come. I'm all of a flutter. I wonder how I look.

SIM (*outside*). Right this way — I'll show you in. (*Enter SIM and HARRY BLANFORD, c. All exhibit surprise.*)

WHIFF. (*aside*). The devil!

MRS. S. Simon Sampson, are you stark, staring mad? Turn that creature forth.

SIM (*down c*). Yes, I guess not. I want ter introduce him ter sis. She don't know he's the soap-pedler, I'll bet a cent.

EMMA. Mercy! but isn't he changed! (*Aside.*) I wonder if I look all right.

SIM. Now jest speak right up prompt. Don't be bashful 'cause you're ter a weddin'. I'll go and keep sis from fainting. (*Crosses to EMMA and fans her with his hat; she fights him off.*)

WHIFF (*agitated*). Well, sir, what do you want?

HARRY. Oh, nothing in particular. Just called ter make a friendly visit, don't you know. Been some time since we met, now, hain't it; nigh on tu a year, more or less. The remembrance of that parting gives me pain every time I think of it. So this is your wedding night, is it? Well, the bride is tu be congratulated. (*Turns to Emma.*) Ah, good evening, miss. You see I have changed my vernacular as well as my personal appearance. It is all on account of the etiquette there is in war. And you, madam? (*Turning to MRS. SAMPSON.*)

MRS. S. Don't you speak to me, sir; don't you dare say a word.

HARRY. Oh, well, then, I won't. It might bring the broom into requisition if I did. I say, Whiffles! how prettily you handled that revolver in the Heron swamp — now, didn't you. (*Whiffles agitated.*) Oh, well, it's all right. I wouldn't frighten you for nothing, don't you know.

MR. SAMPSON (*outside*). This is the place. I'll soon fix ye so you'll be warm and comfortable.

(*Enter HARDING, assisted by MR. SAMPSON, and followed by HUMPHREY, SMOOTHY, and SHERIFF.*)

MRS. SAMPSON. I'm thunderstruck!

WHIFF. (*aside*). Have the Fates conspired against me? My God! if I do not escape, the gallows await me.

MR. SAMPSON (*assisting HARDING into chair, R. C.*). There! I reckon that'll be a leetle more comfortable than the swamp. Ye see, he jest insisted ter be brought here, an' so we hitched up old Gray and brought him. Ye haven't a drop o' brandy in the house, have ye, Mark?

WHIFF. Yes, it is in the office. I will bring it at once. (*Starts off.*)

HARRY (*stepping in front of him and motioning him back*). Now, you just wait.

WHIFF. Why, what means this? Are you lord and master here, or am I?

HARRY. Well, it is my private opinion that I hold the fort at the present moment. I'll attend tu that brandy myself.

MRS. S. (*C. L.*). Well, I declare! if things haven't come to a pretty pass.



SIM. I know where 'tis. I'll fetch it in half a jiffy. (*Exit c.*)

MRS. S. Mr. Sampson, what is the cause of this hub-bub? Why are these ragamuffins here? I await your explanation.

MR. S. An' you won't hev long ter wait, if you'll only keep quiet. (*Enter SIM with bottle and tumbler.*) Here's the brandy. Now, just take a leetle o' this, an' you'll feel better. (*Fills glass, and hands to HARDING.*) There! don't it sorter revive ye? (*Sets bottle and tumbler on table.*)

HARD. Yes, all that is needed. I am not long for this world — my wound is mortal.

MRS. S. For mercy's sake! how did he get wounded?

SIM. Oh, they've been havin' a tarin' old fight down in Jeffry's woods — close ter my bear-trap, too. Dad'll tell ye all about it some other time. They've killed that darned sub-runner Meggs, though, an' I'm glad of it.

HARD. My friends, I have but a short time to live, and, therefore, must speak. Charles Eastman, can you look upon me without a shudder?

WHIFF. Yes, I can look upon you as a coward and a traitor. My game is up, I can see that, and all through your base treachery. Miss Marathon, I congratulate you on your narrow escape. This was to be our wedding night; but I yield up my position to another. No doubt that other is in waiting, as I have seen him in these parts. Could I have foiled him, though, I would have laughed you all to scorn.

GRACE. Another in waiting? You do not mean — Father in Heaven! can it be true? Is Albert alive — and here?

MEN. (*rushing in and clasping her in his arms*). Yes, Grace, alive and here to claim you as his own.

GRACE. Thank Heaven! alive and innocent! Oh, Albert, tell me with your own lips that you are innocent!

MEN. The witnesses of my innocence are here. Let them speak.

MRS. S. Well, I never!

MR. S. Reckon things are sorter shiftin' around — an't they, Nance?

HARD. Pardon me, friends, if I occupy a few moments of your time. That man (*pointing to WHIFFLES*) has been my master. I have been to him as a slave. For that service, he has trodden me under foot, crushed me like the viper that I am, and made me a besotted wretch. This room is familiar to me; in it I saw a crime committed; a crime that,

hardened as I was, thrilled me with horror at the time. Of the actors in that night's dark tragedy, only one contemplated murder, and he it is who struck the fatal blow. The murderer stands there! (*Pointing to WHIFFLES.*)

WHIFF. It is a lie — a damned lie!

HARD. It is true!

HUMPH. Yer jest bet yer life it is.

SMOOTHY. It is.

HARD. The object of that murder was gain, as you art well aware. A will was in the safe bequeathing all of this property to him. That will was to be changed for another, and he knew it. To find the money in the possession of Mr. Menton was to place the guilt upon him, and also to dispose of him. To murder Mr. Marathon before the new will was made was to make himself master of this property. That a new will had been made, and was in the safe at that time, was a thing unknown to the minds of all. Forced into that plot, partially through bribes, and partially through threats, I determined to steal the will, and, by so doing, thwart him in his evil design. This I supposed I had done; but, upon examination, I discovered to my horror that I had stolen the wrong will. The very will that bequeathed all of this property to his niece — Miss Marathon.

WHIFF. The man is mad. This is a false fabrication of his to ruin me. I demand the proof.

HARD. And you shall have it; for what proof can be more convincing than the will itself. (*Produces will, and throws it upon table.*)

WHIFF. Foiled again!

HARD. Another word, and I am done. Mr. Menton, you do not recollect me, and I am not much surprised — for time and dissipation have made fearful havoc with my personal appearance; but I am the living witness of that forgery that was charged upon you in Portland some twelve years ago.

MEN. Can this be true? Then am I indeed a free man!

HARD. That forger, and the murderer before you, are one and the same person. Officer, there is your man; arrest him.

OFFICER (*advancing to WHIFFLES*). Mr. Whiffles, I arrest you for the murder of Mr. Marathon.

WHIFF. Yes, sir, I attend. Mr. Menton, I wish you joy. It would have delighted me to have kept you under my thumb a while longer, but it is impossible. The tables are turned. You doubtless think that the gallows will find me a ready victim; but, believe me, the gallows are not made, or the cell

unlocked, that will hold me a prisoner. Officer, I am ready. (*Exit C. OFFICER with WHIFFLES, and followed by HUMPHREY and SMOOTHY.*)

SIM. Gosh! I'm going out an' see the fun. (*Exit c.*)

MRS. S. Well, I declare! my tongue is completely tied. I never saw anything so mysterious in all my life.

MR. S. Sorter winds ye right up now, don't it, Nance. Well, I tell ye things kinder turn out cur'us sometimes. Now, I allus mor'n haff thought Menton here warn't guilty of that are crime.

MRS. S. Well, you didn't ever say it if you did.

MEN. Never mind the past; it has been dark and cloudy. Now, that the black clouds have rolled away, and this stain has been removed from my character, let us begin life anew. Shall it not be so, Grace?

GRACE. Oh, yes, indeed it shall. Dear auntie, you will assist in making us happy now, won't you?

MRS. S. Well, I suppose I must. He always did appear too much of a gentleman for a skedaddler. Above the average, in my estimation.

HARRY (C. R.). Well, now, what about me? Great Scott! I seem tu be left out in the cold.

GRACE. Ah, here is one who has been talking about you in her sleep for a year. Is it not so, Emma?

EMMA. No, it isn't. (*Aside.*) Oh, dear, I wonder how I look.

MEN. My opinion is, Harry, so long as you have deserted, that it would be safer for you to cross over into Canada. Before you go, however, I would see how you two look together. Come, Emma, cross over there.

EMMA (*rolling corner of apron*). If ma is willing?

MRS. S. Oh, yes, your ma's willing. He isn't quite up to the scratch, and a deserter, too; but I suppose he'll do. Indeed, I feel that he must. (*EMMA crosses to HARRY.*)

HARRY. No, he isn't quite up to the scratch, and he's ragged and hungry; but he's got a ten-acre lot and two pigs in the State of Maine, and don't you think he hasn't. (*Pistol shot outside.*) Thunder and Mars! — what's that?

SIM (*running in*). Oh, by gosh! he's done it.

MRS. S. Done what? Who?

SIM. Oh — Whiffles. He's shot hisself. Blowed his brains high'r'n a kite. I'm goin' back. (*Runs off.*)

MR. S. Wall, 'tain't no great loss, seein' as how he's turned out. Besides, it'll save the State the trouble of hangin' him. How are ye feelin' now, my friend?

HARD. My time on earth, sir, has nearly expired. The

room seems dark to me, and the air is close. (*They move him to c. of room.*) Thanks, that will do. Mr. Menton, knowing me to be the principal cause of your prolonged misfortunes, I wonder you do not curse me. Still, my heart is not all wicked in here. It has often repented of its follies, and now must cease to beat on account of them. Before that time shall arrive, I would ask your forgiveness for the great injustice I have done you.

MEN. Mr. Harding, let not your heart be troubled. I freely forgive you, as I hope you will be forgiven in that other world.

HARD. Thank you, sir, thank you. I now can die in peace. The end is not a great way off. Even now I can feel myself drifting, drifting, drifting down to the end of the river of life. Upon either side are sloping banks green with summer verdure, and tall spreading trees, and singing birds, and all that goes to make earth beautiful. Before me is the great sea. Out beyond the wide expanse of waters, on the long, narrow slope seen in the dim distance, stands a white-robed figure slowly beckoning me onward. My eyes grow dim, and the light of the world turns to black shadows; but in that white-robed figure I behold one who nursed me when a little innocent babe. She stands there with outstretched arms, and beckons me over to the other side. Yes, I come — I come; wait but a little longer, and I will come. I am coming to thee. (*Dies in the arms of Mr. SAMPSON.* Music. Tableau.)

## DISPOSITION OF CHARACTERS:

MRS. SAMPSON

MR. SAMPSON

HARDING

HARRY

MENTON

EMMA

GRACE

L.

R.

CURTAIN.

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