

(Solemn boom of distant guns, or music or bells, which have been silent for a while. She rises sobbing.)

O-o-o! hear that!

(Totters away—assisted—passing the window, glances out.)

Returning! He is in the ground! O-o-o, take me away, take me away!

(Crying hard.)

WIDOW

(Aside.)

It breaks my heart!

(Exit BOTH.)

(Enter ANDRÉ, stealthily.)

ANDRÉ

(Walks about soliloquising—gazing at pictures, busts and things.)

— — — 'George, she's just *rancid* with money. — — Laws, if I hadn't been afraid of that forged contract, I wouldn't give a rap to marry her or *anybody*. — — — However, I'll take her if she doesn't go back on me — — I wonder if she will? I believe she'll give me the promise. Yet she's terribly capricious, and uncertain. Chicago—I don't take much stock in Chicago, for all he says he studied for the ministry — — — *he swears she'll say yes, this time—*

(Looking up at a picture—stands where WIDOW can't see him when she enters.)

(Enter WIDOW.)

(She is entirely bald, black patch over one eye, has a slovenly old peignoir on, which conceals her dress; face is yellow; has a hand mirror; walks on crutches.)

WIDOW

(Solus.)

The dear fellow, he ought to be here in half an hour, I think.

(ANDRÉ sees her and steps out of range and stares.)

I've loved him—oh, for a whole month, now.

(Seats herself at a center-table.)

There's no resisting him, he admires me so. I couldn't help teasing him. But I think maybe I have worried him long enough, poor darling. Ah, he will be so happy. I must make myself supremely beautiful for him.

(Strikes bell twice.)

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

Talk about the ruins of ancient Rome! — — — I wish I—I wish—I suppose there is no way to get out of here without her seeing me.

(Enter PAGE.)

WIDOW

Bring my new teeth.

(Exit PAGE.)

(She fusses at mouth.)

I do think this is the most troublesome set I've ever had. When I *want* to remove them I can't do it, and every time I go to a ball and get excited I cough them out.

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

God bless my soul.

(PAGE brings the new set on a salver. From behind a screen?)

(To be acted—not spoken. Except remark to PAGE?)

WIDOW

(Puts them in—works mouth.)

They don't fit very well. Take up an awful sight of room. However they are more stylish than the others.

(To PAGE.)

Bring me a fresh glass eye—*clean* one.

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

It's perfectly odious!

PAGE

Any particular one, Madam?

WIDOW

Well, yes—my Sunday one.

(Exit PAGE.)

(Fussing at patched eye.)

This troublesome thing — — — it's stuck.

(To be acted—not spoken,—except "It's stuck.")

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

Oh, my goodness!

WIDOW

Sho! I've turned it with the gilded side to the front.

(Hand-glass.)

Why, it looks like a torch.

(Works at it.)

There—now it's right.

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

Lord, it's ghastly!

(PAGE brings eye on salver.)

WIDOW

(Holding the eye up and examining.)

Ah, that's a love!

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

Think of it—she would do that every night before she went to bed. A body couldn't stand it. It would give him night-mare.

WIDOW

There—

(Examines it.)

troublesome thing—I shan't try to wear it again. Dear André, he shall have it for a love-gift.

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

Not if I know myself.

WIDOW

(Removes patch. Makes winks in the glass.)

This one's all right. Fits snug as a plug. Full of expression, too.

(To PAGE.)

Fetch my hair.

(Exit PAGE.)

Now let me see. Yes—I'll put on the new complexion, now. It'll need time to dry before he comes.

(Turns her back and wipes off the yellow.)

There

(Hand-glass—)

why, it's the loveliest I've ever bought.

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

Upon my word, I always thought it was natural.

(PAGE brings hair.)

(WIDOW begins to put it on.)

WIDOW

Fetch me some legs.

(Exit PAGE.)

ANDRÉ

Isn't any *part* of her genuine?

WIDOW

(Examining wig in glass.)

Dear me, I believe I've injured this, cutting off that lock. But no matter, he begged for it *so* hard.

ANDRÉ

(Aside.)

And so I did.

(PAGE brings several handsome artificial legs up to knee, stockinged and gartered, on a tray.)

WIDOW

(*Holding one up.*)

Ah, that's the new American one—and it's a daisy, too.

(*Turns her back—PAGE on his knees, helping screw-on leg.*)

Sho', you are all wrong—the heel's in *front*. Turn it around. No—it belongs on the *other* leg.

ANDRÉ

(*Aside—slowly shaking his head.*)

Nothing solid *about* her.

WIDOW

(*Examining legs.*)

They are all *lefts*. Get some more.

(*Exit PAGE.*)

(*WIDOW's back still turned.*)

ANDRÉ

(*Aside—fervently.*)

I wouldn't marry that débris if she was worth a billion. I'm going to get out or die.

(*Sneaks out.*)

WIDOW

(*Removing peignoir.*)

He's disposed of, I reckon. Ah, the boys missed that circus.

(*Looking at watch and calling off.*)