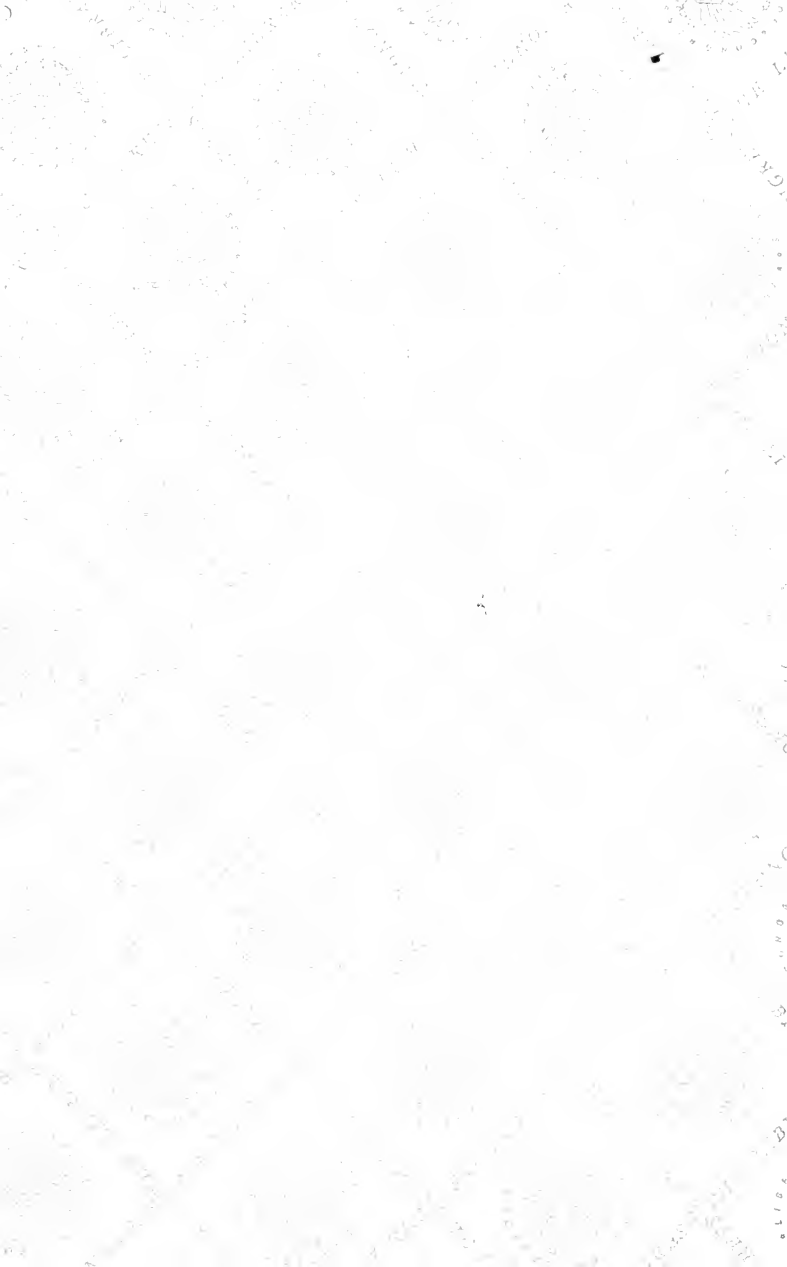
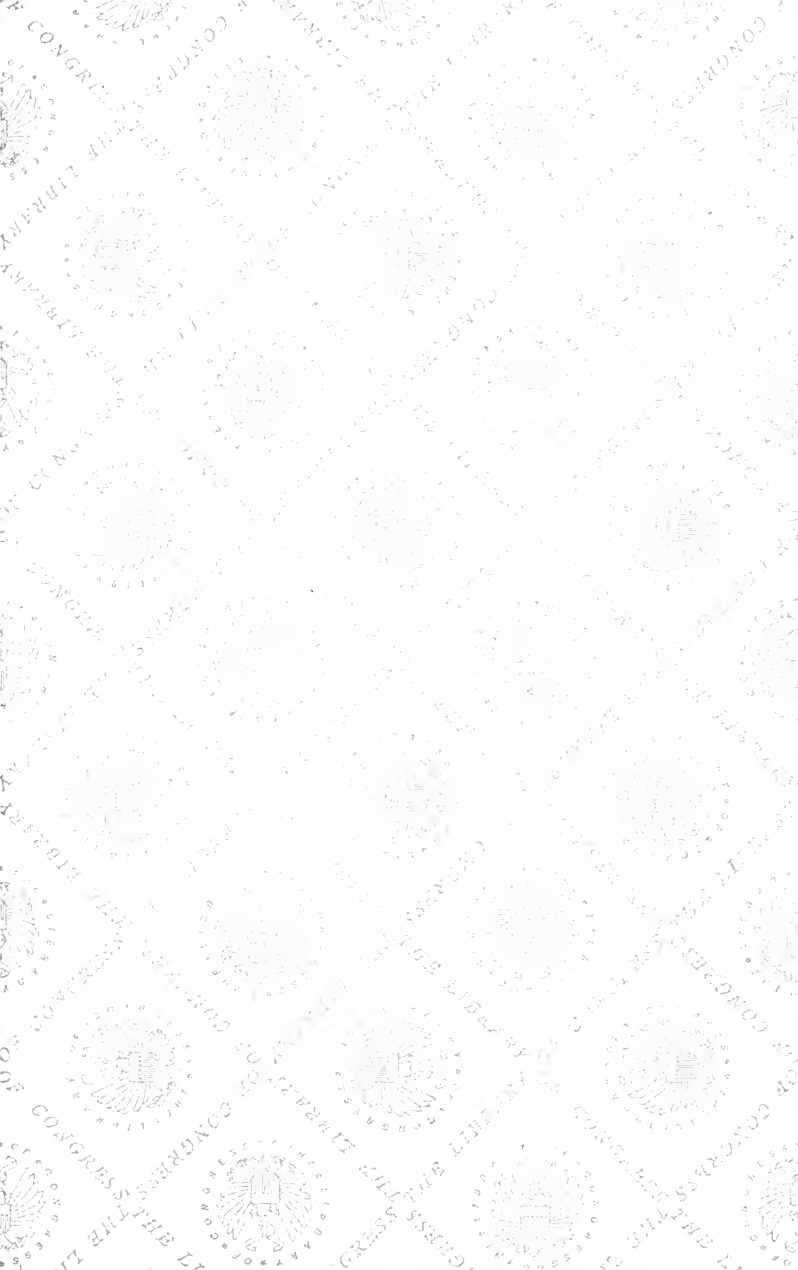


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BETSEY BOBBETT.

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A DRAMA.

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SCENES DRAWN FROM THE BOOK

My Opinions and Betsey Bobbett's

BY

"JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE.

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MARIETTA HOLLY.

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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JOSIAH ALLEN, a farmer,.....  
SAMANTHA, his wife,.....  
TIRZAH ANN, farmer's daughter,.....  
THOMAS JEFFERSON, farmer's son,.....  
BETSEY BOBBETT, an old maid,.....  
SHAKESPEARE BOBBETT, Betsey's brother. ....  
DOCTOR BOMBUS,.....  
WIDDER DOODLE, .....  
SOPHRONA GOWDY,.....  
ELDER PEEDICK,.....  
EDITOR OF JONESVILLE "AUGUR,".....  
SIMON SLIMPSEY, a widower, .....  
WIDOW TUBBS,.....  
THE PEDDLER,.....



# BETSEY BOBBETT.

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## ACT I.

SCENE.—*Monday at the Allen's.—Mrs. Allen kneading bread. Tirzah Ann washing at the washtub.—Widder Doodle picking over beans.—Elder Peedick sitting in the corner arranging a book of manuscript sermons.*

WID. D. Oh how much these beans makes me think of Doodle. He died, Doodle did, and was a corpse just as quick as he died; but I never can forget that dear man, nor his line-ment never. And it hain't no ways likely that I shall ever marry agin'.

SAM. Cheer up, Widder Doodle, cheer up. You'll disturb the Elder, and he wants to get his sermons all pinned together before he starts; and Josiah is out after the horse now. I am glad you stayed over Sunday with us Elder.

ELDER. I thank you, Madam. (*He goes on with his work. speak- ing to himself*): Let me see, where is the 20thly?

WID. D. Could you forget your Josiah, if you lived to be his relict?

SAM. No; I loved Josiah Allen, though why I loved him, I know not. But in the immortal words of the poet, "Love will go where it is sent." Yes, Tirzah Ann, I married your pa in mother's parlor, on the 14th day of June, in a brown silk dress with a long boddist waist, from pure love. And that love has been like a beacon in our path- way ever since. Its pure light, though it has sputtered some, and in trying times, such as washing days and cleaning house, has burnt down pretty low—has never gone out. Tirzah Ann, look at your father's wristbands and collar, and see if you can see any streaks of white on 'em. Now Tirzah Ann, you are inclined to be sentimental. You took it from your pa. Josiah Allen, if he was encouraged, would act spoony. I re- member when we were first engaged he called me a little an- gel. I just looked at him and says I, I weigh 204 pounds by the stillyards; and he didn't call me so agin. I guess he tho't 204 pounds would make a pretty hefty angel. No, Tirzah Ann, sentiment hain't my style: reason and common sense are my themes. Now there is Betsey Bobbett: she is one of the sen- timentolest creeters that ever I did see. She is awful opposed to women's rights. She says it looks so sweet and genteel, somehow, for wimmin to not have any rights. She says it is wimmin's only spear to marry. But as yet she hain't found

any man willin' to lay hold of that spear with her. But she is always a talking about how sweet it is for wimmin to be like runnin' vines, a clingin' to man like ivy to a tree.

ELDER. (*in a stately way*) Them are my sentiments, Mrs. Allen. As I remarked yesterday in my tenthly, "Marriage is wimmen's only spear." And as I remarked in my fourteenthly, "How sweet, how heavenly the sight, to see a lovely woman clinging like a sweet, twining, creeping vine to a man's manly strength."

WID. D. It is pretty to see it; I love to cling; I used to cling to Doodle.

ELDER. I wish I had known Doodle; he must have been a happy man.

SAM. But, Elder, how is a woman to cling if she hain't nothin' to cling to. What are the wimmen to do whose faces are as humbly as a plate of cold greens? Is such a woman to go out into the street and collar a man and order him to marry her? Now I say a woman hadn't ort to marry unless she has a man to marry to—a man whose love satisfies her head and her heart; some men's love hain't worth nothin'. I wouldn't give a cent a bushel for it by the car load. But I mean a man that suits her; a man she seems to belong to, just like North and South America jined by nater, unbeknown to them ever since creation. She'll know him if she ever sees him, jest as I knew my Josiah, for their two hearts will suit each other jest like the two halves of a pair of shears. These are the marriages heaven signs the certificuts of; and this marryin' for a home, or for fear of bein' called a old maid is no more marriage in the sight of God, no more true marriage than the blush of a fashionable woman that is bought for ten cents an ounce and carried home in her pocket, is true modesty.

ELDER. I can only repeat what I said yesterday in my 21stly. That it is flyin' in the face of the Bible for a woman not to marry. It is heaven's design that women should be a vine, and man a tree.

WID. D. I always thought my Doodle was a tree. I knew he was.

SAM. Well Elder, your wife is jest dead with the tyfus, and I ask you this qestion. Are you willing to let Betsey Bobbett cling to you? She believes jest as you do, and she is fairly dying to make a runnin' vine of herself; and are you willing to be a tree?

ELDER. Wall—as it were—Mrs Allen—I—that is—the religious state of the country at present is—as it were—

SAM. Are you willing to be a tree?

ELDER. I believe Mrs. Allen you are a strong Grant woman. Now I favor Blaine.

SAM. Are you willing to be a tree?

ELDER. I guess I'll go to the barn and get my saddle bags

*Exit ELDER.*

SAM. I knew jest how it would be; I knew he wouldn't be a tree.

TIRZ. A. Wall; I don't blame him mother. You ought to have seen Betsey last night to meetin'. She got up to talk, and she would look right at Elder Peedick, and then at the editor of the *Augur*, and at Simon Slimpsey, and says she: I know I am religious because I feel that I love the bretheren. I don't blame him.

SAM. No, nor I nuther. I don't want a man to be a tree, unless they want to, and I want them to use reason and not insist on every woman makin' a vine of herself. But the Elder means middlin' well, and he'd make a tolerable good husband for some woman.

WID. D. It haint no ways likely I shall ever marry again. No other man's linement can ever look to me like my Doodle's linement.

SAM. But the Elder has belated us dreadfully with our Monday's work. Here it is most night and we have only fairly got to work. But we can finish it in the morning. Yes, as I was a saying Tirzah Ann, Betsey hain't handsome, her cheek bones are too high, and she, being not much more than skin and bone, they show more than if she was in good order. Time has seen fit to deprive her of her hair and teeth, but her large nose he has kindly suffered her to keep. I have seen a good many that was sentimental that had it bad; but Betsey has got it the worst of anybody I ever did see, unless it is her brother Shakespeare, and he acts as spoony round you, Tirzah Ann, as any spoon on my buttery shelves. It worries me.

WID. D. My Doodle used to act spoony, as spoony as—as a teaspoon.

SAM. Wall if I thought there was any danger, Tirzah Ann, of you falling in love with Shakespeare Bobbett, I'd give you a good thoroughwort puke. That will cure most anybody if you take it in time.

TIRZ. A. Wall, I guss there hain't no chance, mother.

SAM. Wall, mabby not. Now you wring the clothes out, Tirzah Ann, and hang 'em right up here on the line.

TIRZ. A. They will look awfully, mother, hangin' up here. We shall look as if we was settin' in a wet calico tent.

SAM. I don't care, Tirzah Ann, we are so beat out we shall go to bed as soon as it is dark.

TIRZ. A. We shall have to any way, for father forgot to take

the kerosine can, and there hain't a lamp in the house that we can light. But oh, dear, how it does look here, mother. I never in my hull life see our house look as it does to-night. It would mortify me most to death if any body should come in.

SAM. Wall, there hain't no danger of anybody comin' Monday; and we will slick up the first thing in the morning. But bein' up all night with Thomas Jefferson, and then havin' to wait on the Elder, and doin' our Monday's work in the afternoon, has about used me up, and if you think you can finish up Tirzah Ann, I will soak my feet and go to bed. I am afraid I am goin' to be awful sick. I feel sick to my stomach all of a sudden, and every bit of noise goes through my head like a sword.

WID. D. Let me get you some warm water, Samantha. Here, put your feet right into it; and here, put your night-cap on. Oh dear me, how much that sickness to the stomach makes me think of Doodle. Do you feel better, Samantha?

SAM. I shan't feel any better till I get to bed.

*Enter JOSIAH.*

TIRZ. A. Why, what is the matter father?

JOSIAH (*groaning*). Oh! I have been took with a dumb creek in my back. Give me some of that linement quick, and rub it onto my shoulders, Tirzah Ann. What is the matter with your mother? Is she sick?

WID. D. Oh yes; Samantha is awful sick—took sudden—and there is Thomas J. up stairs sick abed. If there was ever a distressed house this is the house.

TIRZ. A. It looks distressed, anyway

WID. D. Josiah, won't you try some of the Green Mounting salve?

JOSIAH. Oh! I don't know; I can't set down, or stand up; I am awful bad off. I want to get to bed as soon as I can.

WID. D. Try the Green Mounting salve, brother Josiah; and oh how much that salve makes me think—(*looking out the window*)

TIRZ. A. Why, for mercy's sake! Who is coming? There is a whole house-full of folks on the door-step. (*Tirzah Ann and the Widder Doodle runs out of the room, as the door opens, and ten or fifteen people come in, headed by Betsey Bobbett. Josiah tries to fix his shirt and vest round his shoulders before they get in but he can't, so he dives under the table. Samantha stands her ground. She stands up and confronts them.*)

BETSEY B. We have come to surprise you! And in order to more sweetly surprise you, we have come Monday night, and come early. Will you not let us surprise you?

SAM. No! no! We will not be surprised! You shan't surprise us to-night! We won't be surprised! Speak, Josiah; tell her; will we be surprised to-night?

JOSIAH. (*Looking out from under the table spread*) No; No; we will not be surprised.

BET. B. You see dear friends she will not let us surprise her; we will go (*They all go out. Betsey goes last, and she turns around at the door and says*) Maybe it is right and propah to serve a young girl, who has always been your friend, in this way. I have known you a long time Josiah Allen's wife.

SAM. (*Stepping out of the foot bath and shutting up the door*) I have known you plenty long enough.

JOSIAH (*Coming out from under the table*) Darn surprise parties, and darn —

SAM. Stop swearin', Josiah Allen; I should think we was bad enough off without swearing. But I hate surprise parties as bad as you do. Betsey Bobbett has led 'em into one house where they had the small-pox, and one where they was makin' preparations for a funeral. They are perfect nuisances. It stands to reason so long as anybody has got a tongue, if they want to see their friends to their house, they can invite 'em, and if anybody is too poor to bake a cake or two, and a pan of cookies, they are too poor to go into company at all. I hain't proud, and never was called so, but I don't want Tom, Dick, and Harry, that I never spoke to in my life, feel free to break into my house any time they please. I perfectly detest surprise parties; but you don't ketch me swearin' about it.

Jos. Wall; I *will* say darn Betsey Bobbett; there now, *darn her*; oh! my back; (*slowly sitting down*) I can't sit down, nor stand down.

SAM. You went under the table quick enough when they come in.

Jos. Throw that in my face, will you? What could I do? My clothes all fallin' of me.

SAM. Wall, Josiah, less be thankful that we are as well off as we be. Betsey might have insisted on surprisin' us. Do you s'pose they will be mad?

Jos. I don't know, nor care, but I hope they will.

CURTAIN FALLS.

## ACT. II.

SCENE.— *Widder Doodle and Tirzah Ann sitting at work tufting a bed spread. —Samantha comes in out of the garden*

SAM. I declare them hens makes me more trouble than all the rest of my work, keeps me a scarin' 'em out of the garden all the time, and that pup hain't good for anything.

TIRZ. A. Father says all it wants is a little encouragement.

SAM. Encouragement! I should think as much. Yes I know your pa says that if he will run a little ahead of it when he is a settin' it on to things, it will go on to one first rate. And I told him he had better take the pup in his arms and throw it at the hens mebbly that would encourage it enough. But there they are; I must go and scare 'em off again.

TIRZ. A. I'll go mother. *(She goes out clapping her hands and crying "Shoo; Shoo;" and the hens are heard cackling behind the scenes).*

WID. D. Oh how much that pup makes me think of Doodle. My Doodle needed encouragement.

TIRZ. A. *(Coming back)* Here comes Betsey Bobbet, mother.

*Enter BETSEY.*

ALL SAY Good morning, Betsey.

BET. *(Sadly)* Good morning, Miss Allen; good morning, Tirzah Ann; good morning Widder Doodle. *(She sits down and takes out her tatting and commences to work)*

SAM. Hain't you well to-day, Betsey.

BET. I feel deprest to-day; awfully deprest.

SAM. What is the matter?

BET. I feel lonely; more lonely than I have felt for yeahs.

SAM. What is the matter, Betsey?

BET. I had a dream last night, Josiah Allen's wife.

SAM. What was it?

BET. I dreamed I was married, Josiah Allen's wife. I tell you it was hard, after dreamin' that, to wake up to the cold realities and cares of this life; it was *hard*. I sot up in end of the bed and wept. *(she weeps)* I tried to get to sleep again and dream it ovah, but I could not.

SAM. Wall, to be sure, husbands are handy on 4th of Julys, and funeral processions. It looks kinder lonesome to see a woman streaming along alone; but they are contrary creeters, Betsey, when they are a mind to be. How do you like my new bed-spread?

BET. It is beautiful.

SAM. Yes; it looks well enough now, but it 'most wore my fingers out a tuftin' it.

BET. How sweet it must be to wear the fingers out for a deah companion. I would be willing to wear mine clear down to the bone. I made a vow, some yeahs ago, that I would make my deah future companion happy, for I would nevah, nevah fail to meet him with a sweet smile as he came home to me at twilight. I felt that was all he would require to make him happy. Do you think it was a rash vow, Josiah Allen's wife?

SAM. Oh, I guess it won't do any hurt. But if a man couldn't have but one of the two, a smile or a supper, as he came home at night, I believe he would take the supper.

WID. D. I know Doodle would. He had to have jest what he wanted to eat at jest the time he wanted it, or it would give him the palsy; he never had the palsy, but he always said that all that kept him from it was havin' meat vittles, or anything else he wanted, jest the minute he wanted it. Oh, what a man that was; what a linement he had on him. It hain't no ways likely I shall ever marry agin. No, I shan't never see another man whose linement will look to me like Mr. Doodleses linement.

SAM. Yes, Betsey, I believe a man would take the supper instead of the smile.

BET. Oh, deah! such cold practical ideahs are painful to me.

SAM. Wall, if you ever have the opportunity you try both ways; let your fire go out and you and your house look like fury, and nothing to eat, and you jest stand in the door and smile. And then again you have a nice supper—stewed oysters and cream biscuit and peaches, or something else first rate, and the table all set out as nice as a pink, and the kettle singing, and you dressed up pretty, and goin' round the house in a sensible way, and you jest watch and see w'ich of the two ways is the most agreeable to him.

BET. Oh, food! food! what is food to the deathless emotions of the soul? What does the aching young heart care what food it eats? Let my dear futuah companion smile on me, and that is enough.

SAM. A man can't smile on an empty stomach, Betsey. And a man can't eat soggy bread with little chunks of saleratus in it, and clammy potatoes, and drink dish-water tea and muddy coffee and smile; or they might give one or two sickly, deathly smiles; but depend upon it, Betsey, they couldn't keep it up. I have seen bread, Betsey Bobbett, that was enough to break down any man's affection, unless he had firm principle to back it up, and love's young dream has been drouded in thick muddy coffee before now. If there hain't anything pleasant in a man's home how can he be attached to it? Nobody can't, man nor women, respect what hain't respectable, nor love what

hain't lovable. Of course men have to be corrected sometimes. I correct Josiah frequently.

BET. How any one blessed with a deah companion can speak about correcting them, is a mvstery to me.

SAM. Men have to be corrected, Betsey; there wouldn't be no living with them unless you did.

*Enter* THOMAS JEFFERSON.

BET. Well, you can enertain such views if you will, but as for me, I will be clinging; I will be respected by men. They do so love to have winmen clinging, that I will, until I die, carry out this belief that is so sweet to them. Until I die, I will neveh let go of this speah.

JHOS. J. (*aside*) She has been brandishing that speah for fifty years.

SAM. There is them hens agin, Thos. Jefferson; You go and scare 'em out (*Exit Thos Jefferson*)

BET. There is a gentleman coming.

TIRZ. A. A peddler.

*Enter* PEDDLER. MRS. A. *coldly greets him.* BETSEY *gets up and bows.* He shows his goods.

PED. Young lady, can't I sell you this beautiful lace neck-tie; real old point lace, and only 18 pence.

TIRZ. A. Oh, mother, do buy it for me.

SAM. No, Tirzah Ann, no.

PED. Then let me sell you this beautiful valuable ring. Most diamond dealers would want to make a profit of a hundred dollars or so on it, but I will let you have it for five shillings. It weighs over a hundred and 4 carets.

SAM. A hundred and 4 carrots; that is a likely story. Why, if the carrots was any size at ali that would be over a bushel. No, Tirzah Ann, you can't have the ring

PED. Can't I sell you something, madam.

WID. D. Oh, no, I am a widder; and it hain't no ways likely I shall ever marry agin. (*She weeps, wipes her eyes on her apron*)

PED. Here, I have got just what you want and need. See this beautiful mourning handkerchief. It is almost worth the agony of bein' a widder to enjoy the privilege of mournin' on such a handkerchief as that. It is richly worth 75 cents, but you may have it for 25, and what will you give?

WID. D. I will give a quarter of a dollar.

PED. Take it at your own price. Now Madam (*turning to Samantha*) Let me sell you this beautiful carpet; it is the pure ingrain.

SAM. Ingrain; so be you ingrain.



PED. I guess I know, for I bought it of old Ingrain himself. I give the old man 12 shillings a yard for it; but seeing it is you, and I like your looks so much, and it seems so much like home to me here, I will let you have it for 75 cents a yard; cheaper than dirt to walk on, or boards.

SAM. I don't want it; I have got carpets enough.

PED. Do you want it for 50 cents?

SAM. No!

PED. Would 25 cents be any inducement to you?

SAM. No!

PED. Would 18 cents tempt you?

SAM. Say another word to me about your old stair carpet if you dare; jest let me ketch you at it. Be I going to have you a trapsin' all over the house after me? Am I going to be made crazy as a loon by you?

BET. Oh, Josiah Allen's wife, do not be so hasty; of course the gentleman wishes to dispose of his goods, else why should he be in the mercantile business?

PED. (*Turning to Betsey, takes earrings out of his pocket*) I carry these in my pocket for fear I will be robbed. I hadn't ought to carry them round at all; a single man going alone around the country as I do; but I have got a pistol (*he takes a large pistol, the larger the better from his pocket. Betsey shrieks and falls back terribly frightened*) I have got a pistol, and let anybody tackle me for these ear-rings if they dare to.

BET. Is their intrinsic worth so much?

PED. It hain't so much their neat value, although that is enormous, as who owned them informally. Whose ears do you suppose these have had hold of?

BET. How can I tell, never having seen them before.

PED. Jest so. You never was acquainted with them, but these very identical creeters used to belong to Miss Shakespeare. Yes, these belonged to Hamlet's mother. Bill bought 'em at old Stratford.

BET. Bill?

PED. Yes, old Shakespeare. I have been with his family so much, that I have got into the habit of calling him Bill, jest as they do.

BET. Then you have been there?

PED. Oh, yes; I wintered there and partly summered. But as I was a saying, Bill give 'em to his wife; he give 'em to Ann when he first begun to pay attention to her. Bill bought 'em of a one-eyed man with a wooden leg by the name of Brown. Miss Shakespeare wore 'em as long as she lived, and they was kept in the family till I bought 'em; a sister of one of his

brother-in-law's was obliged to part with 'em to get morphine.

BET. I suppose you ask a large price for them ?

PED. How much ! how much you remind me of a favorite sister who died when she was fifteen. She was considered by good judges to be the handsomest girl in North America. But business before pleasure—I ought to have upwards of 30 dollars a head for 'em ; but seeing it is you, and it hain't no ways likely that I shall ever meet with another wo—young girl that I feel under bonds to sell 'em to, you may have 'em for 13 dollars and a half.

BET. That is more money than I thought of spending to-day.

PED. Let me tell you what I will do. I don't care seeing it's you, if I do get cheated. I am willing to be cheated by one that looks so much like that angel sister. Give me 13 dollars and a half and I'll throw in the pin that goes with 'em. I did want to keep that to remind me of them happy days at Stratford. But take 'em, take 'em and put 'em out of my sight right quick, or I shall repent.

BET. (*tenderly*) I don't want to rob you of them, deah man.

PED. Take 'em, and give me the money quick, before I am completely unmanned (*takes money*) Take care of the ear-rings, and Heaven bless you.

*Exit PEDDLER. Enter THOS. JEFFERSON.*

THOS. J. What have you got, Betsey ?

BET. Some ear-rings that used to belong to the immortal Shakespeare's wite informally.

THOS. J. Good gracious ! I saw Miss Morten this morning sell them to this peddler. She sold them for a dozen shirt buttons, and a paper of pins.

BET. I don't believe it.

THOS. J. It is the truth ; he wanted to buy old jewelry. She brought out some broken rings and these were in the box, and she told him he might have them in welcome ; but he give her the buttons and pins.

Who bought for gold the purest brass ?  
 Mother, who brought this grief to pass ?  
 What was this maiden's name ? alas !

BETSEY BOBBETT.

SAM. Thomas Jefferson, you ought to be ashamed. There's them hens again. I snall have to scare 'em off myself. (*Samantha goes out to frighten the hens, Betsey goes out the other door ; Thos. J. dances round and sings.*)

How was she fooled, this lovely dame ?  
 How was her reason overcome ?  
 What was this lovely creature's name ?

BETSEY BOBBETT.

(*Samantha screams; Thos. J, Tirzah Ann and Widder Doodle rush out, and Josiah comes in bringing Samantha in his arms.*)

SAM. (*groaning*) I wonder if you will keep that pup now.

Jos. Maybe you didn't encourage it enough. Do keep still Samantha, how do you s'pose I am going to carry you if you touse round so?

(*He lays her on the lounge; Thos J and Tirzah Ann and Widder Doodle comes in the widder a crying*) Oh, Doodle; Doodle; if you was alive, you would tell your relict what to do for Samautha; I know you would.

Jos. You go for Dr. Bombus, Thomas Jefferson.

*Exit THOS. JEFFERSON. Enter Miss GOWDY.*

MISS G. I heard you had an axident. Miss Allen, and I came to see if I could do anything. You hain't been well for some time Miss Allen, and I have mistrusted all along that you had the tizick.

WID. D. I think it is the very oh lord.

SAM. The pain is in my foot mostly.

MISS G. I can't help that; there is tizick with it, and I think that was what ailed Josiah when he was sick.

SAM. Why that was the newraligy the doctor said.

MISS G. Doctors are liable to mistakes. I always thought it was the tizick. There are more folks that are tizicky in this world than you think for. I am a master hand for knowing tizick when I see it.

WID. D. It looks more to me like the very oh lord.

(*Enter Thos J and Doctor; Doctor very solemn and dignified, examines her foot*)

DR. B. Miss Allen you have strong symptoms of zebra smilen marcellus. You need perfect quiet, and you (*to Josiah*) must see that she has it; and Mr. Allen you must be cheerful.

WID. D. Hain't it more like the very oh lord. My Doodle had that. And oh, Doodle, Doodle, shan't I never see your linement again? Oh how much sickness puts me in mind of him, and health, and everything. Oh Doodle, would it have been a confort to you to have lived to see how your widder mourned for you. Samantha can't I help you? I know you have got the very oh lord, and oh, how much that disease makes me think of Doodle.

MISS G. Dr. Bombus, hain't it the tizick?

DR. B. No; you can't fool me on diseases; I have never had my dognosés disputed. The other Dr. in Jonesville was called in the other day to a plain case of ganders; he called it gallopin' consumption. The minute I sot my eyes on the man I

said ganders. And this is a clear case of zebra smilen marcellus. Good landlord, you can't fool me on the zebra.

SAM. That is a disease I never made no calculations on havin'. Where does the zebra generally tackle folks?

DR. B. Wall, people generally have it in the posterity part of the brain; but you seem to have it in the foot. Now if I can only keep it in the foot, keep it from the brain, I can help you.

SAM. The disease is a perfect stranger to me; do folks ever get over the zebra?

DR. B. They do when I doctor them; but you must follow my directions close. Take this decoction of squills, *nox vomica, visa versa*—excuse dead language—take 40 drops every half hour till relief is felt and experienced. (*Doctor bows to Samantha and stalks out*)

MISS G. I know it is the tizick Tirzah Ann, give me a piece of paper and a pencil; this will make a item.

WID. D. Oh, how much that pencil makes me think of Doodle.

SAM. What is the matter, Josiah?

JOS. I'm bein' cheerful, Samantha

SAM. You are bein' a natural born idiot, and do you stop it.

JOS. I wont stop it, Samantha; I will be cheertul.

SAM. Wont you go out and let me rest awhile, Josiah Allen?

JOS. No; I will stand by you and be cheerful. Doctor Bombus said you must be kept perfectly quiet, and I must be cheerful before you; it is my duty, and I will be.

SAM. It seems to me I should like some lemonade, if the lemons wasn't all used up.

JOS. I will harness up the old mare and start for Jonesville, and get you some. (*He goes out, but comes back and puts his head inside the door and laughs loud*)

*Enter BETSEY.*

BET. I had just got home when I heard of the axident, so I thought I would come back and spend the entiah day. (*she takes off her hat.*) How do you feel, Josiah Allen's wife?

SAM. I feel very bad and feverish?

WID. D. Very oh lord; jest as Doodle felt.

MISS G. Tizick!

BET. Yes; I know just how you feel. I have had such a fever that the sweat stood in great drops all over me. You need quiet. (*Glares at the two women*) I meant to ask you when I was in here before you was hurt, which do you like best, a sun-flower bed-quilt, or a blazing star? So many young girls are being snatched away lately that I want to be prepared. I

am going to line it with otter color: white is prettier, but gets soiled so easily; and if two little children just of an age was a playin' on it, it would keep clean longer. I think I will have it a blazin' star.

WID. D. Oh, how much that blazing star makes me think of Doodle and his liniment.

*Enter EDITOR of the Augur.*

EDITOR. Good day, Mrs. Allen; I have heard of the axident that has befallen you, and so as an editor in search of information, I have come. I thought with your permission I would make you the leading article in my next week's paper.

BET. She's a poem, I am composing her now in my own mind.

MISS G. She's a tragedy; I am putting her down as one.

SAM. (*Putting her hand to her head mildly*) Am I a tragedy? Yes, I believe I am, I feel like a tragedy, I feel awful.

ED. Where were you hurt? by whom? And what was the first and primary cause of the hurt?

SAM. I was hurt by a hen; the first cause was the pup; but they will tell you. (*Betsey and Miss Gowdy go up close to him, one on each side.*)

MISS G. I will gladly spend hours informing you.

BET. Let me tell you, ueah man.

ED. I must go; there is a man waiting for me at the gate. Widder Doodle can you command you feelings sufficiently to step into the next room with me and give the particulars.

WID. D. Oh, yes; Doodle always said I could drive ahead of me as big a drove of particulars as any woman of my size and heft. I was Doodleses wife then, and now I am his widder; I was his widder jest as quick as he was dead; and it hain't no ways suposeable that I shall ever marry agin.

*Exit EDITOR and WIDDER DOODLE.*

MISS G. I must go too. Little Ben has got the croup, and I must be to home. (*She goes out.*)

BET. Croup is only a hollow excuse, it is the editor that is drawing of her home.

TIRZ. A. Why she can't ride, he has got a load.

BET. Oh, she thinks she can walk along side of his wagon, and talk. But I won't worry over it no more, nor begrech her her privilages. I see, Josiah Allen's wife, that you need care; and in order to quiet and soothe you, I will read to you; I will do all I can to keep you quiet to-day; and to-morrow mother, and Aunt Maria, and all her family; and Aunt Jane, and her children, will come down

and stay all day with you—stay to dinner and supper. They are all to our house a visiting: and mother had rather bring them with her than not. There is eleven of them in all, and they'll all put in to keep you quiet; and you needn't make no fuss for them at all, though they all love boiled dinners dearly. And now I will proceed to read to you the longest and most eloquent editorial that has ever appeared in the *Augur*, written by its noble and eloquent editor. It is six columns in length, and is concerning our relations with Spain.

SAM Let the editor and his relations go to Spain; and do you go to Spain with your relations; and do you start this minute! (*Betsy looks frightened, gathers up her calico, and moves toward the door, and says:*

BET. I do not mind my cold rebuffs,  
 To be turned out with bedquilt stuffs,  
 Philosophy would ease my smart,  
 Would say, Oh! peace, sad female heart.  
 But, oh! this is the woe to me,  
 She would not listen unto he.

CURTAIN FALLS.

## ACT III.

SCENE.—*Samantha's kitchen, with a great deal of work about.*—*Enter Editor of the Augur leading a twin by each hand.*

ED. My hired girl has left me, Mrs. Allen, and I want to go to Shackeville this morning and see if I can find one. And I called to see if I could leave a twin or two with you while I am gone. And Mr. Allen invited me to come back to dinner; I told him I would, and I would read to you a political argument I have written for the next week's *Augur*. It is as long as the President's message, and is in blank verse. (*Samantha groans*) Mr. Allen told me that the Widder Doodle and Tirzah Ann had gone a visiting, and you had sights of work to do. I hated to ask you to take care of the twins; but I really didn't know what to do; I was at my wit's end.

SAM. Probable, there has been longer journeys took than that was; but I will keep the twins. I will try to do just as my friend John Rogers would have done.

ED. Who?

SAM. The first martyr in Queen Mary's reign. Here children let me take off your things. But I have got sights and sights of work to do to-day, and I have got to go up into the wood-house chamber to do some work, and you will have to stay here with the twins till I come back. Here is a picture book they may take to recreate on while I am gone. It is Foxe's book of martyrs; and oh what a comfort that book is to me on days like this. Anybody may say they are patient and unselfish, and are willing to be martyrs; but I tell you you can't tell what principles folks are made of till they are sot fire to. Now the religion and self-denial and sound principles of them old martyrs of Foxes, they couldn't burn up, they couldn't make a fire hot enough. And when I am tied to different stakes of martyrdom, I tell you it keeps my mind cool and calm, to think of the patience of them old martyrs of Foxes, and compare my sufferin's with thiers, and meditate on this fact, that fire hain't no hotter now than it was then, and though the soul may boy the body up triumphant, there couldn't be any body burnt up without smartin. Yes, I will keep the twins, and I will hear your blank verses; I will be down shortiy.

(*Exit SAMANTHA; Enter BETSEY BOBBETT.*)

BET. Good morning, deah sir.

ED. Good morning.

BET. I saw you coming in here and I hurried over to bring some poetry that I have been composing for your paper. It is called "Gushings of a Tender Soul." And would it be any more soothing and comforting to you if I should sign my name Bettie Bobbett, or Betsey as I always have. I asked Josiah Allen's wife if she liked the "Bettie," and she said she expected

every day to hear some minister preach about Johnnie the Baptist and Minnie Magde'en, but she is cold and practical; but I will read it. (*The twins cry and she says*): Oh poor little motherless things, how much you need a step-mother; but I will read.

ED. (*aside*) Gracious Heavens! What shall I do!

Oh let who will, oh let who can,  
Be tied unto, a horrid male man.  
Thus said I ere my tendeh heart was touched;  
Thus said I ere my tendeh feelings gushed;  
But, oh! a change hath swept o'er me,  
As billows sweep the deep blue sea;  
A voice, a noble form, one day I saw,  
An arrow flew, my heart is nearly raw.

His first pardner sweetly lies beneath the turf,  
He is wandering, now, in sorrow's briny surf;  
Two twins—the deah little cherub creeters,  
Can wipe the tears from off his classic features;  
Oh! sweet lot, worthy angel risen,  
To wipe the tears from eyes like hisen. (*Editor groans.*)

BET. May I ask you, deah man, if the twin has got oveh swallowing the thimble? I heard it swallowed the hired girl's thimble the very day she hired out to another place, and left you alone.

ED. It ahd, and I wish it had swallowed the hired girl! I feel reckless, and bad.

BET. Oh! deah man; you need to be soothed. Poetry is soothing, and comforting, when rehearsed by a tendeh female voice. I have a few lines here, composed "On a Twin Swallowing a Side Thimble." It is more on a mournful plan; but I will read it to you.

ED. (*Aside*) Did Heaven ever witness such tribulations? (*And while Betsey is reading he takes a pistol out of his pocket, aims it at her, and then replaces it. Betsey reads*):

BET. Oh, when side thimbles swallowed be,  
How can the world look sweet to he  
Who owns the twins, fair babe, heaven bless it,  
Who hath no own mother to caress it.

Its own mother hath sweetly gone above,  
Oh, how he needs a mother's love,  
My own heart runs o'er with tenderness,  
And its own noble father tries to do his best.

But housework, men can't perfectly understand,  
Oh, how it needs a helping hand.  
Ah! when twins are sick, and hired girls have flown,  
It is sad for a deah man to be alone.



*Enter THOS. JEFFERSON.*

THOS J. Good morning, editor, good morning, Betsey; I have got a poem of yours here, Betsey, that I found in father's tin trunk the other day. I hav'nt seen you before since I found it.

BET. (*delighted*) Is it possible; your pa probably cut it out of some paper and has been treasuring it up.

THOS. J. Shall I read it?

BET Oh, yes; do read it, Thos. Jefferson.

THOS. J. Josiah, I the tale have hurn  
 With rigid ear, and streaming eye,  
 I saw from me that you did turn,  
 I never knew the reason why;  
 Oh! Josiah, it seemed as if I must expire!

(*Betsey, as he begins to read, is lost in thought, and does not seem to hear, then springs up.*)

BET. Thomas Jefferson this is cruel. Give it to me; don't read it. don't!

ED. (*in low tone*) Go on.

THOS. J. I saw thee coming down the street,  
 She by your side in bonnet blue,  
 The stones that grated 'neath thy feet,  
 Seemed crunching on my vitals too.  
 Oh! Josiah, it seems as if I must expire.

BET. (*mildly*) Don't read any more, don't!

ED. Go on! go on!

THOS. J. I saw thee washing sheep last night,  
 On the bridge I stood with marble brow;  
 The water raged, thou clasped it tight  
 I sighed, "Should both be drowned now,"  
 I thought Josiah,  
 Oh, happy sheep, to thus expire.

(*Enter Samantha, carrying a pair of swifts with some skeins of yarn on it*)

BET. Josiah Allen's wife, shall your cruel boy be allowed to injure a cause, and bleed a tender heart?

SAM. Thomas Jefferson what have you been up to now?

ED. He has done nobly; but I must go at once. Hired girls must be seen to immediately.

THOS. J. And I must go and fodder the steers.

*Exit EDITOR and THOS. J.*

*(One of the twins runs up to the swifts and begins to tangle the yarn on it, and while Samantha attends to that, the other one tips over a basket of apples. Samantha holds the child off with one hand while she picks up the apples with the other.)*

BET. If there is any object on earth, Josiah Allen's wife, that I warm to, it is the sweet little children of widowers. I have always felt that I wanted to comfort them, and their deah pa's. I have always felt that it was women's highest speah, her only mission, to sooth. to cling, to smile, to coo. I always felt that it was women's greatest privelege, her crowning blessing to soothe lacerations, to be a sort of a poultice to the manly breast when it is torn with the cares of life. Do you not think so?

SAM. Am I a poultice, Betsey Bobbett? Do I look like one? Am I in a condition to be one? I have done a big ironing to-day, churned ten pounds of butter, scalded two hens and picked 'em, made seven pies and a batch of nutcakes, two pans of cookies, and mopped all over. And now I have got these twins on my hands, all this carpet yarn to double, blank verses, ahead on me, and dinner to get, and now I am called on to be a poultice. What has my sect done that they have got to be lacerator-soothers and poultices, when they have got everything else under the sun to do. Everybody says that men are stronger than wimmen, and why should they be treated like glass-china, liable to break to pieces every minute? And if they have got to be soothed, why can't they git some man to soothe 'em? They have as much agin time as wimmen have. Evenin's they don't have anything else to do, they might jest as well be a soothin' each other as to be a hangin' round grocery stores, or settin' by the fire whittlin'.

BET. Oh! it must be so sweet, so strangely sweet, to soothe the manly breast: to soothe, to smile, to coo.

SAM. I am perfectly willing to coo it I had time; and I had jest as lives soothe lacerations as not, if I hadn't everything else under the sun to do. I had jest as lives sit down and smile at Josiah Allen by the hour, and smooth down his bald head affectionately, but who would fry the nut-cakes, and make the ginger cookies. I could coo at him day in, and day out, but who would skim milk, and wash pans, and darn, and fry, and bake, and bile, while I was a cooin'?

BET. Oh! Josiah Allen's wife; we shall always differ on the subject of coos. But I wish to crave your advice on a deep and solemn subject. Martin Farquieh Tuppel is one of the sweetest poets of the ages. My sentiments have always blended in with his sentiments. I have always flew with his flights, and soared with his soars. And last night after I had retired, one of his sublime ideahs come to me with a power I neveh felt before. It knocked the bolted door of my heart open, and said: "Betsey Bobbett, you have not neveh done it." He remarks

that if anybody is going to be married, their deah future companion is on earth, though we may neveh have seen him, or her, and it is our duty to pray for that future companion. Josiah Allen's wife, I have not neveh done it ; I feel condemned. Would you begin to pray now ?

SAM. Are you going to pray for a husband, or about one ?

BET. (*mournfully*) A little of both.

SAM. Wall, I don't know as it would no any hurt, Betsey.

BET. I will begin to pray to-night, but that is not all. Folks must work as well as pray ; I am going to take a decided stand. Be you a going to the quire meeting to-morrow night ?

SAM. I am layin' out to go if I hain't too lame.

BET. Josiah Allen's wife will you stand by me ? There is not another female woman in Jonesville that I have the firm unwaverin' confidence in that I have in you. You always bring about whatever you set your hands to, and I want to know will you stand by me to-morrow night ?

SAM. What undertakin' have you got into your head now, Betsey Bobbett ?

BET. I am going to encourage the editor of the *Augur*. That man needs a companion. Men are offish and bashful and do not always know what is best for them. I have seen horses hang back in the harness before now ; I have seen geese that would not walk up to be picked ; I have seen children hang back from pikery. The horses ought to be *made* to go ; the geese ought to be held and picked ; the children ought to take the pikery if you have to hold their noses to make them. The editor of the *Augur* needs a companion, and I am going to encourage that man to-morrow night, and I want to know Josiah Allen's wife, if you will stand by me ?

SAM. You know, Betsey, that I can't run ; I'm too fat and lame ; and then I'm gettin' too old. Mebby I might *walk* up and help you corner him, but you know I can't run for anybody.

*Enter JOSIAH.*

JOS. The Editor has come, and wants me to fetch out the twins.

SAM. Why I thought he was coming back to take dinner, and read his blank verses.

JOS. Wall, he was unhitchin' his horse, and I happened to mention that I guessed Betsey would be here to dinner too ; and he jumped into that buggy agin' like lightnin', and hollered out : " Fetch out the twins ? " He acted sort o' crazy like, and skairt.

BET. So sweetly sensitive, he fears to be forward and intrusive.

JOS. I told him to stay ; I told him you would have a awful good dinner, and I knew what it was to be a widower and live on pancakes. But all he said was to yell out, "Fetch out the twins."

*(Samantha goes to putting on the childrens' wraps)*

BET. Oh, do not be in such haste, Josiah Allen's wife. The editor may come in to dinner if you don't hurry so, and I will stay too. *(Betsey fixes her hair, arranges her neck tie and looks anxiously from the window ; then goes and walks from the window to the door peering out in hopes he will come in.)*

JOS. There hain't no use on waiting, you won't ketch him in here. Hear him now. *(A voice from behind the scenes):*

ED. Fetch out the twins.

### CURTAIN FALLS.

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### ACT IV.

SCENE — *Outside of cottage — Josiah and Samantha within. — Cats heard fighting drendjully behind the scenes — Upper window opens, and Thomas J throws out something to scare cats. — When Josiah realizes that it is a serenador, he gets out of bed and starts for the door — Samantha pulling him back again — You can see their head and shoulders as they pass by an open window below — Samantha with night-gown and night cap on ; Josiah in similar raiment, only with a tall hat and umbrella — They pass by the window several times, as he is determined he will go out and stop the music, and she will not let him. — During the serenade Tirzah Ann appears at an upper window opposite Thomas Jefferson with a night-cap on and a bouquet of flowers — She vainly endeavors to attract Shakespeare's attention.*

THOS. J. You've preached long enough brothers, on that text ; I'll put in a 7thly for you. *(Throws boot.)* You've protracted your meeting here long enough ; you may adjourn, now, to somebody else's window, and exhort them a spell. *(Throws something more)* Now I wonder if you'll come round on this circuit right away.

SAM. Thomas Jefferson, stop that noise.

JOS. Do let him be ; do let him kill the old creeters, I am wore out.

SAM. Josiah, I don't mind his killin' the cats, but I won't have him talking about holding protracted meetin's and preechin' ; I won't have it.

Jos. Wall, do lay down ; the most I care for is to get rid of the cats.

SAM. You do have wicked streaks Josiah, and the way you let that boy go on is awful. Where do you think you will go to, Josiah Allen ?

Jos. I shall go into another bed if you can't stop talkin'. I have been kept awake till midnight by them awful creeters, and now you want to finish me. Oh, dummit ! them dum cats are at it agin

SAM. Well, you needn't swear so if they be ; but I say it hain't cats.

Jos. It is.

SAM. I know better , it hain't cats

Jos. Wall, if it hain't cats, what is it ?

SAM. It is a acordeun.

Jos. How come a acordeun under our window ?

SAM. It is Shakespeare Bobbett seranadin' Tirzah Ann, and he has got under the wrong window. Josiah Alen come back here this minute ; do you realize your condition ; you hain't dressed.

Jos. Wall, I can put my hat on I 'spose.

SAM. Yes, a stovepipe hat is a great protection. Josiah Allen if you go to the door in that condition, I'll prosicute you. What do you mean by acting so. You was young once yourself.

Jos. I wasn't a confounded fool, if I was young

SAM. Come back to bed, Josiah Allen ; do you want to get the Bobbetses and the Doodleses mad at you ?

Jos Yes, I do.

SAM. I should think you would be ashamed of yourself, swearin' and actin' as you have ; and you'll end by gettin' your death cold. (*Shakespeare Bobbett has appeared outside with a guitar, and played a strain, as if uncertain of the key. Think, oh, think of me.*)

Jos No danger of our not thinkin' on you, no danger on it. (*Shakespeare plays and sings*)

Come, oh, come with me, Miss Allen.

The moon is beaming ;

Oh, Tirzah ! come with me,

The stars are gleaming.

All around is bright with beauty beaming,

Moonlight hours in my opinion,

Is the time for love.

CHORUS—Tra la la, Miss Tirzah,  
Tra la la, Miss Allen,  
Tra la la, tra la la,  
My dear young maid.

SAM. Josiah Allen, if you make another move I'll part with you. It does beat all how you act. Do you think it is any comfort for me to lay here and hear it? You was young once yourself.

JOS. Throw that in my face ag'in will you? What if I wuz? Oh! do hear him beginnin' agin. I should like to know what comfort there is in his prowlin' round here, makin' two old folks lay all night in perfect agony.

SAM. It hain't much after midnight, and if it was, do you calculate to go through life without any trouble? If you do you'll find yourself mistaken. (*Shakespeare sings to the same tune.*)

When I think of thee, thou lovely dame,  
I feel so weak and overcome  
That tears would flow from my eye-lid,  
Did not my stern manhood forbid,  
For Tirzah Ann—for Tirzah Ann,  
I am a melancholy man.

I'm wasting slow, my last year's vest  
Hangs loose on me; my nightly rests  
Are thin as gauze, and thoughts of you,  
Gashes 'em wildly through and through.  
Oh! Tirzah Ann; oh, Tirzah Ann;  
I am a melancholy man.

JOS. You'd be a melancholy man my young feller if I was out there half a minute with a club. Samantha, lemme go out, dummit; I will go!

SAM. Do you stop swearin' and be calm.

JOS. I won't be calm, and I will say dummit; there now, dummit!

S. BOB. (*sings*) Oh! I languish for thee; I am languishing for thee. (*Upper window opens again.*)

THOS J My musical young friend, havn't you languished enough for one night? Because if you have, father and mother and I, being kept awake by other serenaders the fore-part of the night, will love to excuse you, will thank you for your labors in our behalf and love to bid you good evening—Tirzah Ann being fast asleep in the other end of the house. But don't let me hurry you Shakespeare, my dear young friend, if you havn't languished enough, you keep right on languishing. I hope I hain't so hard hearted enough to deny a young man and neighbor the privilege of languishing. (*Shakespeare departs.*)

CURTAIN FALLS.

## ACT V.

SCENE—*Josiah Allen's wife with bonnet on ready to start.—She says to herself: "I wonder why Josiah Allen don't come. We shall be late to that quire meetin'."*—*When Simon Slimpsey rushes in and sinks down in a chair.*

SIMON. Am I pursued?

SAM. There hain't nobody in sight. Has your life been attacked by burglars and incindiarys? Speak, Simon Slimpsey, speak!

SIMON. Betsey Bobbett!

SAM. What of her, Simon Slimpsey?

SIMON. She'll be the death on me, and my soul is jeopardized on account of her. To think that I, a member of a orthodox church, and the father of thirteen small children, could be tempted to swear. But I did, not more'n two minutes ago. I said, By Jupiter! I can't stand it so much longer. And last night to meetin', when she was payin' attention to me, I wished I was a ghost; for I thought if I was a apperition I could vanish from her view. Oh! I have got so low as to wish I was a ghost. She come a rushin' out of Deacon Gowdy's just now as I came past jest a purpose to talk to me. She don't give me no peace. Last night she would walk tight to my side all the way from meetin' and she looked so hungry at the gate, as I went through and fastened it on the inside.

SAM. Mebby she'll marry the editor of the *Augur*. She is payin' attention to him.

SIMON. No; she won't get him; I shall be the one, I always was the one. It has always been so, if there was ever a underlin' and a victim wanted, I was that underlin' and that victim. And Betsey Bobbett will get round me yet, you see if she don't.

SAM. Cheer up. Simon Slimpsey; folks hain't obleeged to marry if they don't want to.

SIMON. Yes they be; if folks get round 'em. Hain't you seen her verses in last week's *Augur*?

SAM. No, I haint. (*Simon hands her the paper and she reads*):

Oh, wedlock is our only hope,  
 All o'er this mighty nation,  
 Men are brought up to other trades,  
 But this is our vocation;  
 Oh! not for sense or love ask we,  
 We ask not te be courted,  
 Our watchword is to married be,  
 That we may be supported.

Say not you're strong and love to work,  
 Are healthier than your brother,  
 Who for a blacksmith is designed,  
 Such feelings you must smother;  
 Your restless hands fold up or gripe  
 Your waist into a span,  
 And spend your strength in looking out  
 To hail the coming man.

CHORUS.—Press onward, do not fear, sisters,  
 Press onward, do not fear,  
 Remember women's spear, sister,  
 Remember women's spear.

SAM. Wall, she believes that marryin' is wimmens only spear.

SIMON. It is that spear that is going to destroy me.

SAM. Don't give up so Simon Slimpsey; I hate to see you lookin' so gloomy and deprest.

SIMON. It is the awful determination of them lines that apauls me. I have seen it in another. Betsey Bobbett reminds me dreadfully of another; she makes me think of that first wife of mine. And I don't want to marry again Miss Allen, I don't want to. I didn't want to marry the first time, I wanted to be a bachelor. I think they have the easiest time of it by half. Now there is a friend of mine that is only half an hour younger than I be, and that hadn't ought to make much difference in our looks, had it?

SAM. No, Simon Slimpsey, it hadn't.

SIMON. Well; you ought to see what a head of hair he's got now; sound to the roots, not a lock missing. I wanted to be one, but my late wife come and kept house for me, and—and married me. I lived with her for eighteen years, and when she left me I was—I was reconciled. I was reconciled some time before it took place. I don't want to say nothin' against nobody that hain't round here in this world, but I lost a good deal of hair by my late wife; and I wanted to keep a lock or two for my children to keep as a relict of me. I have got thirteen, as you know, countin' each pair of twins as two, and it would take a considerable number of hairs to go round. I don't want to marry agin.

SAM. Mebby you are borrowin' trouble without cause, Simon Slimpsey, with life there is hope. Don't give up so Simon Slimpsey; mebby she'll marry the editor of the *Augur*; she's payin' lots of attention to him.

SIMON. No, he won't have her, she'll get round me yet—you mark my words, and when the time comes you will think of what I told you. (*Simon weeps*) You see if she don't get round me yet.



SAM Chirk up, Simon Slimpsey, be a man.

SIMON. That is the trouble, if I wasn't a man she would give me some peace. (*He weeps bitterly. The curtain falls, but rises immediately for the quire scene*)

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SCENE—II—*Quire Meeting—Two or three rows of seats,—Any number of Singers, the more the better—Editor takes chair in center of first row—Betsey and Miss Gowdy both try to take the vacant seat at his left: Miss Gowdy gets it—Betsey sits in front row at right of Editor, not next to him—Samantha and Josiah sit at left of Miss Gowdy—Elder Peedick, the leader, stands at the right—Josiah and Samantha come in arm in arm after most of them get seated—Josiah says as they walk in, Don't be a lockin' arms, Samantha, it will make talk—Elder Peedick distributes books.*

ELD. P. We will commence this evening by singing the hymn—"How blest was Jacob." We will sing it to the tune of Ortenville. Widder Tubbs, will you play the instrument? (*some old melodeon*).

S. BOB. The metre is too long.

THOS. J. Yes, there is too much tune for the words.

ELD. P. I believe I am running this quire (*He takes out a tuning fork and tries it, and commences*). How blest was Ja-a-a-cob. Lemme see. I didn't get the right key. (*tries again*) How blest was Ja-a-fol-de-rol-cob.

THOS. J. You had better try some other patriarch, and see if you can run him through the tune.

S. BOB. I knew when the tune and words was added up there would be tune to carry.

ELD. P. Shakespeare Bobbett, do you keep still, and don't let me ketch you a pressin' the key to-night.

S. BOB. I shall press as many keys as I am a minter for all you; you are always findin' fault with sumthin' or other.

ELD. P. Perhaps we had better try some more familiar hymn. We will sing on page 200. The duet between the sulfireno and the beartone will be sung by the editor of the *Augur* and Betsey Bobbett.

MISS G. I believe I can sing that full as well as another certain person.

BET Sophrona. I shali sing it, it has been give out, and Elder Pedick, you had better give Miss Gowdy a book. She seem

to have to look over with the editor. (*Elder Peedick gives the key and they all sing*).

Though the old man rises fearful,  
In our hearts renewed by grace,  
Yet his work is sad and direful,  
That old man is our disgrace.

(*Duet—That same verse set to the song, "When thy bosom heaves a sigh." Betsey and the editor starts. Betsey gets her part too low, they sing it as far as "Though the old man"—when Josiah rises.*)

JOS. It is a shame for a woman to sing alone in a room full of men. (*He begins and sings the whole verse through to the tune of Greenville.*)

SAM. Josiah, if you say another word I'll part with you. What do you mean, Josiah Allen?

JOS. I'm singing base.

SAM. Do you sit down and behave yourself; she has pitched it to low. It hain't base.

JOS. I know better, Samantha; it *is* base. I guess I know base when I hear it, and as long as I call myself a man, I will have the privilege of singing base.

SAM. Sing! I'd call it singing

(*Sophronia and the Editor now take advantage of Betsey's confusion and go triumphantly through it. All then repeat the first part singing it well to the tune of Arlington.*)

PEEDICK. We will now have a intermission of five minutes.

(*Editor draws Samantha to front of stage and says*):

ED. How sweet it is Josiah Allen's wife, for a noble but storm-tosted bark to anchor in a beautiful calm. How sweet it is when you see: he ravenin' tempest a smilin' at you, I mean a lowerin' at you, to feel that it can't harm you, that you are beyond its reach. Josiah Allen's wife. I feel safe and happy to-night; I believe you are my friend

SAM. Yes, and you well-wisher; whatever happens, if you are ever encouraged, or any other trial comes to you, remember that I wished you well and pitied you.

ED. Instead of pitying me, wish me joy. I am married, I was married a week ago.

SAM. Who to?

ED. The prettiest girl in Log London. She is at her father's now, but will be here in a few days. I must go, the twins will be waking up. Yes, Miss Allen, I am married and safe.

*Exit EDITOR.*

BET. Ketch hold of me, Josiah Allen's wife, ketch hold of me. I am on the very point of swooning.

SAM. Ketch hold of yourself.

BET. One of my dearest gazelles is a dying. One of my fondest hopes is a withering.

SAM. Let 'em wither. Betsey Bobbett, this gazelle is married, and there hain't no use in your followin' on that trail any longer. Do 'ry and behave till meetin' is out.

PEEDICK. We will now sing on page 99. Sing the words on page 99 to the tune of old Northfield.

ALL. We're sinners wandering every day,  
Pre-sum-shu-ous, and bo'd.  
We all are sheep—  
We all are sheep—  
We all are sheep that's gone astray,  
And wandering from the fold.

(*Widder Doodle sitting in the corner weeps and says:*) Oh how much that sheep makes me think of Doodle.

ALL SING. Oh yes, pre-sum-shu-ous we are,  
And blind, and halt, and lame.  
We all are mean—  
We all are mean—  
We all are mean'ing to be good,  
But nothing can we claim

PEEDICK. We will now sing the verse which Miss Bobbett composed for her own private devotions, but which she kindly permits the quire to use. She says it should be sung with great expression and feeling. (*Betsey, who has been weeping gets up and sings this.*)

ALL SING. Oh! sad I wander down life's vale,  
And drink life's bitter cup,  
Send down the man—  
Send down the man—  
Send down the manna of rich grace,  
And I will rake it up.

TIEZ. A. I don't like the hymns we have sung to-night. We hain't all sheep, and we don't all of us want men seat down.

MISS G. It don't look well, Tirzah Ann, for you to be correctin' your betters.

BET. (*Severely.*) Tirzah Ann Allen, you are too young to realize things.

PEEDICK. We will now sing, "How Sweet for Bretheren to Agree." Sing it to the tune of Bowston.

ALL. How sweet for bretheren to—

PEEDICK. Try again; now: (*Gives key.*)

ALL. How sweet for bretheren to—

S. BOB. You hain't got tune enough for the words ; the best calculator in tunes couldn't do it.

PEEDICK. I can't do anything ; you flat the notes so.

S. BOB. I don't flat any more than the rest do.

PEEDICK. You young villian, you do. (*Widder Tubbs jumps up in front, stands with her back to the audience, beats time and sings. All join in after the first line, and when the rest sing "unity," Shakespeare Bobbeit sings "onion tea." They sing chorus to "Oh that will be joyful"*)

How sweet for bretheren to agree,  
 How sweet for bretheren to agree,  
 How sweet for bretheren to agree,  
 And dwell in unitee ;  
 And dwell in unitee-e-e,  
 And dwell in unitee.  
 How sweet for bretheren to agree,  
 And dwell in unitee. (*Shakespeare singing out last full and clear, "Onion tea."*)

WID. D. My Doodle loved onions (*As they go out Josiah looks back and says :*)

JOS. You come right home, Tirzah Ann ; don't be loiterin' along the way. (*Widder Doodle goes out last, and as she gets almost to the door Elder Peedick, who has been picking up the books, calls her back.*)

ELD. P. Widder, I want to speak with you (*She goes back and they sit down on one of the benches.*)

ELD. P. I hain't seen you but once before since I was a widower. It was a awful blow to me ; a hard blow. (*Smiting his breast.*)

WID. D. I feel to sympathize with you ; I know how I felt when I lost Doodle.

PEEDICK. Yes ; I tell you Widder. I have seen trouble lately. A spell ago I lost the best cow I had ; then I lost a new umbrell, and a whale-bone whip, and now my wife is dead. I tell you it cuts me right down ; it makes me feel poor. You wasn't acquainted with the corpse, I believe.

WID. D. No, but I have heard her well spoke of.

PEEDICK. Yes, she was a lovely woman. My heartstrings was wrapped completely around her. Not a pair of pantaloons have I hired made sense we was both married to each other, nor a vest. I tell you it was hard to lose her, dretful hard. I never realized how much I loved that woman till I see I must give her up, and hire a girl at 2 dollars a week—and they waste more than their necks are worth. I tell you my heart is full of tender memories of that woman, when I think how she would get up and build fires in the winter —

WID. D. That is what I always did for my Doodle. He would be a dreamin' how pretty I was, and how much he loved me, and he'd want to go to sleep agin and dream it over. So I would get up and split the kindlin' wood and build th' fire, and get breakfast, so's to let him lay and dream about me. I love to build fires.

PEEDICK. Do you love to build fires, Widder? I wish you had been acquainted with the corpse; I believe you would have loved each other like sisters.

WID. D. You must chirk up Elder Peedick, you must look forward to happier days.

PEEDICK. I know there is another spear and I try to hang my hopes up on it, a spear where hired girls are unknown and partings are no more.

WID. D. I can't bear hired girls.

PEEDICK. You look like the corpse; you *do* look like her, I see it plainer and plainer. And oh, what a woman that was, she knew her place so well; she always said w'immen wasn't equal to men. You couldn't have hired her to have had rights. she always said wirmin was too delicate and feeble to have rights; she said that she had rather dig potatoes any day than to have 'em. She could dig potatoes as fast as a man.

WID. D. I knew I wasn't the equal of Doodle. He used to set in the rock'n' chair while I would be a hoing out the garden, or bringin' in wood, or churnin' and read such beautiful arguments to me, and so convincin', provin' it all out how havin' rights would be too much for the weaker sect, and that men wouldn't feel nigh so tender and reverential towards 'em as they did now.

PEEDICK. Then you used to hoe out the garden and bring in wood.

WID. D. Yes, I loved to; I loved to dearly.

PEEDICK. Widder, I am a man of business. My wife has been dead three weeks, and she won't be no deader if I should wait three months as some men do. I heard you a praisin' up my wagon and span of mares to-night, and if you'll be my bride, the wagon is yours and the mares. Widder, I throw myself onto your feet, and I throw the wagon and the mares onto 'em, and with them and me. I throw eighty-five acres of good land, 14 cows, 5 calves, 4 three-year-olds, and a yearlin', a dwellin' house, a good horse barn and myself. I throw 'em all onto your feet, and there we lay on 'em.

WID. D. Oh, Doodle! Doodle! if you was alive you would tell your widder what to do to do right.

PEEDICK. Widder, I am a layin' on your feet, and my property, my land, my live stock, my housen and my housen

stuff, are all a layin' on 'em. Make up your mind at once, for if you don't consent, I have got other views ahead of me which must be seen to at once. Time is hastenin' and the world is full of willin' wimmen. Widder what do you say?

WID. D. Wall, I have got kinder out the habit of marryin', it comes kinder natural to me, and your linement looks a good deal like Doodie's linement.

PEEDICK. Then you consent, widder. Wall we will be married a week from Sunday; we will be married Sunday so's not to break into the week's work. And I will turn off my hired girl, and you can come right to my house and do the house-work, and help me what you can out doors, and tend to the milk of 14 cows and be perfectly happy.

### CURTAIN FALLS.

### ACT VI.

SCENE—*Betsy and Simon Slimpsey at home.—Eight or nine children in various stages of distress, faces tied up, etc.—Two cradles with children in them.—Betsy sewing—Simon trying to take care of the children.*

*Enter JOSIAH ALLEN.*

JOS. Good mornin', Simon; good mornin', Betsy.

BET. (*Haughtily.*) Excuse my not getting up and setting you a chair, Josiah Allen. Being married, I don't have to be so particular in my manners as I used to. Thank heavens! I can hold my head up now as high as anybody.

JOS. We heard you was all sick up here, and I thought I would come in and see how you was.

BET. Are you not all coming to the reception to-night?

JOS. Yes, I 'spose so; and Samantha told me if there was anything she could do for the children, she would come earlier.

SIMON. I wish she would come and see if something can't be done for 'em. They have all got the mumps and measles, and colic, and everything. And she's to work all the time on her ridin' dress, and fixin' for this doin's of her'n. I tried to have her put it off till five or six of the children got better; but she won't.

BET. No; I told my husband, Mr. Slimpsey, that my dignity as a married woman was at stake. In common times it is well to attend to sickness, but now, dignity and style both demand that I recieve to night.

JOS. Wall; Samantha will come right over.

BET. Tell her Mrs. Simon Slimpsey will be glad to see her; formally Bobbett. (*Exit Josiah, and soon Samantha comes in followed by Miss Gowdy and Mrs. Elder Peedick.*)

MISS G. How do you do, Betsey ?

BET. (*Coldly, holding out her hand, but not rising.*) I am glad you come early, Sophronia. I want you to feel free with me, just as if I was not married. I shall still associate with my old friends. I don't mean to show out no more haughtiness than I can help. I have told my husband, Mr. Slimpsey, that I should not turn my back on all single women now, if I was rose above 'em in station. Help yourself to some chairs. (*They sit down and Samantha and Mrs. Peedick each of them take up a child on their laps*)

SAM. How are the children now ?

SIMON. The seventh boy is worse, and the twin girls are took down with it. It would be a melancholly pleasure if you could do something for 'em.

SAM. Have they been sweat ?

BET. No ; I told my husband, Mr. Slimpsey, that I would not sweat them until after our reception. Sweating children is more or less depressing in its effects, and I felt that I needed all my youthful spirits and energies to support the weight of dignity that will enwrap me on this occasion like a mantilly.

MRS. PEEDICK. I sweat Doodle when he had the very oh lord, till the sweat run right off his linement, and blistered both his feet till he couldn't stand up on em ; and I shall probably try to make Elder Peedick jest as comfortable when he is sick. But, oh Doodle, Doodle ; your relict never can forget you, never.

SAM. Chirk up Miss Peedick ; don't try to be a widder and a wife at the same time. Don't try to be a mourner for one man and a bride to another man simultanius. It is jest an on-reasonable as it would be to try to set down and stand up at once. Betsey, have you give 'em any smart weed ?

BET. No ; If my husband, Mr. Slimpsey, approves, I shall probably s eep up some after the reception, and after I complete this riding dress. I have had to write a poem to read upon this occasion. 'A Him of victory,' and it has hindered me about my dress. I *need* it, for I shall want to ride out and take the air as soon as the children get well, for eyen married people cannot breathe without air, and I wan't to finish this for my first appearance on horseback after marriage. I have nothing to wear suitable for a bride, and this pale-plue cambric trimmed with otter color, will be becomin' to me, and very dressy. I knew a good deal would be expected of me in my changed circumstances. I shall probably attract a great deal of at'ntion.

MISS G. I should think you would, ridin' that old horse of your'n. His ribs look like wash-boards.

SAM. I should jest as lives ride a case-knife.

MISS G. Most dead with blind staggers and lame as he can be, a stumblin' and a fallin' all the time.

BET. I got something now to sustain me and hold me up, if horses do fall under me. They may lame me, but I have got a dignity, now, Sophronia, that horses cannot give neither can they take away. I'm married now. (*Simon groans*). I shall also appear at conference meeting next Sunday evening for the first time after marriage. There is one thing I feel as if I must say in public at once, and that is, that I believe in the perseverance of saints.

MISS G. *Saints!*

BET. I will now go and make a few changes in my toilet for the occasion. (*She goes out carrying her riding-dress*)

SAM. I havn't seen you before, Simon since your marriage

SIMON. I knew it would come to this, Miss Allen; I told you how it would be. She always said it was her spear to marry, and I knew I should be the one; I always was the one.

SAM. Does she use you well, Simon.

SIMON. She's pretty hard on me. I hain't had my way in anything sense the day she married me. She began to hold my nose to the grindstone, as the sayin' is, before we had been married two hours; and she hain't no house-keeper, or cook. I have had to live on pan-cakes 'most of the time since it took place, and they're tougher than leather. I have been 'most tempted to cut some out of my boot-leg, to see if they wouldn't be tenderer; but I never should hear the last of it if I did. She jaws me awfully, and orders me 'round as if I was a dog. If I was a yeller dog she couldn't seem to look down on me more, and treat me any worse.

SAM. Wall; I always did mistrust them wimmen that don't want any rights, only to cling and coo. But I don't want to run anybody to their back. She thought it was her spear to marry.

SIMON. I told you that spear of her'n would destroy me, and it has. (*He weeps*)

(*Enter Betsey, with several pairs of ragged pantaloons to mend over her arm, and several sheets of foolscap paper in her hand.*)

BET. I thought perhaps I could get a few minutes to sew before the arrival of our guests. I have 7 pairs of pantaloons to mend before I retiah. Children wear out clothing so rapidly,



and our children seem to make a specialty of ripping and tearing. We have been obliged to put two of them to bed on that account, and they are swearing now violently in bed, at their step mother, because I have not been able to mend their clothes in time for the reception.

SAM. Are you happy, Betsey?

BET. I am at rest; more at rest than I have been for years!

MISS G. (*Looking round at the sick children and taking up the ragged pantaloons and looking at them:*) At rest!

SAM. Are you happy, Betsey?

BET. I feel awful dignified. There is not any use in a woman's trying to feel dignified until she is married. I have tried it and I know. I can truly say, Josiah Allen's wife, that I never knew what dignity was until one week ago last Sunday night, at half-past 7 in the evening.

SAM. Are you happy, Betsey?

BET. I have got something to lean on.

SAM. Don't lean too hard, Betsey.

BET. Why?

SAM. You may be sorry if you do. Do you love your husband, Betsey?

BET. I don't think love is necessary. I am married, and that is enough to satisfy any woman who is more or less reasonable—that is the main and important thing; as I have said, love and respect are miners.

MISS G. *Miners!*

WID. D. My Doodle never called it a miner; and he worshiped the ground I walked on, and the neighbors all said he did; they said he loved the ground better than he did me, but he didn't, he worshiped us both.

SAM. *Miners.* Betsey Bobbett.

BET. Mrs. Betsey Bobbett Slimpsey.

SAM. Wall, Mrs. Betsey Slimpsey, there hain't no more beautiful sight on earth than to see two human souls out of pure love to each other gently approaching each other as if they must; and, at last, all their hopes and thoughts and affections running together like two drops of water in a morning glory blow, and to see them nestling there, not caring for nobody outside the blow, bound up in each other till the sun evaporates 'em as it were, and draws 'em together up into the heavens, not separating 'em even up there. Why such a marriage

as that is a sight that does men and angels good to look at. But when a woman sells herself, swops her purity, her self-respect, her truth and her soul, for any kind of barter, such as a home, a few thousand dollars, the name of being married, a horse and buggy, some jewelry, etc.; and not only sells herself, but worse than the Turk wimmen, goes 'round herself hunting up a buyer: crazy, wild-eyed, afraid she won't find none—Suppose she does have a minister for a salesman—my contempt for such a female is inmitigable.

MISS G. And so is mine.

WID. D. And so would my Doodleles have been; you could see that by his linement.

SAM. And I don't want to hear such wimmen talk about infamy. For in what respect are they better than these other infamous wimmen weall despise? Do you 'spose their standin' up in front of a minister and tellin' a few lies, such as I promise to love a man I hate, and honor a man I despise, and obey a man I calculate to make toe the mark? Do you 'spose these few lies make 'em any purer in the sight of God? Marriage is like baptism, as I have said mor'n a hundred times. You have got to have the inward grace and the outward form to make it lawful and right. What good does the water do if your soul hain't baptized with the love of God? It hain't no better than fallin' into the creek

BET. Some of us married folks feel differently, Josiah Allen's wife. Let me read to you a short poem of 20 or 30 verses written recently by a married woman, by she that was formerly Betsey Bobbett, now Mrs. Simon Slimpsey. I am to read it to the reception to-night, but I think it will be well for me to read it over so I can deliver it more eloquently. Hear my Bridal Owed, hear my Him of Victory

SAM. How can I be calm and hear it? Oh, John Rogers! and Foxes Martyrs! how I sympathize with you.

MRS. P. Oh, Doodle! Doodle! what shall I do to do right?

SAM. (*In a low tone*) Nine children, and one at the breast! Thumb screws and grid-irons! (*Speaking in her usual tone.*) No, I will not ontie myself from this stake of martyrdom. I will cling to duty's appon strings. Simon, if I was in your place, I should sweat the five biggest boys to-night, and most of the girls. I should give the twins and the smallest girls some strong smartweed tea, and I should let the rest of 'em be till the Dr. comes. Betsey I will hear the him. (*Simon groans, and burys his face in his handkerchief. Betsey rises and reads:*)

Once grief did rave about my lonely head,

(*Here two of the children pull at her dress and ask for water, and one*

*says*: Gimme a piece of bread'n butter. *She tells them to get it themselves, and then resumes her reading.*)

Once grief did rave about my lonely head;  
Once I did droop, as droops a drooping willow bough;  
Once I did tune my liah to doleful strains—

*(One of the children calls out)* Say, can't you gimme somethin' to eat, I'm most starved. *(Another says)* Won't you lemme have some? Say, won't you lemme? *(Another, in a loud defiant tone)* Gimme some; gimme some quick.

BET. *(To one of the children)* Bring me my thimble. *(He brings it and she puts it on and snaps their heads with it, and they cry and go into a corner and make up faces at her and one of them pinches the child in the cradle, and he kicks against it and yells.)*

Once I did tune my liah to doleful strains,  
'Tis past, for Betsey Slimpsey, formally Bobbett,  
is married now.

*(Here Simon groans so loud that Betsey stops and says):* Husband keep still and listen to your wife's him of victory!

No trouble now can touch my haughty head,  
I no humiliation never more shall know  
Sorrow stand off, my tears have all been shed,  
For Mrs. Betsey Bobbett Slimpsey's married now.

MRS. PEEDICK. I think I shall have to go Betsey, it is getting late, and being a bride myself, I want to make some changes in my clothing. I shall wear my wedding dress. It is black and white lawn even checks. I wanted to look sort of bridy, and still I wanted to mourn a little at the same time. The white checks means Elder Peedick, the black checks stands for Doble. For oh, what a man that was.

SAM. Miss Peedick if you don't take my advice, you'll see trouble ahead on you. When a widder man or a widder woman, embarks on a new voyage, let 'em burn the ship behind 'em that they sailed round in, in their former voyages. This trying to be a pardner and a mourner at one time is gaulin' to man or woman. Mournin' for Doodle was jest as honorable as anything could be; marryin' Elder Peedick was another honorable job, and you ort to made up your mind which business would be the most 'happyfyin' and profitable to you, and then foller it up with a willin' mind, but don't try to do both. Betsey, we will be here in good season. I have got a nice present for you, but bein' pretty hefty, I shant probably bring it to-night. It's a piller case full of dried apples and a jar of butter. Josiah will bring a sack of flour.

*Exit SAMANTHA, MRS. PEEDICK and MISS G.*

BET. Come, Mr. Slimpsey, stand up here by me and receive our bridal congratulations.

SIMON. You know I can't stand up, Betsey, not for any length of time, most dead with the rheumatiz.

BET. My husband, you must.

SIMON. Why can't you stand up there alone and lemme be. I wish you would. I wanted you to go off on a weddin' tower; you was crazy for one and I told you to go, and I'd stay to home and tend to things, and the longer you stayed the better I'd like it. But no, you wouldn't go unless I went, and now you want to make me stand up there by you half the night, when you know it is all I can do to get up onto my feet any way. You don't seem to have no mercy on me at all, orderin' me round all the time.

(*One of the children looking out :*) There is a hull lot of folks a comin'.

BET. Husband, you *must* get up; our bridal guests are arrivin'.

SIMON. Wall then, give me my cane, and I'll try it

BET. And your raiment is disordered; it looks bad.

SIMON. It looks as well as I feel, I know that. (*They stand up, Betsey haughtily erect, Simon leaning on his cane, and occasionally shedding tears They all bring presents, the more ridiculous the better. Josiah brings a sack of flour; Dr Bombas brings a large bottle of medicine; the Editor of the Augur a file of the Augurs etc Thomas Jank Tirzah Ann comes in first, congratulates them*)

BET. (*proudly*) I thank you, Mr. Allen. I thank you Miss Allen.

SIMON. (*mournfully*) I told your mother how it would be

BET. (*hunching him, whispers*) How you act! Do put on some style; thank him.

SIMON. Much ob'eeded. I knew— (*He stops and wipes his eyes Betsey reproves him for his actions, and just then Elder Peedick and wife enter.*)

ELD. P. My wife, Miss Peedick

SIMON. (*Grasping her hand*) Widder, you can feel for me; you have seen trouble.

MRS. P. Oh yes, I see trouble when I lost Doodle.

ELD. P. (*frowning*) Miss Peedick, the subject of Doodle, hain't at all appropriate for the occasion. (*Several come up and wish them joy, at last Shakespeare Bobbett.*)

S. B. I wish you joy, Mr. Slimpsey.

SIMON. Oh yes; keep on! keep it up!

DR. B. Mr. and Mrs. Slimpsey, I wish you prosperity and health. I can safely promise you the latter (*waving his hand towards the medicine*) Take it according to directions, 40 drops every half hour, and if you don't get better send for me. *Dies irae anno domini.* Excuse dead language

SIMON. Oh yes; I'll excuse it. I believe it is better off than we be. (*Editor of Augur and bride come last.*)

ED. Accept my hearty congratulations. I can truly say that I never felt more heartfelt happiness and relief than on this occasion.

SIMON. Well you may feel happy; well you may.

ED. I am not a natural singer, in fact, my efforts in that direction have always been of such a nature as to cause sadness to my best friends; but on this occasion I feel like bursting forth into song. And we will now with the permission of Mr. and Mrs. Slimpsey, greet them with a bridal song.

BET. Oh, yes; sing to us some rejoicing anthem, or some sweet and tender love song.

SIMON. Can't you sing China?

ED. Why, that is a funeral hymn, Mr. Slimpsey.

SIMON. I know it has been used as such, but it seems as if it would be a sort of a melancholy pleasure to me to hear it now. But I hain't peticular; sing anything—sing, if you feel like it.

MRS. P. They sung China to Doodles funeral.

ELD. P. (*Looking very angry*) Doodles name hain't no name to be used on this occasion, Miss Peedick. I wish to gracious that I could get five minutes rest from Doodle.

MRS. P. Wall he had a beautiful linement on him.

ELD. P. (*very cross*) What if he had?

MRS. P. But you have got a beautiful linement, too. You are what would be called very handsome.

ELD. P. (*sweetly*) You are a sensible woman, Miss Peedick. You are a lovely woman. Every day of your life you make me think more and more of the corpse. But I suppose they are waiting for me to pitch the tune. Being leader of the quire they naturally lean on me for harmony. So we will now sing the bridal song, kindly arranged for this happy occasion by the Editor of the *Augur*. (*They all sing to the tune of the jubilee song, 'Mary and Martha's just gone along'*)

Betsey Bobbett's married now,  
 Betsey Bobbett's married now,  
 Betsey Bobbett's married now,  
 So ring the marriage bells. (*Simon groans*).

It is the way she long has sought.  
 And mourned because she found it not,  
 But now she's reached that blissful lot;  
 So ring her wedding bells. (*Simon groans and buries his  
 face in his handkerchief*).

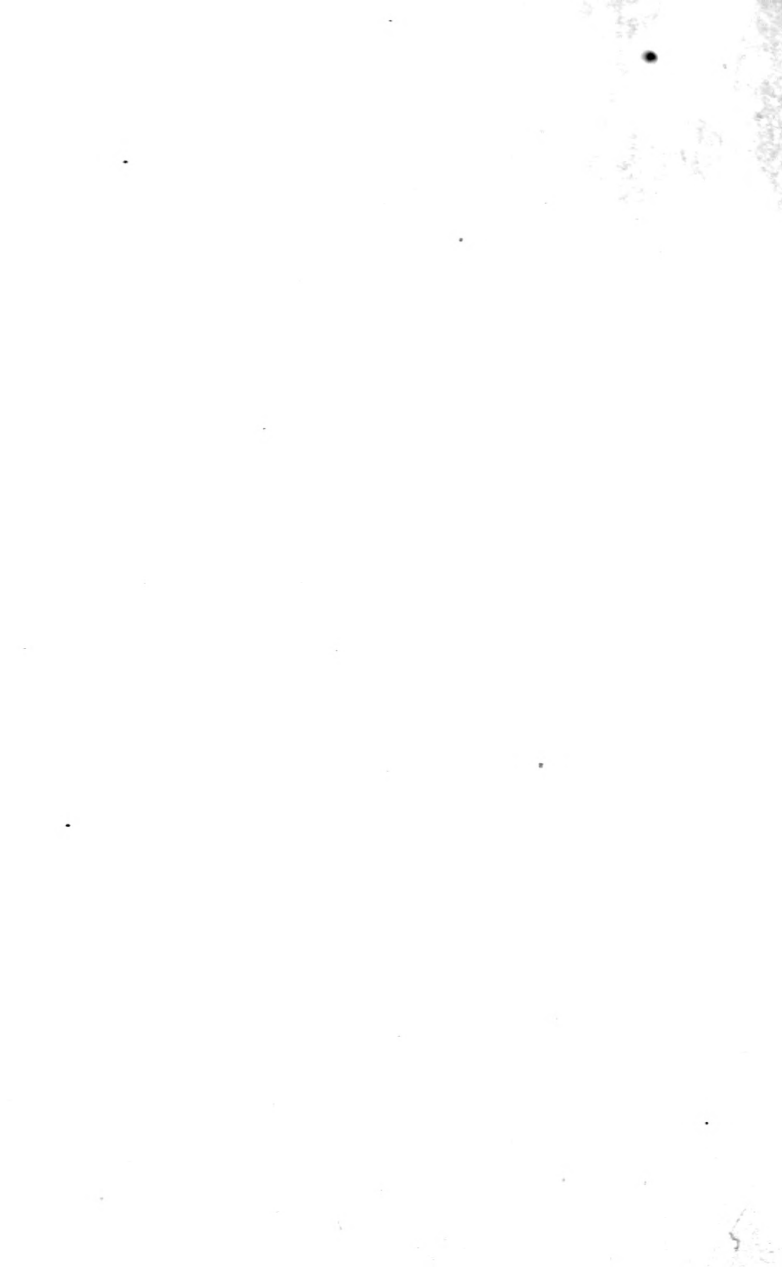
'Tis Betsey Bobbett Slimpsey, how,  
 With joy she took that blessed vow,  
 She's Simon's wife forever now;  
 So ring their wedding bells.

(*Simon uncovers his face and says in a heart broken tone*): Couldn't  
 you toll the bells? But I don't want to make no trouble. I  
 don't feel like arguin', ring 'em if you drather, ring 'em if you  
 feel like it. (*They pay no attention to him, and he covers his face with  
 his handkerchief again and weeps aloud; they turn to the audience and  
 sing*):

Good night, and pleasant dreams,  
 Hearts full of sunny gleams;  
 Good nig<sup>ht</sup>, and happy dreams,  
 And ring ye merry bells.



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