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ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE.

THE
AMATEUR
DRAMA.

LITTLE

BROWN JUG



BOSTON :
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149 Washington Street.



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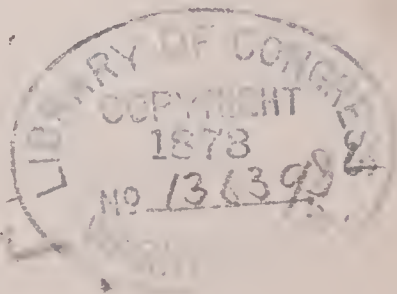
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LITTLE BROWN JUG.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

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George Melville Baker

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unreadable

THE LITTLE BROWN JUG.

a 74 P 20 Oct 1897

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

JOHN NUTTER, a Shoemaker.
WILL NUTTER, his Son.
NED HARTSHORN, his Apprentice.
HENRY DOUGLAS, a Spendthrift.
JARIUS JORDAN, a Yankee Speculator.
HANNAH NUTTER, John's Wife.
MARY NUTTER, John's Daughter.
SALLY PEESLEE, Yankee Help.

COSTUMES.

JOHN. Act 1, Bald, gray wig, gray side whiskers, dark pants, colored shirt, sleeves rolled up, leather apron. Act 2, Drab clothes, calico dressing gown. Act 3, same as Act 2.

WILL. Act 1, Dark pants, colored shirt, sleeves rolled up, leather apron, short coat to put on. Act 2, Rusty velvet coat, flaming necktie, dark pants and vest, gold chain, jockey cap, all soiled and worn. Act 3, Neat and tasty dress.

NED. Act 1, About the same as Will's. Act 2, Dark pants, white shirt, with black tie, dressing-gown. Act 3, Neat business suit.

DOUGLAS. Fashionable dress for each act. Liberal display of jewelry. Kids, hat, and cane.

JARIUS. Act 1, Rusty dark pants, very short, swallow-tailed blue coat, long red hair, shocking bad hat, unblackened boots. Act 2 and 3, Good business suits and hats, neatly arranged hair, polished boots, dress not dandified, but neat and substantial.

HANNAH. Act 1 and 2, Plain calico dresses. Act 3, white dress.

MARY. Act 1, Red or brown dress, white collar, neat apron, sleeves rolled up. Act 2, Figured muslin. Act 3, White.

SALLY. Act 1, Calico dress, white collar and cuffs, bonnet or hat. Acts 2 and 3, Neat calico or muslin.

ACT 1. SCENE. — NUTTER'S *Shop*. *Door, C., open, L. of door, against flat, shoemaker's bench, on which sits NUTTER, at work. Bench, R., on which NED HARTSHORN is at work. Bench, L., on which WILL NUTTER is at work. JARIUS JORDAN seated on a block, R. C., with his hat on, whittling, with a stick and large jack-knife.*

John. Wal, neow, Jarius, depend upon it, there's nothin' like a stiddy, in-door-work life to give a man position in the world. Yeou city fellers may do all the schemin' yeou like; but when the time comes for action, it's the farmers and the shoemakers that find the bone and sinew to keep the world a joggin, whether in provisions or politics. You peddle, and we provide; you scheme, and we vote. My grandsir was a shoemaker, so was my daddy, so am I, and I mean that my boy Will, there, shall foller in the footsteps of his father. P'raps 'tain't what you might call a high calling; but boots and shoes, taps and patches, are always wanted, and

will be jest as long as gincration succeeds gincration ; and when you've got a trade like mine, p'raps you can't hoard up much money, but you've got a sure hold on the staff of life.

Jarius. Jes' so, John, jes' so ; that's mighty good argifying, if a feller critter hain't got no soul above peggin' souls. But that air Will of yourn has got the city fever the wust kind. He's hankering for a chance to try his fortune among the money-catchers. Consarn it, give the boy a chance. There's no hay-seed in his hair.

Will. That's right, Jarius ; peg away. I never shall take kindly to this work. Hammer and sew, patch and peg. Bah ! I'm tired of it ! It's so awful slow ! I want to see the world, rub elbows with bustling fellows, set my wits at work, use my tongue, wrestle with sharp ones for the best end of a bargain. That's life !

Jarius. Jes' so. You're a lively young colt — you are. It's a shame you can't have a prance in the city.

John. Yes ; you're a pretty chap to set a lad's head a whizzing — you are, Jarius Jordan. You've been everything by turn, and nothing long.

Jarius. Jes' so, John, jes so. But I calkilate that with every turn I've give myself a h'ist in the world, anyhow. I've peddled tin ware, wooden ware, hardware, everywhere. I've swapped horses, traded in cattle, druv hogs, and raised poultry. I've invented cotton gius, reapers, and mowers, cider presses and match safes, travelled with pictures, poetry books, stationery, and Bibles. I've dug gold, mined copper, and bored ile ; fit Ingins, Mexicans, and sesesh ; kept school, led a choir, taught singing-school, been a deacon in regular standing. I've been a

printer, a book-binder, a counter-jumper, and an insurance agent, and other things too numerous to mention. There's three things I never took a hand in — swearin', lyin', and drinkin'. I've got a clean conscience and a bank-book full of figgers. I despise meanness, hate misers, and am down on rascality like all possessed. So, you see, John, with all my rolling, I've gathered *some* moss, and am none the wuss for it.

Will. No, indeed. There's not a better fellow living than Jarius Jordan.

Jarius. O, git eout! Don't yeou go to tootin' the horn.

Ned. It's the truth. 'Twould have been a hard winter for widow Black, but for the kind care Jarius Jordan bestowed upon her.

Jarius. Sho! Don't you tell tales out of school, young feller.

Will. Then there's old Pearson. Who'd have kept him out of the poor-house, when he broke his leg, if Jarius Jordan hadn't stepped in, housed him all winter, and paid the doctor's bill?

Jarius. O, go along! D'ye want to spile my complexion? Now, John, you just give Will a chance. You'll never regret it.

John. I tell you, what's good enough for the old man is good enough for the boy. I'll never give my consent to his going into the city — never. I'm not going to send my boy into that sink of iniquity, to be overcome by temptation. So you jest shut up, Jarius. I've got an awful temper, and if you rile me, I won't answer for the consequences.

Jarius. Jes' so. But, speaking of temptations —

Enter HANNAH, L., with a small brown jug.

Hannah. Here, father, here's your "'leven o'clock."

John. (*Dropping his work, and taking the jug.*) Ah, that's good.

Hannah. Why, law sakes, Mr. Jerden!* How do you do? The sight of you's good for sore eyes.

Jarius. Thank you, marm. I'm pretty well, considerin'. Hope you're hearty.

Hannah. Me? Sakes alive! I never had an ache or a pain in my life, and I'm goin' on for sixty. There's nothin' like good, wholesome work to keep off sickness.

Jarius. Jes so, Mrs. Nutter.

"Rubbin' and scrubbin'
Gives rust a drubbin'."

John. (*After a long pull at the jug.*) Ah, that's good! The raal Holland, sweetened to taste, and rousing hot! Take a pull, Jarius?

Jarius. No, I thank ye.

John. (*Takes a drink.*) Ah! Here, Will. (*Passes jug to WILL, who grasps it eagerly, and drinks.*)

Jarius. Sho! Yeou ain't a going to drink that stuff!

Will. Stuff? Hullo!

John. Stuff? Hear the critter!

Hannah. Stuff, indeed! When I mixed it myself, and in the little brown jug, that's been in the family years and years!

* Hannah and Sally should follow this pronunciation.

Jarius. Jes' so. The jug is a relic?

Hannah. Yes, indeed; and we wouldn't part with it for the world. It's been handed down from father to son ever since the first Nutter landed in America.

John. And used year in and year out. It's seasoned with the good grog of five generations.

Jarius. Jes' so. Seen some tight times, I reckon. Come, Ned, it's your turn.

Ned. No, I thank you. I never drink.

Will. (*Drinks.*) No? I stand his watch.

Jarius. Jes' so. So Ned don't like it, hey?

Ned. Ned never tasted it, Mr. Jordan. My poor mother's last request was that I should never touch it. Don't you think a mother's last request should be sacred?

Jarius. Don't I? As sacred as the family Bible.

Ned. As sacred as the memory of the loved and lost. I had a good mother, Mr. Jordan.

Jarius. Jes so. You show it.

Hannah. Yes, indeed; a poor, hard-working woman was Marcy Hartshorn: the best washer and ironer in the place; and such a cook! Her pies would make your mouth water. And turnovers! the young ones would cry for them. O, dear! such a pity she threw herself away on that drunken sot — Jim Hartshorn. Why, when he died —

John. Hush, mother, hush!

Hannah. Dear me! I forgot. But it always makes me mad when I think — (*sniffs*). Bless me! What's that? (*Sniffs.*) I smell something.

Jarius. Jes' so — gin and sugar.

Hannah. It's my pies a-burning, as sure as I live! And I here gossiping. O, dear! there's a whole ovenful spoiled by my neglect! [Exit, L.

John. Don't mind her, Ned. She didn't mean to hurt your feelings. She'd do anything in the world for you.

Ned. I know she would. Heaven bless her! You see, Mr. Jordan, liquor has left a stain on my family name; and I'm not likely to be friendly with it.

Jarius. Jes' so. Stick to the last request, young feller, and you'll wipe it out. And if ever you want a friend, don't forget the undersigned, Jarius Jordan, for you'll find him on hand, like a picked-up dinner.

John. There; that job's done. Here, Will, drop that jug. It's a leetle strong to-day. Put on your coat, and take these shoes to Mrs. Douglas.

Will. (*Rises while speaking, takes off apron, puts on coat and hat, sets the jug on the floor beside JOHN NUTTER'S bench.*) That's just the job for me. Hen Douglas sent me word he wanted to see me. So I can kill two birds with one stone. (*Takes shoes.*) The Holland is a leetle strong, and no mistake. [Exit, C.

Jarius. See here, John Nutter, I'm a b'ilin' and a b'ilin', an' if I don't let off steam, there'll be a case of spontaneous combustion in my in'ards. You're a good deal older than I am; but we've been good friends ever since I was knee high to a woodchuck; so, hear me fust, and lick me arterwards, if you don't like it. Here you've been a talking about the temptations of the city, and putting that inter your boy's mouth that will work his eternal destruction! Your little brown jug will be his evil genius. Mind what I say. He hankers arter it now;

and you, here in the country, are tempting him, and making an appetite that'll eat him up soul and body. And now he's off to meet that air Douglas, who always has a bottle at his elbow. He's a dangerous chap.

John. Much you know about it. He's Will's friend. He's taken a shine to him, and, if I'd say the word, would give him a great lift in the city. He's a well-meaning chap, that Douglas. He's got a rich father, and need not work. He's well educated, and has got good manners. Will's all the better for being in company with such a man. As for the little brown jug, don't abuse that. It never did me any harm, and I was as young as Will when I took my first pull at it. So, don't you meddle, Jarius. When I find things going wrong in my family, I'll take 'em in hand myself.

Jarius. Jes' so. Look here, John. I've taken a fancy to that boy myself. Give me his time, and I'll put in your hand, to-day, five hundred dollars, and guarantee you a thousand more, if I don't make a man of him when he's twenty-one.

John. (*Rising.*) You can't have him. I've just had enough of your meddling. If I wanted him to go, I'd make terms with Mr. Douglas, and not you. He shall never go with my leave; and he knows that if he goes without, he never returns here. You're pretty flush with your money, Jarius, but you haven't enough to buy that boy's time, nor logic enough, sharp as you think yourself, to turn my purpose. [*Exit, L.*

Jarius. Jes' so. Stubborn as a mule. Douglas will get that boy in spite of thunder. I do hate to see that young feller go to the dogs; as he's sure to do if some-

thing don't hinder. He's jest the chap to go into Stinson's good graces, and gain a complete knowledge of agricultural implements in his concern, and jest the lad to keep a sharp eye on my interest in the patent reaper. I do hate to get encred; but old Nutter's a hard lot when he gets his back up.

Enter SALLY, C.

Sally. Goodness gracious! If I've been here once, I've been here twenty times for Mrs. Douglas's shoes, and she ravin' distracted about 'em! Such a dawdlin' set as you shoemakers are! — Sakes, Mr. Jerden, heow dew yeou dew? I didn't see yeou before.

Jarius. (*On her entrance puts up his knife, takes off his hat, and tries to smooth his hair, and appears very sheepish and awkward while she remains.*) Jes' so, Miss Higgins; business first, and pleasure arterwards.

Ned. Don't fret about the shoes, Sally. Will has just taken them to the house.

Sally. Well, thank goodness, that's settled.

Jarius. Heow's yeour marm, Miss Peeslee?

Sally. Rather peaked, Mr. Jerden; and jest when I ought to be at home, I'm kept at the big house and worked like a dog. Such a set of cross-grained folks you never did see. Old Mr. Douglas as proud and stiff as a gran-ydear, Mrs. Douglas frettin' and worryin' the livelong day about nothin', and that good-for-nothin' Hen of theirs a carryin' on all sorts of didos. He and the old gentleman had an awful quarrel this mornin'. Somehow Mr. Douglas got it into his head that Hen was sparking Mary

Nutter in airnest. Don't believe such a notion ever entered the feller's head afore. He's only flirtin' with her, same as he has with twenty other girls; but, to spite the old man, he swore — O, awful! — he'd marry her, if he was turned out of doors for it.

Ned. He marry our Mary!

Sally. Why not? He's none too good for her.

Ned. She's too good for him.

Sally. Why, Ned, you ain't sweet on her — are you?

Ned. Me? I should not dare. But he's a worthless spendthrift, thinks only of his own pleasure, regardless of others' feelings, selfish, dissipated, cunning, and crafty. He marry Mary! Heaven forbid!

Jarius. Jes' so. He cuts a mighty big swell on an awful small capital.

Sally. He's good looking, and that goes a long way with girls. I don't think Mary would break her heart if she knew she was to be his wife.

Ned. No; but, once in his possession, he would break it. Many whispers of his wild life in the city have been blown to our ears.

Sally. He's a communion merchant — ain't he?

Ned. A commission merchant, Sally.

Jarius. Jes' so. I've heard of him. He's got a a shingle, a desk, and a chair. The shingle hangs at the door; he sits in the chair and watches his legs on the desk, through tobacco smoke; and that's the extent of his business.

Sally. He wants to take Will Nutter off there, to learn the business.

Jarius. Jes' so. And, with the edication he's receiving here, he'll make a capital assistant in the smoking department.

Sally. Land sakes! I can't stop here spinning shop yarn. Good by. Nothing new — is there? I haven't been out of the house for a week.

Jarius. Nothing special, Miss Peeslee. Harris has lost the suit and the cow.

Sally. I want to know!

Jarius. Mrs. Prime as buried her husband last week; has gone to Jarsey to modify her grief.

Sally. Poor Mrs. Prime! How I pity her!

Jarius. Jes' so. She lost a prime husband, that's a fact. He was the best feller on a fishing frolic you ever see. Parson Lucas has resigned, and they do say the parish is resigned to his resigning, too. They've got a new bell-rope onto the second parish. Mrs. Jones's expectations has turned out a bouncing boy —

Sally. What! another?

Jarius. That's what they say. Molly Moses had a candy scrape last night, and Si Jones went home with his hair full. Bunsen has got a new lot of calicoes — prime ones, fast colors. And Joe Britton has killed his hog. But there's no news.

Sally. No weddin', no nothin'? I don't hear anythiu' about your marriage, Mr. Jerden.

Jarius. Don't you? Well, that's queer. I ben about it every time I come home. But it's all talk and no cider. No, Miss Peeslee, I'm an unplucked apple on the tree of life. But, to return the compliment, I don't hear nothin' 'bout your gittin' spliced.

Sally. Me? I guess not. It's time enough to think about that when mother is able to take care of herself. I won't say I haven't had a chance, Mr. Jerden; but my first duty is to her; and I mean to work my fingers to the bone, if need be, that the old home may shelter her as long as she lives.

Jarius. Jes' so. So you gave Si Slocum the mitten?

Sally. Yes, I did, — the worthless scamp!

Jarius. Then Deacon Sassafras wanted you to take the place of his late departed — didn't he?

Sally. He wanted a drudge, the mean old skinflint!

Jarius. Why, he's rich — the deacon is.

Sally. But awful mean. I don't see how they trust him up behind the singing-seats with the contribution box Sundays. I wouldn't.

Jarius. Jes' so. Josh Higgins was kinder smitten one time — hey, Miss Peeslee.

Sally. Well, p'raps he was, and p'raps he wasn't. He was too much smitten with whiskey for me.

Jarius. Jes' so. Well, Sally — Miss Peeslee — you're a smart gal; and if I want so pesky busy with my new reaper — I'd — I'd —

Sally. Well, what would you do, Mr. Jerden?

Jarius. I'd jest look round and pick out a smart husband for you.

Sally. You needn't trouble yourself, Mr. Jerden. I can pick for myself when I git ready. Better be lookin' out for yourself. You do want slicking up, and a wife would soon reduce that crop of hair to its proper dimensions, mend that hole in your elbow, iron out that ruffled, seedy-looking hat, and find a blacking-brush for

those rusty boots. If I wasn't so busy, Jarius — Mr. Jerden — I'd look round and find you a wife, for you do need one awfully. [Exit, G.]

Jarius. Jes' so. Neow there's a gal I've been hankerin' arter for five years, and never so much as dared ask her to lecter or singin'-school. Consarn it, Jarius, you're a mealy-mouthed critter among the gals, smart as you are at tradin' and swappin'. It's no sorter use; the minute that gal comes a-near me, there's a sinkin' at my stomach that no end of vittles can't fill up. Smart? Why, she beats all nater; and I kinder think she likes me, and gin those chaps the go-by on my account. Come, come, Jarius, spunk up! Don't be a fool! Say the word, and she's yourn for better or for wus. I'll put arter her, and spit it out to once. *(Goes to door, c.)*

Enter SALLY, c.

Sally. Here, Ned; I forgot to pay for the boots. *(Gives money.)*

Ned. One dollar. All right. Thank you, Sally.

Sally. Was you going my way, Mr. Jerden?

Jarius. Yes — no — no. I was going to see Joe Bristles' hog.

Sally. O, yes. "Birds of a feather," you know. [Exit, c. to R.]

Jarius. Jes' so. Consarn it, Jarius, you are a hog, and no mistake. [Exit c. to L.]

Ned. Hen Douglas marry Mary Nutter! O, Heaven forbid! What a dear good girl she is! The sound of her voice, as she merrily sings at her work, sets my hammer flying glibly, and my heart beating quickly, too.

'Twill be called a good match, for he has money, and she is the most capable girl in the place. She would grace the handsomest house that his money could furnish. But could he make her happy? He, with his foppish airs, his love of display, delight in reckless dissipation! No, no. He would tire of her in a week, and then, with some new fancy luring him, turn coldly from her, perhaps abuse her, and break her heart. Break her heart! O, Mary, Mary! For the first time in my life I long for wealth, for then I should have the power to enter the field, and, if I could not win you for myself, at least save you from a heartless man.

Mary. (*Outside, L., sings.*)

“Come, arouse thee, arouse thee,
My merry Swiss maid;
Take thy *pail*, and to labor away.”

Enter, L., with pail.

Ah, Ned, all alone, and still at work? The old adage will never do for you — “When the cat’s away, the mice will play.”

Ned. No, indeed, Mary. I like work too well to slight it when the master’s eye is not upon me. It’s such a jolly companion! With every peg I drive away poverty; with every punch of my awl I see success; with every pull of the threads I gain a long pull and a strong pull up the ladder of life. O, work is a man’s best friend, and when he turns his back upon that, he richly deserves what he is sure to get — a gloomy life and a nameless grave.

Mary. Well done, Ned!

“ With bench for horse, and awl for lance,
Through stubborn leather you gayly prance;
Shouting your war-cry, with cheery ring,
‘ Make way, make way for the shoemaker king!’ ”

Ned. Mary, Mary, don't laugh at me!

Mary. Laugh at you? No, indeed; not I. You were philosophical, so I, to keep you company, became poetical. But you're right, Ned, as you always are. Work has been your best friend, for it has enabled all of us to find in you its best companion — merit.

Ned. Ah! thank you, Mary. If you only knew how proud I feel to hear you praise me!

Mary. If I did? Why, then, I suppose I should feel it my duty to be silent. So don't let me know it. Good by.

Ned. Where are you going?

Mary. To the well for water.

Ned. No; I'll go for you. (*Jumping up.*) Give me the pail.

Mary. Thank you. (*Gives pail. Ned goes to door.*) I say, Ned, ain't you afraid to leave your awl behind?

Ned. (*At door.*) Mary, you're laughing at me. — (*Aside.*) She little knows I leave my *all* — my heart — behind. [*Exit, L.*

Mary. (*Sits on bench.*) Dear fellow! What a shame his father turned out so bad! And no mother to care for him! (*Takes up lapstone and strap.*) I wonder what kind of a shoemaker I should make! (*Takes awl.*) Dear me, I've pricked my finger! Where's the hammer?

O, here it is. I don't believe it's very hard work to mend a shoe. As he is doing my work, I should be doing his. I wonder where he left off!

Enter DOUGLAS, C.

Douglas. Beautiful, beautiful!

“ She had a hammer in her hand,
The day when first we met.”

Mary. (*Jumping up.*) Mr. Douglas!

Douglas. Ah, Mary, I've caught you cobbling.

Mary. No, you haven't, for I hadn't commenced.

Douglas. So, so, the pretty Mary has turned cobbler!

Mary. The pretty Mary has done nothing of the kind. She was only amusing herself while waiting —

Douglas. For me — her adorer, who languishes in her absence, and whose heart beats with rapture at sight of her beautiful face.

Mary. Don't, Henry, be so sentimental. You know I don't like it. Why not say, plain and plump, “ I'm glad to see you ! ” instead of all that palaver about languish and heart-beats? You know I don't like it.

Douglas. O, you don't? Then hereafter this rapturous —

Mary. Henry!

Douglas. Mary, I've done. But what in the world were you doing on that dirty bench?

Mary. Well, I never! Dirty, indeed! Sit down there at once!

Douglas. What! I? You're joking.

Mary. Very well, if you don't choose to obey me, I'm off to my work. (*Going, L.*)

Douglas. O, very well, if you mean it. (*Sits on bench.*)

Mary. Now, Henry, I've made a vow that I will never marry a man who cannot mend a shoe. I've just made it. And if you have any expectation of making me your wife, the sooner you learn the trade the better.

Douglas. Well, that's a capital joke, and, egad, I'll humor it. So here goes. (*Takes up lapstone. Drops it on his toes.*) O, murder! I've smashed my toe!

Mary. No matter. Try again.

Douglas. To smash another? No, I thank you. (*Puts lapstone in lap.*) There, that's all right. (*Takes up shoe, puts strap over it.*) How's that?

Mary. Beautiful. You were born to be a shoemaker.

Douglas. I hope not. (*Takes pegs and hammer.*) Now, to drive my first peg. (*Strikes his fingers. NED appears at doorway with pail.*) O, murder! I've smashed my thumb!

Ned. Served you right. meddler.

Douglas. (*Starts up.*) Sir! What's that?

Ned. The truth. You're meddling with my tools; and if you're not out of this place in three seconds, I'll wallop you.

Mary. O, Ned, Ned! it's all my fault. I set him to work.

Ned. O, indeed! That's quite another matter. But he can't stay on my bench.

Douglas. If you're not more civil, *you* won't stay on it long. Mind that, Master Ned.

Ned. What d'ye mean?

Mary. Now, don't quarrel. Bring the pail in for me, Ned. — Mr. Douglas, I'll give you a lesson another time. [*Exit, L.*

Ned. Lesson, indeed! You work with your white hands! Bah, you couldn't earn your salt! [*Exit, L.*

Douglas. Confound that fellow, he puts on more airs than a nabob! He's in the way. Mary is too fond of him; and he, with that jealous glitter in his eye, too much in love with her for my comfort. He must be got rid of. Pshaw, Douglas! What chance could a poor journeyman shoemaker have with the lady of your choice? Rich, accomplished, by no means a bad-looking fellow, the whole family would be delighted to gain so distinguished a connection. And she, I know, looks upon me with favor. I have only to gain the old man's consent. And that's an easy matter. Still, I don't like the idea of this fellow's presence. He must be got rid of. But how? Will! Ah, there's a ready tool. I want him in the city. There's a little sharp practice in which I want a second hand to work; and Will's the lad. If I can only get him to pick a quarrel with Ned Hartshorn, bring them to blows, and thus arouse the old man's temper, they'll both be turned out of doors. Will would be mine, and the other out of the way.

Will. (*Outside. Sings.*)

“ My wife and I live all alone,
In the little brown house we call our own;
She,” &c.

Enters, C., intoxicated.

Hullo, Hen! How are you, Hen? I've been looking for you — I have. Wan't at home. But the bottle was.

I found it in the old spot, so I drank your health. "Here's to Hen Douglas. Hip, hip, hooray!" Hullo, there's the little brown jug! I'll drink your health again. Hip, hip, hooray! (*Drinks.*) I say! what's the matter with you?

Douglas. I have been insulted.

Will. Been what? Say that again. Show me the man, woman, or child that has insulted Hen Douglas, — hip, hip, hooray! — and I'll — I'll wipe him out. Fetch 'em on, one at a time, or all together. I'm the friend of the oppressed — I am. Feel my muscle! so don't you be afraid. Say, who's the feller or fellerers?

Douglas. Fellow, indeed! That miserable whelp, Ned Hartshorn, here in this place, and in the presence of your sister. But I've done with you all. I'll not be disgraced by such associates. Good by, Will. You I like, and if ever you get into trouble, come to me in the city, and I'll stand your friend.

Will. Say! hold on! Let's settle this thing. You shall have satisfaction. If Ned Hartshorn has dared to insult my friend, — my friend, Hen Douglas; hip, hip, hooray! — I'll trounce him. Now you just wait and see me do it. Going to the city? All right. I'll go with you, spite of the old man.

Douglas. No, no, don't pick a quarrel on my account. Perhaps he didn't mean to insult me. Perhaps he was blinded by his love for your sister.

Will. What? Ned Hartshorn in love with my sister! I'll trounce him for that. Now you see me do it. Insult my friend, and in love with my sister! O, I'll fix him!

Douglas. Hush! Here he is.

Enter NED, L.

Ned. Ah, Will, back again?

Will. Ay, back again, you sneaking thief!

Ned. How, Will? You forget yourself.

Will. Indeed! You forgot yourself when you made love to my sister and insulted my friend, you mean, contemptible sneak!

Ned. Will, you've been drinking.

Will. (*Throws off his coat.*) You're right. I've just enough liquid lightning in my hide to rouse my manhood. You've insulted my friend. Beg his pardon at once.

Ned. I shall do nothing of the kind. If he has told you I insulted him, he must have told you, also, that I made love to your sister; and he's a liar.

Douglas. Liar? This to me?

Ned. Ay, to you. 'Tis you who have turned Will's head, you who have tempted him to drink, you who, with a lying tongue, now seek to make us quarrel. Bah! you're a coward! You dare not face me yourself; you dare not ask me to beg your pardon; for, if you did, you know I'd knock you down quicker than I did when you insulted Patty Moore.

Will. But I dare, and mean you shall. So, solemn, pious, temperate Ned Hartshorn, obey at once!

Ned. Will, I'd do anything in reason to oblige *you*. But I can't do that.

Will. Then I'll thrash you within an inch of your life.

Ned. O no, you won't, Will.

Will. I say I will, sneak, coward, son of a drunkard!

Ned. Careful, Will, careful!

Will. Come on. My blood's up. If you won't apologize, you must fight.

Ned. Keep off! keep off, I say! You'll get hurt.

Will. Shall I? I'll risk it. (*They struggle. NED throws WILL across stage. He falls on bench, L.*)

Douglas. That won't do. (*Seizes jug, steps up behind NED, and strikes him on the head. JARIUS appears in the door, C.*)

Ned. O, my head, my head! (*Staggers, and falls on bench, R.*)

Jarius. Jes' so. (*Disappears.*)

Douglas. (*Runs to WILL, and places the jug in his hand.*) Are you hurt, Will?

Will. Hurt? No. Let me come at him. Let me —

Douglas. No, no. You have nearly killed him with the jug.

Will. The jug?

Douglas. Yes; you seized it, and struck him before I could interfere.

Will. Did I? Then I'll give him another.

Enter JOHN, L.

John. What's going on here? Fighting? Ned hurt? Who has done this?

Enter JARIUS, C.

Jarius. (*Goes to NED.*) The boy's senseless. Water, water! quick! (*Enter MARY, L.*) Mary, bring water! quick! Ned's hurt.

Mary. Ned hurt? O, mercy! [*Exit, L.*

John. Who struck him?

Douglas. Will, but quite accidentally: You see, Ned provoked him, and, quite accidentally —

Will. No such thing. Don't play sneak, Hen. I did it, old man, to uphold the honor of the family.

John. Will Nutter, you're drunk.

Will. Drunk yourself, you old fool. O, I ain't afraid of you. I've been tied to your leather apron long enough. Now I'm going to see the world. D'ye hear that, old man? No more pegs for me. You can have the little brown jug to yourself now. I've had a taste of something better — something stronger. It's roused the man in me. So I'm off. Good by.

Enter MARY, L. with water. She runs to NED, and JARIUS and she try to revive NED.

John. Stop, Will Nutter. If you leave this place now, you can never return to it.

Will. That's all right — just the sort. Don't want to see it again. Hope you'll live long and prosper, and, when you die, leave a nice little fortune to yours, truly. Good by.

Douglas. Don't mind him, sir. I'll take care of him. You see how he is. Come, Will. (*Drags him to the door, c.*)

Will. I say, old man, I'm off to fame and fortune.

John. Fame and fortune? Disgrace and infamy! Will, I'll give you one more chance. Return to your bench, and all shall be forgotten. Leave this place now, and its doors shall never be opened to you again, though you were dying on the doorstep. Choose now, and choose quickly.

Will. Quick enough. I'm off.

John. Then go; and, as you desert me, may you, in turn, be deserted. May all your plans fail you, your enterprises prove unsuccessful, poverty and ruin dog your steps, and life be to you a failure and a burden. Away, and bear with you a father's bitter, bitter —

Mary. (*Running to him, and putting her arms around his neck.*) No, father, don't say that, don't say that! Poor boy, his will be a bitter life without his father's curse.

TABLEAU.

WILL in door, c., his left arm raised defiantly. *DOUGLAS* has left hand on *WILL*'S shoulder, his right hand in *WILL*'S right, dragging him out. *JARIUS* bending over *NED*, R. *JOHN*, L., with right hand raised; *MARY*, with her arms about his neck, looking into his face. *Slow curtain.*

ACT SECOND.

SCENE. — *Room* in *NUTTER'S* House. Lounge, R., on which *NED* is lying asleep. Small table near lounge, at which *MARY* is seated, sewing. Lamp on table. Arm-chair, L. C. Table with plants, R. corner, back; if scenery is used, window in flat, R. C. Door, C., shut. Moonlight through window. *SALLY*, asleep in arm-chair, L. C.

Mary. Poor fellow, he's asleep at last. What a terrible year it has been for him! That cruel blow stretched him on a bed of sickness, from which we feared he never

would rise. Only a good constitution and careful nursing have saved him from death, and saved Will from worse than death — the stain of murder. O, Will, if you only knew how we have fought to save you from that, how we have prayed for Ned's recovery, your heart might be touched with remorse. Surely Henry Douglas must have told him of his danger. He says he has. But not a word, not a line comes from him. A whole year has passed. We have watched and waited. Mother's once bright cheek has grown pale. Father, though he says not a word, starts at every footfall. But yet no sign of his return.

Sally. Now, Jarius, if you don't stop, I'll scream. Murder, murder! (*Wakes.*) Bless my soul! Have I been dreaming?

Mary. Yes, Sally, of Jarius.

Sally. It's no sech thing. Leastwise, dreams go by contraries. I thought that Jarius Jerden had his arm around my neck, and was going to kiss me; so I hol-lered.

Mary. As dreams go by contraries, you wouldn't scream if he really had.

Sally. Yes, I would. What do I care for Jarius Jerden? He's forever pokin' his nose in here when he ain't wanted. I'll give him a piece of my mind some day, see if I don't.

Mary. That will be very satisfactory to him, no doubt, when he pops the important question.

Sally. He? Jarius Jerden pop the question? He'll never do it. He hain't the courage. He jest comes here, and sits and whistles, sighs and whittles, and talks about

Squire Jones and his cattle, and sich nonsense. I've no patience with him. If I was a man, I'd just know which side my bread was buttered on in short order.

Hannah. (*Outside, L.*) Sally, Sally!

Sally. Yes, marm.

Hannah. (*Outside, L.*) Your bread's run onto the floor, the fire's all out, and the cat's in the cream. — Scat! scat!

Sally. Dear me! What a chapter of accidents! And I here dreaming! O, these men, these men!

[*Exit, L.*

Mary. Ah, Sally, 'twill be a happy day for you when Jarius Jordan musters up courage enough to ask you to be his wife. There'll be a prompt answer on your part, I'll warrant. (*Enter DOUGLAS, C.*) And a happy life, which you so richly deserve, will be the sequel to this queer wooing. Heigho!

Douglas. (*Who has crept up behind her chair.*) That sigh was touching, Mary. Was it meant for me?

Mary. (*Starting up.*) Mr. Douglas! You here?

Douglas. Does that surprise you? Where should I be but in the presence of her I love — of the angelic being who has promised to be my wife? (*NED wakes, and, leaning on his elbow, listens.*)

Mary. That was a great while ago.

Douglas. A year only. Surely you have not repented of your promise.

Mary. I have.

Douglas. Ho, ho! So this is the meaning of the coldness which I have felt creeping into our intercourse of late — you repent your promise!

Mary. Mr. Douglas, listen to me. A year ago I was a giddy girl, proud to be noticed by one so high in the social sphere as you. Your attentions to me, while other girls in vain sought to attract you, dazzled me, caused a fluttering in my silly bosom, which I then thought was love, and I gave you encouragement; nay, I will confess it, promised to be your wife. We were very happy here in our family circle then — very. But, alas! trouble came. You know how. My brother fled; our dear Ned was struck down; I became his nurse; by night and by day I watched by his couch; and in those long hours what could I do but think, think, think? I thought of the wide difference in our social position, how unsuited we were for each other — you, with your fine talents and rich connections, I, a poor girl, reared to hard work, with no knowledge of the world outside our little village; and then I looked into my heart, and somehow, I can't explain it, I felt there was no love there; that I never could be happy as your wife; and so to-night I ask you to release me.

Douglas. Well, 'pon my word, here's a confession! Here's a fine position for the heir of the Douglas name and state. After my unremitting attentions for a year, I am to be thrown aside, like a country bumpkin, at the whim of a girl who don't know her own mind! No, no, Mary, I shall not release you. You'll think better of it to-morrow.

Mary. Yes, better, for my resolve will be stronger.

Douglas. And that resolve is —

Mary. Never to marry you, Henry Douglas. It is best we have no misunderstanding now.

Douglas. It is, indeed. So, so! While I have been absent, my place has been taken in your heart by that fool, Ned Hartshorn.

Mary. Mr. Douglas!

Douglas. Yes; it's as plain as the sun at noonday. Stunned by a slight blow, he made that the pretext for a long season of wasting sickness, that he might secure your attention, that he might bill and coo in your face, excite your compassion, and awake in your heart an answer to his love. The hypocrite! With his youth and strength, the blow he received should not have kept him from his work a day. 'Twas a crafty trick.

Mary. Mr. Douglas!

Douglas. Ay, a crafty trick. But it shall not succeed. I have your promise; I have your father's consent. I will not release you.

Mary. Henry Douglas, you have spoken plainly, and you have spoken falsely. 'Tis true he who lies there loves me. I have read it in his pleading eyes; I have heard it in the delirium of fever from his lips. But he is as incapable of the meanness you would ascribe to him as you are of an honorable thought. Shame, shame! He has worked hard for an honest name. Poor fellow; 'tis all he has in the world! — and you, rich and powerful, seek to rob him of that.

Douglas. Mary!

Mary. Silence! I will not hear you. You have attacked the honor of a dear friend, dearer for the infirmity which has fallen upon him through the instrumentality of one of my name. 'Tis but right I should stand forth in his defence. Hear me. I asked you to release me

from my promise ; I gave you the reasons, good, true reasons, which would have convinced an honorable man. I have one more to give, which must convince you. I can never be your wife, for your attack has revealed something I hardly dreamed. I love Ned Hartshorn as I can never love another.

Douglas. Ha ! The truth at last ! There is no misunderstanding now. Your last reason has convinced me. Now hear one which must overpower yours, which must convince you that I will not be trifled with. Your brother Will and I parted company this morning.

Mary. Will and you ! What mean you ?

Douglas. Yesterday, being the first of the month, my book was returned to me from the Phoenix Bank, with the checks which I had drawn during the month. I say, which I had drawn. I'm wrong. There was one there for two hundred dollars, signed by a clever imitation of my name, of which I had no knowledge. It was a forgery.

Mary. A forgery ! Well ?

Douglas. Nay, 'twas very bad, for I found, upon investigation, it had been done by your brother.

Mary. Will ? No, no ; you do not suspect him.

Douglas. I know he forged that check. This morning I charged him with it. Of course he indignantly denied it. I informed him, quietly, that I had no further need of his services. He took his hat, and departed ; and there the matter rests. Of course I might have called in an officer, and had him arrested ; but, as he was in a fair way to become my brother-in-law, that would have been injudicious, to say the least.

Mary. It would have killed my mother. But Will—where is he now ?

Douglas. I haven't the least idea. Of one thing be certain — he will never trouble you with his presence. His city life has not been a success. He will not return to boast of it. Besides, should he appear here, I must arrest him.

Mary. You arrest him? No, no; that would be infamous.

Douglas. He is a criminal; he has robbed me, and squandered my money. Why should I pardon him?

Mary. Because — because — (*Aside.*) O, Heavens, I have lost the power to plead for him!

Douglas. Mary, you *will* think better of your resolve. You love your brother; he is in danger. If I but raise my finger, disgrace and infamy are fastened upon him forever. I would not willingly be the instrument of justice in this case. I would not rob him of liberty; of the opportunity to wipe out this disgrace. But you, to-night, propose to rob me of my happiness; to blight my life by withholding the treasure I covet — yourself. Think you not, in such a case, revenge is justice?

Mary. What would you have me do?

Douglas. Fulfil your promise. Become my wife.

Mary. Still loving Ned Hartshorn?

Douglas. Love that fool! I do not believe it. You are too sensible a girl, Mary. No, no. When you are my wife, this idle folly will be but a dream.

Mary. Yes, when I am your wife! And if I keep my promise, my brother —

Douglas. Shall not be molested. More, I will befriend him, and place him in a good position.

Mary. Indeed! So I am to save my brother at the

cost of my love! Henry Douglas, the trick is worthy of you; but it shall not move me. I love my brother, Heaven knows; but not even to save him from prison would I marry one who has suffered at his hands, by consenting to become your wife.

Douglas. I have done. Justice must take its course. Nay, I will not be conquered by so mean a foe. Your father, your father, Mary, he shall decide whom he will accept as his daughter's husband, — I, rich, accomplished, of good family, or that low, gawky clown.

Mary. Silence! He is a brave, noble, true man, who would scorn to stoop to the petty tricks of the rich and accomplished Henry Douglas. Let my father decide. I care not. Every threat you utter but strengthens my resolution. Do your worst. From your arms I would fly to his, though I knew poverty and toil should be our portion.

Douglas. As you please. But I shall not release you, Mary Nutter. My wife you shall, you must be. You've a stubborn father and a stubborn lover to fight. Arm yourself, Mary; you will need all your strength, and then — I shall win. Good night. [*Exit, c.*

Mary. Ah, while there is life there is hope, even in a bad cause. (*Turns, and sees NED looking at her.*) Why, Ned, you awake?

Ned. Yes, Mary. I have heard all.

Mary. What! No, no, Ned, not all!

Ned. Yes, Mary, every word. O, it seems as though a reviving draught had been poured through my veins, and life, strong, healthy life was coming back to me. Now I can speak, give utterance to that which you have

discovered, but which I, weak, distrustful, hid in my own bosom. Now, Mary, I can tell you I love you.

Mary. Ned, have I done right to break my promise?

Ned. Yes, Mary. You have obeyed the dictates of your heart. Douglas is unworthy the rich prize he seeks.

Mary. Had I known you were listening, Ned, I fear my tongue would have refused to do its duty.

Ned. And you love me?

Mary. Yes, Ned, with all my heart.

Ned. O, you make me so happy! An hour ago life seemed not worth living for; but now, with your love to cheer me, all is bright and hopeful. It's a glorious world! and never fear but I will find a way to lead you, not to toil and poverty, not to wealth and luxury, but to a comfortable home, where the ring of my hammer and the sound of your voice shall blend in sweet accord.

Mary. Why, Ned, what magic's here? Your eye is bright, your cheek glowing, your whole manner so unlike you! I'm frightened.

Ned. Magic? The magic of a woman's love, which can transform age to youth, and make the dull heart beat with healthy power. You smile on me, and I am strong again.

Mary. Now be careful. Remember you are an invalid. Bless me! how late it is! Come, you must to bed at once. Remember I am your nurse still.

Ned. O, I'll obey. But I shan't sleep a wink. Mary, are you sure I'm not dreaming?

Mary. There's my hand. When you ask it, it is yours.

Ned. (*Places his arm around her waist, takes her hand and raises it to his lips.*) Mine! heart and hand mine! No; I'm not dreaming. 'Tis a blessed reality.

[*Exeunt, R.*

(*Knock at door, C., then it opens, and JARIUS sticks his head in.*)

Jarius. Jes' so. (*Enters.*) Nobody to hum, or all gone to roost, except Sally. That air female I jest seen through the kitchen winder a slashin' away in the bread trough like all possessed. She's a powerful gal — she is. Her washin' don't hang round long arter breakfast, I reckon. O, Sally, ef yeou only knew what a powerful drubbin' was goin' on behind my ribs on your account, you'd take pity and help a feller out somehow. Plague take it! She knows it well enough. Didn't I start right off, a year ago, on her hint, and git my hair cropped so short that I couldn't lay on a piller, and sneezed and snorted, and wore out handkerchers with the influenza? Didn't I go and git measured for a new pair of boots, so tight that I hobbled all day and howled all night with aching toes? Didn't I git fitted to a bran new coat, that bust up the back the fust time I wore it? Ef that ain't showin' off one's love, I'd like to know it! But it's no use. She won't help a feller a bit. She knows every time I come I'm a burnin' to ask her to be my wife. But I can't say it. It gits jes' so fur, and there it sticks. Sally, I love you. Four words. I'm blamed ef they ain't a bigger load to git rid of than a Fourth er July oration! But it's no use. It's got to come. So, Jarius, don't be a fool. Spit it out, and she's yourn. I will, the minute I see her. I wou't wait

for nothin', but jest shout, Sally — (*Enter SALLY, L., with her hands and arms covered with flour*). Sh, sh! How do you do? (*Shakes hands quickly*.)

Sally. Law sakes, Mr. Jerden, you've caught me this time, sure enough! I'm up to my elbows in flour. So jest excuse me a minute. (*Going, L.*)

Jarius. No, hold on a minute, or I shall bust. Now's the appointed time, Sally. Sally, I've got something particular to say — Sally — Sally — old Hopkins has got the yaller jaunders.

Sally. Wal, I declare! Is that the particular somethin'? (*Going, L.*)

Jarius. No, no. Hold on a minute. (*Catches her by the arm; gets flour on his hands*.) 'Tain't that. (*Aside*.) Consara it, there's a cold chill runs up my back, and my face is burnin' up. (*Wipes his face with his hands, leaving flour on it*.)

Sally. Why, Mr. Jerden, what is the matter with you? You're as pale as a ghost!

Jarius. Jes' so. O, Sally, hear me. Don't look at me, but open your ears. Pally Seeslee, — no, Sally Peeslee, — I — I — I think it's going to rain. (*Aside*.) I can't do it.

Sally. Wal, what of it?

Jarius. Jes' so. It'll put an end to the dry spell.

Sally. It seems to me that you are having a very dry spell about somethin', Mr. Jerden.

Jarius. Yes; jes' so. Ha, ha, ha-h! That's very good!

Sally. I'll be back before you want me, I guess. (*Going, L.*)

Jarius. Don't leave me. Hear me first, for I'm on an awful strain, and if I once let up I'm a gone coon. Sally, I want to say — I must say — Sally, I mean to say — how's your marm?

Sally. Why, Mr. Jerden, are you crazy? Mother's been dead and buried this six months.

Jarius. So she has. It's no use asking arter her — is it? That wan't what I was going to say. To come to the p'int, Sally, to come to the p'int, I — I — I don't feel well.

Sally. Then you'd better go home, tie up your ears, and get to bed. It's my opinion you've had a pint too much, Jarius Jerden; and if ever you show yourself here in that condition again, I'll drown the pizen out of yer with a kittle of hot water. Ain't ye ashamed of yourself, at your time of life, making a fool of yourself in this way, Jarius Jerden? I did think you had some sense; but you're nothing but a fool, arter all. Go home. Don't stand there staring at me in that way. Go to bed, sleep it off, and rise in the morning a sadder and a wiser man. O, Jarius, you, of all men! Wal, I never! [*Exit, L.*]

Jarius. Jes' so. Sold again. And she thinks I'm drunk! Never was drunk in all my life; but if the sensation is anything like bein' in love without the power of tellin' on it, then all I've got to say, it's an all-fired mean feelin'. Wal, things is gittin' on backwards mighty fast, anyhow. I've made a darned goose of myself, that's sartin. Go home and sleep it off? Yes, I guess not. I'll just hang round here a little longer, and if there's another chance, I'll make one mouthful of it, and say,

“Sally —” O, consarn it, Jarius, you darsn’t. You’re a mean, mealy-mouthed critter, and no mistake.

[*Exit, c.*

Enter MARY, R.

Mary. Who’s that? Somebody just left the house. Who could it have been? It must have been Jarius, on his nightly visit. Sally’s light is still burning in the kitchen. I’ll just pick up my work, and off to bed. Can it be possible that Will forged that check? I don’t believe it. Henry Douglas must have invented that story to frighten me.

Enter WILL, C., softly.

Poor boy, I wish he were safe home again!

Will. Mary — sister!

Mary. (*Rushing into his arms.*) O, Will, dear Will, is it you at last?

Will. Hush! Don’t wake anybody. I wouldn’t be seen by any one but you for the world. You see, I got awful homesick, wanted to have a look at the old home, and, if possible, speak with you. But I don’t want to meet father or mother.

Mary. Don’t want to meet them! O, Will, your city life —

Will. Is splendid! I’m rising in the world — I am. That’s the place for me. Busy all day, and at night seeing the sights. O, it’s gay! I’m doing well. But I shall never meet father until I am rich enough to say, “I was right, and you were wrong. I should have been on the bench now had I listened to you; but I asserted

my rights, went into the world, and have come back rich, powerful, influential." Amen. That's the style in which I shall meet him one of these days.

Mary. Will, are you still in the employ of Mr. Douglas?

Will. No. I'm on my own account.

Mary. O, Heavens! 'tis true, 'tis true!

Will. What's true, Mary?

Mary. The forged check.

Will. Eh? What forged check?

Mary. Henry Douglas told me to-night that you had forged his name to a check for two hundred dollars.

Will. 'Tis a lie! an infamous lie!

Mary. He said you denied it.

Will. We have never spoken concerning a check. I have had nothing to do with his money matters.

Mary. But you have parted?

Will. Because he wished me to testify falsely in a case in which he was concerned—to perjure myself. I refused; and for that reason, and that alone, we parted. Mary, I may be wild and reckless, but, believe me, I have never committed a crime — never.

Mary. I do believe you, Will. 'Tis but another proof of his perfidy.

Will. Never mind him, Mary. He's not worthy of a thought. Tell me of father and mother. Are they well?

Mary. Ah, Will, your conduct has made them ten years older. Father will not allow your name to be mentioned, and mother, at his bidding, is silent; but her face is careworn, her step feeble, and the nervous start

she gives when the door opens tells how anxiously she awaits your return. You will see her, Will?

Will. Not to-night, Mary. In an hour I must be on my way back to the city. Mary, I wish I had not come here. There's a power in the old house that makes my heart ache, it awakens such memories! And mother, dear soul, how sadly her bright hopes of her boy have been shattered! Though I have dashed into the city, and been swept along by its hurry and whirl, I have often thought of this quiet house, and ached, fairly ached, to feel mother's arms around my neck, and her good-night kiss upon my brow. O, Mary, be tender, very tender with her. Don't let her hear a word against me. Sometimes I think that fierce temptation will overwhelm me, ruin me, body and soul; and that would break her heart.

Mary. O, Will, stay with us. Here you are safe from all temptations.

Will. Here? Why, Mary, you forget the little brown jug, which first tempted me to drink, which created a thirst, which, fight against as I will, must be quenched.

Mary. Ah; but the little brown jug will not tempt you now. Since that day there has been no more brewing of strong drink. Father has abandoned it, and the old jug has been put to a better use.

Will. . A better use? .

Mary. Yes. 'Tis now placed in the cupboard in father's room, and every Saturday night he places in it the sum of money he would have expended for liquor during the week. There's quite a large sum there.

Will. That's very queer. In father's cupboard, you say?

Mary. Yes. But you do not inquire after Ned.

Will. Ned Hartshorn? Is he here still?

Mary. Will, are you ignorant of his severe illness? Did not Mr. Douglas tell you?

Will. Nothing concerning Ned Hartshorn. I haven't heard his name before for a year.

Mary. Douglas's deceit again! Will, for a year he has not left the house. That blow with the jug, a year ago, nearly killed him.

Will. What! And I knew nothing of it? O, this is terrible! That man is a fiend! He has tried to keep from me all knowledge of you and my family, for what reason I cannot guess. But I will know. Ned Hartshorn nearly killed, and by my hand! I am accursed! Let me fly from this place!

Mary. No, no, Will; not now, not now!

Will. I will! I must! What right have I to stand beneath this roof? I have defied my father, chosen my own path in life, turned my back upon you all, and have no right to claim kindred here. Let me go, Mary. 'Tis better for all. There's a curse upon me, a bitter curse. Let me go! let me go!

Mary. No, no, brother. (*Clings about his neck.*) I will not release you. We love you dearly.

Will. Then pray for me, think of me kindly if you can; but part we must. (*Kisses her.*) Mary, sister, Heaven bless you! (*Rushes out, c.*)

Mary. Gone. Poor boy! I tremble for him, swayed by every impulse of his wayward nature, in the midst

of temptation ; his young life already poisoned by the love of drink, what must be his fate ! O, brother, may Heaven send some good angel to reclaim you, and hear a mother's and a sister's prayers in your behalf. (*Takes light from table, and exits, R.*)

Door opens, softly. Enter WILL, C.

Will. Homeless and friendless ! She little knows it has come to that. She little knows that my threat to acquaint my father with his wild doings parted Douglas and I. He marry her ! Not if I can prevent it. But what power have I with my stubborn father ? Douglas has trumped up his charge of forgery to frighten me and intimidate her. How can I alarm her and father ? I came to tell her, and have not spoken a word against him. But I will find a way. Just now I must care for myself. I haven't had a morsel to eat to-day, so my good mother's cupboard must provide. If I could only have one good pull at the little brown jug ! I forgot. 'Tis now put to better use. Better ? There's money in it ; and money will provide both food and shelter. Why not ? Haven't I a right to put my fingers in it ? Yes, you have put it to a better use, father, and, with your good leave, I'll have a pull at it, as in former days. Egad, it's a capital joke. There's no crime about it, for it's all in the family, and one member mustn't starve while others hoard wealth. I'll creep into father's room, secure the jug, help myself, and nobody shall be the wiser. Softly, my boy, softly. (*Creeps out, L.*)

JARIUS appears at window, or door, c.

Jarius. Consarn it! somebody's been sneaking round this house for the last half hour. Wonder if he's arter Sally! (*Enters window, or door.*) Blamed if I ain't going to know what it's all about! If it's a thief, then all I've got to say, there'll be some s pry wrastling around here afore he gits off with much plunder.

Enter WILL, L., with jug of money.

Will. All right. I've got it. (*Runs into JARIUS'S arms.*)

Jarius. (*Seizing him by collar.*) Jes' so. So have I.

Will. Ah! Discovered! Who are you, scoundrel?

Jarius. Who are you, thief? (*Drags him to moonlight.*) Will Nutter!

Will. Jarius Jordan!

Jarius. Wal, I never! Will Nutter a thief!

Will. Thief? 'Tis false.

Jarius. (*Snatching jug from him.*) Here is the proof. O, Will, young feller, has it come to this?

Will. What right have you meddling here? This is my father's house. Haven't I a right to pass in and out of it when I please?

Jarius. Jes' so; but not to rob the old man. What right have I to meddle? The right which every honest man should be proud to exercise—the right to battle wrong wherever found. Young feller, you've made my heart ache to-night. To see the boy we were all so proud

of sneaking out of his father's house a thief! It's too bad!

Will. Jarius Jordan, once more I tell you I'm no thief.

Jarius. Will you tell your father so, when I arouse him, as I mean to?

Will. No, no, Jarius; don't do that. Let me go as I came. Keep the jug, if you please; only let me go.

Jarius. Will Nutter, young feller, you're going to destruction as fast as your legs can carry you. Where's your pride? Where's your grand expectations, that you raved so about, a year ago? Why, you're the meanest of all critters — a thief.

Will. That name again?

Jarius. Yes; again and again. I ain't agoin' to be mealy-mouthed on this subject, anyhow. You see what yer fine friend has brought ye to; for it's all his work. I've watched ye in the city all through yer year of service with him. I've seen the temptations spread by him like a spider, and you, poor little fly, walk into them. It all came of his trickery. And now here you are, crawling into the room where your poor mother is sleeping —

Will. O, don't, Jarius; don't speak of my mother! What would she say to know that her poor boy was a —
a —

Jarius. Thief! Say it, Will, young feller. Git the bile all out of yer system. Look at yerself as ye are; feel as mean as ye look. You are —

Will. A thief! Yes, Jarius, it's the truth. O, why did I come here? Why add this horror to a life already made wretched by my folly? I never dreamed of this. It

was a sudden impulse. I never gave a thought to it. It came upon me unawares. But now I see its wickedness. O, Jarius, why can't I die? (*Sinks on floor, covers face with hands.*) Why can't I die? I haven't a friend in the world to care for me now.

Jarius. Yes, you have. Look up, Will. I never went back on a feller-critter, good or bad, when in distress, and I ain't a goin' to do it now. Look up, young feller. I'll help you out.

Will. Help me? You! Then show me how to help myself. Show me some way to wipe out this disgrace, and I will bless you.

Jarius. Listen to me. A year ago, of your own accord, you set out to seek your fortune with Hen Douglas —

Will. Yesterday we parted, for his service was too mean for me to perform.

Jarius. Jes' so. You've had a year of his tuition; will you now take a year of mine?

Will. Yours, Jarius?

Jarius. Yes, mine. I wanted you then, but Douglas eúcred me. I want you now. Will you serve me?

Will. Willingly, and bless you for the chance.

Jarius. Jes' so. Young feller, you've only seen the dark side of life. You've been dipped into temptation; but hang on to me and I'll pull you out. There's my hand.

Will. And there's mine.

Jarius. Hold on a minute. Let's understand things. There's got to be a rippin' away of old associations — no billiards, no cards, no theatres.

Will. There's my hand.

Jarius. Hold on a minute. You're to stick to all I ask, although it goes agin the grain.

Will. There's my hand.

Jarius. Hold on a minute. Here's the hardest. You must solemnly promise that for one year you will never touch, taste, or handle liquor, plain or embellished, raw or fancy. It's hard, young feller, for you, but it's your only hope.

Will. It is, indeed, Jarius. Heaven bless you! You are a true friend. As you speak, I feel the strength of your good, noble heart animating mine. Yours is the first warning voice that has ever reached my ears, and I will heed it. Do with me as you will. I promise.

Jarius. Jes' so. Nuff sed; shake. (*They stand in centre of stage, with clasped hands, as the curtain slowly descends.*)

ACT THIRD.

SCENE. — *Same as Act 2. Table, L. Arm-chair L. of table, in which is seated JOHN NUTTER. Lounge, R. Chair, R., back. Table, with plants, L., back. Door, C., open. NED standing R. of table.*

John. It's no use argifyng, Ned. It can't be; it shan't be. Mary gin her promise to Henry Douglas more than a year ago, an' she's got to stick tew it. I ain't a goin' to have no flirts about me.

Ned. But she does not love him, sir; she is truly at-

tached to me. You surely would not have her break her heart.

John. Better break it than break her promise, and break his heart.

Ned. There is no fear of breaking his; he has none. He is unworthy of her.

John. Now, Ned, don't be mean. Don't speak ill of a man because he is likely to win where you may lose.

Ned. I speak the truth. Mary has told him she did not love him, and asked him to release her. He refused. He's a mean, contemptible sneak, unworthy any woman's love. That one act stamps him so.

John. Now stop. That's enough. I know Henry Douglas better than you. He has been a good friend to me, and I won't have him abused. When, a year ago, I emptied the little brown jug of my savings, and found, to my surprise, a handsome sum, he showed me a grand chance for a safe investment. I took his advice, and doubled my money in a month. He helped me to other investments.

Ned. I know. Some of them paid and some didn't. The balance is on the wrong side, for your money has vanished, and there's a mortgage of a thousand dollars on your property, which he holds. Pretty friend he!

John. Well, what of it? Them as win must expect to lose sometimes. It's no use your talkin' agin him. He's smart, and he'll help me out, with a handsome profit, when the time comes right.

Ned. And for his sake you refuse to let Mary marry the man of her choice?

John. *He* was the man of her choice. I'm only a givin' him justice. Now look a-here, Ned; let's have no more of this. I think a heap of you. You're a smart workman; and I'd like to see you married. Mary's already engaged. (*Rises.*) Think no more of her. If you want a smart wife,

Enter JARIUS, C.

take Sally Peeslee. She's a bouncer. [*Exit, L.*

Jarius. (*Aside.*) Jes' so. Guess I didn't come back any tew soon. (*Aloud.*) Ned!

Ned. (*Turning, sees JARIUS.*) Jarius Jordan!

Jarius. Jes' so. Heow air yer, young feller? (*Shake hands.*) And heow's everybody?

Ned. Glad to see you once more. It must be a year since you were here.

Jarius. Jes' so; a year to-day. Folks all well?

Ned. Yes — no; Mother Nutter is poorly; the rest are hearty.

Jarius. Sally Peeslee smart — hey? By the by, didn't I hear John Nutter say somethin' about your makin' up to her?

Ned. You need fear no rival in me, Mr. Jordan.

Jarius. Jes' so. Expected you and Mary would have made a match. P'raps you have.

Ned. No. We are warmly attached; but Mr. Nutter will not hear of our marrying. He wants to give her to Henry Douglas.

Jarius. The old fool! Nothin' personal in that remark. But he's wus than a nine-days'-old pup — hain't

got his eyes open. Wal, what air ye goin' to do 'bout it — give her up?

* *Ned.* Never! I scarcely know what to do. Douglas has almost ruined the old man with speculation. Everything is mortgaged to him; and if Mary does not marry him, he will turn them out of their home.

Jarius. Sho! How much is the mortgage?

Ned. A thousand dollars.

Jarius. Wal, don't yeou fret, young feller. I'll see yeou through. I've got a bone to pick with that air chap; and, keen as he thinks himself, he's got to git up airly if he gits ahead of Jarius Jordan. Hullo, here's Mary!

Enter MARY, R.

Mary. Well, Ned, what does he say? — Why, Mr. Jordan!

Jarius. Jes' so. Heow d'ye do? (*Shake hands.*) Prettier than ever, I declare!

Mary. This is an unexpected pleasure. We haven't seen you for a long time.

Jarius. Jes' so. But Ned don't say what *he* said.

Ned. He refused me, Mary. He says you must keep your promise to Douglas.

Mary. Never. I'll die first.

Jarius. Jes' so. Good grit. Neow, young folks, I always was famous for meddlin'; and I'm goin' to help you in this matter, if you'll let me. Douglas has a hold on the old gent with a mortgage. I understand that. Anything else?

Mary. He holds a check, which he declares was forged,

his name used, and the money drawn from the bank by Will. This he has threatened to use against my brother.

Jarius. Jes' so. A forged check? That's an old trick. You don't happen to know what bank it was drawn on — do you?

Mary. He told me. Let me think a moment. The Phœnix Bank.

Jarius. The Phœnix? Sho! I've got him! (*Goes to table, takes a tablet from his pocket, and writes with a pencil.*) Neow, then, young feller, I want to use yer. If yeou want Mary, jest put on your hat, and leg it to the telegraph office. Here's a message; put it through, and wait for an answer. (*Tears out leaf, and gives it to NED.*)

Ned. But what does this mean?

Jarius. Business. Don't ask any questions; but go. If yeou git the answer I expect, I'll eucere Douglas in spite of thunder.

Ned. Will you? Then I'm off. — Will you go, Mary?

Jarius. No; Mary will stay here. Where's your politeness? Ain't I company?

Ned. All right, Mr. Jordan. I'm off. [*Exit, c.*]

Jarius. Well, Mary, heow's yer marm?

Mary. She's very sick, Mr. Jordan. She keeps her room most of the time. My brother's conduct, my father's wild speculations, and the persistent wooing of Henry Douglas, — whom she detests, — have made her very miserable.

Jarius. Jes' so. Wal, we'll see if we can't doctor her up. Now, Mary, the next time Douglas comes here

don't you be mealy-mouthed. Let him have it right and left. Tell him jest what you think of him, and defy him to do his worst.

Mary. I dare not. He is wicked enough to crush father with the mortgage he holds, and mean enough to kill mother by disclosing Will's connection with the forged check.

Jarius. Let him do his worst, Mary. He's a crafty chap, a-schemin' to snare the old man and get your hand; but there's a weak p'int somewhere in his net, and if I can find it I'll holler.

Mary. I'll obey you, Mr. Jordan. Only put an end to this terrible persecution, and you will make me happy.

Jarius. Jes' so. Hullo! there's Sally. Now I've got something particular to say to her, and if you don't mind taking a hasty leave, I'll be obliged to ye.

Mary. O, certainly. Ahem! Mr. Jordan, you're sure you have the courage to speak now?

Jarius. Neow yeou git eout! Want to make a feller feel cheap — don't yeou?

Mary. Ha, ha! Mr. Jordan, you've a brave heart, but you dare not ask her. See if I am not right. Good by. [Exit, R.]

Jarius. Darsn't ask Sally to be my wife? Don't think I'm such a blarsted fool neow. Arter staying away a year, guess I've about screwed my courage up to do it, or bust.

Sally. (*Outside, L.*) Mary, Mary! Where on airth is them mangoes? (*Enter, L.*)

Jarius. Duuno, Sally. Here's a man come.

Sally. Jarius Jerden! Wal, I never! How d' ye do?

Jarius. Purty well, Sally. (*Shake hands.*) Sally, you are a bouncer, and no mistake!

Sally. Where yeou been this long while? Come back for good?

Jarius. Wal, that depends. Sally, yeou dew look jest about good enough to eat.

Sally. Do I? (*Aside.*) Law sakes; how his eyes blaze! I believe he's going to pop. (*Aloud.*) I'm making pickles.

Jarius. Making pickles? (*Aside.*) She's pickled me, long ago.

Sally. Yes; and I want the mangoes. Somebody's hid 'em. I must find Mary. (*Crosses to R.*)

Jarius. Don't go, Sally; I want to speak to yeou. If you leave me neow, I won't answer for the consequences.

Sally. (*Aside.*) O, dear; I'm afraid of him! (*Aloud.*) What is it, Mr. Jerden? (*Edging off, R.*)

Jarius. (*Aside.*) How skeery she is! Wonder what's the matter! (*Aloud.*) Sally, I'm goin' to do somethin' desperate, for the sight of yeou has set me on fire. I feel — I feel that the hour has come —

Sally. (*Aside.*) I can't bear it. (*Aloud.*) Dear me; this place hain't been dusted to-day. (*Takes her apron, and runs about dusting table, chair, and lounge.*)

Jarius. (*Aside.*) I swow, she's skeered! All right, Jarius; now's yer chance. (*Runs after SALLY; brings her down, C.*) Sally, it's no use; yeou must hear me. Sally, do yeou know what it is to be in — in — in — love?

Sally. (*Aside.*) He's going to pop! (*Aloud.*) O,

them plants! (*Runs up, L. C.*) They haven't been watered to-day.

Jarius. (*Aside.*) How she does carry on! (*Runs after her, and brings her down, C.*) Now look a-here, Sally; it's no use. You'll spile everything.

Sally. O, my pickles! they'll spile! Do let me go, Mr. Jerden.

Jarius. (*Putting his arm round her waist.*) Let 'em spile! I've got yeou fast, Sally, and I'm going to try and keep yeou for ever and ever.

Sally. (*Struggling to get away.*) Mr. Jerden, I'm ashamed of you.

Jarius. I'm ashamed of myself, Sally. To think I've been so mealy-mouthed! What bright eyes you've got! and rosy cheeks! and such a mouth! I declare, I must have a kiss!

Sally. Don't yeou dew it, Mr. Jerden.

Jarius. I can't help it, Sally. I never saw a sugar bowl but what I wanted to git my fingers into it, or a 'lasses barrel but what I wanted to lick it. And a mouth like yours! — Jehu, don't stop me! (*Kisses her.*)

Enter DOUGLAS, C.

Douglas. Aha! (*SALLY screams, and runs off, L.*)

Jarius. Jes' so. Aha, yerself, and see heow yeou like it.

Douglas. Jarius Jordan! You back again?

Jarius. Jes' so, and likely to stop a spell.

Douglas. I should judge so from the warm welcome you have just received. Is the day fixed — hey?

Jarius. Wal, not exactly. I'm kinder waitin' for you and Mary. Is the day fixed — hey?

Douglas. Ha! You are sarcastic. They tell me you have made a great deal of money, Jordan.

Jarius. Wal, I ain't as poor as a church mouse.

Douglas. That's good. Our old friend Nutter has got into difficulties; wants money. Now you are just the chap to help him.

Jarius. Guess not. I don't throw my money away for nothin'. What I git I keep.

Douglas. (*Aside.*) Good. No fear of him. (*Aloud.*) That's right. Don't let him wheedle you out of it; for, between you and me, he's a ruined man.

Jarius. Jes' so. He's a good old chap; but I've heard he's been speculatin', and is bound to end in the poorhouse. Wal, they've got a purty good one here, and'll make him comfortable. Here comes his darter. I won't spile your fun as you did mine. I've got a heap of business to attend tew. Good day. (*Aside.*) Darn your ugly picter, *your day is fixed.* [*Exit, c.*]

Douglas. Rich and mean. All the better for me; he will not mar my project; and to-day I will give Mary my ultimatum — her hand, or her father's ruin.

Enter MARY, R.

Ah, Mary, you are looking finely to-day !

Mary. Thank you, Mr. Douglas. Father is at home. I will call him. (*Crosses to L.*)

Douglas. No. By your leave, I would have a word with you.

Mary. Certainly, if you wish it. (*Sits in chair L. of table.*)

Douglas. (*Brings chair down C., and sits.*) *Mary,* I have come to-day to revive a topic upon which I have been silent a year.

Mary. You come again to ask me to marry you. I have been expecting this visit.

Douglas. And you are prepared with an answer?

Mary. I am.

Douglas. Stop one moment, *Mary.* Before you give me that answer, hear me. You must believe that I love you. This long year, during which I have been almost a constant visitor, looking upon you with wistful eyes, yet with a silent tongue, for fear of your displeasure, coming and going, must be convincing proof that, spite of your coldness, your image is enshrined within my heart.

Mary. Mr. Douglas, the man who truly loves a woman shows his devotion by making her happy, even at the cost of his own happiness.

Douglas. You're right, *Mary.* 'Tis your happiness I seek when I ask you to become my wife. I would not see you throw yourself away upon a poor man, when I have the power to surround you with every comfort, and a heart overflowing with love, that cannot fail to make you happy.

Mary. Enough. You and I can never agree. My answer a year ago was final.

Douglas. Pray reconsider it. If not for my sake, for that of your father.

Mary. Whom you have persistently wooed for the last year. What of him?

Douglas. He has met with reverse of fortune. He is now a poor man, so poor that, but for my friendly aid, he would have no home to shelter him.

Mary. (*Rising.*) Your friendly aid! 'Twas you who led him into speculation; you who, by crafty advice, swept away his little store of hard-earned savings; you, who now stand over his home ready to crush it if I, his daughter, dare refuse you my hand!

Douglas. Nay, Mary, you are harsh. Calm yourself. Out of my deep love for you I have endeavored to better his worldly condition. If I have failed in my designs —

Mary. You have failed, Henry Douglas. My father is in your power, 'tis true. You can at any moment drive him from his home. In that design you have triumphed. But beyond that you have miserably failed. Though my father should curse me, should drive me from my home for my disobedience, I will never marry you — never!

Douglas. Ah, you'll think better of it, Mary. I have spent a great deal of money to help him. He owes me a large sum. With you my wife, I could not be hard with him. Without you, I must deal with him justly, man to man, and claim my own.

Mary. Claim it at once. Drive us forth, for then comes my triumph. There's a brave, true man waiting for me. Already we have planned a new home, where my parents will be tenderly cared for, and two loving hearts and four willing hands will rebuild all your craft

has destroyed. Ay, Henry Douglas, do your worst! You are a villain, and I hate and defy you!

Douglas. (*Rising.*) Enough. Mary Nutter, I will take you at your word. I *will* do my worst. You have turned all my love to hate. I'll woo no more. But, mark me, your father shall be driven from his home; your lover — curse him! — shall be shot like a dog, though I hang for it!

Hannah. (*Outside, L.*) Mary, dear! Mary!

Douglas. Hark! There's the voice of one very, very dear to you. You have defied me, Mary. I'll strike my first blow there.

Mary. My mother! No, no. You would not be so cruel. Spare her, I entreat you!

Douglas. No, no. You are too late.

Enter HANNAH, feebly, R., in a white wrapper.

Hannah. Mary, Mary, dear! don't you hear me?

Mary. (*Running to her, and leading her to lounge.*) Yes, mother; I was just coming. Why did you leave your room?

Hannah. It was so lonesome there, Mary, dear; and, you know, to-day is Will's birthday. Yes, to-day he is a man. And I have felt all day that I should see him; that to-day he would think of his poor mother, and find the way home to her.

Mary. Yes, mother, it is his birthday; but he is far, far away.

Hannah. Yes; but not too far away to reach his mother. I remember, as though it were but yesterday,

when he was twelve years old. What a bright, noble boy he was! He came to my side, put his arms about my neck, and said, "Mother, I shall soon be a man!" Dear boy, he was a brave little man then. "And when I am a man, the first thing I shall do will be to run to you and kiss you, and thank you for making me a good, true man." Dear boy! and I haven't seen him for two years! and he don't write to me; and you all look strange when I ask for him. But he'll come to-day, I know he will, for he promised; and he never broke a promise he gave his mother — never.

Douglas. Ah, it's shameful, shameful that a boy with so good a mother should turn out so bad!

Mary. (*To DOUGLAS.*) Hush! For Heaven's sake be merciful!

Hannah. What's that! Who spoke? Who said my boy turned out bad?

Mary. Nobody, mother. Don't mind that man. He's deceived himself. It's Henry Douglas.

Hannah. Henry Douglas? What does he know about my Will?

Douglas. Too much. He has deceived me. I thought him a true, noble boy; but he robbed me.

Enter JARIUS, C.

Jarius. (*Aside.*) Jes' so. He's got to work. Where on airth is that Ned?

Hannah. Robbed you! My Will? 'Tis false!

Douglas. I'm sorry to say 'tis true.

Mary. Mr. Douglas, have you no pity?

Douglas. You would have it so, Mary. I am not to blame.

Jarius. (*Aside.*) Consarn it, why don't that boy come. (*He fidgets in the doorway, looking off, and then watching DOUGLAS.*)

Douglas. Yes, Mrs. Nutter; I am sorry to distress you; but 'tis best you know the truth. While in my employ, Will robbed me of two hundred dollars.

Hannah. No, no; you are mistaken. My boy, my noble boy! I'll not believe it.

Jarius. (*Aside.*) Consarn his ugly picter! I shall split! Where is that boy?

Douglas. Yes, he robbed me; forged my name to a check. 'Tis here. (*Showing check.*)

Hannah. O, Heavens! My boy! my boy!

Douglas. Drew the money from the bank —

(*NED appears, c. Gives JARIUS a telegram.*)

Mary. Villain, you are killing her. — Mother, 'tis false! 'tis false!

Douglas. 'Tis true. I can prove it.

Jarius. (*Coming down c., with telegram.*) Jes' so. (*Snatches the check.*) Phoenix Bank: two hundred dollars. Humbug! that's no forgery.

Douglas. No forgery? Is not that my name?

Jarius. Jes' so. But here's a little telegram from the Phoenix Bank. (*Reads.*) "Have examined the books. Henry Douglas never had funds in our bank."

Douglas. Fool! what business have you to meddle in this matter?

Jarius. Why, bless your soul, I'm one of the directors in that air Phoenix.

Douglas. Confusion!

Jarius. Jes' so. Mrs. Nutter, don't be scart. Will's all right on that p'int.

Hannah. I knew he was. Poor boy, he has enemies who would rob him of his good name.

Jarius. Jes' so. But this ere sneak didn't make much of a speck when *he* tried it on. Mr. Douglas, I'd git eout if I was in yeour place.

Douglas. Mr. Jarius Jordan, your bare assertion that you are a director in this bank will not serve. I still hold my charge of forgery against Will Nutter.

Jarius. Jes' so. Well, you hold it. It won't hurt anybody if it goes off; but I'm inclined to think it'll kick like thunder.

Enter JOHN, L.

John. Ah, Douglas! I've been up to see you. I'm all anxiety to hear from the Carom stock. Has it gone up?

Douglas. No; but the mine has.

John. Gracious Heaven! Then I am ruined! (*Sinks into chair L. of table, and buries his face in his hands.*)

Douglas. Yes, old man, you've nothing left but your house and shop; and they must go to repay me.

John. What! You will not close on me?

Douglas. I must. I want the money.

John. Why, you told me you would wait; that when you married Mary you would give it up. Won't you wait?

Douglas. No; that would be too long.

Mary. I shall never marry him, father.

John. But you must — you shall. I'll have no disobedience.

Hannah. Father, father, Mary is a good girl. Don't speak of disobedience.

John. She shall marry Henry Douglas.

Douglas. Never, John Nutter! I would not marry your daughter were she at my feet entreating me to take her to my arms. (*Folds his arms.*) She's not my style.

John. What, you miserable whelp! Do you know where you are — who you are speaking to? You have entreated me to give her to you; you have begged me to exert my power, and drive her to your arms; and, now that you have me in your power, you dare to insult her! Villain, I'll strangle you! (*Rushes at DOUGLAS.*)

Jarius. (*Rushing between.*) Hold on. Keep cool, Mr. Nutter.

Douglas. I want nothing that belongs to you, old man, but my money; that I will have. Pay me one thousand dollars, or I take immediate possession of your property.

John. O, I am justly served! I listened to your voice, embarked in speculation, turned against my daughter's love, and now, in my old age, must wander forth without a home.

Douglas. It's rather hard. Keep the home, and pay the money. It's easy enough.

Jarius. Jes' so. Pay the money, and let the sneak go.

John. How can I? I haven't a cent in the world.

Jarius. Jes' so. Where's the little brown jug?

Mary. Alas, that is empty!

Jarius. Sho! Let's have a look at it.

John. 'Tis useless. I haven't put a copper into it for a year. Everything has gone to that villain.

Jarius. Jes' so. Let's see the jug for old acquaintance' sake. (*Exit, MARY, L.*) It's a bad thing to give up putting away a little somethin' for a rainy day, ain't it, Mrs. Nutter?

Hannah. Yes. John always did save until that Henry Douglas showed him how to spend.

Jarius. Jes' so. It's a great pity. I could tell you a story about a boy I knowed.

Hannah. A boy! What boy?

Jarius. Why, how bright you are looking, Mrs. Nutter! Guess you feel better.

Douglas. Well, is my money coming?

Jarius. Hold on. Don't git into a sweat. I want to tell yer about that air boy. Yer see, about a year ago I came across a poor chap, who'd run down hill awful fast; he'd got into temptation, and tripped. A good deal like your boy, Mrs. Nutter.

Hannah. My Will? He was a good boy. He's a man to-day.

Jarius. Jes' so. Wal, this here chap wanted work. He was as penitent as could be; so I set him to work among agricultural implements, as a sort of salesman, paid him fair wages, and a smarter chap you never see. I noticed he never spent much, and so one day I asked him what he did with his savings. He didn't like to tell at first; but arter a while he told me that his daddy had a kind of saving-up place — a sugar-bowl, or

a coffee-pot, or a jug, somewhere, and he used to walk off every Saturday night ten miles, creep into the house, and put it away in the old ju— savings bank. Wal, I had a reapin' machine that I had a patent onto, that I thought a heap on; but, somehow, it wouldn't work. When they got the horses in, and a boy on top of it, and started the thing off, for a little while 'twould go first rate; when, all at once, there'd be a h'ist and spill, and machine, and horse, and boy would all be mixed up in a heap. It was a bust. Wal, that air boy would look, and look, and look at that machine, and one day he says to me, "I've found what's the matter." And I'll be hauged if he hadn't. I was so tickled that I jest drew my check for a thousand dollars, and made him a present of it; and I'll be bound that air check is in the old gentleman's little brown jug.

Mary. (*Outside.*) O, father! mother! (*Runs in, L., with jug, followed by SALLY.*) The jug! the jug! It's heaped full of bank notes. (*Emptying it upon table.*)

Sally. Heaps and heaps!

John. Bank notes, and — What's this? (*Takes up check.*) A check! "Pay to William Nutter, or order, one thousand dollars." Signed, "Jarius Jordau." Jordan, is this your work?

Jarius. Look at the back.

John. (*Reads.*) "William Nutter." My son!

Hannah. Our Will! My boy! O, Jarius Jordan! what does this mean?

Jarius. It means glory! Halleluyah! Fourth of July! Kingdom come! It's a grand emancipation jubilee. The

boy I've been telling you about is the same boy that villain, Henry Douglas, led into temptation, whom he charged with forgery, whom I took in hand, set straight, and who to-day is a man indeed — your son Will, Mrs. Nutter.

Hannah. I know it, I know it. He's saved us, he's saved us! O, where is he? Where is my boy?

Enter WILL, C.

Will. Here, mother, here's your own boy again.

Hannah. (*Screams.*) O, Will! Will! I knew you'd come! I knew you'd come! (*Runs into his arms.*)

John. Will, welcome home! (*Takes his hand.*) Everything is forgotten and forgiven. I'm proud to welcome my son home again.

Will. Home, father, spite of the craft of that man whom I once called friend. It is ours still. — Mary, sister!

Mary. Dear, dear Will, a thousand times welcome! (*Clasps his hand.*)

Will. Ah, sister, I have missed you all. Thank Heaven, I am once more able to meet you without a blush of shame.

Ned. Here's your old chum, Will; can you spare a hand for him?

Will. (*Giving both hands to NED. MARY leads her mother to lounge.*) Ah, Ned, you have much to forgive. That cruel blow with the little brown jug!

Ned. Don't speak of it. You don't know how much good it did me. Does he, Mary?

Jarius. Jes' so. If it did you any good, give the

credit where it belongs — to Henry Douglas, for he struck the blow.

Douglas. 'Tis false.

Jarius. It's the truth, for I saw the act. I didn't tell on it, for I wanted a p'int agin Douglas. To-morrow I shall make a charge of assault with intent to kill. It's hung two years, but I guess it's strong enough to do some execution.

Douglas. You have no witnesses. Your charge will fall to the ground, Mr. Jarius Jordan. You have outwitted me, but you must confess I have plotted safely. There's not a point you've found to convict me of crime. You are rather keen. Try it. If I have failed in my attempt to ruin the family of the renowned shoemaker, John Nutter, I have still the satisfaction of retiring from the field with a very handsome profit in the shape of your check for a thousand dollars, which I shall expect to receive before night. Good day, all. Nutter, I leave you to join the hands of your daughter and her accomplished lover. Give them your blessing, and send me a card. (*At door.*) Ha, ha, farewell to Cobbler's Paradise! [*Exit, c.*]

Sally. (*Runs up to door.*) Good riddance to bad rubbish.

Jarius. Sally, Sally, don't do that. (*Runs after her, and brings her down c.*)

Sally. Jarius Jerden, if there's a Yankee angel, you're the critter.

Jarius. Sally, I want to ask you — that is — I'm going to — Consarn it! Sally, will you marry me? Phew! it's out at last!

Sally. Of course I will. I would five years ago, if you'd only had the spunk to ask me.

Jarius. Jes' so. I've been a donkey. But them words did stick in my wizen awful.

Hannah. (*Rising.*) Law sakes, Mary, don't try to keep me on this sofa. I ain't a bit sick. I'm just as well as you are; and if I don't dance at your weddin', it'll be because I hain't got a partner.

Will. You shall not want for partners, mother. I claim the privilege of opening the ball with you.

Hannah. And you shall, Will. Law, my! how handsome you have grown!

John. Hasn't he, mother! This is a proud day for us.

Hannah. Yes, indeed; for Will's a man to-day.

Will. And, if I am, I owe it all to one who, in the dark hour, took me by the hand and led me into the light. Ah, many a poor boy who has been led into temptation might be saved from a miserable life if a friendly hand were stretched forth, and a warning word kindly given, as they were to me by Jarius Jordan — Heaven bless him!

Hannah. Ay, Heaven bless you, Jarius. You have made a mother's heart happy in the gift of her boy, reclaimed from sin. May all you seek be yours.

Jarius. Jes' so — which is Sally. I've got her. As there's likely to be a matrimonial convention in this house pretty soon, I appint myself a delegate.

Sally. Second the motion.

John. Ned, I withdraw all objections to your proposal regarding Mary.

Ned. Thank you, Mr. Nutter. — Mary, are you going to make me happy?

Mary. I'm going to try, Ned. And where there's a will there's a way, you know.

Will. Mother, you don't know how happy I feel to be with you again, to see the old home, everything about the room so familiar; even the little brown jug has a familiar look. It was my first temptation.

Jarius. Yes, boy, it was a family temptation. I knowed it would work trouble. Ah, if the liquid poison that slays was never allowed to show itself in the home, there would be fewer desolate hearthstones, fewer blighted lives.

John. You're right, Jarius. When that boy fell, it opened my eyes, and not a drop of liquor shall ever enter my doors.

Jarius. Jes' so. Stick to it, John Nutter. It was a bad speck. It turned your boy adrift; but, thanks to a mother's love, he fought and conquered.

Will. (*Comes up and takes JARIUS'S hand.*) Thanks to you, thanks to you!

Jarius. Wal, I dunno —

Hannah. (*Comes and takes JARIUS'S other hand.*) Jes' so, Jarius, jes' so.

TABLEAU.

JARIUS, C. WILL *clasping his right hand*, MRS. NUTTER *his left*. JOHN NUTTER *and* SALLY, R. NED *and* MARY, L., *arm-in-arm*.

CURTAIN.



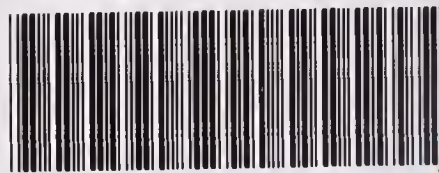
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