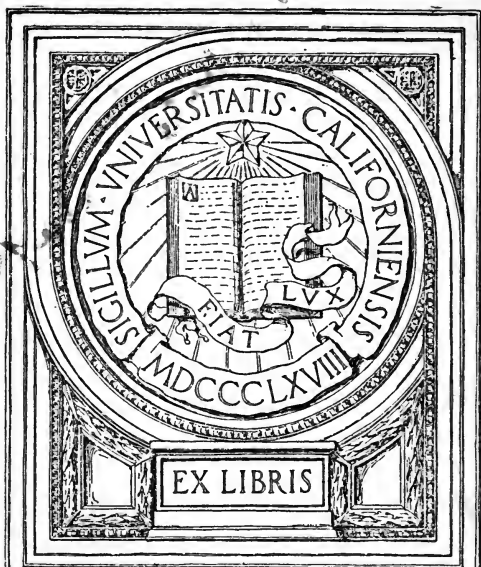


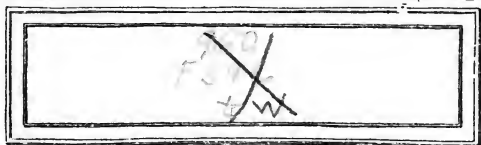
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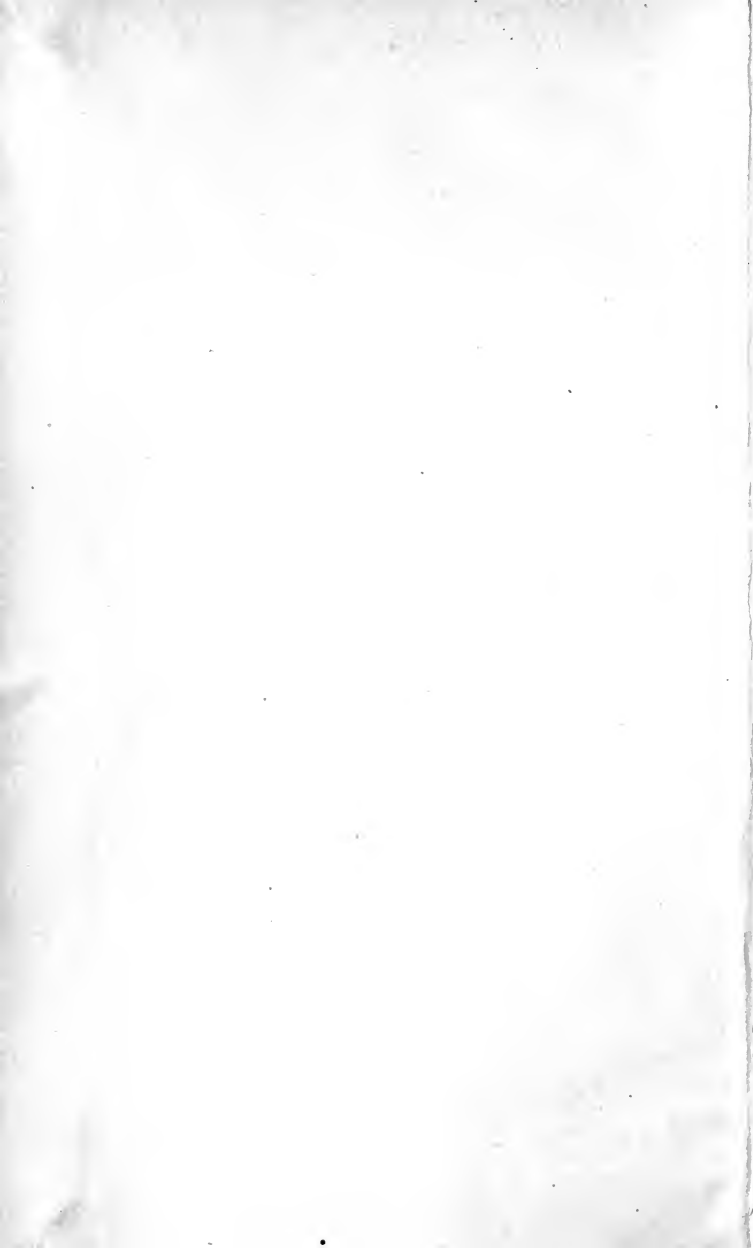


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ENGLISH I





\$1200 A YEAR

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY
EDNA FERBER
AND
NEWMAN LEVY



The line drawings by Newman Levy which appear in this volume are included not as an artistic expression, but because they seemed to add to the joy of the piece, having been made, as Mr. Levy says, "in moments of desperation, between pulls at my pipe, when the darned old dialogue wouldn't budget!"

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY

1920

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Eng I



BRAIN ^{AND}
BRAWN

TO
ENGLISH
AND
SCANDINAVIAN

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1920

MAIN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PAUL STODDARD, Professor of Economics

JEAN STODDARD, his wife

HENRY ADAMS WINTHROP, Professor of Greek

FRANCES WINTHROP, his daughter

CYRUS McCLURE, a mill owner

STEVEN McCLURE, his son

CHRIS ZSUPNIK, a mill hand

MRS. ZSUPNIK, his wife

TONY ZSUPNIK, his daughter

MARTHA, a servant

A. STARR PUTNAM, Professor of English Literature

EMILY PUTNAM, his wife

HOWARD SNELL, Assistant Professor of Chemistry

MILLY FANNING, his fiancée

VERNON SALSURY, Professor of Biology

OTTO KRAJIK

LOUIS POLINSKI

} Mill hands

GUS, a janitor

SLOTKIN, a tailor

CLEVELAND WELCH, of the Mastodon Art-Film Co.

429123



THE ANCESTOR

Act I. The Stoddards' flat on College Hill,
Dinsmore University.

Late afternoon.

Act II. The Stoddards' flat in the mill district.
Six months later.

Saturday afternoon.

Act III. Scene 1. Library of Cyrus McClure's
on the Hill.

Saturday night.

Scene 2. The Stoddards' flat.

Sunday morning.

Time The present.

The scene of the play is laid in Wickley, Pennsylvania, a mill town.

\$1200 A YEAR

ACT I



ISADORE SLOTKIN

ACT I

SCENE I: *Living room in the Stoddard flat, College Hill, a residential section adjoining the campus of Dinsmore University, Wickley, Pennsylvania. The family consists of PAUL STODDARD, instructor in Economics at the University, and his wife, JEAN. They have been married three years, during which time STODDARD'S salary has been twelve hundred a year.*

The apartment consists of a living room, bedroom, and kitchen. The living room is furnished shabbily with furniture reminiscent of his bachelor days together with a few more recent acquisitions. At right, against the wall, is one of those cheap, golden-oak, upright pianos which she hates. At the back are low bookshelves fairly well filled. The most conspicuous object in the room is a portrait hanging above the bookcases. It is the portrait of GOVERNOR GAMALIEL WINTHROP, one of the early governors of Massachusetts. He is dressed in the Puritan costume and is of a stern and rock-bound countenance. He belongs to JEAN'S side of the family and, as Daisy Ashford

says, "looks a thorough ancestor." Everything else in the room bespeaks shabby gentility and heart-breaking economy.

At the left, back, is a table laid for dinner. There are ten places, though there are only nine chairs, six straight-backed rather cheap-looking dining room chairs; one kitchen chair painted white; one bedroom chair; one piano stool, golden-oak to match the piano. It is at the end of the table facing the audience.

As the curtain rises the stage is empty. A bell rings. After a brief interval it rings again. JEAN STODDARD'S voice is heard from bedroom.

JEAN. Martha! Oh, Martha!

MARTHA [*voice from kitchen*]. Yes!

JEAN. The bell rang.

MARTHA. I heard it. My hands is in the dough.

JEAN. But I'm not dressed. [*The bell rings again, a long ring.*]

MARTHA [*very cross*]. Oh, all right, all right.

[MARTHA enters from kitchen, wiping her floury hands on her apron—crosses to door, muttering as she goes. She is an ample, middle-aged woman not quite so good-natured as she looks. For years she has worked as general utility woman for the wives of various members of the college

faculty, from the president down. She knows more about their social, economic, and private affairs than any one connected with the university. MARTHA opens the door. GUS, the janitor, enters. He looks like a janitor. He is carrying a highly ornate gilt-and-brocade chair.

GUS. How's this?

MARTHA. Kind of fancy, ain't it?

GUS. All our chairs is fancy.

JEAN [*from bedroom, off*]. Martha, is that the janitor with the chair?

MARTHA. Yes'm.

GUS. Where'd you want it?

MARTHA [*points to vacant place at table*]. Over there. Looks awful messy—all them diff'rent kinds of chairs.

[*Enter JEAN STODDARD from bedroom. She is about twenty-five, pretty, and well-bred. She talks with the Boston accent. She is wearing a kimono, having been interrupted while dressing. The Winthrop poise, on which she prides herself, is plainly disturbed. Evidently something unusual is happening.*]

JEAN. Oh, Gus! [*As the full glory of the chair bursts upon her.*] Oh, Gus! . . . but that isn't one of the Pemberton chairs, is it?

GUS. They ain't got nothin' fit to borrow. I went down and brought you up one of our own chairs.

JEAN. But you shouldn't have brought me your best chair.

GUS. This! This ain't nothin', Mis' Stoddard. You ought to see some of our others.

MARTHA. He's got his place furnished up elegant. I been down there. Pianola, whole stuffed parlour set——

GUS. Victrolay.

MARTHA. Over at Professor Dean Blake's house they ain't got anything half as swell.

JEAN. I'm sure they haven't. Put it over there, will you, Gus? [GUS places chair at table. JEAN takes handbag from top of low bookshelf, selects a coin, gives it to GUS.] Thanks.

GUS. Much obliged. [JEAN exits bedroom; GUS glances at coin in his palm.] That won't buy no gasoline.

MARTHA. Dime?

GUS. Yeh. Every little helps, though. It's all a fella can do to get along, these days. Yessir. On'y yesterday I was sayin' to my old woman, I says, it's all a fella can do to get along. Things keep goin' up like this, I says, we sell the car.

MARTHA. Why don't you get a job in one of those big apartments over on the Boulevard?

There's nothin' in it workin' in these college professors' flats. [*Lowers her voice.*] I ain't hardly got the heart to take my dollar an hour for this dinner from her in there.

GUS. They don't have much company to eat, do they?

MARTHA. This is the first time I done any cookin' here. Guess it's the last, too. Ain't enough cream 'r butter, 'r eggs to do with, decent. I like plenty of everything. You can't skimp an' cook right.

GUS. These folks look like they ain't had a square meal in the three years they been livin' here.

MARTHA. Seems like the more you know the less you eat.

GUS. That's just what I was sayin' to my old woman last night. I says there ain't nothin' to this edjication, I says. Sometimes, I says, I'm sorry I ever joined up with this here university.

[*Exit GUS; MARTHA, at dinner table, busies herself with china and silver. She sings a tuneless kind of wail in one of those high, flat voices; JEAN STODDARD, now fully dressed in a becoming but very shabby and home-made looking dress, enters from bedroom. She wears an anxious look. Sniffs the air a little.*]

JEAN. Is the roast all right, Martha?

MARTHA [*without enthusiasm*]. It's cookin' all right. Don't hardly seem big enough to me, though, for ten company.

JEAN. There are seven pounds.

MARTHA. Over at Mrs. Perfessor Putnam's last Tuesday we had ten pounds for eight company and they wasn't enough left over, hardly, to pay me for luggin' it home.

JEAN. I didn't know you were supposed to take it home.

MARTHA. I can't swallow a morsel after I've stood an' cooked an' waited on table, an' all. So I just wrap it up an' take it with.

JEAN. Roast beef is fifty-three cents a pound, Martha.

MARTHA. Comp'ny don't think nothin' about that when it's eatin' . . . Perfessor Putnam coming?

JEAN. Yes.

MARTHA. He's one of the biggest eatin' men I ever see. Not that they has any too much to eat over there, either. 'Specially since the new baby come an' milk so high, and Mrs. Perfessor not strong enough to nurse. You ain't had any fam'ly, have you?

JEAN. No.

MARTHA. Seems like college professors don't run much to babies. I don't believe there's more'n four on the whole Hill.

JEAN. Expensive luxuries—babies.

MARTHA. Land, yes! I had seven.

JEAN. Seven, Martha!

MARTHA. And never a doctor in the house.

JEAN. And are they all living?

MARTHA. All but five.

[Exit MARTHA, kitchen; JEAN takes a handful of rather faded flowers out of their tissue paper wrapping and places them in a bowl in the centre of the table. Stands back to get their effect, which is decidedly un-festive. They droop in the discouraging way wilted flowers have. JEAN sighs.]

MARTHA [from kitchen, off-stage]. Ain't you goin' to have no celery or radishes or olives or like that?

JEAN. No.

MARTHA [enters with dish in hand. Places it on table]. Folks do like somethin' to crunch, though.

JEAN. I know, but everything is so terribly high.

MARTHA. Well, I always say, a party's a party an' do it right or not at all, I always say.

JEAN. It was a choice between you and the celery and olives, Martha. And I chose you.

MARTHA. I'm glad I can help you out for a couple of hours. An' after all, what's two dollars when you know you don't have to jump up from your own table an' run around. Looks so common.

JEAN. How many hours a day do you work, Martha?

MARTHA. Gen'ally five. Days when I help out down to the lunch club, six. But that's too much. Jim's gettin' his fifty a week now, countin' commissions. Why should I slave?

JEAN. Who's Jim?

MARTHA. That's my oldest that drives the milk route.

JEAN. Fifty a week? You mean he gets fifty dollars a week for delivering milk!

MARTHA [*complacently*]. Comes to a little more'n that, some weeks.

JEAN. But, Martha, then with your—your thirty a week that's—

[*Stops, aghast at the sum total of this mental reckoning.*]

MARTHA. Makes about eighty between us. 'Course paw don't earn much, with his rheumatism. He's laid up more'n half the time.

JEAN. What is his work?

MARTHA. Carpenter. Awful aggravatin', too, with wages so good now and so much buildin' goin' on. Times he can't work more'n three or four days a week.

JEAN. How much?—No, don't tell me.

[*Turns away.*]

MARTHA [*mystified*]. H'm?

JEAN. Nothing. . . . What time do you think the pudding ought to go in, Martha? Six? It only takes three quarters of an hour.

MARTHA [*toward kitchen*]. Six is plenty of time. One bottle of whipped cream ain't goin' to be enough to cover it, though.

JEAN. It will have to do, Martha.

MARTHA [*unreconciled*]. It's for you to say.

[*Exits kitchen; after a moment she is followed by JEAN. From the kitchen is heard the clatter of pots and pans and dishes and the whirr of an egg beater. The door bell rings.*

MARTHA *enters from kitchen and goes to door still talking.*]

MARTHA. It'll cover the top, mebbe, but it won't go over the sides, that I know. [*Opens door.*] Oh, it's Mr. Steven.

[STEVEN McCLURE *enters. He is a senior at Dinsmore University. Devoted to PAUL STODDARD and a frequent visitor at the STODDARD apartment. He is a good-looking young chap of about twenty-one, keen, enthusiastic, but with a tendency toward amateur socialism, and given to speeches on the slightest provocation. As he enters he is plainly excited about something.*]

STEVEN. Oh, hello, Martha! If you're here it means a party.

MARTHA [*contemptuously*]. Only one of them faculty dinners.

STEVEN. Oh, I didn't know. If Mrs. Stoddard's busy——

[*Hesitates, turns. He is plainly disappointed. Enter JEAN from kitchen.*]

JEAN. Steven!

STEVEN. Hello, Mrs. Stoddard! [*Nervous, excited.*] Isn't the professor home?

JEAN. Not yet. You've neglected us shamefully. It's almost a week.

[*Exit MARTHA, kitchen.*]

STEVEN. I've been awfully busy. You know how I love to come here. I—Mrs. Stoddard. I've brought her to see you.

JEAN. Brought whom?

STEVEN [*triumphant*]. Tony!

JEAN [*bewildered*]. Tony! But——

STEVEN. You know. The one I've told you about.

JEAN [*smiles*]. You've told me about so many. Where is she?

STEVEN. Right here.

[*STEVEN steps quickly back into the hall, brings ANTONIA ZSUPNIK into the room. TONY is a vivid, dark-eyed, vivacious girl of eighteen or twenty, very pretty. Her costume is in direct contrast to MRS.*

STODDARD'S. *She is wearing clothes that are as expensive as they are ornate. Hat, shoes, dress represent money and bad taste. She looks the factory girl she is. In the beginning TONY is ill at ease, but as the scene goes on she recovers her self-confidence.]*

JEAN [aghast]. Oh!

STEVEN. Mrs. Stoddard, this is 'Tony.

TONY. Pleased to make your acquaintance.

JEAN [startled, but almost concealing it]. How do you do, Tony. [Takes the girl's hand.] I'm calling you Tony because Steven hasn't told me your last name.

TONY [giving it its full Bohemian flavour]. Zsupnik.

JEAN. I didn't quite——

STEVEN. It's Zsupnik, Antonia Zsupnik. We call her Tony. It's Bohemian, you know.

JEAN. Oh, yes—yes, of course. Tony . . . That's so pretty.

STEVEN. I knew you'd be crazy about her the minute you saw her.

JEAN. Won't you sit down?

TONY. I will for one. We walked all the way up here from the Flats. [There are only two available chairs in the room besides the chairs placed at the dinner table. JEAN drags the piano stool from its place at the end of the table.] I'm about ready to drop.

STEVEN. Let me do that. [*Takes piano stool which he straddles boyishly.*]

TONY. Steve's great on walkin'. Says I don't get enough exercise. I tell him I get all the exercise I want down t' the factory.

JEAN. Steven has told us so much about you. I've wanted to know you.

TONY. I've been dyin' to meet you folks. Steven's always goin' on about the Stoddards. Seems to think more of you than he does of his own pa.

JEAN. I hope not. Do you know Mr. McClure?

TONY. I ain't just met him, exactly.

STEVEN. You see—he doesn't know about Tony and me. That we're friends.

TONY. I guess Steve's ashamed of me.

STEVEN. I'm not, Tony. Don't say that.

TONY. Well, why don't you tell him then? [*To MRS. STODDARD.*] Can you see Old Man McClure's face if he knew his son was keepin' comp'ny with one of his own mill hands! I'm in the wire works, you know.

JEAN [*rather faintly.*] The wire works! I didn't know.

TONY. Yeh. It's just like one them novels, ain't it? Or a movie?

JEAN [*hesitatingly, but with great seriousness.*] You know, Tony, Steven is in his last year at the

university. My husband, Professor Stoddard, says he'll graduate with honours—if he doesn't let outside affairs distract him too much.

TONY. Yeh, Steve's smart. You can tell that lookin' at him, just. An' when he gets behind them glasses—you know.

[*Makes two circles of her thumbs and fore-fingers in imitation of shell-rimmed glasses, and brings them up to her eyes, owlshly.*

JEAN and STEVEN laugh in spite of themselves.]

STEVEN [*correcting her grammar*]. Those, Tony.

TONY [*blankly*]. Huh?

STEVEN. Those. Those glasses.

TONY. Oh. Those glasses. [*Very carefully.*] What'd I say? Them? Anyway, it don't make the joke no better.

STEVEN [*goes over to her. Oratorically*]. Poor little girl. To think that my college education, the very clothes I wear, the food I eat, are bought at the terrific price of this child's youth.

TONY [*giggles*]. He's always goin' on like that.

STEVEN. I never come within sight of our big house on the Hill that I don't sicken with the thought that her father and mother, Tony herself, and thousands like them, are living in squalor over at the Flats. Look at her! Look at her!

TONY [*grows indignant. Looks down at her finery, then up at him*]. Say, what's the matter with me, anyway!

STEVEN. Poor little girl.

JEAN [*dryly*]. After all, Steven, your father's money built this university, you know. And he practically supports it.

STEVEN. Blood money! Do you know what this child's father does? He's a puddler.

JEAN [*rather blankly*]. A puddler?

STEVEN. For eight long hours a day he puddles, and puddles and puddles.

TONY [*with spirit*]. Well, he gets his good twenty dollars a day for it, don't he? Ain't nobody in the mills can puddle better'n my old man.

JEAN. Twenty dollars a day! Surely not!

STEVEN. You don't understand, Mrs. Stoddard. Neither does she. Oh, the injustice of it. The tragedy——

[MARTHA appears in doorway of kitchen.]

MARTHA. The cream won't whip, ma'am!

JEAN. Speaking of tragedies. [*To MARTHA.*] But Martha, it must. It was double X whipping cream. Thirty cents.

MARTHA. It's went to cheese, like.

JEAN [*to TONY and STEVEN*]. Just a minute. [*Toward kitchen.*] Did you chill the bowl before

you began to whip it? You know if the bowl is warm it never will——

[JEAN and MARTHA go into the kitchen.]

TONY [looks after her—then jumps up and begins to examine the shabby room interestedly]. Your friends ain't fixed up very swell, are they?

STEVEN. Professor Stoddard's salary at the university is only twelve hundred a year.

TONY. Twelve hundred dollars a year! Le' see now. . . . [Does some painful mental arithmetic.] Twelve into twelve's one. Put down . . . four into . . . why, that's only twenty-five dollars a week! An' here a minute ago you was ravin' because my old man only gets twenty a day. If you ain't a nut!

STEVEN. Professor Stoddard is one of the leading authorities on Economics in this country. He's recognized abroad; and he's only thirty-two. Why, there's no telling what he'll do. They say the book he's writing on the wage system from the time of Charlemagne to the present day will practically revolutionize the whole——

TONY. If he's so good why don't he get more money?

STEVEN. Well, professors don't.

TONY. I don't know nothin' about this here Charley Main an' his wages but believe me if I

wasn't gettin' more than twenty-five a week down to the wire works I'd do more'n write a book about it, I would. [TONY is wandering about the shabby little room, inquisitively. Stops before the portrait of Governor Gamaliel Winthrop and gazes up at it, her head on one side.] Who's this old bird?

STEVEN. That's Governor Gamaliel Winthrop, one of the first governors of Massachusetts. Mrs. Stoddard is directly descended from him.

TONY. What's he wearin' a Buster Brown collar for?

STEVEN. That's the way they dressed in those days. It's the Puritan costume.

TONY [blankly]. Oh.

STEVEN. Mrs. Stoddard is very proud of him. It was he and others like him who founded this country.

TONY. Go on! It was Columbus.

STEVEN. Not found, Tony! Founded!

[JEAN comes in from kitchen, hurriedly followed by MARTHA. MARTHA closes kitchen door behind her.]

MARTHA. I'll just run over to Baumgartner's delicatessen and get another bottle of cream. [JEAN is taking money from pocketbook which she has put on bookshelf, back.]

JEAN. You won't be long, will you, Martha?

[Gives money to MARTHA. MARTHA goes toward outer door.]

MARTHA. You just keep an eye on that roast, Mis' Stoddard. Needs bastin' continual.

[MARTHA exits.]

STEVEN. We'd better run along. You're busy with your dinner.

JEAN. There's nothing to do, really. I prepared everything this morning. Martha came an hour ago to finish and serve so——

[MARTHA'S head is thrust in at door.]

MARTHA. Here's the Winthrops comin'.

JEAN. Already!

[The head vanishes. MARTHA'S voice is heard off, greeting the WINTHROPS.]

STEVEN. Come on, Tony. We'd better go.

JEAN. Do stay just a minute. They'll want to see you, Steven.

[The WINTHROPS enter. PROFESSOR WINTHROP is head of the Greek department and looks it. He is forty-eight but seems older. Absent-minded, scholarly, and impractical. He is only dimly aware of anything that has happened since the Second Peloponnesian War. FRANCES WINTHROP, who follows her father into the room, is twenty and amazingly pretty considering how startling is her resemblance to the portrait of GOVERNOR

GAMALIEL WINTHROP *on the wall. Her shabbiness is as apparent as JEAN'S. Hat and gown have that home-made look.*

WINTHROP [to JEAN]. Hello, little sister. [*Pats her cheek.*] How pretty we look!

FRANCES. Hello, Jean dear. Father *would* come early.

WINTHROP. I wanted a word with Paul before the others came. Just a word. [*Looks vaguely about as though expecting to find him.*] Ah, Steven McClure! Yes.

STEVEN [*comes forward*]. How do you do, sir.

FRANCES. How do you do, Steven.

STEVEN. Hello, Frances. [*Goes over to her.*]

JEAN. Paul isn't here yet, Henry. He promised to be home early, too. He'll want to dress.

FRANCES. [*She is taking off her hat, still in conversation with STEVEN. Turns.*] I thought I might help you, Jean.

JEAN. Martha's here, helping.

FRANCES. Oh, you got Martha!

JEAN. It does seem a frightful extravagance. But it's just for two hours. And after all, only once a year, really. I couldn't do it alone.

FRANCES. Where is she?

JEAN. She's gone on an errand. [*Remembers TONY, who has gone up. Brings her down rather*

hesitatingly.] Oh, Tony, this is my brother, Professor Winthrop. Miss Tony—ah——

STEVEN [*quickly*]. Zsupnik.

JEAN. Yes, of course—Miss Zsupnik. . . .
My niece, Frances Winthrop.

TONY. Pleased to make your acquaintance, Frances. [FRANCES, *startled but game, bows.*]

FRANCES [*to STEVEN*]. Where have you been? We never see you at the house nowadays. Father misses you.

STEVEN. Don't you?

FRANCES. My cooky jar stays surprisingly full.

STEVEN. Oh, those wonderful little round ones, with nuts inside! [*Remembers TONY.*] But I've been awfully busy lately, somehow. I don't know.

TONY [*propriatorially*]. Steven, we better be goin'.

STEVEN. All right.

FRANCES [*a glance at TONY*]. I see.

STEVEN [*to JEAN*]. I couldn't have picked a worse day, could I? Party and everything. We shouldn't have stayed.

TONY. Didn't I take the half-day off just to come!

JEAN. Did you really? And I can't even ask you to stay to dinner. I'm so sorry. You'll come again?

TONY. Sure. You see, at the wire works it's all piece work. We get paid for how much we do.

JEAN. Oh, yes.

TONY. Yeh. So if I take off, why, I'm the goat. [FRANCES has gone over to STEVEN and is talking to him, animatedly.]

JEAN. I'm afraid it was hardly worth while. You must come soon again.

TONY. Come on, Steve!

STEVEN [to FRANCES]. It sounds awfully jolly. I'd love to come, but I'm afraid I can't.

TONY. Pleased to have made your acquaintance, Mrs. Stoddard. [TONY and STEVEN toward door.] Well, good afternoon all.

STEVEN. Good-bye.

JEAN [at door]. Good-bye. [STEVEN and TONY go. JEAN turns toward FRANCES. The two look at each other wordlessly for a moment.]

FRANCES. Where did Steven pick up that terrible girl!

WINTHROP [who is browsing, back, among the books]. H'm? What's that?

FRANCES [raises her voice slightly]. That queer person with Steven.

JEAN. Here. Let me have your hat and stick, Henry. Frances, put your things in the bedroom. How pretty you look!

WINTHROP [who has been ruminating]. Was

she queer? Now I thought she looked quite charming.

JEAN. She is pretty.

FRANCES [*toward bedroom with hat, etc.*]. But—Zsupnik?

[*Exits bedroom.*]

WINTHROP. Zsupnik—Zsupnik. Slavic, I should say. Yes.

FRANCES [*enters from bedroom, patting her hair*]. Where does he pick up these people?

JEAN. Don't ask me. You know Steven. He was making speeches about her just before you came. Said she was downtrodden. Did you notice her hat?

FRANCES. There was nothing downtrodden about that. Self-assertive, I'd call it.

JEAN. It probably cost more than all my winter clothes.

FRANCES. How do those people do it!

JEAN [*bitterly*]. They do it on twenty dollars a day. When that girl sees a hat she wants she goes into the shop and buys it. I can't. I make my own hats. Not only that—they look it.

FRANCES. I haven't had a new hat in two years. Do you know, I don't so much mind home-made dresses, or blouses, or even suits. You can hide a bad collar with a ruffle; and you can save an awkward skirt with a drape. But there's some-

thing about a hat. It's that thing they call line, I suppose.

JEAN. No, it's useless to disguise a bad hat. It's like character in a crisis. It comes right to the top and stands, revealed.

FRANCES. Wasn't it wonderful, during the war, when being shabby was considered the thing? According to those standards, I was practically the smartest dresser on the Hill.

JEAN. It isn't only clothes. It's food, and books, and music, and flowers, and the theatre. We're Winthrops, Frances. We've had those things for hundreds of years. They're part of us. Paul and I haven't gone to a play or a concert in a year. Concerts! I've all I can do to buy enough food to nourish us.

FRANCES. I know. I sometimes think that if I had money I'd spend it for perfume and chicken and plush furniture, like a negro washwoman.

JEAN. I used to be able to manage, when Paul and I first were married. Perhaps because we were younger then. I don't know. Things are becoming so—so terrifying now.

FRANCES. I know. Father's salary and my housekeeping money are just like that definition of parallel lines in geometry—they never meet, no matter how far produced. In fact, the longer they go on, the less likely they are to meet.

JEAN. Paul ought to have steaks and roasts and chops and I give him stews. It's Tony's mother and her kind who come into the butcher's and order two dollars and fifty cents' worth of pork roast while I'm turning my miserable pennies over and over and wondering whether I ought to use them for a pound and a half of veal stew or if Paul will notice if we have hamburger steak again. Paul ought to be doing his best work now. I ought to be helping him with encouragement, and sympathy, and understanding. How can I when all my energy and brains are given to making twenty-five cents do the work of a dollar?

WINTHROP. Now that's very well taken, Jean. You no doubt recollect that a similar situation is anticipated by Aristotle in his Politics when he says—but perhaps Paul has it here.

[Goes back to the bookshelves, where he rummages happily, and is soon lost in a book.]

FRANCES. You see, my problem's simpler than yours, Jean. Poor dear father never knows what he's eating. Carrots or artichokes—it's all one to him.

JEAN. At your age you ought to have nothing to worry about but new frocks and Junior Proms, and whether your dance bouquet is going to match your gown.

FRANCES. That gown has been the same for

three years. It's as unchangeable as the college colours.

JEAN. The pettiness of it all. This dinner—it ought to be the merest incident—and it's a tragedy. I needn't pretend with you, Frances dear. You know.

FRANCES. I'll have to have one myself, soon.

JEAN. I've been putting this off month after month. But we had to have them. They've entertained us. They know we can't afford it. We know they can't. I've had to plan and scheme and contrive for every bit of it. It isn't that I don't like to have them. I do. And I'm fond of them. But not when it means that we've had to do without things for weeks past, and that we'll have to do without them for weeks to come.

FRANCES. You're such a marvellous manager, Jean.

JEAN. I'm economical by marriage—not by nature.

FRANCES. Still, we're not as badly off as poor dear Mrs. Gregg.

JEAN. What's the matter with her? I asked the Greggs for to-night. But they declined.

FRANCES. Of course. This is vile gossip, but they say that poor dear Mrs. Gregg only goes to stand-up parties where she can keep her hat on—teas, and that sort of thing.

JEAN. Why?

FRANCES. Her hair's turning quite gray, but her switch stays brown and she can't afford a new one.

JEAN. Do you know, that's almost not funny.

FRANCES. It's tragic.

JEAN. Don't ever tell that to Aunt Abby.

FRANCES. That reminds me. It's all been arranged.

JEAN. You're going to Boston?

FRANCES. Yes. I had a letter from Aunt Abby this morning. Father's to be at Harvard for four months. One of the exchange professors. And I'm to stay with her.

JEAN [*almost enviously*]. Four months of Boston!

FRANCES [*meaningly*]. With Aunt Abigail.

JEAN. She is terribly ancestral, dear. But there'll be the symphony concerts. And all those nice Harvard boys.

FRANCES. And a grate fire in my bedroom. I always love that at Aunt Abby's. It makes me feel like the heroine of an English novel.

JEAN. And no housekeeping troubles to bother you for four whole months. Oh, Frances!

FRANCES. You make it sound almost attractive.

JEAN. I'd find even Aunt Abby restful after the day I've had.

FRANCES. Poor dear!

JEAN. Entertaining isn't very festive when you've got to be an expert mathematician in order to make the housekeeping money come out right at the end of the week.

FRANCES [*at table*]. Whom are you having besides the Putnams? Let me see [*counts places*] two—four—six—why, there are ten. No wonder!

JEAN. Well, we have to have Dean Blake and Mrs. Blake. They've never dined here and we've been there a dozen times. That's why I had Martha in, really. The dean, you know. Then Howard Snell, and Milly Fanning of course——

FRANCES. Poor Milly. . . . She's getting to be such a faded fiancée. How long have they been engaged? Ever since I can remember.

JEAN. Oh, it must be nine years or more. They say she used to be quite a beauty. [*The doorbell rings*]. That must be Martha. [*Goes to door. Opens it.*]

[SLOTKIN, *the tailor, comes in. He carries a freshly pressed suit over his arm. A little dark man. He is nattily dressed, prosperous looking.*]

SLOTKIN. Here is the professor's suit.

JEAN. Oh, yes, I'll take it. I was afraid you'd be late.

SLOTKIN [*throws suit over the back of a chair, but keeps one hand on it*]. It ain't such a good job.

Spots like that you got to have it dry cleaned. Here. And here. But I done anyway the best I could.

[FRANCES, *during the conversation, has strolled over to the dinner table, has arranged the scanty flowers so that they show to better advantage, goes up to where her father is reading, peeps over his shoulder as he sits absorbed in a book, back.*]

JEAN. I'm sure you did. At any rate, it will have to do. I won't have it dry cleaned just yet. I tried to do it myself, but I was afraid I'd ruin it altogether. [SLOTKIN *still stands, one hand on the suit.*] You may leave it.

SLOTKIN [*takes bill out of his pocket*]. If it would be convenient——

JEAN. I'll send you a check.

SLOTKIN. It's five dollars and fifty cents.

JEAN. I'm afraid I haven't it—just now.

SLOTKIN. Over six months now it's been running, Mrs. Stoddard.

JEAN [*nervously*]. Yes, I know, I'm sorry——

SLOTKIN. Sorry don't pay no rent, lady. I got my expenses. I got to think of my family, too. My presser alone I got to pay him fifty dollars a week.

JEAN. Fifty dollars a week!

SLOTKIN. Sure, fifty. From unpaid bills, Mrs.

Stoddard, it don't come. To you five dollars is maybe nothing. A professor's from a college wife how should she know from the way a poor tailor is got to scrape and save!

JEAN [*utterly wretched*]. But I haven't a penny of change. I gave the last to the maid for some cream.

SLOTKIN. Huh—cream! [*Picks up suit and walks toward door.*] I come back again to-morrow.

JEAN. But he's got to have it to-night. We're having guests to dinner.

SLOTKIN [*angry*]. Say, dinners! You first can pay your bills.

JEAN. But Mr. Stoddard must have the suit. [*Turns desperately to FRANCES who has tried to appear unhearing.*] Frances, have you any money?

FRANCES. How much?

JEAN. Five-fifty. [*FRANCES gives a little hopeless gesture and shakes her head; JEAN turns to WINTHROP who is at the back of the room.*] Henry! [*WINTHROP comes down.*] Have you any money?

WINTHROP. Money? Why, yes, I think I—

JEAN. I need five dollars and fifty cents.

WINTHROP [*hopefully*]. M-m-m—We'll see.

[*They all stand expectantly, then less and less hopefully as he works his way methodically through each pocket from pants to vest, from vest to coat. In a coat pocket he*

comes upon his purse—a limp leather affair of the old-fashioned clasp kind. They all visibly brighten at this. He opens the purse, peers into it, empties its contents into his hand.]

WINTHROP [counts]. Ten—fifteen—twenty-three [looks up brightly]. Twenty-three cents. How much did you say you wanted? [At this SLOTKIN, with full knowledge of the hopelessness of the situation, leaves, taking the suit with him. The door slams.]

JEAN. Frances, what shall I do?

FRANCES. Don't take it so seriously, dear. After all, it's rather funny.

JEAN. But it isn't funny. It's the only suit Paul has. He went to his classes this morning in a suit the old clothes man wouldn't look at. . . . If it were five million it would be funny. But five dollars!

FRANCES. Isn't Paul awfully late? We came early just because father insisted he must talk to him.

JEAN. He'll scarcely have time to dress. [Remembers.] He won't need to, now.

FRANCES. Paul's very late, father. He's probably delayed at the university. I'm afraid you won't have time for your talk with him before the others arrive.

WINTHROP. Yes, yes. I must talk to him. He's been inviting trouble with those lectures of his on trade guilds.

JEAN [*startled*]. Paul says those lectures are more popular than any he's ever given. His classes have never been so crowded.

WINTHROP. Still, you know he is a bit outspoken at times—for a college professor. When the classroom is overcrowded—take warning, I say. I've been lecturing for twenty years on Theocritus and the other Greek bucolic poets, and in all that time I've been very careful not to say anything that might give offence. Yes, indeed.

JEAN. There isn't a man in the country who has Paul's grasp of his subject.

WINTHROP. That may well be. Paul is a remarkable young man. But Mr. McClure objects to some of the things Paul has said.

FRANCES. What right has a man like that to censor Paul's lectures?

WINTHROP. You forget, my dear, that Cyrus McClure and his mills support this university. Who would have a better right?

[*Enter PAUL. A well-built man of thirty-one or two, with a fine, strong face. From shoes to hat he is respectably seedy. There is about him a look that might suggest the successful lawyer, or even business man,*

if he were better dressed. As he comes in his manner and expression plainly show weariness and great depression.]

JEAN. Paul, dear, where in the world have you been?

STODDARD [*kisses her perfunctorily*]. Sorry, dear. [*Listlessly.*] Hello, Frances. Hello, Henry. [*He slumps, rather than sits, in the nearest chair, as though utterly weary. Runs his hand through his hair.*]

JEAN [*stands over him, tenderly*]. Your hair is actually wild, dear. And your tie! [*It is twisted almost under one ear, and an end straggles over his coat collar.*] Do go and brush up.

STODDARD [*dully*]. Yes.

JEAN. Paul, Slotkin was here.

STODDARD [*hardly hearing her*]. Who?

JEAN. Slotkin, the tailor. He brought the suit he'd cleaned but he took it away again. He says he won't leave it until we pay the five-fifty we owe him.

STODDARD. He said that to you?

JEAN. Yes, but——

STODDARD. After all, he's right. And we'll pay him. We're going to pay everybody we owe.

JEAN. You'll have to wear those clothes to dinner. He has your suit. I'm so sorry. They'll be here any minute.

STODDARD. It doesn't matter.

JEAN. Paul, there's something wrong.

WINTHROP. If it's this little friction about the lectures, my dear boy——

STODDARD [*quickly*]. You've heard!

WINTHROP. I heard there was some slight trouble. Some objection. I really think you might tone them down a shade. Just a shade.

STODDARD [*laughs grimly*]. Tone them down!

WINTHROP. After all, you must realize that as a professor your future at the university depends in a great measure——

STODDARD. I have no future at the university. I'm through.

JEAN. Paul, what do you mean!

STODDARD. I've quit the university. I've resigned.

FRANCES, JEAN [*simultaneously*]. Paul! Resigned!

WINTHROP. Nonsense, my boy.

JEAN. But what for? What have you done!

STODDARD. I don't expect you to believe it, but they told me that my discussion of trade guilds in England in the fifteenth century was offensive; that I must tone my lectures down. They didn't ask me if I would. Old man McClure sat there like a slave owner and said I must. No wage agitation lectures at this university, he said

Why, until yesterday, he never knew there were trade guilds in fifteenth-century England. He doesn't know yet what they are.

JEAN. Then why does he object?

STODDARD. Because he says they have to do with labour. I traced their growth to the present-day labour unions. He heard about that. You know how it is in a kept university. Besides, he said, it would turn the public's attention to his mills. "There's too much talk going on about capital and labour!" he said, "as it is. I won't have it in the university. You'll have to stop those lectures." He said that—to me!

JEAN. And you, Paul? You——

FRANCES. What did you say?

STODDARD [*quietly*]. I told him I'd see him and the whole university council in hell first.

WINTHROP. What, what! You didn't say that!

JEAN. They'll never take you back if you said that.

STODDARD. Take me back! Do you think I'd go back?

JEAN. But, Paul, what are we going to do? What are——

STODDARD. We're going to be human beings. We're going to get out of here.

JEAN. Out of here! Where?

STODDARD. I'm going down to McClure's mills

and get a job—a real job. He may never know I'm there but he'll be paying me money—real money. Do you know what those fellows get down there? They earn more in a day than I do in a week.

JEAN. Dear, you can't. Work in a mill! You don't mean it.

STODDARD. I do mean it. I spent four years at Dinsmore and three years at Oxford getting my degrees. I believed I was fitting myself for the biggest job a man could tackle—training young boys to be fine, useful men. I believed I could teach them to think clearly and cleanly. I starved, and dug, and tutored, and crammed during those seven years. I felt that any sacrifice I might make would be little enough for such a splendid service. I was a fool.

JEAN [*goes over to him*]. Now, don't, dear. You're excited. You're not yourself. To-morrow you'll——

STODDARD. I am myself. I tell you my eyes are open for the first time. We've all been blind. Blind! I tell you that no self-respecting mill hand would work for McClure at the starvation wages we've lived on. Twelve hundred dollars a year! Why, a heater over at the mills gets twenty-five dollars a day. A roller—whatever that is—gets thirty. A puddler——

JEAN [*sees her opportunity*]. A puddler gets twenty dollars a day!

STODDARD [*somewhat startled*]. How did you know that?

JEAN. It's true, isn't it?

FRANCES. And that little tailor. Didn't he say he paid his presser some ridiculous amount?

JEAN. He said fifty dollars a week.

STODDARD. A fellow that sews buttons on pants gets fifty dollars a week. I get twenty-five dollars a week. We who are leading the intellectual life of this nation haven't enough food and clothing. Gus, our janitor, lives better and earns more than I do. It would take me fifteen minutes to learn to do his work. A motorman gets sixty cents an hour. It pays better to mind trains than to train minds.

WINTHROP. All very interesting, my boy. And true, perhaps. But don't be ridiculous. You can't become a labourer. You're a gentleman.

FRANCES. Paul, you hot-head, I suppose you'll be suggesting next that you and Jean go to live down on the Flats, next door to Miss Tony—ah—— [*Turns amusedly to JEAN.*] What was that name, dear?

STODDARD. That's just where she's going to live.

JEAN [*now really alarmed*]. They'll take you back, Paul. This will blow over.

WINTHROP. So long as you haven't formally resigned.

FRANCES. No. There was nothing very formal about what you said to the council.

JEAN [*at the look on his face*]. Dear, you're not serious.

STODDARD. I'm just this serious. I'm going down to the mill office to-morrow morning to ask them to give me a job. I've kept up my gym work. [*Flexes his arm muscles.*] I can capitalize that out of the ruin.

JEAN. But how about me! What are we going to do?

STODDARD. We're going to begin to live, old girl. We've had three years of genteel poverty. Now we're going to have the things we've wanted. You've wanted to keep up your music. You couldn't. I've needed books I hadn't the money to buy. We've wanted children and we could no more afford them than we could afford to buy the Kohinoor.

JEAN [*very near tears*]. We've been happy here, anyway—almost happy.

STODDARD. You can be almost anything but almost happy. Either you're happy or you're not—and we've not been. Do you think I don't know how shabby and out-of-date your clothes are? Well, I do. I'm no comic supplement college

professor. Listen, Jean. I sold my life insurance policy last week. You didn't know that. I couldn't tell you. I had to do it. Things were getting too thick for me. We had to have money, somehow.

JEAN. We'd have managed. We always have. Things will be brighter.

STODDARD. They'll be worse. It's only the beginning. I'm quitting this job, and I've the right to quit. And I'm quitting the Hill and all that goes with it. If I've got to work with my hands to earn a decent living, then we're going to live down among the rest of them. We're through with pretence. We're through giving shoddy little dinners we can't afford to pay for shoddy little dinners we've eaten at the expense of someone else who can't afford them. You've put enough thought, and energy, and nerve-strain into the scabbling together of this little meal to exhaust you for a month. And for what?

JEAN. But we had to do it, dear.

STODDARD. We won't have to any more. We're through starving. They've not only starved us; they've told me I'm not free to teach as I like on my starvation wage. Well, if I've got to sell myself to old McClure, by God he's going to pay me for it!

[*The doorbell rings.*]

JEAN [*comes back to the thought of her dinner and guests with a start.*] They're here! The dinner! [*Glances wildly toward the kitchen. Starts toward it. Stops.*] And Martha isn't back.

FRANCES [*toward door*]. I'll go, dear. Besides, it isn't nearly seven. They're early.

JEAN [*hurriedly, aside to STODDARD*]. Paul, please, not a word of this to the others. It would only harm you.

STODDARD [*as FRANCES opens door*]. It's too late for that. It can't harm me now.

[*Enter PROFESSOR PUTNAM, MRS. PUTNAM, and, directly after them, HOWARD SNELL and MILLY FANNING. PUTNAM is older than SNELL; more mature in every way. There is about SNELL a diffident and somewhat crushed look—that of a man baffled by circumstances. The clothes of the two men are neat but unmistakably shabby, and of a cut and style that went out six or seven years ago. The two women are dowdily dressed, but their costumes are not ridiculous. There is about the little group a certain dignity, in spite of its evident shabbiness. MRS. PUTNAM is a bustling, managerial woman. MILLY FANNING is not as young as she once was. A rather wistful figure, with the look of the faded*

fiancée. They enter with a little flurry of arrival and greeting. There is a sort of chorus of "Hellos" and "Good evenings". JEAN comes forward with an effort, trying to smile. STODDARD makes no pretence at gayety. WINTHROP, back, shakes his head ominously.]

MRS. PUTNAM. Now don't tell us we're too early, because we know it.

JEAN. I'm glad you are—if you don't mind waiting for dinner.

FRANCES. You see father and I were even earlier than you. [*To the two women.*] Do come in here and take off your things. [*Toward bedroom.*]

PUTNAM [*to STODDARD*]. Well, how's the terrible infant?

STODDARD. Then you know?

SNELL. That's why we came early. Wanted to get here before Dean Blake and Mrs. Blake.

STODDARD. I hardly think you need worry about their getting here.

[*MRS. PUTNAM, MILLY FANNING, JEAN, and FRANCES exeunt bedroom, talking "Did you make it yourself?" etc. JEAN glances back at STODDARD, apprehensively.*]

PUTNAM. They're not coming!

STODDARD. They haven't said they're not.

SNELL. Still, if what we've heard about that

meeting this afternoon is true—the dean would hardly—eh, Winthrop?

WINTHROP. Gossip, my dear fellow, gossip!

STODDARD. Here—let me take those. [*Takes hats, gloves, etc. Carries them to low bookshelf, back.*]

PUTNAM. Then it isn't true. H'm! Well! We needn't have hurried to get here before the dean, then.

[*JEAN enters from bedroom. Scans the men's faces anxiously as if to learn from them what has been said in her absence.*]

SNELL. Come on, Stoddard. We're all friends here. Of course you know everybody's talking. It isn't as if the Blakes were here. What about the row this afternoon, h'm?

[*The telephone rings. STODDARD crosses quickly to answer it, as the three women—FRANCES, MRS. PUTNAM, and MILLY FANNING—enter from bedroom, having removed their hats and wraps.*]

MILLY FANNING [*continuing conversation begun in bedroom*]. I always say get black. It's quiet and at the same time it's dressy and you can wear it anywhere.

STODDARD [*at telephone just before taking up receiver*]. Mrs. Blake's suddenly ill. . . . Any takers? [*Picks up receiver. The others stand wait-*

ing while STODDARD, looking at them over the instrument, and smiling a little, talks.] Hello. . . . Yes, yes, talking. . . . Oh, yes. . . . Well, I'm sorry to hear that. . . . Too bad. . . . Nothing serious, I hope. . . . No—no, indeed. It won't inconvenience us. We're sorry not to have you, but there probably isn't any too much to go round, as it is. . . .

JEAN [*horrified*]. Oh, Paul, how could you!

STODDARD [*at telephone*]. Good-bye. [*Hangs up receiver, straightens his shoulders, smiling a little.*] I hope you'll excuse my not being dressed—all of you. [*He is looking down at his shabby coat; brushes his sleeve lightly.*] The tailor wouldn't leave my other suit because I couldn't pay his bill.

JEAN. Paul!

[Follows a moment's dreadful silence. STODDARD has broken an unwritten rule. They have never openly admitted poverty and debt to one another.]

STODDARD. You all know I've only one decent suit of clothes, just as you have.

PUTNAM [*rather feebly*]. You always will have your little joke, Stoddard.

SNELL. Ha! Yes.

STODDARD. Joke nothing! You see before you, ladies and gentlemen, a perfect specimen of the turned worm.

JEAN [*assumes a gayety that deceives no one*]. Paul's had a little unpleasantness at the university, and he's cross as a bear. Let's all snub him.

FRANCES [*rushing to JEAN'S aid*]. Yes, let's all talk animatedly and leave him out. He'll soon come round.

STODDARD. But I'm not cross. I've never felt more amiable in my life. Gad, it's glorious to be able to speak the truth for the first time in three years!

MRS. PUTNAM [*who doesn't believe in beating about the bush*]. This may all be very humorous, Professor Stoddard, but just what does it mean?

STODDARD. It means, dear lady, that I've left the free, unshackled intellectual life. From to-morrow on I belong to the downtrodden labouring class.

PUTNAM. Come, come, Stoddard. You're not serious. A little unpleasantness with McClure and the council this afternoon doesn't necessarily——

JEAN. Of course it doesn't. Paul's nervous, excited, tired——

STODDARD. I tell you I'm leaving the Hill and \$1,200 a year to go down to the mill at thirty a day. Come on with me, Putnam—Snell!

MRS. PUTNAM. Augustus! You'll do nothing of the kind!

SNELL. You wouldn't so far forget the dignity of your profession.

STODDARD [*until now he has been half jocular in his manner. He becomes suddenly very serious and strangely quiet in manner*]. Look here. You came early, all of you, because you wanted to hear the truth. Now I'm going to give it to you. If you don't like it, remember you asked for it. You didn't think there was anything undignified, did you, in our coming forward a year ago to ask for an increase in salary. The head of every college in this university signed that petition—the College of Arts, the College of Law—Medical, Agricultural, Engineering, Sciences—all of them. And when it was refused us there was nothing undignified in our crawling back to our starvation jobs. No. We weren't too dignified to ask for what we wanted, but we were too dignified to demand it. Nine colleges in this university. Nine men, one from each of these nine colleges, set down on an island together, could start a civilization. Every autumn a thousand boys worth a few dollars each march into Dinsmore University. Every June a thousand doctors and lawyers, engineers and chemists, architects and agriculturists, march out. And the difference in usefulness of those two groups is the measure of our use to America. For civilization isn't machinery or wealth, but the skill, and the training, and the spirit of men. The most important and dignified profession in the world

receives less consideration from the world than does the lowest form of labour. And who's to blame? We are! We talk of the dignity of our profession, but we've never brought to it enough dignity to make the world respect it. It's the man with the muscle who gets the money. But you can't starve the brains of a nation without killing the nation itself. I believe that as surely as I believe in life itself, and I'm going down to Cyrus McClure's mill, not to earn thirty dollars a day but to prove that I believe that.

SNELL. You'll never make the world believe that. They'll laugh at you.

STODDARD. Let them! They've never taken me seriously in shiny broadcloth. I'll try them in overalls.

PUTNAM. You talk like a hot-headed young fool, Stoddard. Sleep on it. You'll change your mind to-morrow.

STODDARD. I've slept on it for three years. I'm awake now. And I'm going to stay awake. Here Snell! You and Milly Fanning have wanted to marry for nine years, haven't you?

JEAN. Paul, don't!

SNELL. Look here, Stoddard!

STODDARD. You wanted the truth. You're known in the university as the Perpetual Fiancé. Your salary's nine hundred a year. And because

no two people can live decently on nine hundred a year you've seen Milly Fanning change from the prettiest girl on University Hill to the hopeless, crushed woman she is to-day. The best years of your life are gone. They'll never come back. [MILLY FANNING, *with a little broken cry, turns her face away from them all.*] Putnam, you and Emily have one of the four babies on the Hill. But you couldn't have had it in your youth, when you were young, and strong, and virile. No, you waited fifteen years for it, and now you wonder why it's weak, and puny, and fretful. It hasn't had a fair chance. Well, I want to tell you, Putnam—and you, Snell—that if submitting to that kind of thing is what you call dignified, then damn dignity!

[*The outer door is flung open and MARTHA enters, breathless and wild-eyed, a bottle of cream in her hand.*]

MARTHA [*panting*]. Oh, Mis' Stoddard, ma'am, I'm that sorry! I been in every delicatessen on the Hill. [*Crosses to kitchen, talking breathlessly.*] Baumgartner's didn't have no whipping cream. Schwartz's didn't have no whipping cream. I went way over to Meisenberg's and they didn't have no whip—— [*Opens kitchen door. A cloud of smoke meets her, together with the fumes of the burned roast.*] Oh, my God, you ain't been near the roast! [*Rushes to kitchen.*]

JEAN. I forgot to baste it. [*Starts toward kitchen.*]

MARTHA. It's burned to a cinder.

JEAN. The dinner's ruined. Oh, I'm so sorry! [*The others look as a group of people do who are hungry and have been cheated out of their dinner.*]

FRANCES. Can't we do something with it? Cut off the top slices.

MRS. PUTNAM. H'm. [*The protest of an experienced housekeeper.*]

STODDARD. No. We won't serve cinders. Here, Martha. Run around the corner and get a steak—a big one.

MARTHA. Steak! It'd cost yuh a fortune for a crowd like this.

STODDARD [*takes out his wallet, selects a bill, and stuffs it into her hand, giving her a little push toward the door*]. Here. Take that. And spend it all. Quick!

MARTHA [*looks at the bill*]. Ten dollars! For a steak!

STODDARD. That's all right, Martha. I'm not a college professor any more. I'm a mill hand. Make it a T-bone sirloin.

Curtain

ACT II



ACT II

SCENE: *The STODDARDS' living room down on the Flats. The Flats is that section of Wickley, Pa., in which the mill hands live. It is in direct contrast with the Hill Section, occupied by the university professors and their families.*

The room is luxuriously and tastefully furnished. There are lamps, books, flowers. Modern, well-made furniture is so arranged as to give the apartment a restful, home-like air. A small grand piano replaces the old golden-oak upright. There are low bookshelves against the wall, back. The main doorway, leading to the outer hall, divides the bookshelves. The portrait of GOVERNOR GAMALIEL WINTHROP occupies much the same position as in the STODDARDS' little flat on the Hill. For the rest, the room speaks of prosperity and well being. A framed photograph of FRANCES WINTHROP on the piano. At the left is a door leading to the dining room. Another to bedroom, right.

As the curtain rises MARTHA is in the act of turning on one of the two soft-shaded lamps. The other is already glowing cozily at the side of

the piano. MRS. CHRIS ZSUPNIK, TONY'S mother, who lives in the flat upstairs, is seated in a deep chair engaged in conversation with MARTHA. She is a stout woman of the foreign-born labouring class type. She talks with a thick accent and in clumsy idiom. She is wearing a shapeless house dress and a kitchen apron. She and MARTHA are apparently good friends. MARTHA shakes out a sofa pillow, straightens a book, wipes an end of the table with a corner of her apron to rid it of imaginary dust. Blows away another fleck of dust from the table top.]

MARTHA. A body just can't keep nothin' clean down here with all this smoke and soot from the mill. It's dust, dust, dust all day long. I cleaned this place thorough this morning, with a vac'um, and now look at that! [*Runs a quick finger over the table top and holds it up for MRS. ZSUPNIK'S inspection.*]

MRS. ZSUPNIK. What for you clean all time! I ain't see such peoples for clean.

MARTHA. You got to clean to *keep* clean.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Such little furniture you got here it ain't work.

MARTHA. Little furniture! What's the woman mean, now?

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*almost incoherent in her efforts to*

make her meaning clear]. It is not'ing! Not'ing! [*A wild wave of the arms that includes the entire apartment.*] Not enough furnish. Like here. [*Waddles heavily over to the long, graceful library table whose top is bare except for a lamp and a bowl of flowers.*] Here is all—naked. Ugh!

MARTHA. Well, sure it is. What's wrong with it?

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Not enough. Like poor people got. Where is parlour set? Where is big electric light? Where is picture? Where is pillow? Where is victrola? [*Runs over to where two candles in handsome candlesticks ornament either side of a long wall-mirror.*] Like in old kaun-tree candles. Candles is for poor peoples.

MARTHA. Go on! You don't know. It's swell to have a room bare-lookin'. That's the style. The less you got in a room the sweller you are. An' candles is all the go.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Me got plush furniture, lace curtains, table cover fringe like so [*indicating about a foot of fringe*].

MARTHA. Your place! My God, it's like a auction room. You can't see the room for the furniture.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Me—I like.

MARTHA. Well, I ain't sayin' I'm so stuck on this nothin' in a room, myself, but two three chairs

and mebbe a pianny. Always looks to me like you run out of money before you finished furnishin' up, like.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Sure. [*Then waves a triumphant hand toward dining room.*] You eat out tablecloth!

MARTHA. Oh, you poor ignorant furriner, you!

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Not oilcloth even.

MARTHA. Oilcloth! Why eatin' off a bare table is the height of elegance. Just doilies. Why, say, they was a English Perfessor come to the college once, for two years, from across the ocean an' do you know what?

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*fascinated, her hands rolled comfortably in her apron across her stomach*]. W'at?

MARTHA. They had two three children an' was well-to-do. But they was so swell they didn't even set no table at all for breakfast! Everythin' on a side table, keepin' warm with hot water beneath, an' everybody helpin' themselves an' not even no servants to wait on, that's how swell they was!

[*MRS. ZSUPNIK shrugs expressive shoulders and indicates extreme distaste for any such people or proceedings. She even shudders once.*]

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Crazy kaun-tree!

MARTHA. Not a-tall! It's just how you're

used to it. Now dressin's the same. You an' your Tony, you think when you're all dolled up like a Christmas tree, with everythin' on but lighted candles, w'y you think you're dressed swell.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. My Tony she got white shoe—feather in hat—fur coat—pink dress——

MARTHA. There yuh are! Anybody can put on pink an' people know what they're wearin'. But when you can put on black an' one them quiet little hats an' *yet* have people turn to look at you—that's dressin'.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Mrs. Stoddard—she go like that.

MARTHA. If I do say it, she's got wonderful taste. Everything dark an' plain an' yet she looks like a million dollars. Them sleeves in her new suit fit like they was painted on her arm.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. I guess she ain't come home soon I got cook my supper sure.

MARTHA. What you goin' have that's good?

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Goulash—noodles——

MARTHA. My land, you folks eat greasy!

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Not like you, grass all time.

MARTHA. That ain't grass. That's salad—lettuce.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. You cook American. Me cook Bohemian, eat much better.

MARTHA. My folks they like their steaks, an'

their chops, an' their salads. Yuh could get a ton of your goulash for the price of a really good cut of steak now.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Mr. Steve McClure he t'ink me cook swell. He come eat by us much. Tony she laugh make fun how he eat my coffee cake. So big piece. [*Indicates about a square yard of coffee cake.*]

MARTHA. Some class to your Tony goin' with Steve McClure.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. My Tony she got lots fellas. [*With great animation and very skittish.*] In old kawn-tree me just like my Tony. Many year back. Me some kiddo!

MARTHA. I bet you was! You ain't so bad yet, when you got your corsets on. Last Sunday when you was down here with your man, wearin' that fur coat, you might have been Tony's own sister for looks.

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*plainly delighted, wagging her head*]. Sure t'ing!

MARTHA. I got to be gettin' my folks' supper, too.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. My man he come home hungry. Terrible!

MARTHA. It's the same way with the Perfesser. I fill his lunch box mornings enough for a horse. San'wiches, cheese, pie, fruit, coffee, an' first thing

he says when he comes in the door in the evenin', he says, "Well," he says, "what you got good for dinner, Martha?"

[*The doorbell rings. MARTHA goes to hall, opens door. MRS. ZSUPNIK is still seated comfortably, but is about to rise and leave. FRANCES WINTHROP enters.*]

MARTHA. I haven't seen you for months, Miss Frances.

FRANCES. I've been in Boston, visiting.

MARTHA. The folks'll be glad to see you. They ain't home yet. Just come in, sit down, and make yourself at home.

FRANCES. What a frightful neighbourhood. I've waded through garbage cans and babies to get here.

MARTHA. It ain't so bad when you get used to the smell.

FRANCES [*looks about the pretty room in surprise*]. Why, this room is charming! [*For the first time sees MRS. ZSUPNIK.*]

MARTHA. Meet Mrs. Zsupnik, Miss Frances. [*FRANCES, startled, bows very frigidly.*]

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Please' for meet you. How do? [*Puts out her hand which FRANCES evidently does not see.*]

FRANCES. Why, who?— Is this one of your friends, Martha?

MARTHA. Oh, Mrs. Zsupnik's our upstairs neighbour. She's a friend of the folks.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. My man he work-by Stoddard in mill, sure.

[FRANCES *is speechless.*]

MARTHA. You see, the Perfesser he's head of a whole gang of 'em now. I don't know what they call him. Foreman or something. Elegant pay.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. My man he get big money, too. He boss puddler.

MARTHA. Oh, sure. But he ain't got the brains of the Perfessor. You couldn't expect it in a poor ignorant furriner.

FRANCES. Martha, who were those men downstairs in the doorway? And one woman. When I came in they asked me where I was going. And when I told them I was calling on the Stoddards they wanted to know who I was and what I was coming for and a man with a camera——

MARTHA [*with fine contempt*]. Oh, them ain't nothin'. On'y reporters. Always hangin' around and askin' questions and takin' pictures. When the Perfesser comes home they just jump at him but he jams right through 'em, laughin', and gets by, they hangin' on to his coat tails. Them women reporters is the worst.

FRANCES. Dreadful!

MARTHA. They had my picture in last week.

All the papers. I forgot about 'em and run down on a errand in my kitchen apron an' there they was. I wouldn't of minded if I'd been dressed up decent. Did you see it?

FRANCES. Yes, I saw it.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. I go now. My man he is come home pretty soon for supper. [*To FRANCES amiably.*] Well, I say good-bye now.

[FRANCES, *still speechless, inclines her head ever so slightly.* MRS. ZSUPNIK *again offers to shake hands, this time unavoidably.* FRANCES *extends the barest tips of her gloved fingers.* MRS. ZSUPNIK *pumps this limp burden up and down vigorously.* MRS. ZSUPNIK *goes toward door.* FRANCES *stares after her.*]

MARTHA [*heartily*]. Drop in again when the folks is home, Mrs. Zsupnik.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Sure t'ing. [MRS. ZSUPNIK *goes.*]

FRANCES [*breathlessly*]. Martha, Martha! Do you mean to tell me that people like that are in the habit of coming into this house? As callers!

MARTHA. Oh, the Zsupniks is in an' out all the time. I never saw such people for visitin'. Old Zsupnik an' the Perfesser they're great friends, they are. Sit an' chin by the hour about

labour, an' politics, an' I don' know what all. And laugh! Old Zsupnik he's quite a cut-up.

FRANCES. It's incredible!

MARTHA [*not quite understanding*]. Oh, it ain't as bad as that, I wouldn't say.

FRANCES. You don't mean they actually like it down here!

MARTHA. Well, they do an' they don't. Or, mebbe, they did an' they don't. I dunno. Now the Perfesser, he seems to like it elegant. I never see him so jolly as lately.

FRANCES. And Mrs. Stoddard?

MARTHA [*doubtfully*]. I ain't sayin'. She was like a child at first with a new doll. Buyin' her pretty things, and fixin' 'em the way she liked. I bet she's had everything in this here room moved eleven times, anyway. The pianny used t' be where the sofy is, an' the sofy used to be where the table——

FRANCES. But now?

MARTHA. I dunno. She started with her music lessons. And she got some new dresses make her look a fashion plate. But—I dunno. Mebbe now you're back she'll have more comp'ny like.

FRANCES [*almost as if talking aloud to herself*]. Then they haven't come here. [*Almost a whisper.*] Cats.

MARTHA [*very inquisitive*]. What's that, Miss Frances?

FRANCES. I say you evidently like it here— with such informal neighbours.

MARTHA. It ain't what I'm used to. But I've known sorrow since I last seen you. My man gone. An' my eldest that was earnin' such elegant money on the milk route— [*Weeps into a corner of her apron.*]

FRANCES. Dead, too! Oh, I'm so sorry—

MARTHA. No—married. Married an' takes the bread, you might say, right out of my mouth. That's why I'm working down here. The wages is wages, I will say. An' it's a home. But I'm used to mixin' with class on the Hill. These jabberin' furriners ain't no comp'ny for college folks.

[*The doorbell rings. MARTHA goes to door, FRANCES, to piano. Sits. STEVEN MC-CLURE comes in followed by MARTHA.*]

STEVEN. Martha, is Tony down here? I was just upstairs and she's not there.

MARTHA. Didn't you meet her ma goin' up?

STEVEN. No.

MARTHA. I guess she went the back stairs. No, Tony ain't here. Guess she ain't home from work yet. Everybody's late to-night. My folks ain't home yet neither.

[*FRANCES rises from her seat at the piano.*]

STEVEN *sees her, goes to her.* MARTHA *exits to dining room.*]

STEVEN. Hello, Frances! I thought you were still in Boston.

FRANCES. I got back just yesterday.

STEVEN. Nice time?

FRANCES [*rather dubiously*]. Oh—yes, I stopped with Aunt Abigail Winthrop. Of course she's a dear but—but terribly—ah——

STEVEN. Winthropian?

FRANCES. I wasn't going to say just that. And of course it's insulting that you should say it. But I suppose that's it. She won't admit the existence of the automobile. Still drives daily in a shiny little boxlike thing behind two fat horses; and Jonas, who is eighty at least, perched on the box all wrapped in robes and collars like a mummy.

STEVEN. It doesn't sound very gay. You were gone a frightfully long time.

FRANCES [*quickly*]. Did you think so?

STEVEN. Mrs. Stoddard said she missed you.

FRANCES [*disappointed*]. Oh.

STEVEN. Have you seen Mrs. Stoddard? But of course.

FRANCES. No, I haven't. You see, I left for Boston just after they—just after Paul——

STEVEN. Then you haven't been here before!

FRANCES. I got back only this morning.

STEVEN [*all enthusiasm*]. Isn't it wonderful—the things he has done! How long has it been since you left? Only three or four months, isn't it?

FRANCES. Yes.

STEVEN. And in that time he's become a national figure—famous!

FRANCES. If having your photograph in every newspaper and magazine in the country, with minute details as to what you wear, and think, and eat for breakfast is being a national figure—

STEVEN. Why, those are only the accessories. It's what he has done that makes him a big man. I don't see how he stands it. He's down in the mill all day, every day, working like an engine. Every Saturday night and twice every Sunday he speaks somewhere. He was in Boston last month. Did you hear him?

FRANCES. No. Aunt Abby wouldn't allow—

STEVEN. It was one of his best.

FRANCES. I've read most of Paul's speeches and interviews. And the things he says about your father!

STEVEN [*all enthusiasm*]. Aren't they glorious! That one where he says that dad is paying more in one day to the men who turn out steel bars in his mills than he pays in a week to the men who are turning out his son for use in the world. Meaning me.

FRANCES. I can't see why you should be so enthusiastic about that.

STEVEN. But it's true. In fact, I typed that very speech.

FRANCES. Typed it?

STEVEN. I'm acting as his secretary two hours a day. You never saw such a mass of letters, and telegrams, and clippings as he gets.

FRANCES. But how about your classes?

STEVEN. The university's only running on three cylinders. Half the faculty has left, you know. I'm down here a lot of the time. Jolly little flat, isn't it?

FRANCES. If you don't mind the neighbourhood!

STEVEN. What's wrong with the neighbourhood? Of course it isn't the Hill, but——

FRANCES. The noise, the filth, the people! Those unkempt women leaning out of the windows and screaming to each other. One of them was actually here in this room when I came in. She seemed to be perfectly at home here. A Mrs. Zsup—— something or other. Awful.

STEVEN. Mrs. Zsupnik. Tony's mother.

FRANCES. Tony! Oh, yes. I forgot. You go in for Zsupniks, too, don't you?

STEVEN. Frances, you don't know these people as I do.

FRANCES. I don't want to know them.

STEVEN. If you could come down here, and live among them.

FRANCES. Heaven forbid!

STEVEN. That's the trouble with you, Frances. You go through life as you picked your way through those streets—afraid that you might soil your skirts.

FRANCES. We Winthrops have never gone in for slumming. I wonder how Jean stands it.

STEVEN. You Winthrops are like the Chinese. You spend your lives burning incense to the memory of your ancestors. [*Points to portrait of GOVERNOR WINTHROP on wall.*] That old Plymouth Rock up there has been dead three hundred years and you're still afraid of him.

FRANCES [*looks up at the grim portrait*]. Poor old Governor. How grim and horrified he looks! No wonder, at finding himself down here on the Flats among the—Zsupniks.

STEVEN. He's been sniffing incense so long it'll do him good to smell a little garlic.

FRANCES. Aren't you just the least bit rude?

STEVEN [*all contrition*]. I'm sorry, Frances. But you—I don't know—you always make me feel so inferior—so—so young. And I'm older than you are.

FRANCES. I see. You prefer a girl you can patronize.

[*MARTHA enters from dining room.*]

MARTHA. Tony just yelled down the dumb-waiter to ask was you here, Mr. Steven.

STEVEN. I'll run up.

MARTHA. No. She's comin' down. She said somethin' about a new hat to show Mis' Stoddard.

STEVEN [*hurriedly*]. I'll go to the door.

[MARTHA *exits dining room*. STEVEN *to hall door*. FRANCES *over to piano in corner*. STEVEN'S *voice, very low, can be heard in hall, off*.]

TONY [*very loud*]. Who? [TONY *enters, followed by STEVEN*.] Who's she? [Sees FRANCES.] Oh!

[*In her hand TONY has a very magnificent new hat of velvet with a blue ostrich plume. It is the kind of hat that FRANCES WINTHROP would sooner die than wear*.]

STEVEN. You remember Miss Winthrop, don't you, Tony?

TONY [*mischievously, pretends to have forgotten*]. I don't believe I've had the pleasure. [*Giggles*.]

[FRANCES *is visibly taken aback at this*.]

STEVEN. Why, yes, Tony. Don't you remember just yesterday you were looking at that photograph of Miss Winthrop on the piano. And you said—— [*Stops, confused*.]

TONY [*pretends dimly to remember now*]. Oh, yeh, I said she was a ringer for the old bird on the wall. The one discovered America.

FRANCES [*ignoring TONY entirely, turns to STEVEN*]. I see now where you've acquired your interesting point of view.

STEVEN [*oratorically*]. What can history mean to this child of the mill! How can you expect——

TONY. Oh, my God! There he goes again like I was a freak in a circus. [*After the manner of a barker in a sideshow.*] Step into the tent, ladies and gents, an' see the marvel of the age! Tony, the wild woman, captured alive on the Flats of Wickley. Step up an' see how she walks, talks——

[*MARTHA appears in dining room door. She has a mixing spoon in one hand.*]

MARTHA. Tony, stop your carryin' on! I heard you back in the kitchen.

TONY. Come on in, Martha. Just in time for the big show! Steve's going to make a speech. Go on, Steve, like you commenced. Go on. "This poor child of the mills!" [*To MARTHA.*] That's me.

MARTHA. Hush your foolishness. This poor child of the kitchen's got her dinner to get an' no time to waste on your crazy doin's.

FRANCES [*seizes this chance to escape from TONY*]. Martha, I've a message for you from Mrs. Blake.

MARTHA. Have you, now? Tell me.

FRANCES. I'll come in and talk to you. [*Crosses to dining room door.*]

TONY [*puts on her new hat and stands deliberately in FRANCES' way*]. How d'yuh like my new hat? H'm? [*Turns her audacious little head this way and that.*] How d'yuh like it?

FRANCES [*every inch a Winthrop. Regards the hat with the look she would bestow upon a museum curiosity*]. It suits you—perfectly. In fact, I can't imagine any one but you buying it. [FRANCES *exits dining room with MARTHA.*]

TONY [*looks after her, balefully. Snatches the hat off. Then with a great deal of elegance and some venom, imitates FRANCES' manner*]. Ah, yes. I see now where you've acquired your interesting point of view. [*Minces toward dining room door in exaggerated imitation of FRANCES' walk.*]

STEVEN. Tony, she'll hear you! She'll see you!

TONY. Let her! What do I care! She's got a nerve goin' around actin' like Elsie Ferguson—in them clothes.

STEVEN. Look here, Tony. Miss Winthrop's a very dear friend of mine.

TONY. Yeh? Well, you got to quit makin' a monkey out of me in front of your very dear friends, see? I'm as good as her, an' better, any day. Why, this here hat cost sixteen dollars.

STEVEN. Dear child, to a girl like Frances Winthrop clothes mean very little.

TONY. Oh, they do, do they! It's a wonder

that stuck-up nose of hern ain't wore flat from bein' pressed up against store windows. I bet she dreams about a fur coat three times a week, reg'lar. No, she don't care no more for clothes than she does for her right hand, she don't.

STEVEN. I won't listen to this, Tony.

TONY. Besides, if I was as stuck on a fella as she is on you, I'd go out an' get him, I would, 'stead of——

STEVEN. Stop it, Tony!

TONY. I will not. Anybody could see she's batty about you. Every time she looks at me she just registers hate like Theda Bara.

[*The outer door slams. PAUL STODDARD enters. He is dressed like a labourer. He carries a dinner pail and the evening paper.*]

STODDARD. Hello! What's all this!

TONY. Steve an' me in the third reel of Tony the Beautiful Mill Hand.

STEVEN. Tony—please——

STODDARD [*good humouredly*]. Go on. It sounds like a thriller to me.

[*MARTHA enters from dining room.*]

MARTHA. I thought it was you I heard.

STODDARD [*makes as though to toss her his dinner pail*]. Catch, Martha!

MARTHA. Oh, for the land's sakes! Don't

throw it! I couldn't catch a feather bed. [*Takes pail from STODDARD.*]

STODDARD. What have you got for supper, Martha? I'm starved.

MARTHA [*opens top of dinner pail. Peers in.*]
Bare as the palm of my hand. [*Goes to dining room door. Calls in.*] It's him. He's here. [*MARTHA exits dining room with pail.*]

STODDARD. Oh, Jean's home! [*Goes toward dining room.*]

[*FRANCES enters. STEVEN and TONY up. They talk inaudibly. STEVEN very earnest, TONY tossing her head.*]

FRANCES. Paul!

STODDARD [*surprised and glad*]. Hello, Frances! I didn't know you'd come back. It's good to see you.

FRANCES. I got back this morning.

STODDARD. You're prettier than ever. Boston agrees with you. Is father with you?

FRANCES. No. He was to meet me here at half-past four.

STODDARD. It's five now.

FRANCES. I know. I was late. I thought father would be waiting for me. He's probably lost in this terrible neighbourhood.

STODDARD. Oh, come, now, it isn't as bad as that.

FRANCES. I'm sorry. I didn't mean——

[Enter CHRIS ZSUPNIK. *A typical foreign-born mill hand, stocky, broad-shouldered, with a heavy, clumping walk. He is dressed in baggy, nondescript working clothes. About forty-eight years old with a walrus moustache and a good-natured grin. In both hands he carefully carries a deep bowl covered with a fringed red napkin.*]

ZSUPNIK. Oo, golly! I don't know you got comp'ny.

STODDARD. Hello, Zsupnik! Come in, come in!

ZSUPNIK [*comes down, grinning*]. Old woman she is send you for supper some fine goulash she make. [*Smacks his lips to convey to the others its delicacy and flavour.*]

STODDARD. Now, that's kind of her. She's a wonderful cook.

ZSUPNIK [*to TONY*]. Tony, why you ain't help your ma, huh?

TONY [*sulking*]. Ain't I been workin' all day!

STEVEN. Surely, Mr. Zsupnik, you can't ask a girl who has worked in a factory all day to come home to more work at night.

ZSUPNIK. Her mama she done it. Four o'clock in morning she work in field in Bohemia——

STODDARD. Yes, but this is America, Zsupnik. You're an American now. So is Tony.

ZSUPNIK. Yeh, Tony, she talk back sassy just like American girl, all right.

STODDARD. I'll have Martha take that dish.
[Calls.] Martha!

MARTHA [*from kitchen, off*]. Yes!

STODDARD. Come here, will you?

MARTHA [*as before*]. In a minute!

STODDARD. Zsupnik, I want to introduce you to my niece. Make you acquainted—you know. Frances, this Mr. Chris Zsupnik, our neighbour upstairs. . . . My wife's niece, Miss Frances Winthrop.

[ZSUPNIK juggles the hot bowl with some difficulty but finally succeeds in freeing one huge hand which he wipes on the side of his trousers and extends genially to MISS WINTHROP. He has taken off his hat, and not knowing what else to do with it has dropped it at his feet.]

ZSUPNIK. How-do! How-do!

FRANCES [*gives him her finger tips. He shakes her hand vigorously, endangering the bowl of goulash*].
How do you do.

STODDARD. Here, let me take that! [*Tries to take bowl from ZSUPNIK, who insists on keeping it.*]

ZSUPNIK. He's all right. [*Genially to FRANCES.*]
You like goulash?

FRANCES [*trying not to shudder*]. I've never eaten it.

ZSUPNIK [*astounded*]. No!

STODDARD. You must try it, Frances. Mrs. Zsupnik is queen of the goulash makers.

[ZSUPNIK *turns back the corner of the red napkin, invitingly revealing the contents of the savory dish.*]

FRANCES [*faintly*]. Oh, I couldn't, really.

TONY [*a trifle maliciously*]. Maybe she don't like garlic, pa.

STODDARD. The Winthrops all dote on it, don't they, Frances?

[*A rather baleful look from FRANCES. TONY breaks into a series of giggles.*]

ZSUPNIK [*with a gesture toward the ceiling*]. Tony, you ain't go up help your mama I——

TONY. I'm goin' now. Come on, Steve.

STEVEN. I'll see you all later. Good-bye, Frances.

FRANCES. Good-bye!

[MARTHA *enters from dining room; TONY and STEVEN go.*]

STODDARD. Martha, here's something Mrs. Zsupnik sent for supper.

[MARTHA *takes dish from ZSUPNIK.*]

ZSUPNIK. No spill. He very full.

MARTHA. Never fear my spoilin' the carpet with the stuff.

[Her nose in the air she turns back one corner of the napkin as she goes toward the kitchen. A whiff of the pungent food causes her nose to become still more elevated if possible. She exits dining room holding the dish well away from her in distaste. ZSUPNIK has been looking fixedly at FRANCES. Now he comes close and peers at her. FRANCES becomes uncomfortable.]

FRANCES *[loses her composure entirely]*. What's the matter?

ZSUPNIK. Don't I have see you before some place? Sure.

FRANCES. I think not. No.

[ZSUPNIK continues to stare. STODDARD, filling his pipe, is not conscious of what is going on.]

FRANCES *[becoming agitated]*. Really! Paul!

STODDARD. You don't mind my old pipe, do you, Frances?

FRANCES *[indignantly, as ZSUPNIK'S gaze grows more intent]*. No, but I do mind——

ZSUPNIK *[as though a great light has come over him]*. By golly! *[Turns his head to stare at picture of GOVERNOR WINTHROP on wall then back to FRANCES, then to picture again, then back to FRANCES.]*

STODDARD. What's the matter?

ZSUPNIK [*points to portrait*]. That's where I see you before! You just like old man on picture. Look! Look!

FRANCES. Paul, this man is insufferable!

STODDARD. He doesn't mean any harm, Frances. The best fellow in the world. [*Slaps ZSUPNIK on the back.*] And, Frances, you know you are a hundred-year throwback to old Gamaliel himself.

FRANCES. I'm proud of it.

STODDARD. Well, Zsupnik didn't mean it as an insult, you know.

[*MARTHA enters with clean empty bowl and red napkin neatly folded inside.*]

MARTHA. Here's your dish an' napkin, Mr. Zsupnik. Much obliged. You can take 'em up when you go. [*Aside to FRANCES.*] I emptied the stuff out.

STODDARD. Keep it good and hot, Martha.

MARTHA [*goes, muttering*]. It's hot enough, now, with paprika, and all kinds of furrin' devilment.

STODDARD. Oh, Martha, did Mrs. Stoddard expect to be home so late, when she left? Did she say?

MARTHA [*turns at dining room door*]. Well, I dunno. She went to one them concerts.

STODDARD. Yes, they're usually late.

[*MARTHA goes.*]

FRANCES. Who's playing?

STODDARD. Kreisler, I think.

FRANCES [*a little enviously*]. Oh, glorious [*sighs*]!

ZSUPNIK. What time you go meeting to-night?

STODDARD. It's called for eight. But I'd like just a few minutes' talk with the shop committee, first. [*Glances at watch.*] That doesn't give me much time.

ZSUPNIK. You going to have big crowd, by golly! Krieger's hall he ain't big enough when you speak, I betcha.

FRANCES. You're speaking at Krieger's? But that's the workingmen's hall!

STODDARD. I'm a workingman.

FRANCES. But you haven't been talking to that kind of audience, have you? The papers said that when you talked at Carnegie you had a regular Metropolitan Opera audience. And certainly at Faneuil Hall it was distinguished enough.

STODDARD. Until to-night I've been talking about brains gone bankrupt. I knew that to win my point I'd have to become the fashion. And I have. Any lecturer can become fashionable if he's only rude enough to his audience.

ZSUPNIK. To-night you put him up old McClure, huh?

FRANCES. You're attacking McClure directly? To his men?

STODDARD. No, I'm not attacking him. You don't realize, Frances, what's happened in these last four months. Twenty thousand schools have closed for lack of teachers. Brain workers all over the country are becoming labourers. The mill office is crowded with men wanting jobs. The law of supply and demand is beginning to work. There isn't a magazine or newspaper in the country that hasn't had editorials, and articles, and paragraphs about McClure.

FRANCES. And they all call him Moloch McClure. Poor old man!

STODDARD. Whatever they call him it's beginning to get to him. And now, as a solution, he announces he's going to lower the wage scale in his mills. Gad, there's something almost magnificent about his blind egotism.

ZSUPNIK [*proud of his American slang*]. Treat 'em rough. . . . Sure.

STODDARD. No: there'll be no "treat 'em rough" in what I have to say to-night. But there must be no lowering of wages. That won't help my purpose. You men have got to stand pat.

FRANCES. Labour problems bore me so.

STODDARD. I'd rather teach 'em than solve them, myself.

[*Three dull and portentous thumps are heard apparently coming from the ceiling just*

above. All look up at ceiling. The three thumps are repeated immediately, and even more emphatically].

ZSUPNIK. Oo! That is my old woman. She give me hell. Supper ready. [*Rushes up toward hall and outer door. Remembers his manners, turns, takes off his battered soft hat.*] Well, I am please' for meet you, lady. Sure.

STODDARD. See you later, Zsupnik. [*As the thumps begin again.*] Hurry before the ceiling gives way. [*ZSUPNIK goes.*] Great old boy. [*Laughs.*] Afraid of nothing in the world except that wife of his.

FRANCES. The woman who was here when I came?

STODDARD. Oh, you've seen her! What did you think of her? H'm? Wonderful type!

FRANCES. Oh, really, Paul.

STODDARD. Now, now, Frances! I know Bohemia is what they call a far cry from Boston. But it has its aspects, too. And they're interesting—darned interesting.

FRANCES. I suppose so.

STODDARD. Will you excuse me, Frances, while I wash up? Jean'll be here any minute. I've got to get some of this mill grime off of me.

FRANCES. It's too fantastic, seeing you in those clothes. I can't get used to it.

STODDARD. I've been happier since I began to wear them than I've ever been in my life before.

FRANCES. And Jean, as the honest toiler's wife? How she does like it?

STODDARD. Well, Jean—Jean's getting used to it. Of course the people down here—— But she has the things she's always wanted. Things we've never been able to afford before. Music, books, pretty dresses, good food. Isn't this a pretty little place? But really charming. Be honest!

FRANCES. It's simply perfect.

STODDARD. They were what you call model tenements to begin with. A few partitions knocked down and some paint did the trick. The rest was easy.

FRANCES. And doesn't it matter to you—the things your own people are saying about you?

STODDARD. My own people!

FRANCES. Aunt Abigail Winthrop in Boston——

STODDARD. Oh, yes, I had a delightful letter from dear old Aunt Abby, after I spoke in Boston. She said I was dragging Jean into the mud, and that after what I had done to the family escutcheon it would have to be dry cleaned—or something like that.

FRANCES. You can't blame her. Of course we're more or less hardened to it all now. But

I'll never forget that first Sunday page: "College Professor Turns Mill Hand."

STODDARD. I didn't much care for that one. But there was one. . . . "Pedagogue Dons Garb of Toiler"—now that's my notion of a headline.

FRANCES. If you'd only stay in the mill and—and puddle, or whatever it is you do. People would forget. But you don't. You're always making those terrible speeches. You haven't been off the first page in months. Even the *Boston Transcript* doesn't seem able to get out an edition without you. You're in everything from the *Literary Digest* to *Snappy Stories*.

STODDARD. Well, then, my speeches must be pretty good—as speeches go.

FRANCES. I suppose so. But it's harrowing never to be able to pick up a paper or a magazine without seeing a photograph of you in a soft shirt with your sleeves rolled up and your collar turned in like a hero in a Western picture.

STODDARD. Frances, it's glorious. Four months ago I was called on the carpet because I dared express an opinion to a handful of immature boys in a class room; an opinion about something that had happened in the fifteenth century. I learned then that a college professor has no right to have opinions. In the four months since then

I've talked to fifty thousand men and women. To-night I'm going down to Krieger's Hall to tell five thousand men and women to stand firm. And they'll do it because I tell them.

FRANCES. But you always said the labouring man was getting too much money.

STODDARD. I still say it. But lowering his wage now won't help. That's putting the cart before the horse.

FRANCES. Oh, I suppose you're having a beautiful time, Paul. But what about Jean, while you're being photographed, and interviewed, and made a fuss of?

STODDARD. Jean? Jean's happy—enough.

FRANCES. With the Zsupniks, I suppose.

STODDARD. What have they got to do with it?

FRANCES. A lot. How often have the Putnams, or the Salsburys, or the Blakes, or the Pembertons been here?

STODDARD. They haven't been.

FRANCES. Of course they haven't.

STODDARD. I know what they're saying. And don't think it doesn't hurt. But they'll see it my way some day. They must. Only why are they so slow? Frances, I get more out of a half-hour's talk with old Chris Zsupnik than I got in my three years' association with those unprogressive, out-of-touch-with-life professors on the Hill.

Zsupnik and his kind have got wisdom, I tell you, that comes of the soil. And humour! They're rich with it.

[The hall door is heard to slam. JEAN STODDARD comes in with a rush, followed more slowly by WINTHROP. JEAN is flushed and animated. Her gown, hat, shoes, gloves are modish and becoming and smart to the last degree.]

JEAN. Oh, my dears! I'm so sorry! *[Kisses FRANCES.]* How wonderful you look!

FRANCES *[all admiration]*. And you!

JEAN *[unheeding]*. Doesn't she, Paul? *[To FRANCES.]* I'm dying for all the Boston gossip. We'll just take out our teeth and have a good talk. *[She is taking off her hat and gloves as she continues. Her manner is almost too markedly animated.]* Such a glorious concert. Kreisler, you know. He gave us a dozen encores, the dear! That's why I'm so late. I couldn't bear to leave. I kept edging up to the door, and then coming back down the aisle.

FRANCES. Where did you pick up father? *[To WINTHROP.]* I was beginning to worry about you.

WINTHROP. Well, Frances, you know that slip of paper you gave me—the one with the address on it. Yes. I seem to have misplaced it just

after I stepped out of the street car. Most extraordinary thing.

FRANCES. In your pocket, I suppose.

WINTHROP. I searched through all my pockets, methodically. I even looked into the lining of my hat. You know I sometimes do—— There were a number of small boys uncommonly rude.

JEAN. Poor dear lamb! He must have been wandering around for hours. I was rushing home when I met him coming out of Palazzo's fish shop.

WINTHROP. Very pungent place—very.

JEAN. I had my little encounter this afternoon, too. [*She is smiling a little smile that is not very happy.*] I met Emily Putnam and Mrs. Salsbury as I was coming from the concert. They cut me.

FRANCES [*indignantly*]. They didn't!

JEAN. But they did.

STODDARD [*blunderingly*]. Probably didn't see you.

JEAN. They not only saw me—they saw straight through me. I felt Emily Putnam's eyes on my hairpins—here [*touches her back hair*].

FRANCES. I didn't think they'd go as far as that.

STODDARD. Jean doesn't care. Do you, old girl?

JEAN. That's the curious part of it. [*Turns away a little.*] I do.

STODDARD. Why should you! No matter how blank she looked I'll bet Emily Putnam has a mental photograph of every tuck and hem in your dress.

FRANCES. That makes it all the worse. In time they may forget your first-page atrocities. But they'll never forgive Jean those clothes.

JEAN [*in spite of herself*]. It is rather nice, isn't it? [*Sighs.*] But gowns don't count.

STODDARD. Don't they, eh? Six months ago you were wretched because you couldn't have them. I must say I don't understand you, Jean.

JEAN. Frances understands—don't you, Frances?

FRANCES. I think I do, dear.

STODDARD. Here—we're out of our depths, Henry. I'm going to clean up. [*Goes toward bedroom right.*] Come on, Henry. I'll practise to-night's speech on you while I'm shaving.

[*As soon as the men are out of the room the two women look at each other for an electric moment, wordlessly. They come together with a little rush. Strangely enough, it is FRANCES, the younger woman, who takes JEAN in her arms.*]

FRANCES [*pats JEAN'S shoulder soothingly*]. There, there, dear. I know, I know. I've seen your neighbours.

JEAN [*lifts her head, wipes her eyes, looks cautiously toward the bedroom door. Her voice is lowered*]. Frances, I hate it. I hate it! I can't go on living down here. It's wonderful to have somebody who understands. Paul doesn't seem to. He has his work—and these meetings, and speeches, and tours—and he loves it. You can't imagine what these months have been to me. It wasn't so bad at first. It was rather fun. The novelty of it. And the joy of not having to think of every penny. And then buying all these pretty things. [*She can't help a certain pride in that room.*] It is pretty, isn't it? This room?

FRANCES. I'd love to live in it.

JEAN. But not down here. Do you know you're the first woman of my own class who's ever set foot in it!

FRANCES. Not one of them!

JEAN. Not one of them. . . . And you know I'm not the kind of woman who can be content just to have pretty clothes, pretty things about. Oh, I don't say I haven't loved them. I have. I do! But it isn't enough. It isn't enough! I want people. I want my own people [*She is very near to tears again*].

FRANCES. Paul seems to be so satisfied with these—these Zsupniks, and all that.

JEAN. I sometimes wonder. After all, he's

a scholar in mind and by training. Not a labourer. It's the excitement, I suppose. And then every minute of his time is full. I—I scarcely see him, now.

FRANCES. When I talked to him he was like a boy. And when this man upstairs came in——

JEAN. He's always having those mill workers of his in here. They seem to fascinate him. I never come into the room that I don't expect to find at least two puddlers on the davenport and a roller with his feet on the piano.

FRANCES. Perhaps he's interested in them—as types.

JEAN. No. He likes them. Another year of this and he'll be one of them. He'll be drinking his coffee out of his saucer, next, and demanding a raw onion in his lunch box.

FRANCES. You can't go on like this, Jean.

JEAN. What can I do?

FRANCES. Talk to him. Make him see it. He always has been so understanding.

JEAN. You don't know him, now. For that matter, neither do I. I scarcely see him. He's down at the mills all day. At night he prepares his speeches, reads his correspondence, writes reams of letters, reads. On Saturday night and Sunday he's off speaking somewhere.

FRANCES. Why doesn't he give up the silly

puddling, or whatever it is he does in the mill, and go in for lecturing altogether?

JEAN. Because then he wouldn't be a professor turned mill hand. He'd be a professor turned lecturer. Nobody'd go to hear him.

FRANCES [*a doubt in her mind*]. But he seemed so sincere!

JEAN. Sincere! He's as sincere as the Crusaders, and twice as energetic. Why, when I hear him speak even I'm convinced. Only—well, I never was meant to be the wife of a Crusader.

FRANCES. I don't quite see how it's all going to end. They'll never take him back at the university. And you can't go on here.

JEAN. I'm afraid to look ahead.

[*The doorbell rings.*]

JEAN [*wipes her eyes hastily and pats her disordered hair*]. Probably another roller.

FRANCES. What's a roller?

[*MARTHA enters from dining room, goes to hall door.*]

JEAN. A roller is something that earns thirty dollars working eight hours, and thinks he ought to get forty—working six.

MARTHA [*off*]. Well, for the land's sakes! How do, Perfesser! How do!

[*Enter PUTNAM, SNELL, and SALSURY.*]

They are, if possible, shabbier than when

they last appeared, but it is apparent that they are nerved up to a determined effort of some sort. SALSURY is the oldest of the three men. He wears a brown beard slightly tinged with gray.]

JEAN [after one astonished moment]. Professor Putnam! Howard! How do you do! And Professor Salsbury! How glad I am to see you!

[The three professors greet her and FRANCES. There is about them marked constraint. MARTHA exits dining room.]

PUTNAM [to FRANCES]. So you and your father have returned! We have needed him sorely—sorely.

[The other men are looking about the attractive room in some wonderment, and with evident admiration.]

FRANCES. We're both so happy to be back.

JEAN. You want to see Paul, of course.

SNELL [a little doubtfully]. H'm, yes. Yes.

SALSURY [hesitatingly]. Ah—er—yes. *[He gives it the rising inflection.]*

PUTNAM [firmly]. In fact—yes!

JEAN. Do sit down, I'll call him. *[Goes to bedroom door, calls].* Paul! Some—friends here to see you.

STODDARD *[from bedroom, off. His voice some-*

what muffled and queer]. Aw'ri'. Minute. Shaving!

JEAN [*to the others*]. Probably finishing his chin.

PUTNAM. What a charming place you have here.

JEAN. Do you like it?

SNELL. One would hardly expect—ah—in this neighbourhood.

SALSBURY. It's luxurious—positively.

JEAN. Oh, no. Just comfortable. Six rooms. The bedroom, there [*indicates door right*]. And in here—perhaps you'd like to see it? [*The three men rise and follow her to door, left*]. Paul has a tiny study just off the dining room! [*They are grouped in the doorway and peer in, interestedly. They turn to look at each other, thoughtfully.*] Then there's the kitchen, of course, and Martha's room. [*Her first opportunity to show the place.*]

PUTNAM. H'm, yes.

SALSBURY. Yes, indeed.

[*It is plain that they are thinking of the contrast between this charming little place and their own meagre, shabby households.*]

SNELL [*he has MILLY in mind*]. One could be very happy here.

JEAN. Yes, but it isn't the Hill.

SNELL [*rather sadly*]. The Hill isn't paradise by any m——

PUTNAM [*coughs loudly*]. A mess of pottage, my dear Mrs. Stoddard, if you'll pardon my saying so. A mess of pottage.

[*Enter WINTHROP, peers about near-sightedly.*]

WINTHROP. Well, upon my soul! My dear fellows!

PUTNAM. Welcome home!

SNELL. Ah, Professor! [*They all shake hands.*]

SALSBURY. You've come back to turmoil, Professor Winthrop.

WINTHROP. Things were far from calm in Boston, my dear boy. Classes closed. Students idle. I don't know what we're coming to, really.

PUTNAM. It must be stopped.

[*Enter STODDARD from bedroom, just shrugging himself into his coat. He is freshly shaved and brushed, wears a clean, blue soft shirt, and looks strikingly alert, and virile, and alive in comparison with the subdued and spiritless-looking men who have come to see him.*]

STODDARD [*surprised*]. Hello! Hello! [*To JEAN.*] Jean, why didn't you tell me who it was! [*He is shaking hands with all of them.*] I'd come in with one side lathered and the other smooth. You'll all stay to dinner, won't you? You must. There's always enough for [*looking around rather hastily*] five more, isn't there, Jean?

PUTNAM. No, no, my dear Stoddard. We are here, not for a social call, but as a committee.

STODDARD [*who has suspected this*]. Committee? Oh, I see.

FRANCES. Come father. We must go.

WINTHROP [*who would like to stay*]. Must we?

PUTNAM. We should be happy to have you remain, Professor Winthrop. We know you are with us in what we have to say.

WINTHROP. M-m-m. I'm not so sure. I've just been privileged to hear some splendid periods from Paul. [*Quotes, evidently from STODDARD'S speech.*] Without economic freedom there can be no freedom of the intellect. Without—what was the rest of that, Paul?

STODDARD. Far as we got, Henry. That's where I nicked my chin. [*Dabs his chin ruefully.*]

JEAN [*at dining room door, left*]. Coming, Frances?

[*JEAN and FRANCES go.*]

STODDARD. Now, then, I'm sorry to have to hurry you. But I've a meeting to-night at eight o'clock.

PUTNAM. I, too, have a meeting to-night. The remnants of the faculty of Dinsmore University. You probably know that, encouraged by your example, Tilden of the Chemistry department is now with the Patterson Dye Works as

laboratory expert. Salary six thousand a year. Evans has gone in an advisory capacity with the firm of Fish, Klinger and Klein—ah—Kollege Kut Klothes. Salary of seven thousand.

STODDARD. Seven. Good! That's almost wages.

PUTNAM. Others have come down to the mills. Especially some of our most promising young material. You know these facts. In short, Stoddard, you are responsible for such chaos as Dinsmore University has never known.

SALSBURY. And Dinsmore is only one of a hundred universities similarly handicapped throughout the country.

SNELL. It is Dinsmore that concerns us. You and your speeches, Stoddard, are responsible for it all.

PUTNAM. You graduated from Dinsmore. You taught there for five years. You must still have some feeling for its future.

STODDARD. So much that I left it.

PUTNAM. A strange way to show your affection. You have run the institution to the ground. Instead of assuring better educational facilities for the next generation you are ruining the hopes of this. With practically every college and university in the country on the verge of collapse the youth of the nation will be turned into the streets.

Education will be at a standstill. Where shall we find trained minds to carry on the intellectual life of a civilized nation in the next generation?

STODDARD. I had hoped for it. I never dreamed it would come so soon.

PUTNAM. And you would commit this crime against civilization for thirty dollars a day and the cheap notoriety your actions have brought you?

SNELL [*oratorically*]. For thirty talents of silver.

STODDARD. Let's not become Biblical, Snell. [To PUTNAM.] What is it your committee wants me to do?

PUTNAM. We ask you to stop this agitation before it is too late. We ask you to cease cheapening our profession by your spectacular appeals throughout the country. You knew, when you chose teaching as a profession, that you would never become rich thereby. A college professor is not a mere money maker. You knew you would never be able to surround yourself with luxury or even comfort, perhaps. A teacher is a missionary. But if teaching entails self-sacrifice it is repaid by the nobility of the work itself.

[*A nod of approval from SNELL and SALSURY.*]

WINTHROP. A powerful appeal, Putnam.

PUTNAM. If you no longer wish to be known as a teacher we ask you to let us teach in peace, and

with dignity. If you do not consent to this your name will be stricken to-night from the membership of your fraternity; from the University Club; from the Faculty Club, from the——

STODDARD. Then you're in for a busy evening. I'll never stop until I've won.

[*The committee is visibly taken aback at that.*]

PUTNAM. That's final?

STODDARD. Absolutely.

PUTNAM. Then that is all, gentlemen.

[*The three committeemen move toward the door.*]

STODDARD. Not quite all. I want to thank you.

PUTNAM. Spare us that further insult.

STODDARD. But I mean it. If I've been in doubt, you've convinced me. You've given me the courage to go on.

PUTNAM. What!

STODDARD. It's you who are degrading the profession you say you love. It is men like you who have brought it into disrepute.

PUTNAM. I refuse to listen to this. [*To the others.*] Come.

STODDARD [*places himself in front of them*]. But you must listen. You talk about the nobility of teaching, but you've failed to make the world respect it. We're still Ichabod Cranes, boarding

around among the farmers—or a little better than that. Not one of you but is torn by continual worry—the grinding worry of how you are to feed your family, clothe them, warm them, give them necessities. You've long ago given up amusement, recreation, books even. I know. Every other constructive profession in the world is adequately paid. Why is the teacher at the bottom of the scale? Because you're content to take it out in being noble. Well, how about the next generation of teachers?

SNELL. But it's the present——

STODDARD [*unheeding the interruption*]. Putnam, can you save one penny out of your salary? Be honest.

PUTNAM. You know I can't.

STODDARD. Snell? Salibury? Henry, I needn't ask you. And what if you should take sick? Die? Do you ever think of that?

PUTNAM. I never stop thinking of it.

STODDARD. And you say you're giving your best to your work? You're giving half your mind to it. Half a tortured mind in an under-nourished body.

WINTHROP. Not so bluntly, Paul. Not so blunt——

STODDARD. Let's face facts. You can't live decently on your salary. Hundreds of schools

and colleges are closing because other men and women can't live on the pay that comes from doing the work they love. Well, what then? The teacher of the future will have to be the man or woman who isn't wanted any place else. The quality of our teachers has been deteriorating steadily in the last twenty years. In another twenty our schools will be manned by the unfit, physically and mentally. A country can better afford to economize on everything else than on its education. Education is the foundation of democracy. And yet a stenographer who takes a six months' business course is better paid than a teacher who has spent six years fitting himself for his profession. A bricklayer won't work for six dollars a day, but you're content to teach for less than that.

SNELL [*to* PUTNAM]. Everything he says is true.

PUTNAM. But what can we do? I don't deny it. But what can we do?

STODDARD. It's a desperate situation. Use desperate measures. Your ideals may be lofty, and your calling may be noble, but no man can hold up his head when there's a crack in his shoe. You can't teach with a full mind when the ice box is empty. You may have the brain of a Socrates, but the world will only notice you're wearing a dirty collar and that your trousers are frayed.

[Instinctively the hands of the others go to their collars. They ease their throats in their endeavour to hide their embarrassment at what they have involuntarily done.]

PUTNAM *[taking a last feeble stand]*. What you say has always been true of our profession.

SNELL. God, yes!

PUTNAM. Then why should we rebel now?

WINTHROP *[suddenly]*. Because without economic freedom there can be no freedom of the intellect. Because——

STODDARD. Here. You find this room attractive, don't you? The kind of place you'd want. There isn't a roller in the mills who couldn't have one like it if his taste happened to run that way. He prefers automobiles and victrolas, but that's his affair. Why should you be denied what he takes for granted? He produces materials, yes. But you produce producers.

[Under STODDARD'S spell the others have been listening as though fascinated. With an effort, and almost as though in fear, PUTNAM frees himself.]

PUTNAM *[agitatedly]*. We must be going.

SNELL. Is this what you've been saying in your lectures?

STODDARD. This—and more. Wait.

PUTNAM. No. Come, Snell.

[PUTNAM, SALSURY, and WINTHROP have been edging toward the outer entrance, still keeping their eyes on Stoddard's face. PUTNAM now takes SNELL'S arm. STODDARD, still talking, follows them, step by step.]

STODDARD. To-night, when they expel me from the university clubs, tell them what I've told you. Tell them there's no dignity in living in want. Tell them to prove what will happen when brains go on a strike. Tell them the time has come to show the world what will become of its railroads, its mines, its corporation, its commerce, without the schoolmaster behind them. It is you and I who must train the technical minds that control all these. What of the mills and mines without their engineers? What of the corporations without their lawyers? What of the cities without their architects? The farms without trained agriculturists? [*The four professors are in the doorway now, and still retreating. They back their way out, STODDARD following. They disappear, STODDARD with them*]. I tell you that when you submit to this thing that is being done to you, you commit a crime not only against yourselves but against the next generation of teachers and students. If teaching is the noblest profession in a civilized community, then show that community it must respect it.

[*The outer door bangs. STODDARD'S voice ceases. The stage is empty for a moment. Enter FRANCES from dining room. A moment later JEAN follows her.*]

FRANCES. But we must go. [*Looks about room.*] Father! Why—— [*STODDARD enters from outer hall.*] Where is father?

STODDARD. He's gone.

JEAN. Without Frances!

STODDARD. I think he forgot all about her.

FRANCES. Oh, dear. Sometimes I think father acts just like a stage professor. Good-bye, dear. [*Hurriedly to JEAN. FRANCES toward outer door, back.*]

JEAN. It's so good to know you're home. You'll come soon again.

FRANCES. Of course. [*They kiss.*] Good-bye.

[*FRANCES goes. STODDARD picks up newspaper from piano where he tossed it on entering. Reads, holding the paper up. JEAN turns from hall doorway as FRANCES goes. Her attitude and expression have been alive and energetic. Now, as she comes back into the room, she droops as though a temporary exhilaration had fled. There is a moment's silence. PAUL reads absorbedly. JEAN eyes him with the intent look a woman gives a man when she has*

something important to say and knows that he is blithely unconscious of it. She goes over to piano, fingers a sheet of music, still intent on her husband.]

JEAN. They came to ask you to give it up, didn't they?

STODDARD. Yes. [*Silence again. JEAN and STODDARD as before.*] Frances looks well, doesn't she? [JEAN makes no response.] Pretty girl. She ought to marry. [*He still holds newspaper before him and is reading and talking.*] I hope she won't turn out like your Aunt Abby. They're both an awful lot like the old Governor up there. [*A nod toward the ancestor on the wall.*] Frances never was meant to be an ancestor. [*Reads as before. Suddenly the silence seems to strike him. His paper comes down with a little crash.*] 'Smatter?

JEAN. Nothing.

STODDARD [*goes over to her*]. Is it as bad as that?

JEAN [*moves away from him*]. Am I to spend another evening here, alone, with Martha for company?

STODDARD. Come with me to the meeting to-night, Jean. I wish you would.

JEAN. Paul, nothing counts with you but your work. I haven't really talked with you in months. You care for nothing but those eternal lectures,

and the mills, and the mill hands. It's another world. And it's not my world.

STODDARD. I'm sorry, old girl. It does take everything that's in me—this job. But I've found myself in it.

JEAN. But I've lost you. And you're losing me. I thought life was hard on the Hill. But at least I had you. Your plans were my plans. I understood your difficulties there. I could help you fight them. If we had hardships we endured them together. But here——

STODDARD. I know. This living down here has its drawbacks. You feel them more than I. But [*indicating the room*] it has had its good side, too.

JEAN. It's pretty enough, but who sees it? Your mill friends in their great clumping boots! Half the fun of having pretty things is in knowing your women friends will envy you.

STODDARD. Haven't I tried to interest you in my work down here?

JEAN. Interested in what! In steel slabs, and time-and-half overtime, and bonuses per ton! I don't even know what it means.

STODDARD. It means more comfort for us than we've ever had since we were married.

JEAN. Paul, dear, let's get out of this. We don't belong here. We never did. Let's go back

to the work you really love. Let's go back to our own kind of people.

STODDARD. You know I can't do that—now.

JEAN. But you do want to, don't you? Be honest. You do.

STODDARD. I would like to go back—honestly.

JEAN. Then give up this Quixotic plan of yours. They came to ask you to give it up—Putnam and the rest. Why won't you listen?

STODDARD. I heard what they had to say.

JEAN. And they couldn't change you?

STODDARD. I think there was some change made. [JEAN *looks hopeful*.] But not in me.

JEAN. Paul, does it mean nothing to you that I am thoroughly miserable here?

STODDARD. You've got your music—books—all the things you wanted and couldn't afford.

JEAN. It's people I want. People!

STODDARD. You've been talking to Frances. She has put those ideas into your head. You were happy enough until now. She has come straight from Aunt Abby. I know what that means.

JEAN. Frances had nothing to do with it. I've wanted to tell you this for weeks. I thought I could stick it out. But I can't.

STODDARD. You don't want me to be a quitter.

JEAN. I want you to be the man I married.

STODDARD [*goes to her*]. Don't you know, dear,

that your happiness means more to me than anything in the world? But this thing is bigger than either of us. It's bigger than you are. It's bigger than I am. You've always stood by me and we've gone through a lot together. I need you now more than ever. I need my wife.

JEAN. Need me! I never see you.

STODDARD. Jean, you've been staying home, brooding. You don't get out enough.

JEAN. Out! Out where? Do you expect me to go calling on the mill hands' wives? My own friends are gone. You know what happened this afternoon. I couldn't stand that again. I'd rather stay home forever.

STODDARD. But you're unreasonable, dear. You don't seem to realize what this job of mine means.

JEAN. It means more to you than I do. I married a college professor, not a mill hand.

STODDARD [*grimly*]. You'll have to get used to it.

JEAN [*startled*]. For always!

STODDARD. Possibly.

JEAN. I can't do it! I'd rather be dead! It's too hideous. [*A little pause.*] Paul, give this up or I'll go away.

PAUL [*bewildered*]. What do you mean? Away! Where?

JEAN [*desperately*]. Anywhere. Aunt Abby might——

[MARTHA *appears at dining room door.*]

MARTHA. I rung the gong twicet but I guess you didn't notice.

STODDARD [*looks at watch*]. I ought to be starting. I didn't know it was so late.

MARTHA. Well, for the land's sakes! You can't go to no meetin' on an empty stomach.

STODDARD. I've just time for a bite. [*Goes toward dining room.*]

MARTHA. An' you the one that was starvin' when you come home.

JEAN. Just serve dinner, Martha. I'll be in immediately.

[STODDARD *exits dining room.*]

MARTHA [*grumbling*]. Everything'll be stone cold. [*Exits.*]

[JEAN *stands a moment to satisfy herself that PAUL and MARTHA are in dining room out of hearing. Goes to bedroom. The ting of the telephone is heard as she picks up receiver, out of sight. Her voice is heard, off.*]

JEAN. Lancaster eight-two-four. Yes. [*The telephone is apparently just inside the door between bedroom and living room, for JEAN'S arm can be seen as it reaches out and cautiously closes the door as her voice goes on.*] Is this Lancaster eight-two-

four? May I speak—— [*The door is closed. The doorbell rings, but before MARTHA can answer CHRIS ZSUPNIK, TONY ZSUPNIK, and STEVEN enter. MARTHA appears at dining room door. Encounters the three. TONY is gorgeous in high heels and plumed hat.*]

ZSUPNIK. Is Stoddard ready for meeting?

MARTHA. My land, we ain't et yet.

TONY. It's way after seven. We won't get no good seats if we're late.

[*STODDARD enters from dining room.*]

ZSUPNIK. I got the car outside. Drive you over. You ain't got much time, neither.

STODDARD. I'll be right with you.

[*JEAN opens bedroom door, enters living room as STODDARD goes toward bedroom.*]

MARTHA [*to STODDARD*]. You ain't hardly touched a bite.

STODDARD. Haven't time. [*STODDARD exits bedroom.*]

STEVEN. Aren't you coming to the meeting, Mrs. Stoddard?

JEAN. No.

STEVEN. Oh, come on. I know he'll be wonderful this evening. [*JEAN shakes her head. STODDARD enters from bedroom with soft hat in hand and a flat leather brief case.*]

TONY [*to JEAN*]. Ain't you comin'?

JEAN. No.

TONY. All right, then, let's go. [*They go noisily. The door slams. JEAN is left standing in the room alone. MARTHA enters from dining room.*]

MARTHA. If your vittles ain't fit to eat don't blame me.

JEAN. I don't want any dinner, Martha.

MARTHA. Don't want no dinner!

JEAN. I've—I've a headache. I can't eat anything.

MARTHA. An' me standing all day yuh might say gettin' a meal nobody touches. If I chopped that spinach a minute I chopped it half an hour.

JEAN. I'm sorry, Martha.

MARTHA. It's disheartin', that's what it is. Good food——

JEAN. Martha, if you'd like to go out for a while?

MARTHA [*softening*]. Well, if you don't mind bein' left alone I would like to visit my friend Mary that works up on the Hill.

JEAN. I don't mind being alone. I want to be.

MARTHA. It is best when you've got a headache to be quiet.

[*MARTHA exits dining room. The doorbell rings. JEAN, frowning a little, goes to answer door. MRS. ZSUPNIK enters. She*

is still in working clothes, though she has tidied her hair and has put on one of those aprons heavily bordered with thick hand-made crochet. It is the kind of apron that indicates a certain temporary release from the more menial tasks of housework. A great basket of unmended clothing is in one hand.]

MRS. ZSUPNIK. You ain't go by meeting?

JEAN. No.

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*comes down*]. I bring mend. I think I sit by Martha you all go to meeting.

JEAN. Martha's going to see a friend.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Oo. Well, I sit by you.

[Sinks into a deep chair, takes out needle, thread, thimble, and selects from the pile of freshly washed clothing a great pair of red woollen drawers—evidently one of her husband's garments. This she finds in need of repair and sets about the task.]

JEAN. I—I'm not feeling well, I have a headache.

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*comfortably*]. For headache you don't go meeting, huh?

JEAN. Yes. I wanted to be—alone.

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*mending skillfully*]. Me ain't go by meetings neither.

JEAN. So I see.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. My man he go too much meetings. You man he go too much meetings.

JEAN [*a little startled, and amused, too*]. What makes you think so?

MRS. ZSUPNIK. I know. I was. Meetings is always for hell wit' boss. [*Shakes her head vigorously.*]

JEAN. Certainly this one is.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Sure: All meetings is. My man he is crazy fool. I am mad on my man terrible!

JEAN [*interested in spite of herself*]. Why, Mrs. Zsupnik?

MRS. ZSUPNIK. We got good. We got swell. Swell dress, swell furnish', swell automobile, eat good. What he want that big crazy fool my man! Pretty soon by'm by ol' McClure he get mad. I betcha.

JEAN. That's a queer thing for you to say.

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*she folds the red under-drawers now and selects another garment*]. You know Krajiik?

JEAN. Who?

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Krajiik. Work in mill. Come from place in old kawn-tree w're I come, Chris my ol' man come. Krajiik he work in mill, old woman she work washing, kids they work run errands, beg wood for fire. They are stingy like anything—Krajiiks. Nine year ago. They get

wages. Put always away more money, more money. Krajiik he say he ain't like it in this kawn-tree. Mrs. Krajiik she say she don't like in this kawn-tree. [*She is growing excited now, and animated as she goes on with her story. Forgets to sew.*] They say they save much money go back Bohemia live fine; Mrs. Krajiik she say, always, "So much piece meat in ol' kawn-tree [*indicates an infinitesimal portion with her thumb and forefinger*] got better taste than all meat in America." Always they make like this [*smacks her lips*] say how good is meat in old kawn-tree. [*She laughs a fat, comfortable chuckle.*]

JEAN. And did they go?

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Sure go. They got t'ree, four t'ousan' dollar. They take on ship feather bed, music box, ice cream freezer, sew' machine, grape jell—all t'ings they take.

JEAN. To make their neighbours in the old country envious, of course. It must have been wonderful.

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*calmly*]. T'ree mont' Krajiik all come back.

JEAN. Really! Why?

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*sewing placidly*]. You know why meat taste sweeter in Bohemia as here?

JEAN. Why?

MRS. ZSUPNIK. In American poor man he eat

t'ree times a day I betcha. In ol' kawn-tree once a month, maybe. That is why.

JEAN. Paul would like that story.

MRS. ZSUPNIK. My old man he forgot. He got in head swell. I am talk mad on him to-night. He see. Me fix.

JEAN. You're a smart woman, Mrs. Zsupnik. Do you know, I think I'll do a little fixing myself. [*The telephone bell rings. JEAN goes to bedroom to answer it.*]

JEAN. Hello? [*The doorbell rings. MRS. ZSUPNIK glances toward bedroom.*] No, he's not at home. . . . Not until quite late, I think. . . . [*The doorbell rings again.*]

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*rises*]. I go. [*Goes to hall door.*]

JEAN [*at telephone*]. Yes, I have it. Penn nine-nine-seven-three. Yes, I'll tell him. . . . No, you can't possibly reach him now.

[*During the above telephone conversation MRS. ZSUPNIK has ushered in the caller, CYRUS McCLURE. McCLURE is a small, slightly built man, rather wistful and kindly in expression and manner. Not at all the high-handed, hard-fisted, ruthless millionaire mill owner depicted by the yellow journal cartoons. All his life he has felt handicapped by his lack of education and he now contributes large sums to various*

educational institutions. He has never got over a certain awkwardness and diffidence in the presence of those more cultured than himself. Before McCLURE'S entrance there have been sounds of a slight altercation in the hall. McCLURE is still protesting gently as he comes in, followed by the gesticulating Mrs. ZSUPNIK.]

McCLURE. But, my good woman, I tell you I am.

Mrs. ZSUPNIK [*regards him contemptuously*]. No! In newspaper all rich mens is got high hat, shiny.

McCLURE. But I don't even own a silk hat. I hate silk hats. [*JEAN enters from bedroom.*]

JEAN. Mr. McClure! This is generous of you.

McCLURE. Not at all, my dear lady. [*Mrs. ZSUPNIK shows her alarm and confusion.*] I've trudged miles across the moor when I was a lad to see a lassie not half so pretty as you.

JEAN. When I telephoned you it was to ask you to allow me to come to see you. I hardly hoped you'd see me. I never dreamed you'd offer to come here.

McCLURE. And why not, why not? You look to me like a woman who is accustomed to getting what she wants—and a little more. [*Turns to*

MRS. ZSUPNIK.] Your maid here almost refused to let me in, though I gave her my name. She thought I didn't look the part.

JEAN. But that is our upstairs neighbour, Mrs. Zsupnik. [MRS. ZSUPNIK, *her eyes starting from her head, drops a curtsey, one corner of her apron in her trembling fingers.*]

McCLURE. Zsupnik—Zsupnik? Have you a daughter, Madam?

MRS. ZSUPNIK. Tony. [*Drops another old-world curtsey.*]

McCLURE. [*His face hardens here and you see the power that has made him what he is*]. Tony. That's the girl. . . . So you're her mother? Friend of yours? [*To JEAN.*]

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*hurriedly*]. I go. [*Scuttles over to chair near which her pile of mending lies; gathers it up in her arms.*] I go. [*Toward door. As she passes McCLURE stops to drop another curtsey*]. I go. [*Goes.*]

McCLURE [*wonderingly*]. She seemed frightened.

JEAN. Won't you sit down? Here.

McCLURE. Thanks. [*Sits. He places his black fedora carefully on the floor by the side of his chair as a labouring man might.*]

JEAN. Oh, do let me take that!

McCLURE. No, no. It's all right. Don't

bother. [*Looks about the room. Sits back.*] Well, this is comfortable.

JEAN. Yes, but——

McCLURE. But you don't like it, h'm?

JEAN. Mr. McClure, I'm wretched here.

McCLURE. You don't belong here, ma'am. Any more than a college professor belongs in a mill.

JEAN. The dreadful part of it is he likes it. He's happy.

McCLURE. Happy! Of course he's happy. This very minute he's probably telling my men from the platform that I'm a tyrant and an octopus. [*Plaintively.*] Now, I'm not an octopus, Mrs. Stoddard.

JEAN. I'm sure you're not. But people seem to think——

McCLURE. That's just it. People seem to think, but they don't. They let someone do their thinking for them. And somebody has told them that a mill owner is a fat man in a Prince Albert and a diamond stud and ring and a silk hat slightly on one side. And a large, black cigar. Now I haven't one of those things, Mrs. Stoddard. Except the cigar. And I can't possibly smoke those black ones. They don't agree with me. I smoke the very mildest panatellas.

JEAN. Won't you smoke now?

McCLURE. Thanks. If you're sure you don't mind.

JEAN. Mind! My husband smokes a pipe.

McCLURE [*as he takes from his pocket a slim and very pale cigar. Lights it*]. As I was saying. [*Puffs.*] I'm really a peace-loving man with a knack at making money. I can't help it. I think of things, and try them, and they work. But I don't like to be dictated to.

JEAN. Neither does my husband. That's how the trouble started.

McCLURE. Perhaps that was a mistake. But we really must protect ourselves, Mrs. Stoddard, or where would we be! Millionaires nowadays are so downtrodden. I can't have them talking about unions and labour in the university, you know.

JEAN. But those were fifteenth-century unions.

McCLURE. H'm. I'll warrant in those days they never thought of a six-hour day with twelve-hour pay. Why, I can't call my mills my own, and I worked hard for every penny in 'em. I practically built this town. I built the university. I'm not a man of education myself, ma'am, but I made up my mind my son Steven should have the best. And what comes of it? He learns socialism and all kinds of devilment in the school, and is off with a little hussy who works in my mills. What

next, I say? What next? A man must protect himself.

JEAN. After all, the thing my husband is asking for is fair enough.

McCLURE. I won't be bullied.

JEAN. My husband is not a bully, Mr. McClure!

McCLURE. What do you call it then?

JEAN. He's determined to get what he wants.

McCLURE. And I'm bound to keep what I've got.

JEAN. You and I will never agree at this rate.

McCLURE. I hear you're a sensible little woman, with no nonsense about you. Oh, I find out these things. I know very well you're unhappy down here. That's why I wanted to talk to you. You and I together may set this thing right.

JEAN. How?

McCLURE. Now I think you know, Mrs. Stoddard, that I've always taken the greatest pride in the university. I don't say I'm a philanthropist, or an educator, but I have my little weaknesses, and the university is one of them. There isn't a finer set of buildings in the country. Pure Gothic, the architect assured me. And the plumbing alone—you wouldn't believe. Well, after that it's pretty hard to have a young whipper-snapper going up and down the land referring to me as a

foe of education, ma'am. And a blight—I believe he called it a blight—on the youth of the country. I don't mind being called a Moloch. I'm used to it. But a blight! Well!

JEAN. But you don't understand.

McCLURE. I do understand. If you'll excuse me. I'm being hounded into doing something. Hounded and bullied. And I won't be bullied, I'm too—too——

JEAN [*thoughtlessly*]. Scotch? [*And wishes she hadn't.*]

McCLURE. Firm. I've thought of a plan. Every educator, every newspaper, every periodical in the country has come out with a speech or an article that I pay my mill men ten times the salary of the professors on the Hill. Of course, it's as plain as the law of supply and demand. Six months of this, and what happens? Men from all over the country are swarming here into Wickley, asking for jobs in my mill. Yesterday there was such a crowd of well-dressed applicants clamouring at the superintendent's office that he had to call the police. The town is full of them. The hotels can't accommodate them. The boarding-houses are turning them away. Clerks, teachers, book-keepers, accountants, they're all asking for overalls and thirty a day, to start with. The curious part of it is they make good workers—

especially the professors. They think at their job, and do it in half the time. Well, what's the result?

JEAN [*breathlessly*]. I don't know. I hope it isn't something unpleasant.

McCLURE. Wages come down.

JEAN [*starts to her feet in alarm*]. Oh, but they can't. They mustn't.

McCLURE. But they can. They do. And who's to blame? Your husband, ma'am. They're meeting to-night, to protest. And who's leading the meeting? The very man who's responsible for the condition of things. I may be Scotch, but I can see the humour of that.

JEAN. You can't blame Paul for conditions in your mills. They're your fault.

McCLURE. I do blame him. And while we're about it I blame him for my son Steve's infatuation for that little mill girl. He sees her here. Do you think I've worked and planned and saved all these years, and built the big house up on the Hill for a little ignorant Polack in white shoes and a feather in her hat?

JEAN. Bohemian.

McCLURE. Same thing. My son's a fool!

JEAN. He's a dear!

McCLURE. Same thing. I won't have it. I won't have him throwing himself away. I'll turn him out first. I'll disinherit him.

JEAN. We're not coming to an understanding, are we?

McCLURE. At least we understand each other.

JEAN. And you'll admit, won't you, that my husband is more—well, more active in the mills than he was at the university.

McCLURE. Yes, yes.

JEAN. It might even be better to have him back there. [*As McCLURE does not answer.*] Mightn't it?

McCLURE. I won't be bullied into it.

JEAN. You could do all the bullying—really. You know how popular my husband is with the men in the mills. They've made him a member of the shop committee, They ask his advice about every move they make. He has a—a way with him, you know. And they like it. Chris Zsupnik, who is pretty much of a power himself among the men, just follows him around like a slave.

McCLURE. I know, I know. I can't call my mills my own.

JEAN. But if the men are told that wages must come down, and that Paul is responsible for their coming down, why then——

McCLURE. That's just my idea. But I hardly thought you'd see the force of it, much less suggest it.

JEAN. But it's so simple.

McCLURE. Any plan that will stop him talking. I don't believe I could stand another month of this. I'm a plain man, Mrs. Stoddard, but I have my pride. And to find the press and pulpit of a whole country against you, ma'am, is—well, it's too much. There are some things that even a millionaire won't submit to.

JEAN [*eagerly*]. Will you see them to-night? Before he talks in Pittsburgh to-morrow night? He has a new speech. Much stronger than any of the others.

McCLURE. See who?

JEAN. The committee. Paul was to see a committee here before speaking to-night. The meeting will be over at ten. Send them word you'll see them. At once.

McCLURE. Oh, dear! I always go to bed at ten.

JEAN. It means so much. You know what Sunday is down here. They talk and talk, and smoke their pipes, and talk and talk. Give them this to talk about. Don't you see. If you tell them you won't listen to them so long as my husband is active among them. If they know that he is really responsible for the lowering of wages—don't you see?

McCLURE. H'm.

JEAN. I don't want to be rude. But it's after nine.

McCLURE. I'll be going. [*Picks up his hat. Pauses.*] If nothing comes of this—or too much. [*Doubtfully.*] But after all, why not? Wages must come down some time. Why not now? Myself, I think it's a good move.

JEAN. People misjudge you, Mr. McClure.

McCLURE. Well, it's my own doings, largely. I have to talk loud, and bluster, to keep my courage up. Like the boy whistling past the graveyard. I'll be going.

JEAN. You'll see them to-night—the shop committee?

McCLURE. I'll send word now.

JEAN. Oh, thank you. [*They shake hands.*] Good-bye.

McCLURE. Good-night to you, ma'am. [*McCLURE goes.*]

[*JEAN stands a moment. She smiles to herself. Laughs a delighted little laugh. Glances at her own reflection in the mirror, gives her hair an approving little pat. Goes to piano, begins to play a gay little bar or two. MARTHA, in street clothes, her hat awry, rushes in from dining room. It is evident that she has just come from her visit and that she bears exciting news. She is breathless, red-faced.*]

MARTHA. Oh, Mis' Stoddard, ma'am!

JEAN. What is it, Martha?

MARTHA. I was visitin' Mary, my friend on the Hill, and oh, Mis' Stoddard, ma'am! The college perfessers—the college perfessers—oh, ma'am!

JEAN. Yes! What——

MARTHA. Gone, ma'am. Out! Quit! Every last one of 'em. The college is closed.

JEAN. Oh, what have I done! What have I done! [*Stands, horrified, wide-eyed, as curtain descends.*]



ACT III



ACT III

SCENE: *Library in CYRUS McCLURE'S house on the Hill. Ten o'clock the same evening. There are bookshelves with conventional sets of books in expensive leather and gold bindings. They have an unread look. The furniture is of the massive type. Great chairs, a long table-desk with broad, heavy top almost big enough for a directors' meeting. The table is at the right, one end toward the audience. A chair, huge and deep-seated, is placed at the table. The effect of the room is sombre, rich, and rather lonely. When CYRUS McCLURE is in it he looks very small and insignificant and uncomfortable. There is a door centre, back. A very bad portrait of MRS. McCLURE (deceased) hangs on the wall, left, back. A plain lady who should not have worn that dress.*

When the curtain rises the stage is empty, and rather dim. After a brief wait the door, back, is opened and CYRUS McCLURE comes in. He is wearing the shabby fedora and the unprepossessing clothes of the previous act. As he sidles in

and peers about the big room he looks less than ever the powerful millionaire steel magnate.

He takes off his hat as he comes down and tosses it on a chair. He turns up a lamp and looks about the big room, and shivers just a little, not with cold, and rubs his hands together. He looks at his watch. Goes to telephone at end of table, picks it up.

McCLURE. Millville seven double one. [A brief wait.] . . . Burke? . . . Well? . . . You say you did. . . . When'll they be up? . . . [Sighs.] It's almost that now. . . . 'Bye. . . . [He hangs up the receiver and stands a moment]. Oh, dear, dear! [Glances around the big room again. A pile of unopened newspapers is neatly stacked at one corner of the great table. He selects one from the top of the pile, opens it to an inside page, reads, brings it suddenly together with a crash, rolls it into a ball, and drops it on the floor. Then sweeps the whole pile into the waste basket. Evidently he is not pleased at what he has read. Stands a moment, as before. Looks at watch again. Goes slowly over to portrait of MRS. McCLURE and stands looking up at it, his back to the audience, his attitude one of depression. Turns slowly and comes back to desk. He lights one of his pale, thin cigars and takes up his position behind the table, standing just in front of the chair as though facing an imaginary committee. Strikes an attitude sup-

posed to convey impression of powerful and relentless mill owner. He sinks into chair behind him and is almost completely engulfed in its capacious depths. His head peers wistfully out from its wing sides. He realizes that this will never do. Rises, and with great deal of tugging and pushing manages to move the great chair to one side. In its place he puts a small, straight-backed, armless chair, rather high-seated. He sits in this, removes his old-fashioned spectacles and takes from a case a pair of tortoise-rimmed, large-lensed eye-glasses with a heavy black cord. These he places on his nose, leans back, extends his chest, and brings one fist down on the table, hard. He is ready for them. The door opens and STEVEN enters. He is plainly excited.]

STEVEN. Is it true you've sent for the men to come here?

McCLURE. I'm expecting 'em now.

STEVEN. But what's the matter with Burke? What's the matter with Callahan? They've always run off this kind of thing for you. You've never dealt directly with the men before.

McCLURE. Then it's high time. You're a slow young fella. Don't you know this Brotherhood of Man is all the go? It's what they call the personal touch that's all the rage now. That's how it's done. I'll show the newspapers I'm a humane man.

STEVEN [*comes down to other side of table*]. But, father, you can't lower wages. Why, you—you can't.

McCLURE. Raised 'em, didn't I?

STEVEN. That's different.

McCLURE. Who's saying I can't?

STEVEN. Why, any beginner in political economy—any freshman in economics knows that.

McCLURE. In my mill I run my own politics and do my own economizing.

STEVEN. You know the men won't stand for it. You can't force that kind of thing. It just happens.

McCLURE. If I'd sat around all my life waiting for things to happen I'd be night watchman in the mills by now. It's making things happen when I wanted 'em to that's put me where I am. They're yelling that labour is getting the money that brains ought to have. Raising the one won't help the other. They've got to come down some time. I'm the man to start it. I'll show them they can't bully me. The whole world's upside down. It needs a man of common sense to right it.

STEVEN. They'll never stand for it, I tell you. You'll have a wholesale strike on your hands.

McCLURE. There'll be plenty of professors to break it.

STEVEN. Father, you've gone mad with power.

A modern Moloch riding ruthlessly over the prostrate forms of his helpless victims!

McCLURE. There he goes! Moloch! Is it any wonder the world's against me and the newspapers a mass of lies when my own son—— Now, look here, young man. It's time you were learning. You'll stay here while the men are with me. And before I forget it understand this: I'll have no more running around with a little Polack from the Flats. A fine state of affairs for a son of Cyrus McClure. It's a wonder your poor mother doesn't come back to haunt you.

STEVEN. She was an immigrant Scotch girl herself when you married her, with a shawl over her head. You've often said so.

McCLURE. Yes, and I'm proud of it. If there were more shawls to-day on those that should be wearing 'em instead of feathers and silks there'd be less screeching about strikes and wages.

STEVEN. Tony earns her feathers and silks, poor child, in the stifling clamour of factory wheels.

McCLURE. Stifling fiddlesticks. There's more windows in the factory than bricks, and as for clamour you could hear a pin drop with the new machinery. The trouble with you is you're years behind the times, with your ranting ideas. But make no mistake about this: any more of that girl

and out you go. I won't have it. Not a penny of mine do you get.

STEVEN [*grandly*]. I am beyond the reach of mere money's power.

McCLURE. Maybe so. [*Takes paper from drawer in table-desk.*] Here's your last month's bill for gas and repairs. It'd have kept your mother and me for a year when I was your age. Being beyond the reach of mere money's power you'll no mind paying it yourself.

STEVEN [*turns away, running a frenzied hand through his hair*]. Oh!

McCLURE. Myself, if there's anything I hate it's meeting a committee. And when I might be upstairs in my bed reading that new detective story "The Crimson Emerald." Maybe I've time for a peek at it. [*Listens.*] There they are now. Open the door, Steve.

STEVEN [*to door, opens it*]. Come in, please.

[McCLURE resumes his tortoise-rimmed glasses and his most imposing manner. Enter CHRIS ZSUPNIK, OTTO KRAJIK, and LOUIS POLINSKI. They are all wearing their store clothes. CHRIS ZSUPNIK is good-natured and clumsy as usual, and his grin is as cheerfully friendly as it was in the STODDARD'S flat. Perhaps he is more at ease than the other two, the STODDARD'S

living room having accustomed him to fine surroundings. KRAJIIK is a young fellow, enormously tall and broad-shouldered, with huge, awkward hands and feet and a thick neck. He is of the slow-witted, stubborn type. His clothes are more dashing than those of the other two men. He has a fondness for those bull-dog toe yellow shoes and striped shirts and nobby suits. POLINSKI is the firebrand, small, dark, voluble—a trouble maker.]

McCLURE. Good evening, men.

ZSUPNIK [*genially*]. How-do! [*Looks about the room.*]

KRAJIIK. Good evening! [*POLINSKI merely gives a surly nod.*]

McCLURE. Now let's see. You're——? [*Points to KRAJIIK.*]

KRAJIIK. Krajiik.

McCLURE. You're——?[*Points to POLINSKI.*]

POLINSKI. Polinski.

McCLURE. And you? [*To ZSUPNIK.*]

ZSUPNIK. Me Chris Zsupnik. How-do! [*Clumps forward and grasps McCLURE's hand, shaking it heartily.*]

McCLURE. Zsupnik! Zsupnik! [*Glares at STEVEN who is standing back.*] You've got a daughter?

ZSUPNIK. Sure. Tony. Steve, he know my Tony. [*To STEVEN.*] Ain't you? Sure. [*At this OTTO KRAJIIK steps forward, his big hands doubled into fists.*]

KRAJIIK [*threateningly*]. Yeh, he know Tony. [*STEVEN retreats a little.*]

ZSUPNIK [*grins*]. Krajiik, he know my Tony, too.

McCLURE. I'm meeting the family this evening. [*To STEVEN.*] I suppose the young lady herself's in the hall, as a surprise.

STEVEN. Now, father! [*He places chairs for the three men, in a semicircle, facing McCLURE at the desk. They fumble awkwardly with their hats. KRAJIIK drops his, starts as though he had dropped a bomb, stoops, recovers it.*]

McCLURE. Good meeting?

ZSUPNIK. I betcha!

McCLURE. Usual testimonial to me, I suppose? [*ZSUPNIK and KRAJIIK look at each other, sheepishly. ZSUPNIK grins.*]

POLINSKI. No for cut wages.

McCLURE. What are you making a day, Polinski?

POLINSKI. Twenty-five. Boss heater.

McCLURE. Zsupnik?

ZSUPNIK. Twenty-two fifty steady. Overtime thirty maybe more. Puddler.

McCLURE. Krajiik?

KRAJIK. Thirty. Roller.

McCLURE. A poor downtrodden lot you are! When I worked in the mills as a boy I was glad to get my four a day on a twelve-hour day and we worked two shifts.

POLINSKI [*very surly*]. Now is different.

McCLURE. You're right. I own the mills now. The men in it are kicking at an eight-hour day and I'm working eighteen.

ZSUPNIK. By golly I was glad I am puddler!

McCLURE. You can well be. Look at the three of ye! Dressed to the gills in the latest fashion! I haven't had a new suit of clothes in three years. Can't afford it. Corporation taxes—income taxes—excess profit taxes—luxury taxes—war taxes—surtaxes. It's all I can do to keep body and soul together.

POLINSKI [*stubbornly*]. No stand for cut wages.

McCLURE. I passed Krieger's Hall to-night, where you were holding your meeting. You couldn't get within a block of the place for the automobiles lined up—and I didn't notice any flivvers among 'em, either.

KRAJIK [*slowly and dully, but in a good-natured, chatty way*]. You see my car red—green wheel—yellow top? Snappy six.

McCLURE. When I was your age I was glad to have sole leather to walk in.

POLINSKI [*with dogged repetition*]. Now is different.

KRAJIIK. Sure. Working man he is whole thing now.

McCLURE. What do you do with your money, Krajiik, besides buying automobiles and swell clothes with it?

KRAJIIK. Send money Bohemia.

McCLURE. What foreign nation are you supporting with American money, Polinski?

POLINSKI. Huh?

ZSUPNIK [*to POLINSKI*]. Boss say where you send the postal money order every month.

POLINSKI. Poland. [*Then, suspiciously.*] What is your business where is send money order?

McCLURE. Zsupnik, you've got your family here, haven't you?

ZSUPNIK. I got three sister in Bohemia all got plenty kids and poor like hell.

McCLURE. Far as I can make it out I'm the chief support of Czecho-Slovakia and all points west.

POLINSKI [*suspiciously.*] What he say? [ZSUPNIK *shrugs uncomprehending shoulders.*]

McCLURE. Bacon for breakfast every morning, I'll be bound.

ZSUPNIK. Sure, bacon.

McCLURE. And eggs?

ZSUPNIK. Well, sure, eggs.

McCLURE. Cream in your coffee?

ZSUPNIK. Sure t'ing!

KRAJIIK [*falling into the spirit of the thing*].

Sunday eat roast pig, ice cream, stand on corner smoke fine cigar.

POLINSKI [*fiercely, and speaking in Polish*]. Shut up your mouth, fool! Don't you see the boss is making you ridiculous? He finds out everything and then he will show you what he will do.

KRAJIIK [*replies in Polish*]. He is the fool, not I. What do I care about him! I do as I please.

POLINSKI [*in Polish*]. Wait. You will see.

McCLURE [*to STEVEN*]. You're a college man, Steve. What's that jabber mean?

STEVEN. They're talking hunky, you know. I don't understand it.

McCLURE [*to ZSUPNIK*]. What are they saying, Zsupnik?

ZSUPNIK [*he is very uncomfortable*]. Not'ing, not'ing. They make fight between each other.

McCLURE. Yes, but what do they say? [ZSUPNIK shrugs his shoulders. POLINSKI laughs. KRAJIIK keeps sullen silence.]

McCLURE [*quietly*]. Maybe it was something like this: Polinski says to Krajiik: "Shut up, you fool! The boss will find out everything and then he will fix you!" [*The three stare at McClure in*

open-mouthed consternation as he goes on]. And Krajiik says to Polinski, "The boss is the fool, not me. What do I care for him! I do as I like."

ZSUPNIK. By golly! He know evert'ing!

STEVEN. How did you know that, Dad!

POLINSKI [*under his breath*]. Damn!

McCLURE. Didn't I work long enough in the mills myself? Those days it was mostly Scotch and Irish, but there was a sprinkling of Hunkies, too, and I picked up a bit of their jabber. Oh, the old man ain't such a fool. [*His manner suddenly takes on a new and grim determination.*] Now, then, we understand each other. Let's quit the comedy and get down to business. Steve, you're excused.

STEVEN. But I want to stay.

McCLURE. From now on this room is no place for a friend of the toiler.

STEVEN. But, father!

McCLURE. Out you go! [*STEVEN goes, unwillingly. He does not completely close the door behind him.*]

McCLURE. And close that door. [*The door is closed with a slam.*] If anybody'd told you boys twenty years ago that you'd be earning what you are to-day you'd have put him down as the village idiot, wouldn't you? Crazy?

ZSUPNIK. I betcha.

McCLURE. When I was a hand it was few eggs I got to eat and they were three dozen for a quarter.

POLINSKI. Eggs is dollar a dozen.

McCLURE. I know it. But twenty-five cents looked a dollar to me those days. My wife had one dress outside the ones she wore to do the house-work and she made it herself. My pay slip for the week's work wasn't as much as yours is for the day, but we saved money. Automobiles were never thought of then, or if they were they were called horseless carriages and thought a joke, like a trip to Mars. The wife made my shirts herself, and cut my pants down to fit little Stevie, and I knew a trick or two about cobbling shoes myself. Now I see shoes in the store windows in the Flats marked twenty dollars a pair and not an inch of honest leather in them.

KRAJIK. Earn big money spend how much I feel like. Is my business.

McCLURE. I'm not begrudging you your automobiles, and your pork roasts, and your silk shirts, and your good cigars. You won't have them much longer.

POLINSKI [*on his feet at once*]. Who say we don't!

McCLURE. Stoddard.

ZSUPNIK. What's matter Stoddard? He my friend.

McCLURE [*laughs*]. Yes, he is! Don't you know it's Stoddard who's bringing wages down?

POLINSKI. Stoddard talk in Krieger's Hall to-night say wages got stay up. What you think we crazy?

McCLURE. He's fooling you. You know the town's full of men, don't you?

POLINSKI. Yes.

McCLURE. What brought them here? [*The three shrug their shoulders.*] Stoddard! He's been talking all over the country, and writing for all the papers telling that I pay big wages in the mills. What brought up wages? Scarcity of hands. What's going to bring 'em down? Plenty of workers. Go round to the superintendent's office to-morrow. You'll find a hundred men asking for a job that went begging six months ago. And who's to blame? Stoddard!

ZSUPNIK [*starts forward*]. That's big lie! Stoddard he fine fella. He my friend!

POLINSKI [*reaches forward and yanks ZSUPNIK's coat tail, bringing him abruptly back into his chair*]. Shod op your mout', fool!

ZSUPNIK [*angrily*]. Who is fool?

McCLURE. Now wait a minute. Quarrelling won't get you anywhere. You've been in this country too long. Don't act like a lot of Hunkies. If we don't settle this thing you'll all be back in

the old country, working in the fields for a handful of corn at night.

ZSUPNIK [*startled*]. Why?

KRAJIK. What you mean?

POLINSKI. Why?

McCLURE. Because Stoddard's bringing his crowd down here to get you out. They're coming from all over the country. They're leaving the schools and the offices. In another six months where'll you be? Digging ditches at three dollars a day. No, worse than that. You'll be going back to Bohemia in the steerage. And who'll be to blame? Stoddard.

ZSUPNIK [*protests again, but rather feebly this time*]. Stoddard he workman's friend.

POLINSKI [*on one side*]. Shut up, Zsupnik.

KRAJIK [*on other side*]. Crazy fool. [ZSUPNIK *subsides.*]

McCLURE. I've been a mill hand myself, haven't I?

ZSUPNIK. Stoddard he mill hand, too.

McCLURE. He's no puddler. He's play-acting. He'll write you all up in a book when he gets through. I tell you if wages go down—and they will go down—it isn't the boss you'll have to blame for it, but Stoddard. Let him go on talking for another three months and you'll be selling your automobiles and victrolas, yes, and your fine clothes,

too. You'll be glad of a pipeful of tobacco and a meal. If you don't believe what I'm telling you wait and see for yourselves. But don't come to me for help when it's too late.

POLINSKI. Wage come down we strike.

McCLURE. A lot of good that'll do you. By that time there'll be plenty of new men able to handle the mill jobs and glad of the chance. The town's running over with them. [*There is a moment's silence on the part of the stunned three.*] Well, what are you going to do about it?

KRAJIK [*doubles his great hand into a fist*]. We fix him he don't speaking so easy.

POLINSKI. We fix.

ZSUPNIK [*in a last surge of loyalty toward STODDARD*]. I'm saying Stoddard he fine fella. He live downstairs by me. All time make, "Zsupnik, hello, old scout!" He got brains in head. He know what is good for mens. Stoddard smart like anyt'ing. You beating up my friend I make holler I betcha.

POLINSKI. Scab! [KRAJIK comes over to ZSUPNIK and doubles a huge and threatening fist under his nose.]

McCLURE. That's all right, Zsupnik. He's fooled you. I'm not blaming you. He's fooled smarter men than you. And now listen, boys. I'm not a man for violence. I'm all for peace.

But I haven't worked all these years to have a young whipper-snapper professor come along and tell me how to run my mills and the university I built. He's got a fine college to teach in. I'm going to give him one more chance, mind, to go back to it peacefully. After that don't blame me for what happens. I've done my best to warn you. And now good-night. [KRAJIK and POLINSKI to door, spiritlessly, their manner having lost all the jauntiness and assurance of their entrance. They reach the door. ZSUPNIK seems to hesitate, as though he would like a chance to talk with McCLURE in silence.]

POLINSKI [to ZSUPNIK]. Come on. What the matter with you? [ZSUPNIK still stands, fumbling with his hat, his good-natured face showing his distress. STEVEN enters suddenly. In his hand is a newspaper with a scare head.]

STEVEN. Father, there's an extra. The university's closed, finished, shut. The entire faculty is out.

McCLURE [to the workmen]. There. You see! Look out for your jobs now.

POLINSKI. We fix. [POLINSKI and KRAJIK go. ZSUPNIK, crestfallen and troubled, follows slowly.]

STEVEN [with an effort]. Good-night, father. [Goes.]

McCLURE [absent-mindedly]. Good-night,

good-night. [*Yawns; rummages in table drawer; takes out his bed-time detective story. Starts to turn out lamp on table. STEVEN reënters.*]

STEVEN. Father, I want you to know that I listened at the door. I heard every word you said.

McCLURE. You don't tell me now! H'm. That's what a fella did in this detective story I'm reading. And he came to a bad end, Steve. He came to a very bad end. [*Turns out the light.*]

SCENE CURTAIN

SCENE II

SCENE: *Same as Act II. The time is Sunday morning following the preceding night. About ten o'clock.*

When the curtain rises MRS. STODDARD is seated in a deep chair and is almost completely engulfed in the billows of the Sunday morning papers. They are piled all about her, the pages in wild confusion. She is reading one sheet, absorbedly. Throws it down, with a little exclamation of distress, picks up another, reads that.

The doorbell rings. MARTHA enters from dining room, goes to door, and admits STEVEN. As she goes she casts a meaning glance at MRS. STODDARD in her sea of papers.

STEVEN McCLURE enters with a rush, his air one of excitement. MARTHA is directly behind him.

STEVEN. Are they up?

MARTHA. This long time. Will yuh be havin' a cup of coffee wit' the Perfesser?

STEVEN [*emphatically*]. Coffee! No! [MARTHA *exits left.*]

JEAN. Steve! Up so early on Sunday!

STEVEN. Up! I've scarcely been to bed. I came here as early as I could.

JEAN. Why not? What has happened?

STEVEN. Everything. There's the devil to pay at our house.

JEAN. Why? You mean because the university's closed? Your father's furious, of course.

STEVEN. Oh, no, it isn't that. It's—Mrs. Stoddard, I think you ought to know that Professor Stoddard's in danger down here.

JEAN. Danger?

STEVEN. You see, after that meeting last night— Oh, why didn't you go, Mrs. Stoddard? It was a whirlwind! He swept that crowd—

JEAN. Yes, I know. But the danger. Why is he in danger?

STEVEN. As soon as the meeting was over the committee came up to see father.

JEAN. And of course they said they wouldn't stand for a wage decrease.

STEVEN. Of course. But the worse of it is that father—I don't know how to tell you this, Mrs. Stoddard—but father convinced them that it was Paul who's to blame for it all.

JEAN [*placidly*]. Oh, did he!

STEVEN. But you don't understand! You don't know what it means!

JEAN [*remembers*]. Oh, yes. Now that the university's closed I don't know what——

STEVEN. It isn't that. The men are going to make him get out. Old Zsupnik took his part, but they talked him down. They think Paul's to blame for all this wage trouble. They think their job's gone because of him. And if he doesn't quit—well, I don't want to frighten you, but I'm afraid of what they'll do to him.

JEAN. You mean they'd—but they wouldn't dare! The law——

STEVEN. There are laws down here on the Flats that the Hill doesn't know about. Things just happen down here, and nobody can prove how they happened. They think their job's in danger, and that Paul has tricked them. Almost anything might happen to him.

JEAN [*terrified*]. But that wasn't—your father said he would only——

STEVEN. When did he say—what?

JEAN. Nothing.

STEVEN. There's nothing he didn't say last night. He disposed of me before the men came.

JEAN. Tony?

STEVEN. Yes.

JEAN. Oh, but Steven, you mustn't quarrel with your father because of her.

STEVEN. I have already. I'm going to be

disinherited like the hero in a melodrama. He was at it again early this morning. The more he talked the angrier he got. And the angrier he got the Scotcher he got. He does, you know. At breakfast his R's sounded like the snare drum in a fit. I left.

JEAN. Paul's just at breakfast. After he came home last night he went straight to his study. I think it was morning before he stopped work.

STEVEN. I want to talk to him. [ZSUPNIK enters from outer hall. He is in Sunday slippers, very flappy; a stubby pipe in his mouth, his hat on the back of his head. STEVEN sees him, comes back.]

ZSUPNIK. Perfesser, he's up, no?

JEAN. Good morning. Yes, he's up. He's at breakfast.

STEVEN. How do you do, Mr. Zsupnik.

ZSUPNIK. You tell Perfesser already about meeting, huh?

STEVEN. I haven't seen him yet.

ZSUPNIK [toward dining room]. I tell him how boss say.

[Enter STODDARD from dining room, Sunday paper in hand, pipe in his mouth.]

STODDARD. Thought I heard your growl, Zsupnik. Hello, Steve! You are a pair of early birds. Well, here's the worm. Which one first? [ZSUPNIK and STEVEN both start to say something,

think better of it, are silent again.] H'm. Was it as bad as that?

ZSUPNIK: Better I tell you somewhere else. [*Looks significantly at STEVEN.*]

STEVEN. Oh, if you mean me! Don't mind me.

ZSUPNIK. Old McClure he sure some tough baby!

STODDARD [*a little impatiently*]. But what did he say?

ZSUPNIK. We talk. And McClure he—talk. [*Stops.*]

STODDARD. Yes, but what about? What—

ZSUPNIK. He say you got get out from mill pretty quick.

STODDARD. Not likely.

ZSUPNIK. He say you make big trouble. He say you make wage coming down. He say how you giving mill hand two times cross.

STODDARD. What?

ZSUPNIK. Two times cross. You know. Is slang.

STEVEN. Maybe he means the double cross.

ZSUPNIK. Sure, sure!

STODDARD. We know better than that, though, don't we, Zsupnik?

ZSUPNIK [*somewhat doubtfully*]. M-m-m is maybe.

STODDARD. What do you mean—maybe? Why,

you know where I stand, Zsupnik! Nobody knows better than you. Haven't I always been there when they needed me?

ZSUPNIK. Sure, you damn fine feller, Stoddard. Me, I like you good, only——

STODDARD. Only what?

ZSUPNIK. Last night I say "Stoddard my friend. Stoddard good feller." And Krajiik and Polinski they say "Zsupnik, shut up your mouth! What you talk! Fool!"

STODDARD. You took my part, h'm? And the others didn't like it? And McClure? [To STEVE.] I've got to get this straight, Steve. I'm sorry. Perhaps you won't like it.

STEVEN. Like it! You won't like it either, when you know.

JEAN. Oh, Paul, they're against you, all of them, I'm afraid.

STODDARD. Wait. Let's hear what Zsupnik has to say. You stood by me—good old Chris! And McClure?

ZSUPNIK. Old McClure he smart like anything. He say you got too much fine brains for mill hand. Old McClure he know. He is work by mill many year back.

STODDARD. But so do I.

ZSUPNIK [*slyly*]. Perfessers is different. Pretty quick you put in book how is work in mill, huh?

STODDARD. I tell you, Zsupnik, I work in the mill to earn a living.

ZSUPNIK. Perfesser from colleges earn plenty money, live in big house on Hill, wear all time fine black pants like Sunday.

JEAN. You see, dear?

STODDARD [*as though dazed*]. Good God!

STEVEN [*to ZSUPNIK*]. Can't you understand that Professor Stoddard left the college for a principle?

ZSUPNIK. I don't know nothing only how my old woman she is mad something terrible when I come home this morning. She jaw fierce. [*With a gesture toward ceiling.*] She jaw till I come down-stairs. "What you want?" she yell. "What the matter you all time holler more money, no work, more money, no work."

STODDARD. Why didn't you explain to her?

ZSUPNIK. Explain ain't nothing by my woman. She say: "You got it good. When you get five-hour day you ain't sit around my kitchen in stocking feet you betcha. Me t'row you out."

STODDARD. And that's why you and the others have turned against me? Because McClure says I'm a trouble-maker. Who got you your eight-hour day? Who got you your time-and-a-half overtime? Who——

ZSUPNIK. Sure, sure. I say all this. Make no difference. Boss is mad. Terrible.

STEVEN. You see, he didn't have a chance with father from the first, because of Tony.

STODDARD. Tony? What's Tony got to do with me?

STEVEN. He blames you for bringing Tony and me together.

STODDARD. But I never saw the girl until I came down here to live.

STEVEN [*interrupting*]. Yes. Tony and I——

ZSUPNIK [*who is not at all certain of the conversation but doesn't like the sound of things. Interrupts in turn*]. Tony! Tony! Well, what the matter my Tony, huh? She fine girl.

STODDARD. Of course she is, Zsupnik.

STEVEN. Tony's an exquisite orchid—a white orchid springing from the miasmatic jungle of the Flats.

ZSUPNIK [*complacently*]. Sure.

STODDARD [*amused*]. Well, of course, Steve, if that's the sort of thing you've been saying to your father.

JEAN [*nervously*]. Steven, you dear foolish boy. We know you don't mean it, but your father can't be expected to understand about white orchids, and—ah—what kind of jungle was that?

STEVEN [*stares at her a moment, his face very*

serious. Then he turns to ZSUPNIK with a long breath of resolve. Mr. Zsupnik, there is something I've wanted to say to you. Something I've wanted to say for a long time.

JEAN [*now really alarmed*]. Steven! Don't! Paul!

STEVEN [*rather nervous, but takes a fresh start*]. For a long time——

STODDARD [*sensing from JEAN'S face that the situation is really serious*]. Some other time, Steve, if you don't mind. I've an appointment at twelve and I want to talk to Zsupnik.

STEVEN. No! Mr. Zsupnik, for a long time there is something I've wanted to say to you. I want to say—I—well—I—Tony——

ZSUPNIK. All right. Tony—Tony? What about my Tony?

STEVEN [*blurted it*]. I—I love your daughter and I want to marry her. [JEAN *turns away with a little hopeless gesture*.]

STODDARD. He's done it now! The young idiot!

ZSUPNIK [*somewhat bewildered*]. For why you tell me?

STEVEN. You're Tony's father. I want your consent.

ZSUPNIK. Sure. Tony's pa, me. But my Tony she boss, by damn, just like American girl.

STEVEN. Tony's wonderful! I want to give her all that's beautiful, and rare, and exquisite. When I think of her in the squalor of that noisy flat! The coarseness of it! The cheapness of it!

ZSUPNIK. Cheap! What you mean, cheap! We got victrola cost one hundred and twenty-five my good money. We got automobile, wash machine, piano.

STEVEN [*shudders slightly*]. I want to take her away from just those sordid surroundings. She shall have the beauty, the refinement that her exquisite nature craves.

JEAN [*significantly*]. You forget that that sort of craving costs money, Steven.

STEVEN. Money! What is money!

STODDARD. It's what you buy things with. Don't forget that.

STEVEN. It can't satisfy the hunger of the spirit. What can money have to do with this wild flower—this pale, tender blossom whose beautiful soul is starving. [*TONY enters from hall. She is eating a banana with much relish. Very magnificent in Sunday clothes and none too pleased to see STEVEN.*]

TONY [*to STEVEN*]. For God's sake, don't you *never* stay home!

STEVEN [*goes to her*]. Tony! How glad I am to see you!

TONY. It's gettin' so a girl can't even have her Sundays to herself.

STODDARD [*relieved at Tony's manner*]. We'll leave you with your tender blossom, Steve. Zsupnik, we'll talk in here. [*Goes toward dining room followed by ZSUPNIK.*] Now, am I to understand that when the committee presented their decision to McClure—— [STODDARD and ZSUPNIK *exeunt dining room.*]

JEAN. I must hear this. [*Toward dining room.*]

TONY. What's worryin' you, Mrs. Stoddard?

JEAN. Oh, ever so many things, Tony.

TONY [*good-naturedly*]. I wouldn't pay no attention to those mill fights. Ma and me, when they get to yellin' against everything, just run 'em out the place.

JEAN. I wish it were as simple as that. [JEAN *exits dining room.*]

STEVEN. Tony!

TONY [*evidently not caring to be left alone with STEVE*]. Well, I guess I'll be goin', too.

STEVEN. No, don't go. Where are you going? Let me go with you.

TONY. No, you don't. And if I'd known you was here I wouldn't of come down.

STEVEN [*fatuously*]. You make me feel as if you weren't glad to see me, Tony.

TONY. Well, didn't I just see you last night?

STEVEN. I was watching you all through the meeting, Tony. Your eyes were like stars as you listened to him talk. You were transfigured! No longer the little mill girl, spiritless, crushed!

TONY. That'll be about all of that.

STEVEN. Of what?

TONY. You got to quit callin' me names, that's what!

STEVEN. Names! I'm not calling you names, Tony!

TONY. Well, whatever they are I don't like it, see? What is it if it ain't names I'd like to know!

STEVEN. It's just that I care for you so much. I can't bear to see you unhappy.

TONY. Me unhappy! I ain't unhappy. I got all I want. Look at these [*points to her high-topped coloured kid boots*]. Eleven-fifty. Say, even you can reco'nize a hat that's got class. [*Touches that triumph of apparel with an air of assurance.*] You ought to hear my ma talk about when she was a girl. You'd a had a swell time moanin' over her, you would.

STEVEN. Tony, you're cross at something I've said or done. Tell me the truth.

TONY. All right. I'm sick of you and your speeches, that's the truth. Always a-goin' on. Other fellas don't talk to me like that. I'd like to see 'em try. At first I thought it was fun,

havin' you stuck on me—Old McClure's son an' everything. An' the other girls in the shop et up with jealousy and talkin', and starin' at me in the wash room. But a lot you care about me.

STEVEN. But I do, Tony, I do.

TONY. You do not. Say, I know. When a fella's stuck on a girl he don't go on about her bein' no poor little mutt from the mills—no, sir! He tells her she's a baby doll and things like that.

STEVEN [*feebly*]. But, Tony!

TONY. Tell you what I'm like to you. I'm like one of them bugs you was tellin' me about you put under a glass or somethin' at college and watch it wiggle, see? [*Here STEVEN again attempts to interrupt but TONY goes on. Her hands on her hips, belligerently, she faces him.*] How many times have you took me to the movies?

STEVEN [*helplessly*]. Taken.

TONY. Took!

STEVEN. I hate the movies.

TONY. Well, I don't. An' when a fella's keepin' comp'ny with a girl it's what *she* likes that goes. You ought to run to the movies, oncet in a while [*disdainfully*]. You could learn something off 'n them, you bet. About the way to make love.

STEVEN. Don't drag the tawdry make-believe of the movies into our wonderful feeling for each other, Tony.

TONY [*with a deep breath*]. Now listen to me, Steve. You're a good kid an' I like you. You never took me to the movies, or bought me ice cream, or went to the dances the way the other fellas done, but I ain't holdin' that up against you. You didn't know no better. I'm just tellin' you, straight, you an' me, we're diff'rent.

STEVEN. How different?

TONY. When I'm with the boys in my own crowd, why, I feel comfortable. Fellas like Otto.

STEVEN. Who's Otto?

TONY [*confused*]. Well, I'm just takin' him for example. I talk like him an' he talks like me, I mean. Half the time, when I'm with you, I don't know what you're drivin' at. Well, say, no girl's goin' to enjoy a line of talk when she don't know whether the answer is "No, it ain't" or, "Yes, it is". I can't be usin' my mind all the time like that just for talkin'.

STEVEN. But I want you to be just yourself with me. It's just because you are what you are that I'm mad about you. You're so natural. So refreshing. I don't want you to try to be anything that you aren't.

TONY [*desperately*]. Yeh, but I am!

STEVEN. Am! I should say—are!

TONY. I mean I ain't. Look. This is what I mean. You're always callin' me a crushed flower,

an' like that. At first I didn't mind. I thought maybe fellas like you went on like that, just talkin'. But say, I begun to see you meant it.

STEVEN. Of course I meant it.

TONY. There! That's what I mean when I tell you I ain't. Me crushed! Why, say, there ain't a girl in the Flats has a better time than I have. I got more fellas than any one in the works. I could go every night in the week, if I wanted to, an' all day Sunday. Yes, an' with a different one every time. Why, only last Saturday night at the dance at Kreiger's, Otto an' Gus they had a regular fight right on the floor because Gus he says I promised I'd dance with him, an' Otto, he says no, I——

STEVEN [*overcome*]. Oh, how dreadful. My poor child!

TONY [*with relish*]. Poor nothin'! I liked it. The other girls was wild.

STEVEN. Tony, dear, don't you see that that's just what I mean when I say you're being crushed—dragged into the mire. Two men in a vulgar brawl over you!

TONY. It was grand. Otto give him a bloody nose.

STEVEN. Tony, I can't bear to hear you talk like that.

TONY. Well, that's the way I talk.

STEVEN. But you'll change. You'll learn.

TONY. I won't never be different. What's more, I don't want to be. I'm myself an' you're you. Now that girl—she talks like you. Why don't you get stuck on her an' leave me alone, h'm?

STEVEN. What girl?

TONY. Her—you know—with the interesting point of view. That was here yesterday.

STEVEN. Miss Winthrop?

TONY. Winthrop—that's her. Well, she's your class. Her and you would get along something swell. I bet she never was inside a movie in her life.

STEVEN. Miss Winthrop is not interested in me. [*It is plain, though, that the idea rather appeals to him.*]

TONY. Try her. But let me tell you one thing before I go.

STEVEN. Where are you going?

TONY. You might as well know it. I got a date with Otto.

STEVEN. But, Tony, dear! I've told the whole world I'm going to marry you.

TONY. Well, I'll tell the world you ain't. [*STEVE sits disconsolate. TONY, her whole attitude one of friendly sympathy and good nature, comes over to him.*] I'm goin' to tell you something for your own good, Stevie, because I like you.

STEVEN [*hopefully*]. Do you, Tony?

TONY. Sure. You ain't a bad kid, if you are a nut. Listen [*impressively*]. Girls is all alike. If you want to make a hit with this Winthrop friend of yours, don't go callin' her no poor little crushed flower, see? An' no downtrodden daughter of a Perfessor. Because she ain't good-natured like I am. She's li'ble to get her Boston up. Blow her to the movies oncet in a while. [*Goes toward door. Turns.*] An' for God's sake put a little jazz into your love-makin'! Good-bye, Steve. [*TONY goes. STEVEN, who has started after her, bewildered, now stands as she left him. He sinks into a chair, disconsolate. MRS. STODDARD enters. Goes over to STEVEN. Her hand on his shoulder.*]

STEVEN. She's gone.

JEAN. Gone?

STEVEN. To meet Otto. Tony—Tony never really cared for me, Mrs. Stoddard.

JEAN [*patting his arm a little*]. And you never really cared for Tony.

STEVEN. But I did! I did! That is I—I think I did.

JEAN. Come with me while I talk to Martha. She's terribly cross this morning. As if there weren't enough things to bother me.

STEVEN [*absently*]. Yes, of course, of course.

JEAN. Every time the doorbell rings she says

“Another of them Cheeso-Slavicks” and refuses to budge. [JEAN and STEVEN go. *The doorbell rings. STODDARD enters from dining room followed closely by ZSUPNIK. STODDARD goes to answer front door, talking as he goes.*]

STODDARD. He has fooled you before, I tell you. And he'll do it again.

ZSUPNIK [*takes off his hat to run a rather bewildered hand through his hair and over his head. He is plainly distressed*]. He talk pretty straight for crooked fella. [STODDARD to door. WINTHROP and FRANCES enter.]

STODDARD. Hello!

WINTHROP [*dramatically*]. Paul, the walls of Troy are tottering!

STODDARD. You don't say.

FRANCES. Paul—please! This isn't funny.

STODDARD. No?

WINTHROP [*in same portentous vein*]. My eyes are opened. Paul, my boy, I never dreamed that such things were possible.

STODDARD [*a little impatient by now*]. What things? Good Lord! What things?

FRANCES. Father, do let me—

WINTHROP. At first I could hardly believe my ears. But Professor Putnam has it all at his fingers' ends. A remarkable man, Professor Putnam. A man of erudition—and of force. Don't

doubt that. Force! The things he told us—revealed to us—at the meeting amazed me. Nay, shocked me.

STODDARD. Do you mean it was Putnam—little Putnam—who had the courage?

FRANCES. Plus Emily Putnam.

STODDARD. What did she have to do with it?

WINTHROP. Everything! Everything! If it hadn't been for Jean's dress Dinsmore University would not fail to open its doors Monday morning. Closed! For the first time in sixty years!

STODDARD. Now look here, Henry, Frances, what is this? Jean's dress and Emily Putnam and—[*Suddenly he stops and an inkling of the truth begins to come to him.*] By Jove!

WINTHROP. Certainly. "Cherchez la femme." [To ZSUPNIK.] Always.

ZSUPNIK [*uncomprehending, but agreeable*]. I betcha.

FRANCES. Mrs. Putnam told me last night that after she met Jean on the street yesterday something inside her just seemed to break. She came home with the picture of Jean in her mind—Jean after the concert, radiant, and well dressed, and carefree. An hour later her husband came in after having talked to you. She walked into his little cubby-hole of a study, stood in front of his

desk and said, "Augustus Putnam, if knowledge is power, prove it!"

WINTHROP. In half an hour Putnam had telephoned every one of us and called a meeting for eight-thirty sharp. Putnam repeated what you'd said to him, word for word. There wasn't much demonstration.

FRANCES. I think they all had their minds made up weeks before this. It just needed the spark. And Emily Putnam provided that.

STODDARD. Gad, this is glorious! If they'll only stand by it.

WINTHROP. Oh, they'll stand by it. Not one of them who hasn't a chance at a position with an astonishing—ah—honorarium attached. Astonishing! Thousands!

FRANCES. All except poor dear father.

WINTHROP [*he makes a rather pathetic figure as he stands there*]. All except me.

FRANCES. From our house to yours this morning father considered every known trade, profession, and occupation from travelling salesman to vaudeville.

WINTHROP. If I were a young man—but what can I do? I've been a teacher for twenty-five years. It's my life. I love it. I can't give up teaching.

STODDARD. I loved it, too, Henry.

WINTHROP. Well, now what?

STODDARD. You'll fall into step with the rest of us.

WINTHROP. No. You're moving too fast for me—you young fellows. What's come over the world? What's come over the world?

FRANCES. We'll get on, father, somehow. [*To STODDARD.*] Where's Jean? I must tell her.

STODDARD. In my study with Steven.

FRANCES. With Steven! Oh. [*FRANCES exits dining room.*]

WINTHROP. Ah, well, a knowledge of the Greek poets is poor equipment for modern commercial life. Paul, my boy, Anacreon is an anachronism. Ha! Not bad, that. [*Laughs at his own joke, in which he is joined by STODDARD, and, a little tardily, by ZSUPNIK who naturally does not in the least understand but is good-naturedly willing to share the mirth.*]
MRS. ZSUPNIK, in working dress and apron, her sleeves rolled high, appears suddenly in doorway, wrath on her face. ZSUPNIK, in the midst of a hearty laugh, suddenly sobers and cringes as he sees her.]

MRS. ZSUPNIK [*briefly, to the others.*] 'Scuse. [*Comes down to her husband.*] Zsupnik, why you don't come turn ice cream freezer? Big bum. [*Grasps ZSUPNIK's arm and propels him rapidly out of the room.*] What you think you stand here talk, talk, talk! Me got plenty work Sunday just like

other day. Big loafer! [*Turns at door, her hold still firm on ZSUPNIK'S arm, pauses briefly in her tirade, while her husband stands limp.*] 'Scuse. [*To STODDARD and WINTHROP. Exits with ZSUPNIK immediately resuming her scolding.*]

WINTHROP. Dear me! What a firm sort of person.

STODDARD. She has to be, with Chris. [*Becomes suddenly very serious.*] Henry, things have come to a head. McClure has told the men at the mill that I'm working against them. I've learned those men in the last few months. And I know they don't think. They act. If they're convinced I'm their enemy I'll have to do some quick acting, myself. Good old slow-witted Zsupnik's my friend, and yet I could see that McClure had him pretty thoroughly poisoned. From what I could get out of Zsupnik's version of it McClure's going to give me what he calls a chance to get out. Well, I won't do it.

WINTHROP. And if you don't what will happen?

STODDARD. I can't believe they'd actually try force. And almost everything else that could happen has happened. [*Enter MARTHA from dining room.*]

MARTHA [*very determined*]. I'd like a word with you, Perfesser.

STODDARD. Not now, Martha. I'm busy.

MARTHA. I'm leavin'.

STODDARD. What!

MARTHA. Leavin'. Goin' away from these here Flats.

STODDARD [*to WINTHROP*]. Punishment for my saying that everything had happened that could happen.

MARTHA [*in a burst*]. It ain't what I'm used to that's worked fifteen years in the university and amongst the Hill crowd an' how they ever got along without me since I come down here is more than I can see, and it was only last night when I was up on the Hill and heard the news of the walk-out I says to myself I says, Martha I says, now's your time to leave what you was never——

STODDARD. Now wait a minute, Martha. We've always treated you well, surely. And you're getting more money than you could get on the Hill.

MARTHA. If the Blakes an' the Putnams an' the Salsburys an' the rest is all going out of the Perfesser business like I hear and startin' in to work for real wages an' not no dirty mill neither but elegant positions then I can go to work private for any of them an' glad to have me and take my choice an' mix like I'm used to an' no Cheeso-Slovicks like them Zsupniks.

STODDARD. You don't mean you're going now! Have you told Mrs. Stoddard? You know I'm

speaking out of town to-night. She can't be left alone.

MARTHA. It's you that leaves her alone, poor lamb, an' her cryin' when she thinks nobody's noticin', an' who'd blame her when you think the likes of her down here in this dump with all the smoke an' onions an' nobody——

JEAN [*off, in dining room*]. Oh, Martha! Martha!

MARTHA. Yes'm. [*Exits dining room.*]

STODDARD. This is getting a little thick, isn't it? How about a walk, Henry? An hour's sprint won't hurt either of us. I'll get my coat. [*Goes toward bedroom.*]

WINTHROP [*follows STODDARD*]. It may clear the cobwebs, Paul. I do feel a little queer this morning what with one thing and another. Yes, indeed. [*STODDARD and WINTHROP exit bedroom. WINTHROP rambling on in his vague way as he disappears. STEVE and FRANCES enter from MRS. STODDARD'S room. They are looking into each other's eyes, quite absorbed.*]

FRANCES. Do you really mean that, Steven?

STEVEN. Do I? I think you're some baby doll, Frances!

FRANCES [*coily*]. Oh, Steven. [*They go slowly toward hall, back.*]

STEVEN. I don't know. You're different. A

fellow can talk to a girl like you. You seem to understand. You're wonderful!

FRANCES. I never dreamed you felt like that about me.

STEVEN. I always have. Always. But I was afraid of you. I'm not now. I just needed to put a little—jazz into it.

FRANCES [*pensively*]. Girls are all alike.

STEVEN [*startled at hearing TONY'S very words*]. How did you know that?

FRANCES [*very demure*]. I'm a girl.

STEVEN. Let's go and have lunch somewhere. Let's drive out to Ferroni's. Shall we? Will you?

FRANCES. I'd love to.

STEVEN. Come on. [*They pause at hall door.*] Frances, do you like the movies?

FRANCES. I adore them. Don't you?

STEVEN. Yes. Yes, I like them. [*As they go.*] Then to-night, Frances, we could go to the Rivoli.

FRANCES [*off, as they vanish*]. Oh, that would be nice. [*The doorbell rings. MARTHA enters, crosses to answer it. CYRUS McCLURE enters, followed by MARTHA. McCLURE is looking back as though he has just passed the utterly absorbed STEVEN and FRANCES.*]

McCLURE [*to MARTHA*]. Who was that?

MARTHA [*peers back*]. That just went out? That was young Steve McClure, the old devil's son.

McCLURE. No, no, the girl, the girl!

MARTHA. Oh, her! That was Miss Frances Winthrop.

McCLURE. Winthrop! H'm! [*A little smile of satisfaction.*] Stoddard home?

MARTHA. Perfesser Stoddar's in.

McCLURE. All right. Tell Professor Stoddard I want to see him.

MARTHA [*goes to bedroom door, calls*]. Oh, Perfesser!

STODDARD [*off*]. Yes!

MARTHA. One of them mill hands here to see you. [*MARTHA crosses to door left as STODDARD enters right, followed by WINTHROP.*]

STODDARD. Mr. McClure!

MARTHA. Oh, my God. [*Exits left.*]

McCLURE [*grimly*]. Good morning.

STODDARD. This is a surprise.

McCLURE. I meant it to be.

STODDARD. You know my brother-in-law Professor Winthrop?

McCLURE. Yes, of course. Howdy-do. Howdy-do.

WINTHROP. I'm well, thank you. I can't complain.

STODDARD. Won't you sit down?

McCLURE. This isn't a social call.

STODDARD. You can be just as unsocial sitting

down. Try that chair. It's got a straight back.

McCLURE. Now look here, Stoddard. You've carried things far enough. I've reached the limit.

STODDARD. Not quite.

McCLURE. What!

STODDARD. We've just begun.

McCLURE. See here, Stoddard. I'm the boss yet. I won't stand for your meddling, and your interfering, and your damned speech-making any longer. You're fired.

STODDARD. Mr. McClure you didn't come down here to fire one of your mill hands.

McCLURE. You're not a mill hand. You're a college professor in overalls. And understand, you've made all the trouble you're going to. You're fired.

STODDARD. You know better than that.

McCLURE [*though he knows he is beaten here*]. Better than what?

STODDARD. I belong to the union. You know you can't fire me without the consent of the shop committee.

McCLURE. I do know it. This is a formality. I'm giving you a last chance, Stoddard. The men want you out. I want you out. They don't usually deal so gently with cases like yours. You

and your kind don't belong down here. Are you going to get out?

STODDARD. No. [JEAN enters, left.]

MCCLURE. Don't say I didn't warn you.

JEAN [*alarmed*]. What is it? Paul, what is Mr. Clure warning you of?

MCCLURE. I've done what I can for you, Mrs. Stoddard. I'll stop your talking, Stoddard, if I have to close down the mills to do it.

JEAN. You wouldn't do that!

MCCLURE. Why not? I can live comfortably for the rest of my life on what I've got. If I close down you'll be out and fifteen thousand men with you. Then see how popular you'll be on the lecture platform, and in the newspapers.

WINTHROP. Paul, this looks very bad. Very bad.

MCCLURE. Now, I'm an older man than you, Stoddard. The men from the mill will be here to talk to you. They know what I've said to you. And they won't be as patient as I've been. [*The doorbell rings.*]

STODDARD [*it may be the mill hands*]. I'll go.

JEAN. No, no! Let me! [*Goes quickly. They turn to face door, back. JEAN'S voice is heard, off, as is that of a man. CLEVELAND WELCH enters, followed by JEAN. WELCH is a slim, dapper young fellow, rather extravagantly dressed, with a quick eye*

and a businesslike manner. He glances about the room, knows STODDARD promptly, though he has never seen him before.]

WELCH [*the centre of curiosity and knows it*].
Mr. Stoddard? Mr. Paul Stoddard?

STODDARD. Yes.

WELCH. Welch is my name. Cleveland Welch of the Mastodon-Art Film Company.

STODDARD. I'm very busy just now.

WELCH. Five minutes, Mr. Stoddard.

STODDARD. If you'll just go into my study. Jean, will you——

WELCH. One moment. I think you would be interested to know that I have here [*takes a long envelope from his coat pocket*] a blank contract signed by the Mastodon-Art Film president offering you five thousand dollars a week to play the lead in our great heart-throb film entitled "Brains and Brawn." A picture with a nationwide appeal. You, Mr. Stoddard, have made yourself known to every man, woman, and child in America. You stand for the finest type of young American manhood. In this picture we shall show your struggle for the rights of the brain worker. We shall show you in your boyhood days, fitting yourself for your life work. We shall show you as a student, then as a teacher. Your modest little home, your struggles, your despair. We shall

show then McClure—under another name, of course, but unmistakable—McClure, the illiterate tyrant, crushing the——

STODDARD. Wait!

MCCLURE. It won't be allowed. It's libelous!

WELCH [*ignoring this*]. The message that you have been striving to give in your lectures, Mr. Stoddard, reaching a handful of people only, will be flashed before the eyes of this country's millions. They will be made to realize the danger of the present-day disregard of that most priceless gift—brains. Brains, the bulwark of democracy. Brains, the foundation of civilization. We will first show the cave man, typifying brute strength. Then, step by step——

STODDARD. A wonderful idea, Mr. Welch.

WELCH. It will be a masterpiece. A triumph of the photo-drama. And five thousand a week, Mr. Stoddard. After that—— [*Comes swiftly over to STODDARD.*] Turn your face to the side, please. Ah! Excellent profile. Strong! Athletic? [*Feels STODDARD'S arm muscle.*] Wonderful! Ride?

STODDARD. Used to.

WELCH. Swim?

STODDARD. Yes.

WELCH. Drive a car?

STODDARD. Could if I had one.

WELCH. I knew it. A born moving picture

star! Mr. Stoddard [*shakes his hand*], your fortune's made.

McCLURE. No such picture shall ever be shown. I won't allow it. I'll go to Washington——

WELCH. I want to say, for the benefit of your little friend here, that the scenario of this picture has already been approved by high government officials.

STODDARD. I'll be with you in a minute, Mr. Welch. If you'll just wait in there. [*Indicates door left; WELCH goes.*]

WINTHROP. Did I understand that young man to say five thousand a week! But no!

JEAN. Paul! Think of it.

McCLURE [*defeated*]. Stoddard, what do you consider a fair salary for a university professor—of economics, say.

STODDARD [*as curtain slowly descends*]. I consider a fair salary for a university professor, of, say, economics, to be——

CURTAIN



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