

THE
SPIRITUALIST;

A Comedy in Four Acts,

—BY—

JOSEPH MARION BAKER.

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THE PECULIARITIES OF INDIVIDUALS HAVE EVER FURNISHED
THEMES FOR THE MUSE OF COMEDY.—*Anonymous.*

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Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1882.

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—TO—
MY FATHER,
ABRAM BAKER, M. D.,
OF GOOD HOPE, OHIO,
THIS COMEDY IS INSCRIBED.

THE
SPIRITUALIST,
A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS.

O

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

AMINIDAB DORKINS otherwise MR. QUATTLEWICH, a spiritualist who is President of the Hodwag & Southwestern Railroad Company.

MRS. DORKINS, wife of Aminidab Dorkins.

MR. JUNKINGSON, a farmer.

MRS. JUNKINGSON, wife of Mr. Junkingson.

MELISSA, a single lady, who is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Junkingson.

AUNT SALLY, a rich mischievous widow.

SPRIGGINS, a student at Mrs. Spankington's Academy.

GALL, a book-agent and detective.

SHELDON, a peddler of pictures.

BETSON, a farmer.

BARTLETT, a Justice-of-the-Peace.

PSYCHO, a fiend.

GHOSTS, DEVILS and ANGELS.

THE SPIRITUALIST.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

Discovered a room in Mr. Junkingson's residence, Aunt Sally churning and Miss Melissa Junkingson reading a pictorial paper.

Melissa. Oh dear! Aunt Sally! have you seen my sweet little dog Jewel? I believe some one has killed him. He had such a melancholy air, during the last few days, that I think he had a presentiment of his approaching fate.

Aunt Sally. I haven't seen your detestable poodle lately. One would think that you must be a victim of hydrophobia, since you can talk of nothing but your dog. I wish old Quattlewich had the hydrophobia, because he is an unmitigated nuisance.

Melissa. Oh dear! Aunt Sally! you do talk awfully. Mr. Quattlewich is the most tender and the most chivalric gentleman that ever came to our township; and he told me last night that he loved me for my sense and beauty, and I believe him.

Aunt Sally. Melissa! you are a dunce of a queer kind. I tell you old Quattlewich loves your property, but cares no more for your person than I do for a king of Central Africa.

Melissa. Oh horrid! horrid! Your language penetrates my soul with the acidity of a crab-apple.

Aunt Sally. Acidity of fudge! Melissa, you are too easily imposed on.

Melissa. Did you never hear him tell about his campaigns in Central Africa?—how he espoused the cause of the Pigmies,

during their wars with the giants, and killed fourteen giants with his own hands, in one fight, while the tearful rescued maidens hung upon his accents like—like—

Aunt Sally. Like a turkey-buzzard on a dead horse. How dark he is !

Melissa. His dark complexion was caused by the smoke of battle; there's where he turned dark.

Aunt S. There's where he turned pale.

Melissa. Oh you irreclaimable cynic! How I do love you !
A kiss, Aunt! a kiss! [Kissing Aunt Sally.]

Aunt S. Melissa, do you know that the perseverance of this milk, which I am churning, does astonish the American people? I have been pounding this milk ever since George Washington was an infant; and there is no sign of butter; but the contents of the churn are as thin as Quattlewich's mustache. Come! niece! We'll get some warm water. [Exeunt.]

Enter SPRIGGINS, carrying Jewel a dead dog.

Spriggins. Hem ! ahem ! An elderly female that churns colored water two hours, hoping to convert it into butter. A sentimental single lady; and a modest youth called Spriggins. That's I. I have such an angelical disposition that I smell more sweetly than a female singing class. However, I didn't learn vocal music at Sing Sing; but Quattlewich did, I think. Just two hours ago, according to my chronometer, I poured nearly all the milk out of the churn, and almost filled it with water; and Aunt Sally has been churning that whitened water, not knowing what I did. Two hours are long enough to have produced fishes, if not butter. Here is Melissa's dog Jewel. He is as dead as the ancient Egyptians; and I killed him. I'll put him in the churn, and tell Melissa that her lover Quattlewich killed the dog and placed him there. She loves her dog! How mad she will be at Quattlewich. [Putting the dog in the churn.]

There now; he will have the advantage of a water-cure establishment.

Enter MR. QUATTLEWICH.

Mr. Q. Spriggins! what have you been doing?

Spriggins. Mr. Quattlewich, I have been studying a form of prayer suitable for public gatherings.

Mr. Q. Spriggins, why didn't you ask my advice about it? I have sufficient knowledge to instruct even the clergy in such matters?

Spriggins. Why! Mr. Quattlewich! I thought you were a philosopher and writer; but I had no idea that you were a theologian also.

Mr. Q. I am deeply read in Christian theology, and my judgment is always correct. But I believe only what the spiritual mediums tell me about man and his duties and the future world.

Sprig. Mr. Quattlewich, you should be sent as United States minister to Archangel, Russia.

Mr. Q. Why! that is on the borders of a frosty sea.

Sprig. Rather a cool assertion, I know, sir.

Mr. Q. [*angrily.*] Where's my cane? Where's my cane?

[*Exit*

Sprig. If old Quattlewich cane me, I'll be revenged. He shall never marry Melissa whether he strike me or not.

Enter AUNT SALLY and MELISSA.

[*Aunt S. bears a pitcher containing water, which she pours into the churn.*]

Melissa. Oh dear! what has happened to my poor little dog Jewel? How I miss his affectionate eyes!

Sprig. Melissa, I'll tell you who killed your dog Jewel, presently.

[*Exit.*

Melissa. Dead! oh, what a blow!

Aunt S. How hard and heavy this milk has become! Some one must have been churning it while we were out. [*Peers into the churn.*] How white the butter is! I shall never be able to find a market for this butter in the republic of the United States.

Melissa. What is the trouble?

Aunt S. Oh, dear me! a dead dog in the churn!

Melissa. It is my dear dog Jewel. Oh! the affectionate martyr! How can I behold his saintly, loved remains! I recall the words of the royalist bard: "The glories of our earthly state are shadows, not substantial things. There is no armor against Fate. Death lays his icy hand on kings."

Aunt S. I don't see any appropriateness in applying such sublime poetry to the death of a dog. Jewel wasn't a king.

Melissa. No. But the principle is the same.

Aunt S. I don't doubt the truth of your assertion; for some kings have no more principle than a poodle.

Melissa. Oh, horrid! horrid! You are crusty because you can't make butter, this morning. But I love you still. A kiss, Aunt Sally! A kiss!

[*Kissing Aunt S.*]

Aunt S. Don't be too affectionate. Who could have killed the dog?

Melissa. I don't know.

Aunt S. Neither do I.

Enter SPRIGGINS.

Melissa. My poor little canine friend shall haunt his murderer, and disturb him by nightly barking. I would not have Jewel bite him; but I would desire to see Jewel snap at him, and frighten him.

Sprig. If you two will not tell who told you, I will tell you who killed the dog Jewel.

Aunt S. I'll never tell.

Melissa. I'll keep it as a secret.

Sprig.—Mr. Quattlewich killed Melissa's dog Jewel. I saw him do the bloody deed. Melissa, ask him to kiss the dead dog. If he will not kiss him, it will be a proof that he is guilty of his death and his conscience smites him.

Melissa. Oh! Spriggins! I can't believe that Mr. Quattlewich killed him. He was always so tender and devoted to me that I believe he couldn't have been so cruel. Oh, my Jewel! My dog! my dog! my dog!

Aunt S. This is the first time I ever saw the dog days come in this manner. Ha! ha! ha! [Exit.]

Sprig. Will you bury Jewel, your sweet pet poodle, and engrave on his tombstone a dog's paw pointing up to Heaven!

Mel. Oh, horrid! horrid! I haven't felt so badly since I graduated at the high school.

Sprig. I love you, Melissa.

Mel. And I love the dog.

Sprig. Good-bye! kind young lady. [Exit.]

Mel. Ah, my dog! My unfortunate martyr! How I loved him!

Enter Mr. QUATTLEWICH.

Mr. Q.—Happiness consists in an appreciation of the smaller blessings of life. What causes you so much grief?

Mel. Oh, dear me! Jewel is dead.

Mr. Q. What! Who killed your dog?

Mel. Mr. Quattlewich! I was told that you did. But I can hardly believe it.

Mr. Q.—I kill a poodle! Melissa, do you think that the President of the Hodwag & Southwestern Railroad Company could descend to such a petty act as the slaying of a dog?

Mel. Oh, what a fate!

Mr. Q. Had I killed the dog, I should think that I must have been under the influence of an evil spirit at the time I did the deed. Melissa, will you believe me when I say that I didn't destroy your unfortunate quadruped mammal?

Mel. Mr. Quattlewich! if you say that you didn't kill my dog Jewel, I can't doubt your statement.

Mr. Q. Some scientists think that dogs may be our humble relatives; but I cannot believe them.

Mel. What do the mediums say about death?

Mr. Q. Much that is consolatory.

Mel. Do you believe in spiritualism?

Mr. Q. I do. Science in vain searches the distant past, and in the deposits of a frosty age seeks to discover the origin of the human race; but science cannot penetrate to the world of ghosts, but spiritualism can. A gentle rap upon a table makes known the presence of the souls of the dead. The ghosts of our dead relatives often take complete possession of us; and thus it often happens that, when we think we are ourselves, we are really only our own great-grandfathers or great-grandmothers. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother, I love you still.

Mel. Do you love me more than you do your grandmother?

Mr. Q. Hem! hem! hem! A delicate question! A delicate question, my dear. When I was born, the spirit of Marcus Aurelius told the ghost of Blackhawk that a sweet angel stated to him that Love was destined to be my arbitrary ruler. That tyrant now rules me. When I was in central Africa, I observed that courtship among the savage Niam-Niam (*gnam-gnam*) was very peculiar. I have been a great traveler; and have beheld many wild scenes and some bloody ones. Melissa, do you love me?

Mel. Some, maybe. I cannot say that I am deeply in love with you; but every time I see your sweet expressive eyes I wish I was. But my dog! oh my dog! I must go, and weep alone.

[*Exit.*]

Mr. Q. What a dunce Melissa is! But she has property. Ah! she has property. She will be an odd helpmeet for a philosophical gentleman such as I. But she will be easily governed.

Enter BETSON.

Betson. Mr. Quattlewich, as I was coming to mill, I thought I would call and ascertain if you wish to get any more potatoes.

Mr. Q. Sir, I don't desire any more. You brought my house-keeper six bushels before; and at least a dozen of them were unfit for use. Six bushels, at fifty cents a bushel, would bring you three dollars; but I must deduct twenty-cents for the dozen that were rotten. I do this not for the sake of the money I save, but to teach you to do better in the future.

Betson. Sir, you are a pompous, superstitious, gullible miser.

Enter SPRIGGINS.

Mr. Q. [*To Betson.*] You rustic calamity, I'll fix you. You insolent trickster.

[*Beating Betson.*

[*Exeunt* QUATTLEWICH and BETSON.

Sprig. The visionary's theory is true. Man descended from the ancestors of the apes and monkeys; and some men disgrace their ancestors. I'll place an iceberg between Quattlewich and Melissa. I'll convince her yet that he killed her pet dog Jewel. Old Quattlewich is too mean to become a good husband for Melissa, and he shall never marry her. Here is Quattlewich's carpet-sack. I'll examine it. [*Opening the carpet-sack, he takes letters therefrom and reads them.*] I see, in these letters, that Quattlewich's real name is Aminidab Dorkins. He has a living wife; and he was in this country on the very days which he claims were spent by him in Africa. Mr. Quattlewich, you never danced round dances, in Central Africa, with a hippopotamus for a partner. A lady named Dorkins is stopping at that summer resort, the Empire Hotel. She bears Quattlewich's real name, *Dorkins*, and may be his wife. I'll send her a note.

[*Replacing the letters.*

*Enter QUATTLEWICH, MELISSA, Aunt SALLY and
Mr. JUNKINGSON.*

Mr. Q. It occurred just as I tell you. We had left the Nile and were gliding up the Gazelle river, in Central Africa. Time, ten o'clock at night. We were passing through the shadow of a large cocoa tree, when our attention was attracted by the most unearthly cries upon the land. Creeping stealthily up the bank, we saw the Negroes and the gorillas engaged in battle. By the light of the rising moon, we saw the line of battle of the huge beasts extending more than a mile. They were armed with clubs and bows and arrows. The negroes, though armed as well, were gradually forced toward us, when, seizing my elephant gun, I joined the fight, assisted by my followers. Destiny is another name for skill. By our skill we were enabled to shoot the leader of the gorillas; and the fierce brutes retreated from the field. Of course, few living men could have shown as much military talent as I did. Filled with gratitude, one of the Negro chiefs presented me with the dead body of one of his wives, whom he had slain and nicely dressed for breakfast.

Mel. Oh dear! How very romantic! How wonderful!

Sprig. I should ejaculate! Did you say she was nicely dressed for breakfast?

Mr. Q. Yes sir.

Sprig. Then sir, that was the only Negro, living in that part of Africa, who was nicely dressed.

Aunt S. Mr. Quattlewich, if I could tell as big stories as you do, I would become a lecturer.

Mr. Q. It is more difficult to lie than narrate facts. A man of my character never lies. Aunt Sally, as people call you, you must not accuse me of lying! You must not accuse me of lying.

Enter SHELDON.

Mel. Here comes Mr. Sheldon.

Shel. It affords me satisfaction to meet with people of real culture and position. When one has a production of genius to dispose of, it is inconceivably exasperating to meet only boors, who can not appreciate his choicest wares. [*Exhibiting a large picture of a donkey.*] Ladies and gentlemen, this is a representative—

Sprig. A representative, did you say! That accounts for some of the queer conduct in Congress lately.

Shel. Hem! he! a-hem! A representative of the horse family vulgarly called a donkey. I certify to you that it is a faithful and artistic representation of the identical animal on which the Roman general Titus entered Jerusalem, when that city was taken shortly after the death of Christ. It was painted by Sir Edwin Landseer; and, as a work of *high* art, it has always excited the exaggerated enthusiasm of mankind.

Sprig. Why are the people, represented in the picture, all placed on the housetops?

Aunt S. Because it is a work of *high* art.

Mr. Q. Such scenes are common in the Orient, where people live much on the tops of houses.

Shel. Buy it. It is a noble animal.

Mel. Isn't it cunning!

Shel. You may have it for \$100—\$75 to be paid now; and I will take the remainder in weekly installments.

Mel. [To Mr. Junkingson.] Father, buy it.

Mr. J. No; my daughter. The weevil is in the wheat; and we will not have half a crop; the brindle cow intends to have the hollow-horn; and there are so many peaches this year that the weight of the fruit will ruin my trees; therefore I can't buy the picture.

Mr. Q. I am remarkably well read in history; and I know that the ancient Romans didn't wear swallow tails. [*To Shel.*] Those, sir, are intended for Roman soldiers; but they are ridiculous caricatures. Your picture, sir, is a daub; and I'll not buy it.

Shel. Ah! I perceive that I am among people of real cultivation. Here is a picture more suitable for you. It represents an angel grandmother, just from Heaven, reaching to receive the spirit of her dying grandson. [*Exhibits picture.*]

Aunt S. Do angels wear spectacles? [*To Mr. Q.*] I observe that one does.

Mr. Q. Aunt Sally, as people somewhat unceremoniously call you, I would inform you that when an elderly person dies, the ghost of such an individual frequently wears spectacles, as I have been informed by spiritualistic mediums on whom I can rely. [*To Sheldon.*] How much for that picture?

Shel. It was painted by a famous medium when his eyes were bandaged, and the ghost of Guido inspired him. It is a faithful representation of such a scene. You may have it for \$150.

Mr. Q. I will give you \$1 for the picture, because I believe it represents such a scene.

Shel. Not particularly. Give me \$125 for it.

Mr. Q. I will give you \$2 for it.

Shel. Give me \$100 for it.

Mr. Q. I will give you \$3 for it.

Shel. Give me \$75 for it.

Mr. Q. I will give you \$4 for it.

Shel. Give me \$50 for it.

Mr. Q. I will give you \$5 for it.

Shel. Give me \$25 for it. Just think! It only costs you \$25 to keep an angel in the house!

Mr. Q. Sir! will you be just to me, and believe my statement when I tell you that I am a gentleman of correct taste, who can appreciate a work of art when I see it? I will give you \$6 for the picture, because that looks like a spirit grandmother.

Shel. Sir, you are a gentleman of wonderful taste. My wife and children are suffering for food; and therefore I will take six dollars for it.

Mr. Q. And I, sir, see that you are a man of penetrating judgment since you have been sufficiently discerning to appreciate my taste. Here, sir, are six dollars.

[*Handing Sheldon a sum.*]

Sprig. [*To Shel.*] Why are the angel's cheeks so red?

Shel. It blushes with mortification because it only brought six dollars.

Sprig. I suppose its cheeks are red because it was a cold day in Heaven when it was painted.

Mr. Q. Irreverence, sir! Irreverence!

*Exeunt QUATTLEWICH, SHELDON, MELISSA and
MR. JUNKINGSON.*

Sprig. Many spiritualists are worthy sensible people; but what an irritable, superstitious, selfish, conceited pudding-head Quattlewich is! He could see that the ancient Romans didn't wear swallow-tails; but couldn't perceive the absurdity of representing an angel with spectacles on its nose. Joe McGregor, with his eyes shut, could paint a better picture. I painted it as a comic picture; and you added the spectacles to make it look more laughable. But old Quattlewich bought it as a serious picture—a real death-bed scene. So much for superstition.

Aunt S. Mr. Quattlewich pretends to have visited Central Africa, I believe.

Sprig. He lies prodigiously. I have positive proof that he was in this country on the very day and hour which he claims were spent by him, in Central Africa, in assisting the Pigmies in their wars with the giants.

Aunt S. He is a superstitious egotist. Spriggins, what do you think of spiritualism?

Sprig. I don't know much about it. My vision doesn't extend beyond this world. Unless they bring letters of recommendation from the angels, I shall admit no table-thumping ghosts of my ancestors to my intimacy. However hospitable I may feel toward my dead relatives, I shall not ask them to my table.

Aunt S. Such as were hung for stealing horses might give you the nightmare.

Sprig. Yes; they might. Professor Longwhine believes that the raps are caused by the ghosts of dead carpenters, who pound in the spirit world in consequence of a habit acquired here.

Aunt S. Then, if the ghostly carpenters should scare old Quattlewich to death, they would "hit the nail on the head."

Sprig. I should ejaculate!

Aunt S. Christianity, the religion of our ancestors, will yet civilize the globe. But modern spiritualism!—what is it? a dream or a reality?

Sprig. Quattlewich has a living wife. I have seen the proof of my statement.

Aunt S. I don't doubt it. He pretends to love Melissa, but really loves her property, and would like to marry \$90,000. We will hasten his marriage with Melissa; but after that event he must pay us a large sum or go to prison for bigamy. In the meantime we will play the ghost and scare him well.

Sprig. No; we will scare him sick.

Aunt S. Spriggins, you are a barbarous punster. We will let everybody into the secret of our ghost game, except my unfortunate brother, Mr. Junkingson, and his daughter Melissa. They are such astonishing dunces that they would spoil all if they should hear of our scheme.

Sprig. I should ejaculate! We'll pretend to be spiritualistic mediums. Oh! wouldn't I be a sweet mouth piece for the angels to talk through?

Aunt S. Yes; if they desired to scold the pigs. Ha! ha! ha! We'll have sport.

Sprig. That we will. He! he! he!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Parlor in Mr. Junkingson's House.

Enter QUATTLEWICH, MELISSA, *Mr.* JUNKINGSON, *Mrs.* JUNKINGSON, *Aunt SALLY* and *GALL.*

Gall. You will forgive a stranger for congratulating you on the comfort and refinement everywhere visible in this house.

Mel. We'll forgive you.

Aunt S. We'll agree to forgive you, provided you promise to cease to flatter us about our neatness, when you have books to sell.

Mr. Junk. Everything is wrong. The house is too neat.

Mr. Q. [*To Gall.*] Yes sir; Mr. Junkingson's folks are neat; but you should have seen the neatness exhibited by the cannibals of Central Africa.

Gall. They polished the bones of their human victims very neatly, I suppose; but they must be very superstitious.

Mr. Q. They were not more superstitious than many civilized nations.

Enter SPRIGGINS.

Gall. Did they have mediums in Africa? Did the cannibals believe that the spirits of the dead cause raps on tables, as superstitious people here suppose?

Mr. Q. Mr. Gall, I would inform you, sir, that spiritualism is not superstition. What a donkey superstition is. I am not superstitious; and I know that we can communicate with the dead. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother, I thank thee for the correct views which I entertain upon this subject. What the unbeliever supposes is but the buzz of an insect, is often a stray note from the spirit world; and there is always more wisdom in the raps on a table than in the teachings of the greatest philosophers. Was the gentleman, whose book you are selling, a philosopher?

Gall. He was a wonderful man, sir. He penetrated the heart of Africa, and discovered semi-civilized beasts called gorillas—a remarkable portion of the quadrumana—and he was engaged in a bloody, and romantic war which raged between the pigmies and the giants, which inhabit that obscure portion of this terra-queous sphere.

Aunt S. Is the English language on a spree?

Sprig. I should ejaculate!

Mel. [*To Mr. Junk.*] My dear father! buy the book.

Mr. Junk. No; my daughter. The weevil is in the wheat; and I fear we may have a tornado. I can't buy the book. Mr. Gall, you shall not read any extracts from that book in my house, sir.

Gall. [*Reading aloud.*] "As we passed up the Gazelle river, in Central Africa, our progress was continually interrupted by the presence of immense numbers of hippopotamuses. They snorted so at night that sleep was impossible. But, after eating liberally of African yams, one night, we fell asleep, because the yams were full of a somniferous substance. The next morning, we found that the huge hippopotamuses had

towed our vessel three miles up a tributary of the Gazelle river and left us and our vessel stranded completely."

Mel. What a wonderful story! Yet it is undoubtedly true.

Aunt S. What lies! What intolerable nonsense!

Mr. Junk. Just as I said! Everything is wrong. The brindle cow has the hollow-horn; in Africa even the food contains death; and the heathen will never learn anything about rotation of crops.

Gall. Will you subscribe for the book? [*Offering Mr. Q. a pencil and a subscription book.*]

Mr. Q. Not at present, sir. I am an excellent judge of books; and I know that one must have been written by a man of genius who was also a great traveler.

Gall. Will any one present sign for the book. [*To each.*] Sign for it? Sign for it? Sign for it? Sign for it?

Sprig. We don't want the book, sir. You needn't read any more.

Gall. [*Reading.*] "Not far from the seriba of Mohammed Aboo Summat I saw a tree, which in appearance was allied to the cocoa-palm. It bore small red berries which tasted deliciously. My servant, Abdull Kadell ate some of these as we were passing an extensive marsh. Suddenly a fierce report startled us; and, glancing toward him, I saw pieces of his body flying in every direction. He was literally torn to shreds. Is it possible that some evil spirit induced him to eat the berries? They contained an aciduous substance which, mixing with the gastric juice in his stomach, formed an explosive that literally tore him to pieces. How wonderful is nature! How mysterious is man!"

Mel. How I pity the poor wretch!

Gall. An awful fate. Few books are as wonderful as this.

Sprig. I should ejaculate!

Aunt S. Nonsense! Nonsense!

Mr. Junk. The fruit in this country is far from perfect, and

the African berries tear a man all to pieces. What an unfortunate world! [*To Gall.*] You shall not read any more. The sound hurts my head.

Gall. [*Reads.*] "When I was in Central Africa—"

Mr. Junk. We don't want the book now.

Gall. [*To each.*] Buy the book. Buy the book. Buy the book!

Mr. Junk. Leave my house, sir. We wouldn't have your book, sir.

Gall. [*Reads.*] "When I was among the Pigmies and the giants of Central Africa—"

Aunt S. We wish you had staid there.

Gall. To tell the truth, I see that you are people of sense. I was victimized when I bought these books; they are full of the wildest nonsense ever put before an intelligent public.

Aunt S. Who wrote that book?

Gall. Theophilus Quattlewich, President of the Hodwag & Southwestern Railroad Company and Member of the American Geographical Society.

Mel. Oh dear! Mr. Quattlewich, that's you.

Mr. Q. [*To Gall.*] You are a boor, sir—a boor.

Gall. About the cannibals—

Mr. Q. Do you dare to tell me to my face that the book that I wrote contains wild nonsense! I'll cannibal you. I'll prepare you for the pot of the cannibals. You are one of the links connecting the ape and the amphibian. [*Beating Gall.*]

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Room at Mr. Junkingson's.

Enter Aunt SALLY and SPRIGGINS.

Aunt S. Spriggins, where have you been?

Sprig. Down to the cornfield to extract the cube root of a stump.

Enter Mrs. DORKINS.

Mrs. D. I received a letter from one Mr. Spriggins, who I am told resides here.

Sprig. That's I. I am the identical tenderling who wrote the note.

Mrs. D. And I am Mrs. Dorkins.

Aunt S. [*To Mrs. D.*] What! my old friend Julia Whittinghammer, with whom I used to study botany at school! So your name is Dorkins, now. Where is your husband?

Mrs. D. That's what I should like to know.

Aunt S. What! Can't you keep track of Mr. Dorkins, your husband? You should fasten a bell to him.

Mrs. D. No trouble to do that; for most married men take kindly to the *belles*.

Aunt S. True. True. Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. D. [*To Sprig.*] Your description of Mr. Quattlewich agrees with that of my husband, Mr. Aminidab Dorkins. He deserted me and our children some years since. Have you a picture of Mr. Quattlewich?

Aunt S. I have. [*Showing a photograph*] This is the picture of Mr. Quattlewich.

Mrs. D. Why! that is the picture of my truant husband, Mr. Aminidab Dorkins. [*Producing photograph.*] See the two photographs exactly agree. My photograph of him is the best; but the features are the same. Mr. Quattlewich is my husband; and his real name is Aminidab Dorkins.

Sprig. He is superstitious, and 'believes in more ghosts than there is room for—blue ghosts, green ghosts and red ghosts. I shouldn't be surprised to learn that he believes that some ghosts wear pig-tails, like Chinamen have.

Mrs. Dorkins. He certainly is somewhat superstitious.

Sprig. Do you love that precious husband?

Mrs. D. I certainly have a — ah! some regard for him, notwithstanding the fact that he stole my share of the property and cruelly deserted me, after making the most absurd and wicked charges against me.

Aunt S. Your husband, Mr. Dorkins, or Mr. Quattlewich, as he calls himself, is courting my poor niece, Melissa Junkingson.

Mrs. D. Oh the heartless man! Quattlewich! Quattlewich! Oh what a name my husband has chosen!

Aunt S. [*To Mrs. D.*] Justice requires that he should be punished for his cruelty to you. Besides, some punishment might reform him.

Mrs. D. What you say is but the truth.

Aunt S. Will you assist in punishing him?

Mrs. D. I will. I will. Oh! the soulless deserter of his affectionate wife and children!

Aunt S. If he should consent to live with you as your husband, he might run away again.

Mrs. D. Yes, he might.

Aunt S. Don't make yourself known to him till after his marriage with Melissa Junkingson; then confront him with the evidence of his bigamy, and you can force him to pay you such a sum to keep you quiet as will render you independent for life.

Mrs. D. I will try my very best to assist you.

Sprig. We will take advantage of his superstition, and have some fun at his expense, before his marriage with Melissa. The sheriff may have sport with him after that event. [*To Mrs. D.*] Do you see that box under the table?

Mrs. D. Yes sir.

Sprig. Hide in it, and pretend to be a ghost; and rap the under side of the table, when we ask questions, or your husband does. Aunt Sally can pretend to be a medium

Mrs. D. I will obey you; and rap answers to my husband's questions. [*Hides in the box beneath the table.*]

Enter Mr. QUATTLEWICH otherwise Mr. AMINIDAB DORKINS.

Mr. Q. [soliloquizing.] What a beautiful dream I had last night! I never have such dreams as the common herd have. My angel grandmother stood at my bedside. How bright were her wings! how blissful her smile!

Aunt S. How strangely sweet the presence of an angel is!

Mr. Q. I was told that you were a medium. Did you ever experience the presence of an angel?

Aunt S. I feel the presence of an angel now. I am a powerful medium. A'n't I, Spriggins?

Sprig. I should ejaculate! You have the confidence of all dead widowers and some of the live ones.

Mr. Q. When I was a boy, a neighbor of mine went to heaven, while he was in a trance state, and remained there two weeks.

Enter Mr. JUNKINGSON.

Sprig. I went to heaven for a thanksgiving dinner once; but I didn't get any, because some one had eaten up all the turkey.

Mr. Q. Take seats at the table, and we will communicate with the souls of the dead. The majority of our race believe in ghosts; and some savage African tribes— [*Taking seats.*]

Aunt S. The table is full of spirits.

Mr. Q. Aunt Sally, as people familiarly call you, do you be careful to bring me into communication with no spirits except such as are of superior social position in another world, if I may so express myself. The familiarity of a common ghost should not be encouraged.

Aunt S. Mr. Quattlewich, the ghost of Robert Burns wishes to communicate with you.

Mr. Q. Robert Burns! Robert Burns! He was nothing but a poor Scotch farmer. I'll have nothing to do with him. What did he know about philosophy!

Aunt S. The ghost of Julius Cæsar wishes to communicate with you.

Mr. Q. Ah! let me see. Julius Cæsar belonged to an eminently respectable family of ancient Rome; he wrote well on the subject of the Gallic war; he was a fine orator, an able general, and a statesman of practicality. The ghost of such a man must have an eminently-respectable position in the society of the spirit world. You may admit Julius. I have no particular objections to the fellowship of Julius.

Sprig. I feel the presence of the spirit of an Indian chief. He is just from the happy hunting grounds and inquires for fire water.

Mr. Q. You are right. We must believe that the spirits of the dead are actually here and that we really see them, else they will never appear. Where is the ghost of Julius?

Aunt S. He says he doesn't wish to communicate with such as you.

Mr. Q. Such as I! Such as I! Julius should think himself honored by my friendship. He was nothing but an ambitious bloodthirsty usurper. I'll have nothing to do with Julius Cæsar. His wife wasn't above suspicion, I have heard. Away with *Mr.* Julius Cæsar.

Aunt S. I feel the presence of the ghost of Mrs. Whittingham. She states that she was your mother-in-law.

Mr. Q. What! my mother-in-law! .

Aunt S. Shall we communicate with her?

Mr. Q. Not at present. The conditions are not favorable,

Aunt S. I suppose so, sir.

Mr. Q. Let me ask some questions. I have seldom received answers, but will try again. Endeavor is the herald of success. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother, if you are present, please rap twice. [*Two raps.*] If you are happy in the spirit world, please rap twice. [*Two raps.*] Are the houses in heaven all numbered? Was the ichthyosaurus a dweller on the globe before man's appearance? If so, please rap twice. [*Two distinct raps.*] Is man a descendant of a lower organism? Do the spirits of the dead have holidays. If I would be happy after my marriage with Melissa, please rap twice. [*Two raps.*] Am I destined to be one of the blessed in the spirit world? If I am destined to trouble in another world, please rap twice. [*Two raps.*]

Sprig. The seance is satisfactory. Let us all retire.

Mr. Junk. Just as I said. The weevil is in the wheat; we may have a tornado; the brindle cow intends to have the hollow horn; and Quattlewich is going to the devil.

Enter MELISSA.

Aunt S. I object to such a close of the seance, because I feel the presence of spirits which have said nothing, altho they wish to communicate with us. Strange spirit, has Mr. Quattlewich a living wife? If he has, you may rap twice. [*Two raps.*]

Mr. Q. It lies! It lies! It is not my grandmother's ghost.

Mel. Learn about Jewel.

Aunt S. Strange spirit! is the dog Jewel in the room? If he be here, please rap twice. [*Two raps.*] If he be under the table, let us know.

Mr. Q. I'll look for him under the table.

Aunt S. No! no! no! You mustn't look there. [*Forcing him away.*] The spirits don't want you to look.

Mr. Q. I'll not disobey their mandates.

Aunt S. If the dog Jewel be in the churn, please rap twice.
[*Two raps.*]

Mr Q. [*Goes to the churn, and takes Jewel therefrom and exhibits him.*] My friends, you see the complete vindication of spiritualism. Here is Jewel; and he *was* in the churn, as the spirits said. Unbelief is a vagabond in the presence of such convincing facts. [Exeunt.]

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A Room in the Empire Hotel, a Summer Resort.

Enter SPRIGGINS, Aunt SALLY, Mrs. DORKINS, MELISSA and Mr. JUNKINGSON.

Mr. J. Jewel was in the churn. We'll have to sell that butter at half price.

Mel. He was in the milk. Oh my pet! My Jewel! My star!

Aunt S. That's the first time I ever saw a dog-star in the milky way.

Mel. Ha! ha! ha! [Exeunt MELISSA and Mr. JUNKINGSON.]

Sprig. "Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother," kill this flea! [*Slaps his legs.*] Superstitious old Quattlewich believed everything to be as your raps declared, Mrs. Dorkins. When you rapped that he was destined to roast in perdition, he was horrified. I wish I may have the toothache on the Fourth of July, if I don't believe he has gone home and packed his trunk, so as to be ready for a journey to the bottomless pit. He will probably try to procure a second-class ticket on account of its cheapness.

Aunt S. He will have no use for what is called a *round-trip* ticket.

Sprig. What odd questions he asked! I wonder that he didn't ask if the souls of dead highwaymen were admitted to the seventh heaven. [*Sings and capers.*] I know that in the Age of

Mammals, Our sires were neither deer nor camels; But monkeys that could climb the trees, And there coquet and take their ease.

Mrs. D. Quattlewich is my husband; and his real name is Dorkins. Oh, the heartless—the heartless man! He asked if he would be happy after his marriage with Melissa. Ha! ha! ha! O, the wretch! He should be allowed to marry Melissa, and then be sent to State Prison for bigamy. [*To Spriggins.*] Did my husband Mr. Dorkins, or Quattlewich, as he calls himself, kill Melissa's dog Jewel?

Sprig. I killed the dog myself; but Melissa must be convinced that old Quattlewich killed him. What a row it will raise between them! [*Exit.*]

Aunt S. Mrs. Dorkins, you should watch Quattlewich your husband. You may have some sport.

Mrs. D. I'll watch him.

Aunt S. Punish him as he deserves; and we'll help you if we can. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. D. Here comes my husband and that simpleton, Miss Melissa. [*Hides behind a screen.*]

Enter MELISSA and QUATTLEWICH.

Mr. Q. Melissa, why have you been so cold lately?

Mel. Oh! I've had the ague.

Mr. Q. Ah! my darling, you don't understand me. I would learn why you have been so cold toward me.

Mel. Oh dear! Mr. Quattlewich, I was again told that you murdered my dog Jewel. Oh, the martyr! He wished all mankind good. How I loved him!

Mr. Q. [*Aside.*] If I can only induce her to change the subject. [*Aloud.*] Alas! we are so made that a thing as worthless as the memory of a dead dog may bar our path to happiness. But I am an exception to the rule; for no ordinary obstacle can bar my path. When I was among the Pigmies of Central Africa, the dogs always assisted the little folks in their wars

with the cranes. On one occasion, when the birds had almost routed the Pigmies, the timely appearance of the dogs secured the victory for the little folks, and the birds were compelled to fly the field.

Mel. How romantic! How odd! If dogs are so good, why did you kill Jewel?

Mr. Q. I kill a dog! Melissa, do you think that a philosophical gentleman, who is also a railroad president, *could* kill a dog!

Mel. I fear you did. Two people told me that they saw you kill him.

Mr. Q. I didn't kill him. Who told you such an outrageous lie about me? Tell me at once. Oh! I will cane him! I will cane him!

Mel. I had him skinned and stuffed. If you will kiss his stuffed pelt, I will be convinced that you did not kill him; for surely no one could have the heart to kiss a remnant of an animal which he had slain.

Mr. Q. [*Aside.*] If I can only lead her to change the subject. [*Aloud.*] The idol of one age is the toy of the next. All doctrines must perish, except those of the spiritualistic philosophy. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother! thy whispered lessons of wisdom shall never be forgotten! Will you marry me, my darling?

Mel. When I view this, my soul loses its life; and I never, alas! never can marry the murderer of my canine friend. Will you kiss his pelt? [*Presenting the stuffed dog.*]

Mr. Q. During the Carboniferous Age, there was so much carbonic acid in the air that warm-blooded animals, such as man, could not have existed. Neither horses nor dogs—ah! I mean *sheep*—could have lived.

Mel. Jewel was a dog; and he couldn't have lived then.

Mr. Q. Fury! my dear! My dear, fury! Let us talk about more important matters.

Mel. I don't know anything that's more important.

Mr. Q. At the beginning of Mesozoic time the amphibians were conspicuous animals. They sometimes grew till they were thirteen feet long; they were amphibious, had teeth, and each eye may have resembled a jewel.

Mel. That reminds me of my dead dog Jewel. Will you kiss his pelt, now that I have stuffed him?

Mr. Q. Shall I tell you a tale?

Mel. Jewel had a tail.

Mr. Q. The *domestic* animals appeared on the globe, since the quaternary age began.

Mel. Jewel was domestic.

Mr. Q. My darling! shall I kiss you or the dog?

Mel. Dearest! you may kiss the dog.

Mr. Q. My darling, reflect! How absurd and degrading such an act must appear. Love rarely survives the loss of dignity. Love and dignity are Siamese twins. When one of them has worms, the other needs vermifuge.

Mel. Oh, my pet dog! Why do I love him still?

Mr. Q. Because you can't love him barking, I suppose.

Mel. Oh, you sarcastic cruel man! will you kiss Jewel's stuffed pelt?

Mr. Q. May Satan *pelt* me with brimstone chunks if I do. I am Theophilus Quattlewich, President of the Hodwag & South-western Railroad Company and Member of the American Geographical Society. I am a man of a genius at once brilliant and profound. I did *not* kill your filthy little brute, nor will I kiss any portion of his contemptible carcass.

Mel. Oh horrid! Horrid! He was *not* a filthy little brute. He was a dog of cleanly habits and tender heart.

Mr. Q. How cruel you are to me!

Mel. It is not cruelty to ask you to kiss Jewel. I kiss Jewel myself, and love to do so. When I go to my farms, I shall always take this reminder of Jewel with me; and, when living

in my city residence, I shall always be devoted to the memory of my little pet.

Mr. Q. Ah! my darling, your winning property—winning *ways*, I mean—overcome all scruples; and I will comply with your request. [*Kissing the stuffed poodle.*] My darling, are you satisfied?

Mel. Perfectly, my dear; for I know that you are innocent. The place in my heart once filled by the dog is now occupied by you.

Enter Mr. JUNKINGSON.

Mr. Q. The worst egotists are ever unconscious of their egotism. Most men are born egotists; but I have passed the age of forty, and I view life in the serene light of philosophy. Philosophy is the science of nature; therefore he who is most natural must be the greatest philosopher.

Mel. You are not egotistical, my dear.

Mr. Q. Altho I possess genius, I am modest. I am not too egotistical to kiss the pelt of a dog, if I should suppose that such an act would increase the happiness of one so dear to me. Will you now consent to marry me?

Mel. Dearest, I will. Do you believe that dogs have souls which exist after death?

Mr. Q. I do, because I attended a seance a few nights ago, and the spirit of a dead Indian girl stated that she was accompanied by her dog in Heaven, just as she had been during her earth-life. Nothing exists without a purpose; therefore, if dogs exist in Heaven, there must be swine there for them to chase; and, viewing the subject in this light, I find no difficulty in believing that there are hogs in Heaven.

Mel. How odd! It grieves me to think that the dogs may bite the hogs.

Mr. Junk. This world is far from perfect, and there is pain even in heaven. [*Exit.*]

Mel. Oh! here is Mr. Betson.

Enter BETSON.

Mr. Q. Sir, have you the impudence to try to sell me more potatoes?

Mr. Betson. No sir. I am collecting money for a sick widow, who is in suffering circumstances.

Mel. Oh, poor woman! Here are five dollars for your noble object. [*Giving money to Betson.*]

Mr. Q. Here, sir is a sum. [*Giving money to B.*]

Bet. What! Three cents! Take them back, sir. You are entirely too generous.

Mr. Q. An insult! An insult! [*Beating Betson.*]

Bet. I'll bring an officer, and cause you to be arrested at once. [*Exit.*]

Mr. Q. By assisting the poor, we encourage pauperism. I trust that I am too much of a philosopher to do much of that. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother! I thank thee that I have been able to vindicate my dignity.

Mel. What is a philosopher?

Mr. Q. A wise man, my dear—one who thinks and acts wisely.

Mel. Then, I fear that we haven't been philosophers of late.

Mr. Q. He who is a philosopher under all circumstances is a man under none.

Mel. Oh, Mr. Quattlewich, Mr. Betson has gone to find an officer; and you may be arrested.

Mr. Q. I am not afraid of the police.

Mel. You may be fined.

Mr. Q. Money is a cash article. Money furnishes Thought

with wings. I do not desire to part with my wings. Where should I go?

Mel. Hide in that old safe till the officers leave.

Mr. Q. It were an act beneath the dignity of a philosophical gentleman. He, who is innocent, yet carelessly places himself where he may be suspected, commits a grave offense indeed. Besides I might die there, for want of fresh air. Is there any money in the safe?

Mel. Forty dollars. *[Opens safe.]*

Mr. Q. I wouldn't touch the money. Who owns the safe?

Mel. It belongs to my poor father, who keeps his old love-letters in it; and he made a hole in the safe so that they could have fresh air. Aunt Sally rents this building to Justice Bartlett; and everybody has gone to the river to fish.

Mr. Q. I shall never place my physical and spiritual self in such a diminutive and contemptible dungeon as that. When I was in Central Africa—

Mel. Oh dear! you may be fined and beaten. What shall I do? What shall I do? Oh, dear! dear! dear!

Mr. Q. Strategy is a mark of genius. I'll save my money, and gratify you, my darling. I will even accept the hateful shade of that ignoble cage, so unworthy of me, if by doing so I can dry your beautiful orbs. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother, comfort Melissa! *[Enters the safe.]*

Mel. I'll get the key and lock you in, but release you when the officers have gone. *[Exit.]*

Mr. Q. Melissa is kind; but what an amusing simpleton she is! Ha! ha! ha! But my pocket-book is safe for the present. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Re enter MELISSA.

Mel. How romantic! *[Locks the safe.]* My lover is a phi-

losopher and a railroad president, and he is locked in a safe, and the officers are hunting for him and can't find him.

Enter AUNT SALLY and SPRIGGINS.

Aunt S. Melissa, why are you so flustered?

Mel. Oh dear me! Aunt Sally, I don't want to tell. [*Exit.*]

Sprig. Where does Mr. Junkingson keep the love-letters that he wrote when he was a bachelor?

Aunt S. In that old safe Oh! wouldn't they be rich reading!

Sprig. I should ejaculate! Let's open the safe, and read the love-letters.

Aunt S. Spriggins, you are a miniature Beelzebub. Do you suppose that I'll consent to make my own brother ridiculous?

Sprig. There is a powder-flask and a drill in the tool-box under the safe. I'll get them and blow the safe open.

Aunt S. If you do, I'll take care of the money that's there. I'll put it in my brother's vest pocket, after he retires for the night.

Sprig. Nobody will hear the report; because everybody except us has gone to the river to fish; and Melissa has just left on the street car. [*Drilling a hole in safe and inserting powder, he fires the powder and the safe flies open.*]

Aunt S. Of all earthly objects! [*Exit.*]

Sprig. Well! I'll be blest! [*Exit.*]

Bartlett. [*Outside.*] Burglars! Burglars! Burglars!

Enter BARTLETT, GALL and BETSON.

Bet. Look at the thief!

Bart. [*To Quattlewich, who is emerging from safe.*] Caught you in the act of burglary. Surrender, sir.

Mr. Q. Never sir, never! I'm innocent. I command you to treat me with great respect.

Bart. Surrender, sir.

Mr. Q. I'll not surrender to a mob of bumpkins. I can chastise you all. Cringe! and ask my pardon! you ignorant and inferior mortals!

Gall. We've got you, sir. [*Seizing Mr. Q., they force him off the stage.*] [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Aunt Sally's Village Residence.

Enter Aunt SALLY, SPRIGGINS, BARTLETT, GALL, Mr. JUNKINGSON, MELISSA, QUATTLEWICH and BETSON.

Bart. Mr. Quattlewich! what was your object in going into my safe, if you did not intend to commit burglary?

Mr. Q. Burglary! Burglary, did you say! Be careful in your language, sir. When you accuse a man of my character of such an offense, you are mendacious. We may have been misled by some malicious spirit; but our object was a proper one.

Bart. You must acknowledge that the circumstances were calculated to cause suspicion. I left a thousand dollars in the safe, locked the door, and went away. On returning, I heard my safe blown open, and found you coming out of it.

Mr. Q. Your safe! Melissa told me that Mr. Junkingson owned it. Didn't you Melissa?

Mel. Yes, I did. I told him to hide in the safe till his cruel persecutors should leave.

Bart. I bought the safe of Mr. Junkingson, a few days ago. Didn't I, Mr. Junkingson?

Mr. J. Squire Bartlett, you did. But who blew it open? The matter looks suspicious. Mr. Quattlewich, why did you enter the safe?

Mr. Q. I don't know who blew the safe open. Owing to an unfortunate—ah! an unfortunate—ah! an unfortunate controversy in which I was engaged, I saw fit to place my corporeal frame and spirituality in the safe temporarily. This I did with

Melissa's consent; and she, being properly mindful of my conservation physically and spiritually, locked me in and retained the key. If my object had been to abstract funds, of course I never would have consented to be locked in. I understood that there were only forty dollars in the safe—money belonging to Melissa's father; and, of course, a man of my immense wealth, social position, talents, and culture would never descend to such a petty act as the theft of so insignificant a sum.

Aunt S. He never stole anything smaller than a railroad. Ha! ha! ha!

Bart. I am convinced that you meant no harm. Forgive us.

Mr. Q. I am not one of those who cherish a grudge. When I was in Central Africa, among the savage Niam-Niam (*gnam-gnam*) I noticed that some of their fiercest wars were results of grudges. On one occasion, an old woman, who was slain to be eaten, proved too tough for food, and her slayers cherished a grudge against her relatives because of the toughness of the flesh, and never missed an opportunity to kill them. I saw some of the old woman's flesh myself. It was very tough—yes, remarkably tough.

Aunt S. That's a *tough* story.

Mr. Q. Madam! be more guarded in your colloquial vocabulary in my presence hereafter. Be more guarded, I say!

[*Exeunt* BARTLETT, GALL, JUNKINGSON, MELISSA, QUATTLEWICH and BETSON.]

Aunt S. Isn't Quattlewich a treasure?

Sprig. I should ejaculate!

Aunt S. You got him into a nice scrape about the dog. You were guilty of cruelty when you killed him, and you shouldn't have lied about it. We will introduce Quattlewich to Psycho, a devil, at the next seance. Can you represent a devil?

Sprig. Devil a doubt of it!

Aunt S. We will call on Mrs. Dorkins, the wife of Quattlewich, to help us.

Sprig. Will she not relent and tell her husband all? Is she perfectly reliable? Will she help me play the devil?

Aunt S. She was a schoolmate of mine; and I know that she is perfectly reliable.

Sprig. That is sufficient. If she were a schoolmate of yours, there can be no question about her fitness for helping a devil. She'll do. [*Sings and capers.*]

Oh, Beelzebub! give aid betimes
To punish Quattlewich for crimes.
If you will further our design,
We'll drink your health in ancient wine.

Enter MELISSA and Mrs. DORKINS.

Mel. Spriggins, is your father yet in the grocery business?

Sprig. No; he is a maker of whisky, and owns a still.

Mel. Do you love me more than you do Aunt Sally?

Sprig. My hopes are centered on *thee still*.

Aunt S. That joke is stillborn.

Mel. Oh horrid! Horrid! I must leave at once. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. D. I suppose you are about to play some game on that husband of mine, Mr. Quattlewich; and I am ready to help you.

Aunt S. We will have a musical, spiritualistic seance in the dark, and frighten your husband.

Mrs. D. That we will. Only let the spirits that come be evil ones, so as to frighten my husband Mr. Dorkins—or Quattlewich as he calls himself.

Enter Mrs. JUNKINGSON.

Mrs. J. This shall occur while my husband, Mr. Junkingson, is away from home; because he is jealous of me and unjustly suspects Mr. Quattlewich, although he knows that he is engaged to our daughter Melissa.

Sprig. Aunt Sally! how will you spend the remainder of the Summer?

Aunt S. Oh! at the next ball at the Empire Hotel, I will

lead the dance with Captain Lightfoot of the regular army, and start the next Tuesday for the White Sulphur Springs, to enjoy the mountain air, the beautiful scenery, and the pleasant talk of the cultivated people who frequent that locality. You must lend me the poetical works of Oliver Wendell Holmes; for you know he is my favorite author. I admire his quaint humor, his pathos, and sublimity. I wish I had the poems of Charles Noble Gregory, the Wordsworth of Wisconsin; for they would form an attractive book; and Ella Wheeler's poems are sweet and pathetic; while some of the poems of Franklin Everett are full of sublimity. But what wonderfully fine poetry Bates has written!

Sprig. John G. Saxe is my favorite.

[*Exeunt* SPRIGGINS, Aunt SALLY and Mrs. DORKINS.

Mrs. Junk. [*Alone*] What a splendid chance I will now have to ascertain the real sentiments of Quattlewich concerning my daughter Melissa! I shall pretend to be my daughter during the dark seance, and I shall lead my daughter from her usual seat and occupy it myself; and he will mistake me for my daughter Melissa, and court me; and I can tell what his intentions are by the style of his courtship. If he should have questionable designs, he shall suffer. Oh, my daughter! I'll protect you. [Exit.

SCENE III.

A room at Mr. Junkingson's.

Enter Aunt SALLY, SPRIGGINS, MELISSA and Mr. JUNKINGSON.

Mel. Will you stay at home, to-night, my dear father?

Mr. Junk. No; my daughter; I must attend the grange to-night, because that matter of Sampleshall will come up for consideration. Sampleshall was a chum of mine in the old days when this State was new.

Sprig. And you used to ride a pet bear to church on Sunday, because there were no horses.

Aunt S. Spriggins! treat your senior with more respect. You are impertinent.

Mr. J. I never rode a pet bear to church, on Sunday. We had better horses then than we have now. The horses are all wrong—ring-bone, spavin, bots, colic—all wrong. The people are wrong; and the communists will ruin the country, and wheat is only worth \$3 per bushel in the market.

Mel. Oh dear! Mr. Betson says that wheat ought to be worth more than that in Timbuctoo.

Mr. Junk. Where is Timbuctoo?

Mel. Oh dear! What an odd question! I don't know where it is.

Mr. Junk. Study your atlas, and you will see that Timbuctoo is a flourishing city on the Mississippi river. You just made a display of ridiculous ignorance. I suspect that you never studied much.

Aunt S. [To Mr. J.] My brother, you are a persistent grumbler. If you should reach heaven and see the streets paved with Californian gold, you would raise a row because the precious metal didn't come from Australia. Ha! ha! ha!

Mel. Oh dear Aunt Sally! please don't be cruel to my poor papa.

Aunt S. He is one of those unfortunate mortals who are never happy unless they are miserable.

Mr. Junk. Wife! if old Quattlewich come here while I am absent, lock the house and shut him out. I want no spiritualistic musical seance here while I am gone; because, at the last one, every fiddle that was played by a ghost gave us the tune called "The Devil's Dream;" and there's something wrong about it.

Mrs. Junk. Yes, my dear husband; if he come, I will order him away immediately.

Mr. Junk. Be careful to do so, I tell you. [Exit.]

Aunt S. Thank good luck! the poor old growler has gone.

Enter Mr. QUATTLEWICH.

Mrs. Junk. Mr. Quattlewich, I am delighted to see you. It's almost time for the spiritualistic concert to begin. [*Giving Mr. Q. her hand.*]

Mr. Q. That being the case, I will bring that sweet-toned violin, so that the angels will have at least one suitable instrument on which to play. Alas! how little of earth-born symphony is suitable for the ears of angels!

Sprig. I don't suppose that your violin is suitable for such spirits as will play at the concert; therefore, I'll get a horse-fiddle and a bass drum.

Mr. Q. Irreverence, sir! Irreverence! The tones of the violin, to which I refer, pleased *my* ear; and, I trust I am not conceited, when I inform you that I think I am an excellent judge of music. [*Exit*

Aunt S. Spriggins, you can take the part of Psycho, a devil. I assign to each that part to which he is best adapted.

Sprig. I'll play the part with brimstone neatness.

Aunt S. Spriggins, you are a rattle-headed mischief; a'n't you?

Sprig. I am a modest youth; and, if things had been properly ordered, I would have been born with a prayer engraved on my cheek.

Aunt S. You may well say *engraved*.

Sprig. I should ejaculate! [*Sings and capers*]

Oh he was lucky in debate,
As any genius in the State,
And brilliant in retort,
And had so broad and rich a nature
He might have reached the Legislature,
Had he not been too short.
His neighbors, known for pride and squalor,
Preferred a handsome man and taller.
I don't think that they ought.

Aunt S. How can we convince Quattlewich that his wife is dead?

Sprig. I have caused a notice of her death to be published in the *Snaggletown Weekly Thunderbolt*; and it must be true, for she wrote it herself.

Enter Mrs. DORKINS.

Mrs. D. It's true. I'm dead.

Sprig. I declare! you are a handsome corpse. Say you; would there be any sin in kissing a dead person?

Mrs. D. In this case there would. It would be a *deadly* sin.

Enter MELISSA.

Aunt S. Mrs. Dorkins! this is my niece Melissa Junkingson, the lady whom your husband is courting.

Mel. [To *Mrs. D.*] Mrs. Dorkins.

Aunt S. Mr. Quattlewich's real name is Aminidab Dorkins, and this lady is his wife. I take pleasure in introducing Mrs. Dorkins, because she was a schoolmate of mine in the old days when we used to read about the Division of Endogens, in the botany class.

Mrs. D. I learn that you are about to marry that precious husband of mine. We lived as husband and wife about fifteen years; and you will have connubial capital to begin with—five children who bear the name of Dorkins.

Mel. Forgive me for saying so; but I believe that you must be mistaken. Mr. Quattlewich is a true man, and is my friend.

Aunt S. Simpleton! what Mrs. Dorkins says is true.

Mel. In that case, he only shows the strength of his love for me; for he would leave his wife, his children, everything, in order to become my husband.

Mrs. D. He left me several years before he saw you. Therefore, he couldn't have deserted me because of any love for you.

Mel. Oh dear! oh dear me! He can't be false.

Mrs. D. You wouldn't be his wife if you should marry him an hundred times; because I am his only wife according to law and justice.

Mel. Oh dear! What must I think? What must I do?

Aunt S. Think as we tell you to; and you will think sensibly.

Mrs. Junk. My poor daughter, Melissa! I have just received a letter from Quattlewich's former home, which confirms the worst. Quattlewich's real name is Aminidab Dorkins, and this lady is his wife. Read this letter. [*Giving letter to Mel.*]

Mel. [*After reading it.*] Ah! I suspect that some enemy of Mr. Quattlewich wrote this note. Mr. Quattlewich has been so kind, and true to me.

Sprig. Melissa, you are bright enough; but I heard old Quattlewich call you a fool; and I just saw one of his old neighbors who said that this lady, Mrs. Dorkins, is his wife.

Mel. Oh dear! How sad!

Sprig. He is trying to ruin you.

Mel. Oh! oh! oh dear! What—what—what shall I do?

Aunt S. [*To Mel.*] Obey our instructions. Marry him; and then he must pay you a large sum or go to State Prison for bigamy. In the meanwhile, pretend to love him.

Mel. I will! I will! Dorkins! Dorkins! Quattlewich! Mr. Theophilus Quattlewich! Oh! the old fellow! Ha! ha! ha!

Exeunt Aunt SALLY, Mrs. JUNKINGSON, and Mrs. DORKINS.

Sprig. Melissa! let me enjoy the pleasure of biting one of your cheeks.

Mel. Oh dear! Horrid! Horrid! A cannibal! a cannibal!

Sprig. I only meant to kiss you, my extract of Paradise! [*Kissing Melissa.*] I love you more than I would a pet rabbit; and, after old Quattlewich has been defeated, it would increase my love for you three tons, if you should consent to marry me.

Mel. I must go now.

[*Exit.*

Sprig. Here comes that chum of the angels, the Honorable Theophilus Quattlewich.

Enter Mr. QUATTLEWICH, glancing at a paper.

Mr. Q. I feel very solemnly. You must leave me alone till I recover. I have heard bad news. When we begin to fail, the ghosts of the past haunt our dreams of the future. Even I am not entirely free from such saddening influences. When I was in Central Africa—

Sprig. Yes, yes! I'll go. Oh! I wouldn't stay here, in opposition to your wishes, for the universe. [*Exit.*

Mr. Q. Go! you ill-bred youngster. [*Reads.*] "Died on the 25th of last month, at the home of a friend in this city, Mrs. Amanda Dorkins, wife of Aminidab Dorkins. Since the desertion of her husband, some years since, her troubles have been great, and she finally committed suicide. Funeral to morrow at half-past ten." Glory! my wife is dead. She is too dead to see dress-goods. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother, I thank thee for this blessing! During her earth-life, my grandmother appreciated me, and therefore I do not forget her. I would have married Melissa if I had not heard this delightful news; but now all obstacles are removed. I'll destroy this paper; because it is not one of the leading papers of the nation; for I will read only such journals as suit a lofty intellect. [*Destroys the paper.*]

Enter Mrs. DORKINS.

Aunt S. What pleases you so much? Have you been watering your railroad stock, and declaring a dividend on the water?

Mr. Q. Better than that. Mines have been discovered along the line of the road, and its business has been doubled.

Aunt S. The hour for the spiritualistic concert has arrived.

Enter BETSON, GALL, SHELDON, Mr. JUNKINGSON, MELISSA and OTHERS.

Melissa becomes seated beside Quattlewich, but leaves him after the musical seance begins, and Mrs. Junkingson takes her place.

Mr. Q. The path which leads to ghost-land is formed in ordinary clay.

Aunt S. The spiritualistic concert will now begin. But first of all, the lights must be extinguished.

Mr. Q. The spirits always produce the sweetest sounds in the dark, because light is too coarse for the delicate eyes of our dead friends.

Enter SPRIGGINS *disguised to represent Psycho, a devil.*

Lights are made dim, and musical instruments are played; while ghosts angels and fiends glide across the stage, and a weird light is occasionally seen.

Mr. Q. Be careful to admit only ghosts who have high rank in the spirit world, such as my relative's ghosts and the spirits of famous philosophers, such as Bacon. I should be pleased to enlighten Bacon on some philosophical subjects; but you can also admit the ghosts of famous composers such as Mozart, if they occupied elevated positions during their earth-life; but, if the ghost of any poor, strolling musician come, kick the vagabond out of the room. I'll associate with no common ghosts.

Aunt S. Hush! Hush! The ghost of your dead wife is on your right and Psycho, one of the rulers of hell is on your left.

Mr. Q. [*Aside.*] My dead wife! My dead wife! What a terrible situation!—the devil on one side of me and my wife on the other!

Aunt S. The sombre ghosts of the dead are coming still nearer.

Mr. Q. Ask my wife's ghost if she is happy in the spirit world. I am much interested in her yet; for I was a devoted husband, and was cut to the heart by her death.

Aunt S. Your wife says she never was so delighted as she is now. One of the angel musicians has broken a fiddle-string; but he has gone to heaven for a new one, and will soon return.

Mr. Q. None but a fool could refuse to believe in modern spiritualism, when such evidence is presented.

Psycho goes behind Quattlewich and drops flowers which fall into his lap.

Mr. Q. Flowers from unseen angel hands fall gently in my lap.

Aunt S. I see that the devil is an esthete.

Mr. Q. I am expecting the appearance of an angel.

Enter Mr. JUNKINGSON bearing a club, followed by MELISSA.

Mr. JUNKINGSON is tipsy, and discovers his wife pretending to court QUATTLEWICH, and Quattlewich finds Psycho entirely too near and is horrified.

Mel. Oh dear! Look at Mr. Quattlewich courting my poor mamma!

Mr. Q. Why! I thought she was Melissa! How came you here, Mrs. Junkingson!

Mr. Junk. You lie! You lewd old scatterbrain, you lie! You dare to court my wife; do you?

Mr. Q. [*To Junkingson.*] Don't you dare to strike me with that club. I'll smash you as a locomotive would a mouse. Where's my cane? I'll get it. I can whip five such men as you. [*Seeking his cane, he falls into the arms of Psycho and is horrified; but gets the cane.*] Now face me; you ridiculous bumpkin.

Mr. Junk. Take it sir; take it. [*Knocks Q. down.*]

Mrs. Junk. Good! good! good! [*Exeunt.*

Betson. Seize the old bundle of conceit and superstition. [*Placing Quattlewich on a wheelbarrow, he is wheeled off the stage by Psycho.*]

ACT III.—SCENE I.

A Room in Aunt Sally's Home in the Village.

Enter Mr. JUNKINGSON.

Mr. Junk. Now that I'm becoming sober, I'll consider this matter. [*Drinking from a bottle.*] What brings a devil to my house when I'm not supposed to be at home? Maybe he don't know that I belong to the Grange, and am one of the Board of "Edication," and my great grandfather was a member of the Legislature. As for Quattlewich, he sha'n't spark the whole family. He must marry Melissa at once, so as to hush the scandal that might rise about him and my wife. There's something in this affair that looks suspicious.

Enter Aunt SALLY, Mrs. JUNKINGSON, SPRIGGINS and BETSON.

Sprig. [*To Mr. J.*] Here is a letter, sir. [*Giving Mr. J. a letter.*]

Mr. J. It's from old Quattlewich, and is an answer to a note that I sent him; and I'll read it. [*Reads.*] "Mr. Junkingson: Dear sir: I never in my life found myself placed in such an awkward situation as you caught me in recently. I had no idea that your wife was particularly partial to me; altho I had no doubt that she regarded me with favor, as the ladies generally do. Still there was no secret understanding between us; and I did not suppose that she was in the room when you came in. I had supposed that your enchanting daughter Melissa was enjoying the distinguishing marks of my favor at the time. You can then judge what horror I felt on discovering your wife where you found her. It is evident that Psycho, a devil, was in

the room at the time; and perhaps he placed your wife where you saw her. Ghosts of the dead were also there; and who knows what part they took in the strange catastrophe? Alas! the ghosts of the dead are so filmy that they melt before the full-orbed gaze of man! Though we can see them, if our vision be not impertinent. I hope that nothing will prevent the marriage which was to have been so soon. A man of my talents and social position is not captured every day, you know. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I extend to all my unqualified forgiveness. Please notify that phenomenon of virginal excellence, Melissa, that I am anxious for the consummation of the nuptial rites. Yours unflinchingly,

"HONORABLE THEOPHILUS QUATTLEWICH,

"PRESIDENT OF THE HODWAG & SOUTHWESTERN RAILROAD

"COMPANY AND MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY."

Mrs. Junk. He has told the truth. The devil is responsible for the whole matter. I was lifted up by spirit hands, and was carried through the air bodily and deposited where you found me. Once there, I was deprived of all power to escape, though Mr. Quattlewich did not try to hold me.

Mr. Junk. Everything is wrong. The weevil is in the wheat; the brindle cow intends to have the hollow-horn; and Mrs. Junkingson tells queer stories.

Sprig. There was something mysterious about it; for I tried my best to force Mrs. Junkingson away from Quattlewich and couldn't; though he didn't hold her; nor did she cling to him.

Aunt S. I smelled burning brimstone all the time.

Betson. So did I; and I saw a devil in the room.

Mr. Junk. The shoes! The shoes! A real devil has a hoof and can't wear two shoes; but that fellow had no hoof, and therefore he couldn't have been a devil.

Aunt S. Alas! my poor brother!

Mrs. J. You don't suppose that in this age of fashion a real

devil would show his hoof! Why no! you dear silly creature! [*Chuckling Mr. J.'s chin.*] A real devil would be far too shrewd for that; for he would know that if he showed a hoof he would be denounced as unfashionable, and couldn't catch a sinner once a century. You see, my dear, that unless the devil would destroy his usefulness, he must wear boots or shoes.

Mr. Junk. There seems to be reason in what you say. But what a world it is! Even devils can take advantage of styles of clothing to ruin us.

Aunt S. How strongly everything smells of brimstone!

Mr. J. Does it?

Mrs. J. Why! what a dear gosling! Can't you smell it?

Sprig. I smell it. [*Getting behind Mr. J. he lights a match.*]

Mr. J. I believe I do smell the fumes of brimstone.

Mrs. J. My poor husband, I hope that you are convinced that I did not intend to wrong you, but that I was the victim of a devil. Let me kiss you. [*Kissing him.*]

Mr. J. My sweet pet cow! I am convinced that you are innocent. But what troubles we meet! How wrong seems everything but you! [*Kisses Mrs. J.*] [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in Aunt Sally's Village home.

Enter QUATTLEWICH, BETSON and Aunt SALLY.

Mr. Q. The fact that the spirits of the dead can appear proves that the Controller of the dead wishes to convince the living that there is a hereafter.

B. I don't believe in too many ghosts.

Mr. Q. In one of the battles in which the Pigmies defeated the giants, the little folks were led and assisted by unseen spirits, as I am convinced.

Bet. Oh fudge! Why man! you may be slightly mistaken.

Mr. Q. You don't think that I could be mistaken in such a matter, do you?

Aunt S. Mr. Quattlewich! do you know that I don't believe you ever saw Africa?

Mr. Q. Never saw Africa! Never saw Africa! Madam your tongue is too rude. Of all bores a quiz is the worst. People of talent are never quizzes. A genuine genius, on account of his sensibility, may seem little in the eyes of a quiz; but the genius *knows* that the quiz is a pudding-head.

Aunt S. You never rode up the river Nile on the back of a crocodile. You never did, my dear sir; and if you had—

Mr. Q. What if I had, madam? What if I had?

Aunt S. I don't know whether the tears which such a queer load would have forced the animal to shed could have been properly called crocodile tears or not. Ha! ha! ha! [*Exit.*]

Bet. Aunt Sally is a budget of fun.

Mr. Q. Some people mistake impudence for brilliancy; and she belongs to that unfortunate class. She reads biography, poetry, and history; but what does she know about philosophy? What does she know about philosophy, I say.

Mr. B. Did you hear many queer notions expressed by the natives of Africa?

Mr. Q. I did, sir; and I published them in an entertaining book which I wrote; but I am rejoiced to think that I am not superstitious. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother! I thank thee that I am *not* superstitious!

Bet. Give me an account of some of their superstitions, if you please.

Mr. Q. When I was in the Soudan, I learned that the Mohammedans of that benighted region supposed that the spirits of living old women entered hyenas, at times.

Bet. But did they suppose that the spirits of hyenas ever got into the old women?

Mr. Q. No sir; but why do you ask?

B. Because, sir, that would account for my dead wife's mother.

Mr. Q. The much-abused mothers-in-law are frequently the noblest of women. There's Mrs. Junkingson, who will be my mother-in-law after my marriage with Melissa; if without derogation from dignity I may use so familiar a term, I should say that she's a daisy, sir—a daisy—a daisy. She's a little skittish; but she's a daisy.

Bet. What! You marry Melissa! Why! sir; Mr. Junkingson promised me her hand the very day that my first wife died.

Mr. Q. He was drunk at time, sir, and has changed his mind since. Besides, sir, Melissa has become an earnest admirer of me.

Bet. She'll never marry you after she hears your real history.

Mr. Q. You vulgarian! You filthy boor! I'll inflict proper chastisement on your corporeal frame. [*Beats Betson.*]

Bet. That's enough, sir! A man who owns five farms and has represented constituents as a legislator shouldn't be beaten. I'll send you a challenge, sir.

Mr. Q. And I'll not accept the same, because I never fight my inferiors.

Bet. I'll have you fined in the sum of five dollars, sir.

Mr. Q. Stop! stop! I'll pay no fines. I'll fight you.

Bet. All right, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Mr. Q. Contact with vulgarians is a poor school for self-respect. He'll send no challenge; though I wish he would; for I'd rather be shot at than fined five dollars. Five dollars! Ah! money is a cash article.

Enter SPRIGGINS.

Sprig. Here is a challenge from Mr. Betson. He wrote it after the first beating which you gave him; and asked me to be his second. [*Giving Q. a note.*] He thinks you are so unusually brilliant that he would like to take an observation of you through the sights of a rifle.

Mr. Q. I'm willing; for I learned the use of weapons while in Africa. He, who refuses to defend his honor, will soon have

no honor to defend. We'll fight with pistols; and Sheldon shall be my second. I would choose bowie knives, if the bowie-knife were not a vulgar weapon.

Sprig. Hadn't you better wait till dark?

Mr. Q. No, sir. Why do you wish us to wait till dark?

Sprig. Because you couldn't hit each other in broad daylight.

Mr. Q. That's an animadversion on my marksmanship. Sir, I never allow others such animadversions about me; and I never am guilty of animadversion concerning them. I do not love animadversion.

Sprig. Are you a good shot?

Mr. Q. I do not exaggerate, when I tell you that I am undoubtedly the best marksman in the State. I always draw a bead on the right eye of a squirrel, and would consider it a proof of poor marksmanship if I should hit the left.

Sprig. I suppose that, no matter how small the object is at which you aim, when you draw a bead on it your fine eye does the business; that is, your success is all in your eye.

Mr. Q. It is my boy! It is! Observe the delicate beauty of the lines which inclose my visual orbs? Are they not as exact as geometrician ever drew? See what sagacity is pictured in my eyes!—what penetrating power!

Sprig. Duelling is a violation of the law. If you wound Betson you may be punished; but if you kill him you will endanger your neck; and you might have trouble in getting another; for necks are scarce in the market. If your pistol "hangs fire," it is barely possible that you will not hang.

Mr. Q. Sir, they would not dare to hang me. I do not occupy a common position in society; and I am a gentleman of spirit.

Sprig. There can be no doubt that, if you kill Betson, you will be *high strung*.

Mr. Q. I'll have one shot at least.

Sprig. I am Betson's second; but I want a laugh at his expense, because he beat me once. If you are not hit at the first fire pretend that you are, and fall flatly; and we will convince Betson that he's killed you; and he will be so scared that he will leave the State to avoid arrest; and, when he comes back, the whole country will laugh at him.

Mr. Q. Young man! it is utterly impossible that I should miss him. He will drop like a ten-pin, at the first fire.

Sprig. Well! well! Only promise to fall at the first fire if you be not struck.

Mr. Q. Sir, I will not agree to bring my finely-proportioned corporeal frame in rude contact with any portion of the terrestrial globe.

Sprig. You ought to agree to fall at the first fire, if you are not struck.

Mr. Q. You amaze me, sir. Why should I drop?

Sprig. Because Betson is a dead shot; and it will be your *only* chance to "get the drop on him."

Mr. Q. No sir; I'll stand and shoot.

Sprig. All right, sir; if you stand up and shoot till you wound Betson or kill him, it may prove a costly job for you in the courts.

Mr. Q. Ah! that's so. Ah! I think that I'll agree to fall at the first fire if I be not struck; but it is not necessary for Betson to make a similar arrangement; for I never miss my mark; and he'll tumble when my weapon blazes. [Exit.

Sprig. Astonishing! A duel! Why there hasn't been a duel in this neighborhood since my great-grandfather was knee-high to a Shanghai fowl. Like many duelists, Quattlewich has more courage than judgment.

Enter BETSON.

Bet. Sir, I am at your disposal; my will has been made.

Sprig. You shouldn't fight; the law holds the triumphant duelist as a murderer.

Betson. Load my pistol; I'll back down from *no* violent, conceited, gullible, selfish, heartless, superstitious monopolist. Though I am not a good shot, I'll hit him if I can.

Sprig. You may have one shot at him, provided you agree to fall at the first fire if you are not struck.

Bet. What an odd idea! What is your object?

Sprig. Quattlewich will think that he has killed you; and he will be so scared that he will run away to prevent arrest; and when he comes back, the whole country will laugh at him.

Bet. All right. If I'm not struck at the first fire I'll pretend to be, and fall flatly. Anything to get the laugh on Quattlewich.

Sprig. Wouldn't it be better to wait till dark?

Bet. No, sir; why do you ask?

Sprig. Because people couldn't see you running away from each other, if it were night.

Bet. They couldn't see us in the daytime.

Sprig. Why, sir?

Bet. Because we would run so fast. Ha! ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Sprig. Ah! things are working like a steam Irishman. Finely! Finely! Finely!

Enter SHELDON.

Shel. What sort of business is this? A duel! Are we returning to the trial by combat, and the ignorance, brutality and tomfoolery of the dark ages?

Sprig. It seems so; but I'll bear no part in a real duel; for I am not anxious to enjoy the hospitality of the State at that delightful suburban retreat they call the penitentiary. It's too retired for a man of my active temperament.

Shel. I don't want to be mixed up in a duel, because it looks too ridiculous; besides the principals are so awkward that the seconds are in more danger than the principals; and I wish I hadn't agreed to act as an assistant.

Sprig. I don't belong to the mineral kingdom; and therefore I don't wish to be filled full of lead. Quattlewich is a spiritualist, and if the devil gets mixed in this duel, who can predict the result. Ha! ha! ha!

Shel. Well, sir, I'm a spiritualist myself; but I'm not quite a dunce, though Quattlewich is one.

Sprig. I've made an arrangement with each, by which they will fall at the first fire, if they be not struck. Now we will put *no* bullets in the pistols; and of course neither can be struck; and people who hear of the affair will believe that they were so scared that they couldn't stand; and there will be no end of the laughter. How it will amuse the women!

Shel. The women will faint if pistols are mentioned.

Sprig. The women have gone to a neighbor's. Let's load the pistols. [*Producing pistols.*]

Shel. Load it is. [*Taking a pistol.*] You see, here are nothing but powder and paper; and I put them in Quattlewich's pistol.

Sprig. You see that I have nothing but powder and paper; and I put them in Betson's heavy artillery. They're *horse*-pistols, and I hope they'll kick.

Shel. The pistols are as harmless as robins; and the fools will not be hurt. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

In Mr. Junkinson's Garden.

Enter QUATTLEWICH, BETSON, SPRIGGINS and SHELDON.

Sprig. I'll place my principal in position to fire. [*Places Betson.*]

Bet. I would shoot better from a rest. Say—say—say you,

Mr. Sprig—Spriggins! couldn't you place me where I'd have a rest?—behind a tree for instance?

Sprig. Sir, I didn't know that you were a *wooden* man.

Bet. I devoutly wish I was a wooden man; the bullets wouldn't hurt me then.

Sprig. If Quattlewich should aim at your heart, present your backbone to receive the shot.

Bet. My backbone! My backbone! Oh, I can feel my backbone going. [*Feels his back.*] Yes; I have no backbone.

Sprig. You don't seem to have much. That's a fact. Cheer up Betson! you'll be an angel in five minutes after the pistols crack.

Bet. An angel! An angel! Oh! I don't want to be an angel. Ah! I am entirely too lean for an angel.

Sprig. I think you could fly more readily than if you were fat.

Bet. Oh yes! I'm willing to fly!

Sprig. I see you are.

Bet. Couldn't we settle this by a game of euchre? I'll let the Honorable Mr. Quattlewich have both bowers. I am reasonably skillful with my fists; but this leaden business is entirely new to me. Oh dear! I am afraid of the bul—bul—bullets.

Sprig. I see that I must doctor his courage; for, if I don't, the game is up. [*Whispers to Betson.*]

Bet. Oh yes! I was only pretending to be scared; I met an old army friend as I was coming here, and we found a saloon where the mint-julep was unusually strong; and the liquor has made me somewhat mischievous. You know I have helped support the Coldwater battery when the shots were whispering in our ears in a manner that was strictly confidential. Though, I am not remarkably brave, I have dressed on the colors, ordered arms and fixed bayonets, on fourteen battlefields. Yes, sir; I have been under fire in quite a number of battles. There was something about it that I didn't like, and something

that I did. Mr. Quattlewich, which button of your vest shall I hit.

Mr. Q. I refuse to communicate with so insignificant an individual, except through my second.

Shel. I'll place my principal in position. [*Placing Mr. Q.*]

Mr. Q. [*Aside.*] I crave unseen spiritual help to guide my bullets. [*Aloud.*] I think that the lock is all right. An attention to details should not be beneath the consideration of philosophy. Philosophy is the science of nature; therefore he who is most natural is the greatest philosopher. I shall hit a ventricle of his heart, if my weapon does its work properly; tho I do not have perfect confidence in this pistol. [*Aside.*] Spriggins, if I should fail to hit him, through the fault of my weapon, and be accidentally killed myself, give me a funeral regardless of expense, for money could be of no value to my ghost; but, if I should be wounded, get Doctor Stumpleton, of Snaggletown, to attend me; for he always doctors cheaply. [*Aloud.*] When I was among the savage Niam-Niam—

[*Cocking his pistol.*]

Sprig. [*Aside.*] I do believe that Quattlewich was in Africa. [*Aloud.*] When I say **THREE, fire.** Gentlemen! are you ready?

Mr. Q. Ready! aye, ready sir!

Bet. If I fall, I desire to be buried beside my wife and child. I'm ready.

Sprig. **One! Two! THREE!**

They fire simultaneously, and each, finding he is not hurt, falls headlong.

Sprig. Good bye! my chivalrous paladins! [*Seizing the pistols.*] Good-bye! [*Exit.*]

Enter MELISSA, BARTLETT, Mr. JUNKINGSON, GALL and Aunt SALLY.

Mel. Dead! Dead! Dead! [*Kneels in prayer.*]

Aunt S. Bring a bucket of water and dash it on them; for they've fainted from fright.

Bart. Here comes Sheldon with a bucket full of water.

Enter SHELDON.

Shel. Here's the life-preserving liquid.

Bet. Quattlewich! are you dead?

Mr. Q. Sir, I refuse to answer your question.

Bart. Betson, did you observe anything about Quattlewich's bullet that was peculiarly striking?

Bet. Quattlewich couldn't hit the Empire Hotel, at fifteen paces.

Gall. I am invested with the authority of law, and I order you to seize them; because they're dangerous men; they are duelists.
[*Overpowering and handcuffing them.*]

Aunt S. There were no bullets in the weapons; and the heroes were so scared that they couldn't stand.

Mr. J. There was something wrong about it. There were no bullets in the weapons.

Bet. [*To Mr. Q.*] You bloated monopolist! you played a trick on me; for you fell when you were not struck. It was a cowardly trick.

Mr. Q. You did the same thing, and it was the trick of a venomous poltroon. You shall never marry Melissa; for she is mine.

Bet. You ridiculous scoundrel. She is mine.

Mr. Q. Contemptible vulgarian! Melissa belongs to me.
[*Beats Betson.*]

Bet. Oh, you earth-worm!
[*Beats Q.*]

Enter Mrs. JUNKINGSON.

Mrs. J. I'll enforce order on these premises. I'll show you who owns my daughter Melissa.

[*Beats both her intending sons-in-law.*]

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

At Aunt Sally's Village Home.

A hammock stretched between trees, near a hive.

Enter Mr. QUATTLEWICH.

Mr. Q. Hem! hem! My opinion of Mrs. Junkingson has been considerably modified by recent events. Mrs. Junkingson is *not* a daisy. If she's a plant at all, she's a skunk-cabbage. She's a coarse, violent, deceitful woman. I can whip Mrs. Junkingson. [*Producing a note.*] Here is an invitation to attend a party at old Mudwhacker's. I'll not go. They are too common. Mudwhacker's folks admit common ghosts to their seances; they are in moderate circumstances, and the head of the family knows nothing of philosophy. A line must be drawn somewhere and sometime. I'll draw it now. After next week I'll associate with *no* man, unless his property be valued at five million dollars and he be a gentleman of philosophical attainments. Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother! I am thankful that I entertain correct views of this subject. How much philosophy we find in books! how little there is in everyday life! Yet I am generally philosophical.

Enter Mrs. JUNKINGSON.

Mrs. J. Sir, I beg that you will forgive that outburst of my temper.

Mr. Q. Madam! I shall consider the matter at my leisure.

Mrs. J. My daughter, Melissa, has just become heir to a large tract of land in Podweather county.

Mr Q. Forgive you, madam! Forgive you! You are a woman of unusual talents, beauty and refinement; and you are the mother of my dear Melissa. How could I keep in my bosom so base a passion as hatred. When I was among the

savage Niam-Niam (*gnam-gnam*), I observed that Love was rude, but still triumphant. Forgiveness is a quality which is a characteristic of greatness. I do not exaggerate when I tell you that I can forgive.

Mrs. J. Are you a philosopher, sir?

Mr. Q. I have the quality called modesty; and it is a well-known fact that modest people are generally gifted; but ask my acquaintances what I am, madam, I should not add emphasis to their statements.

Mrs. J. You were not very philosophical at the last spiritualistic seance.

Mr. Q. That is true. In the presence of that which is really supernatural, Philosophy finds no tongue.

Enter Mr. JUNKINGSON.

Mr. J. Forgive my violence, sir. Unfortunately I was drunk.

Mr. Q. Never mention it sir; I grant you my unqualified forgiveness.

Mr. J. You shall marry Melissa; for you are a very wise, brave, and unselfish man. [*Exeunt Mr. and Mrs. Junkingson.*]

Mr. Q. I'll rest in this hammock. I see that it is too near the hive, but the bee is a peaceable animal generally unless disturbed. [*Going into the hammock.*] I hope that the ghost of Plato and Aristotle will come to me in dreams; and bring with them the spirit of some distinguished musician. [*Snores.*]

Enter SPRIGGINS and Aunt SALLY.

Sprig. The old scoundrel snores. The sounds which he makes resemble a concert of bullfrogs.

Aunt S. Stir him up, Spriggins.

Sprig. I'll upset the hive.

Aunt S. Oh! Spriggins! I am delighted.

Sprig. Thinking of this sport does tickle me. [*Upsets the hive.*] [*Exit.*]

Mr. Q. [*Awaking.*] What's this? What's this? Bees! bees! bees! How they sting! My eyes! My nose! My cheeks! Oh! curse the bees. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

At Mr. Jankingson's

Enter MELISSA and QUATTLEWICH.

Mel. Why did you behave so toward my poor mamma, at the spiritualistic concert?

Mr. Q. You must take the circumstances into consideration. There was a devil in the room; and you couldn't expect a man under Satanic influences to act rationally.

Mel. Oh dear! what kind of a devil?

Mr. Q. A bad kind, my dear. A very bad kind, judging from results; and that standard of judgment is a philosophical one. Results are the footprints of the Deity. Even the savage Niam-Niam [*gnam-gnam*] judge everything by results.

Mel. I hope you and ma will not run away together.

Mr. Q. My dear Melissa! how can you be so mistaken? Do you think that a gentleman, who confers dignity on the exalted office of President of the Hodwag & Southwestern Railroad Company, could so far forget himself as to abscond with another man's wife!

Mel. Oh, dear! I don't know. I don't believe that railroad presidents are all saints.

Mr. Q. Not all of them, my dear; but *some* of them—*some* of them.

Mel. I'm not so sure about that. They *may* be.

Mr. Q. Do you think that a railroad president could interfere with a female of any kind?

Mel. [*solemnly.*] Yes, I do; for I have heard that they have cowcatchers on all the trains.

Mr. Q. You cause me to lose patience, my dear. You cause me to lose patience. I referred to the human race alone.

Mel. Do you believe that you actually saw a devil at the last seance ?

Mr. Q. I believe ; therefore I behold ; but unbelief is always punished by a want of vision.

Mel. Have you been reading the papers lately ?

Mr. Q. I have ; and I read that the Russian prince Roman-noze-off is dead.

Mel. Oh dear! Another one of us gone!

Mr. Q. [*Aside.*] What a simpleton Melissa is! [*Aloud.*] My darling, is your city property in good condition ?

Mel. Yes, sir.

Mr. Q. My darling! let us marry at once.

Mel. Do you love moonlight and owls ?

Mr. Q. Ah, my darling! the owl, whooping in the distance, brings mournful sweet fancies. The owl is frequently possessed of the spirit of some old philosopher.

Mel. When I was little, I loved owls because they can't scold.

Mr. Q. I will unbend! In matters of love, only fools are philosophers. My darling! do you love me as much as you would an owl ?

Mel. Oh dear! yes; I love you as much as I would three owls.

Mr. Q. Let us embrace. [*Embracing Melissa.*

Enter Aunt SALLY, BETSON, SPRIGGINS, Mr. and Mrs. JUNK-
INGSON.

Mr. Q. turns aside, and Spriggins kisses Melissa.

Aunt Sally. Well, Mr. Quattlewich, how do you feel since the duel ?

Mr. Q. Madam! you must not mention that unfortunate affair in my presence.

Bet. Mr. Quattlewich! would it not be the better course to acknowledge that this yonker beat us both; and drink his health in mint-julep ?

Mr. Q. I am willing to forgive you, sir ; but I can not indulge in the injurious potation to which you refer.

Bet. We will let the difficulty drop as flatly as *we* did in the duel.

Mr. Q. You have my unqualified forgiveness.

Aunt S. Mr. Quattlewich! shall we have a materializing seance ?

Mr. Q. Aunt Sally, as people call you, I am willing. As you can cause the souls of the dead to take the shape of human beings and be visible to our eyes, let them appear ; but I want no glimmering ghosts of dead friends, and no ghosts who do not occupy high positions in the spirit world. There is comfort in the grip of an embodied ghost, if the ghost be respectable.

Aunt S. I'll place no confidence in any revelation from the world of spirits, unless I be sure it's from a good spirit.

Mr. J. I fear that my first wife might come back. Oh! but she had a horrible temper. Everything is wrong. The weevil is in the wheat; the brindle cow intends to have the hollow horn; and my first wife is coming to visit me.

Annt S. Fudge! She was a woman of too much sense to desire to revisit you.

Mrs. J. [*Aside.*] I do wish that Junkingson's first wife would come from the dead. I want to see who she was that was silly enough to marry Junkingson.

Mr. Q. Materialization is a telescope which enables human beings to understand that which is incomprehensible.

Aunt S. You never made a wiser remark than that.

Mr. Q. Let my deceased grandmother's ghost appear; but keep my wife's ghost and my mother-in-law's ghost out of the room; because I don't wish to disturb the poor dear souls; and do you keep Psycho away.

Aunt S. I'll do as you request, and enter the cabinet.

[*Entering the cabinet.*

Mr. Q. Turn down the lamps. The spirits which will be here to-night will probably prefer the darkness, on account of a diffidence which frequently accompanies merit. [*Aside.*] Confound the extravagance of these people; the kerosene that I must pay for to-night will cost at least ten cents.

Aunt S. [*In the cabinet.*] I feel thy presence, oh mysterious ghost! Take possession of my poor frame.

Enter Mrs. DORKINS, from the Cabinet.

Mrs. D. Thou heartless husband and unfeeling father! I have come from the horrors of perdition, to charge you with my ruin. After you deserted our children and me, grief and rage and the wails of our suffering offspring caused me to kill myself. To my pangs are now added the torments inflicted by hideous goblins. Oh! what agonies are found in the nethermost hell! My false husband! there is a future for you, wild with the groans of the tortured dead.

Mr. Q. I didn't mean to desert you. That is—Oh! ghost!

[*Falling on the floor.*

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

At the Empire Hotel.

Enter MELISSA and QUATTLEWICH.

Mr. Q. Melissa! that was not my wife's ghost. It was an evil spirit disguised as my wife.

Mel. Did it resemble her?

Mr. Q. Ah! it looked just as she did during her earth-life.

Mel. Maybe you were mistaken; and it was not a ghost.

Mr. Q. That is utterly impossible. Did you hear any one tell what the opinion of Professor Longwhine was?

Mel. No; but I heard Aunt Sally say he was not a man of remarkable genius.

Mr. Q. Not a man of remarkable genius! Not remarkable! Ha! ha! ha!

Mel. Why do you laugh?

Mr. Q. Why! Longwhine is a confidante of mine. She don't think that I would take a common person into my confidence; does she! Ha! ha! ha!

Mel. Do your eyes bother you?

Mr. Q. Oh! oh! They bother me now. Curse all bees! Curse all bees, I say. I'll never eat honey again. My sore face will interfere with our wedding.

Mel. Pa says it shall not interfere.

Mr. Q. I'll not marry when I am in such a plight.

Mel. Oh dear! horrid! Pa says you must marry me at once, so as to silence the scandal about you and my mother. My pa says that if you don't marry me to-night, I shall marry Spriggins to-morrow.

Mr. Q. That is enough. Spriggins shall never marry my affianced. But, come to think, this is the very night which the Millerites say will witness the end of the world; and there will be no end of confusion and alarm.

Enter Mr. JUNKINGSON, Aunt SALLY and SPRIGGINS.

Aunt S. If you should marry before the end of the world, people would say that the marriage caused the destruction of mankind; but if you postpone the wedding till after the end of the world, you might have trouble in finding a minister or Justice-of-the-Peace to unite you. Therefore I find no trouble in believing that the best time for such a match is the very hour when the world ends.

Mr. J. Melissa! do you go home and put your hair in curling papers, so as to be ready for the end of the world when it comes.

Sprig. I'll go home, and will my real estate to Beelzebub, so as to secure his good will before that event.

Mr. Q. Aunt Sally! as people somewhat unceremoniously denominate you, have you learned from Professor Longwhine what news he has received from the world of spirits lately?

Aunt S. Yes sir. He says that the ghost of a dead iron-monger stated that you would be employed in the iron-works in the next world.

Mr. Q. Oh! oh! oh! Oh! what an uncongenial business for a man of my refinement. Oh! oh! oh!

Aunt S. If you should be in the iron-works, you would at least confer *substantial* benefit on the residents of ghost-land; so you should be cheerful.

Mr. Q. Everything is wrong. The brindle cow has the hollow horn, and Quattlewich is in the iron-works.

Exeunt Mr. JUNKINGSON, and SPRIGGINS.

Mel. Shall we have a bridal tour?

Mr. Q. Yes, my dear—a beautiful one. We will hitch the old horse to the buggy, and take a trip to the village, and return the next day. Only let the expense be moderate, and I shall not complain. We will be married by Justice Bartlett now.

Aunt S. An old friend of mine wishes to act as bridesmaid. She is somewhat odd, and would prefer to be unknown and closely veiled on the occasion of the marriage.

Mel. How romantic!

Mr. Q. A feminine whim, I suppose; but I will not object, if the lady moves in the upper circles of society. What is the lady's name?

Aunt S. That's a secret; for she wishes to remain unknown for the present; she is so odd.

Mr. Q. She can act as bridesmaid. I give our consent.

Enter BARTLETT, BETSON, Mrs. JUNKINGSON, SPRIGGINS, Mrs. DORKINS, Mr. JUNKINGSON *and Others.*

Mrs. Dorkins is closely veiled, and wears a mantle which conceals her form from her husband, though she shows her features to the audience.

Bart. I have come to tie the nuptial knot for you. [*To Q.*

Mr. Q. I am somewhat disturbed mentally; but I shall not shrink, sir. When I was in Central Africa, I observed that the nuptial customs of the natives were beautifully simple.

Mr. Q. and Melissa take a position suitable for the ceremony; Spriggins as groomsman and Mrs. DORKINS as bridesmaid.

Bart. You do solemnly swear by the President of the United States, the members of the Cabinet, the foreign ambassadors, the Supreme Court, and the governors of the several States, that you will love cherish and obey each other, so help you Hymen.

Mr. Q. That sounds like a mock ceremony; and I'll have nothing to do with it.

Aunt S. I assure you, sir, that that is the ceremony authorized by law.

Bart. It is the ceremony which I have deemed suitable for this occasion. I will get the law on the subject and let you read it.

[*Pretends to start for a book of law.*

Mr. Q. Proceed with the ceremony. We promise, sir. I am deeply read in law, and am probably one of the best judges of constitutional law in the United States, though not a lawyer by profession. But the petty State laws I have properly thought beneath my attention; and will rely on your statement regarding them.

Bart. I pronounce you man and woman.

Mr. Q. That is satisfactory. Melissa and I are much pleased with the delicacy and promptness you have shown. [*To Mrs. Dorkins.*] Pretty lady closely veiled! There is so little beauty

in the world that none of it should be hidden. I have been under fire on sixteen battlefields, but never saw a battery more dangerous than a lady's eyes. Will you be pleased to gratify us by the sight of so much beauty and delicacy?

Mrs. D. [*Unveiling.*] Yes sir.

Mr. Q. What! my wife! Mrs. Dorkins! Mrs. Quattlewich, I should say! Disgusting wretch! I thought that you were dead. Did the malicious spirit of some dead harridan induce you to come here? Oh! what a donkey is credulity!

Mrs. D. My husband! I wish you much joy.

Mr. Q. Crush you! Crush you! Yes, I could crush you as a lightning train crushes a hedgehog.

Mrs. D. My husband, the ceremony was only a mock one; return with me to our children and our dear old home.

Mr. Q. Never, madam! never! never! You can not be *my* wife after this.

Mrs. D. Mr. Quattlewich's real name is Aminidab Dorkins.

Sprig. Mr. Quattlewich and Mr. Dorkins are so nearly related that they should know each other. I will introduce them. Mr. Aminidab Dorkins, this is my affectionate friend the Honorable Theophilus Quattlewich. I can't recommend either one to the other.

Mr. Q. You contemptible yonker! your recommendation would be of no value. Where's my cane! I'll cane the whole party.

Bart. If you make a single movement in that direction, I'll cause you to be sent to jail, sir.

Sprig. Mr. Quattlewich! when you return to Central Africa, take Psycho, the devil, with you. He will be a good soldier, because he has been accustomed to be *under fire*.

Mr. Q. [*Aside*] Was a man of genius ever so *badgered* by *puppies* before?

Aunt S. What a considerate husband! He loved his wife so much that he invited her to assist as bridesmaid!

Mel. Oh dear! don't plague the poor man any more.

Mrs. D. My husband! since you were at our old home my aunt in California bequeathed me property valued at a million dollars. These people knew that you had a living wife; and if I had allowed you to marry Melissa in reality, they would have sent you to prison for bigamy. I prevented that. Will you now return with me?

Mr. Q. Never, madam! never.

Mrs. D. [*Producing a letter.*] Read this letter from California.

Mr. Q. [*After reading*] I am acquainted with the lawyer who wrote this. Ah! I see you are indeed wealthy.

Mrs. D. Will you go with me?

Mr. Q. My darling! [*To Mrs. D.*]

Mel. Do you mean me?

Mr. Q. No; you simpleton! [*To Mrs. D.*] Duplicity is a spy that blabs all secrets. I'll not stain the dignity of an honest man by an exhibition of deceit. Mrs. Dorkins, I will go with you because of my real love for you and our children. [*Aside*] Beloved spirit of my deceased grandmother! what a blissful termination of my sorrows! [*Pats his wife's chin.*]

Mrs. D. Mr. Spriggins, who informed me of the real state of affairs here should be rewarded. Besides he saved my life, at the risk of his own, by gallantly plunging into deep water where I was drowning. Take this check on the bank, sir. It calls for ten thousand dollars. [*Giving check.*]

Mr. Q. My darling! the sum is far too large. Give him five dollars.

Mrs. D. It is not too large a sum.

Mr. Q. According to your pleasure, madam.

[*Exit.*]

Sprig. Madam, I am grateful. Do not put your wealth in your husband's hands; for he might desert you again.

[Takes the check]

Mrs. D. Never fear. He committed a crime before he left home, and I am inducing him to go with me in order to have him properly punished. Many spiritualists are honest, but my husband is exceptionally bad.

Sprig. Aunt Sally, don't you wish that somebody would put such a *check* on your ambition.

[Shakes the bank check under Aunt Sally's nose.]

Aunt S. So long as I own the Empire Hotel, my farms and village property, I'll be satisfied.

Sprig. Squire Bartlett, call here to morrow, and we'll have a real ceremony. I'll marry Melissa.

Mr. J. Oh yes; and you shall have the brindle cow. Come to think, you can have the brindle cow.

Mel. *[Aside]* How sweet! *[Aloud.]* A kiss, aunt! a kiss!

Sprig. A kiss, Melissa! a kiss! *[Imitating her.]*

[Exeunt.]