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The Sympathy of the People

By
John Pratt Whitman

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PREFACE

The plot of "The Sympathy of the People" was suggested and inspired by the new historic policemen's strike in Boston on September 9, 1919.

Like all plays and works of fiction there is no attempt to adhere to facts either in the course of events or in the characters portrayed. In the Boston police strike there was no important love affair, no Lucy Knowles, no Dennis Wiggs, no Grimes, and no banks were broken into.

In Boston today there are many, who like Samuel Gompers, believe the disastrous strike was "framed" in order to allow labor to ride to a fall, as it apparently did.

No event could have been staged—if it were staged—with greater genius and with results more far-reaching in the struggle between capital and labor. From coast to coast there set in a reaction against labor which did much to carry a conservative president into office, with the illustrious governor of Massachusetts for second place.

Of course, a considerable portion of substantial Boston denies vehemently any preconceived plot to injure the labor unions and the labor movement generally.

Who is right or who is wrong in the controversy the author does not pretend to say.

He saw a possible plot; he took advantage of a great drama enacted in real life; and he shaped a dramatic story in a faraway town which would make a thrilling and absorbing play.

Here is an attempt to give amusement; to depict real human characters; to provide wholesome fun; and to mirror deep and absorbing love in artistic and dramatic form—for, after all, "THE PLAY'S THE THING!"

“The Sympathy of the People”

A Drama of Today—In Four Acts

Cast of Characters:

PS 3545
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1920

GRIMES.....	Veteran Bookkeeper in Bank
LIZZIE.....	Woman of All Work
SAMMIE.....	Village Newsboy
LUCY KNOWLES.....	Niece of Banker Knowles, Employed in Bank
IRA HATHAWAY.....	Special Bank Officer—Guardian of People’s Money
ROBERT P. KNOWLES.....	President and Director of Mapleton Bank
DENNIS W. WIGGS.....	Farm Hand, Timid in the Dark
MRS. DENNIS WIGGS.....	Wife of Dennis, and Head of the Family
JASON.....	Mill Hand
TONY PATRONI.....	Mill Hand
TOM WALSH.....	Head of Metal Trades Union
PRESTON MORTON.....	Manufacturer, and Head of Munition Factory
JUDGE DAVID HILTON.....	President of Red Lands Oil Company
BILL KRAMER.....	Editor and Owner of Loganville Courier
SPIKE.....	Confederate, Crook
DUMPY.....	Confederate, Crook
DESPERADO.....	Nameless, and a Bad One
PAL.....	Devil’s Assistant
BANK CASHIER.....	—
MAGGIE.....	The Crook
BILLINGS, ANNA SWARTZ, HENNESSY, WIDOW SMITH, ABE MORRIS,	Mill Hands
JOE MILLER.....	Sheriff

CITIZENS, BANK CUSTOMERS, ETC.

Scene—The Interior of the Mapleton Bank.

Extending across rear is the grill with two cashiers’ windows. Through the decorative iron work may be seen the outer bank, two large plate glass windows framing a pleasant landscape. At the right of the grill is the large safe. At the left end of grill is a gate connecting the inner with the outer bank. Off left, not in view, is front door to which is attached a bell. The sound of the opening of door is important. A banker’s desk with swivel chair and other chairs are left. On opposite side of room is a desk and typewriter; a tall desk holding the bank ledgers, and by it is a high stool.

There is a door down left, and two doors right leading to offices.

It is early morning, the window curtains are still down, and a night light burns. The door is heard to open, and Grimes, the veteran bookkeeper, appears and enters inner bank.

He is a man of fifty, iron gray, stooping shoulders, prematurely wrinkled, thin, and apologetic. His dress and entire make-up are scrupulously neat. He has a tired appearance. His hat and coat he hangs on a rack, and he then goes to his ledger to work after turning on the electric light above his head.

Lizzie, the scrub woman and general cleaner, enters. She has a coal hod in one hand and duster in the other. She is a middle-aged woman, not foreign in appearance, a village personage who has had a common school education, and is the mother of a healthy family

of children. She is sympathetic and motherly, and is surprised to see Grimes at his desk so early.

LIZZIE—You are at your books early, Mr. Grimes?

GRIMES—(He is rather deaf)—Eh?

LIZZIE—(Louder)—You are in early, Mr. Grimes.

GRIMES—My books wouldn't balance last night, and I worked till twelve.

LIZZIE—(Puzzled)—Balance is it? They are sure heavy enough to balance anything of their size. What do you mean by balance?

GRIMES—The books have to show where the money is. If they don't they can't balance. There has to be as much on the books as there is in the safe. There is thirty cents out somewhere.

LIZZIE—Is that all it is? and you working night and day to find it. Why don't you stop looking in those old musty books for it and search the floor and under the rugs?

GRIMES—What's that?

LIZZIE—(Loudly, while she gets out her pocketbook.) If it's thirty cents will balance your books, here it is and welcome you are. (Hands Grimes change.)

GRIMES—(Refusing.) You don't understand, Lizzie; the books show that there is thirty cents more in the bank than these figures account for. You see—

LIZZIE—Oh, if it would make it any easier, I'll take that extra thirty pennies and say nothin' about it, and you can go home and finish your sleep.

GRIMES—You can't help in that way. (With a gesture of impatience hands Lizzie a paper upon which many columns of figures have been scribbled.) Lizzie, if you can find where I have missed thirty cents you might become a bank auditor.

LIZZIE—When I was in school they called me the champion adder.

GRIMES—(Does not hear what Lizzie has said.) Mr. Knowles is always out of patience when he can't begin the day with the books straight; he gets very angry. It isn't pleasant, Lizzie, not pleasant at all. (Forgets Lizzie, and buries head in books, hears nothing.)

LIZZIE—(Sitting in chair left.) Shows by face and fingers she is trying

to add. Aloud.) Four and eight, and six, and two, and—My soul, what a lot of money—oh, I'm all mixed up—and I the grand adder that I was. (Counts on fingers.) It's no use; it's too much to keep in one person's head.

There is no balance in these figers, Mr. Grimes. Balance, balance—how can anything balance in this bank anyway?

How does your salary balance wi' that of Mr. Knowles? And how does my daily wages balance with all the money in that safe? You say, Mr. Knowles will be angry to learn that thirty cents is gone; he hasn't any balance, that's sure.

Ten and three is thirteen—there are too many thirteens in these figers; thirteens don't go with me. Eight and six is—there's another thirteen.

There's a combination in this bank that don't balance—two and two is four; I like figers when they come like that—There is Miss Lucy, Banker Knowles' own niece, workin' here like a slave. I'll begin at the top and run down—eight and nine is seventeen, and six is (counts slowly) twenty-three—another hoodoo. Miss Lucy is one fine young lady, and she's got two grand young men both tryin' to balance with her at the same time. That's a three combination that work's bad for one—I wonder which will be the one—twenty-three and seven are thirty—(Takes pencil from Knowles' desk and copies figures on another page of paper).

Ned Erickson looks to me as though he was tipping the scales and holdin' Miss Lucy's heart over there in France; there is more glory in killin' folks on the other side of the world than protectin' the bank at home like Ira Hathaway does. Them that stay at home have precious little chance to show whether they are brave or not.

If Ira could only brace up and show what's in him he might have a show, bein' he's right here on the ground—these fresh figers are better, I can see 'em plainer—five and five and three. This looks bad, Mr. Grimes (Looks towards Grimes, who has not heard anything. She goes over to him and speaks loudly.) Do they balance yet, Mr. Grimes?

GRIMES—Not yet.

LIZZIE—I'm sorry for you, Mr.

Grimes; and Mr. Knowles comin' any moment. Why don't you go where they wouldn't drive you so hard over thirty cents?

GRIMES—I have been twenty years in this bank, Lizzie, and Mr. Knowles is a just and honest man even if he is hard at times.

It is because he is fair that I stay and work for him. I had rather starve than work for a man who isn't square. If Mr. Knowles should ever do anything like that I would send in my—what am I talking about, he never would. Bell rings. Enter Sammie, Newsboy.)

SAMMIE—Mr. Knowles' paper. Shall I leave it on his desk?

LIZZIE—(Taking up figures again.) I reckon, but don't bother. Mr. Grimes and I are balancing the books, before the boss comes in and gets mad. Eight and four is twelve, and one—(counting on fingers).

SAMMIE—If it's addin' figures, I am the man you are looking for. I'm a star mathematician, second year High.

You say it's got to be done before Mr. Knowles comes in or he'll be peeved. All right, give me one of them—those papers. (Takes paper.) Gee, is all this money in the bank? (In loud voice.) Thirty-two and fifteen is—are—forty-seven, and eleven are fifty-eight, and sixty-five is—(scratches head.) (Outside door is heard to open.)

LIZZIE—Oh, there he comes. Now we'll catch it for not havin' the books balanced. Six and six are thirteen, and two more is two more, and nine is nine more, and, oh dear, I'm all mixed up and don't know which are dollars and what is sense.

SAMMIE—Twenty and thirty-two are fifty-two and eighteen are—is—

LIZZIE—Twenty-two and two is twenty-four, and—(counts on fingers).

LUCY—(Enter Lucy Knowles. She stands smiling and amazed. She is a comely girl with a charming manner, a girl of culture and education, combined with quick sympathies and executive ability. Her first appearance shows her a friend worth having.) I declare, what is all the figgerin'?' Is this a regular arithmetic lesson?

SAMMIE—We thought you was—were—Mr. Knowles, and the books wasn't balanced, and—

LIZZIE—It was like this, Miss Lucy.

Mr. Grimes worked here till twelve last night, and his books wouldn't balance, and he came early to see if he couldn't make 'em come out right, and we was helpin' him. He don't know what has become of thirty cents.

LUCY—Oh, that's it, is it? (Goes to Grimes, who has not noticed what has been taking place.) Lizzie tells me you are shy thirty cents; can I help you?

GRIMES—(Looking up with gratitude.) I should be most grateful. My books show too much, and I can't put my finger on the trouble.

LUCY—(Runs over figures.) These add all right. Have you yesterday's checks? (Grimes brings package of checks.) (She runs over them.) Here's your mistake, Grimes, and it's really my fault; I meant to warn you yesterday of this check. That is a one, but someone started to make a four, and you copied it as four. Are you sure that your difference is thirty cents?

GRIMES—(Relieved.) Thank you, Miss Lucy. You seem to be the one who always pulls me out of a hole. Your uncle never allows excuses.

SAMMIE—Hurrah! We've balanced the books. Come, Mrs. Mack, I guess you and I can go now.

LUCY—Hold on, Sammie, I want a paper. (Gives five cents. Boy starts to make change.) Never mind the change, Sam; your work on the books is surely worth three cents.

LIZZIE—Not much more I guess.

SAMMIE—Well, your figgerin' didn't get you very far.

LIZZIE—(Nettled.) I was considered the best at figgererin' in school where I went. (Following Sam out, both disputing about their respective merits in arithmetic. Lucy opens her typewriter desk and dusts machine. Ira Hathaway enters from left. Tall, pleasant appearing man wearing the uniform of a special officer. He limps slightly. He is guardian of the bank and has charge of all details of the building. A responsible position requiring intelligence and even courage.)

IRA—Good morning, Miss Lucy; morning Grimes. (Goes to large windows and pulls shades letting in a flood of morning sunshine. He puts out hall light, and then takes his tools and begins to fix catch on door into grill. He whistles softly.)

LUCY—You are in good spirits. Has the sunshine got into your tongue?

IRA—Did you ever hear of anyone whistling to keep up his spirits?

LUCY—You are a fine actor then, and should join our dramatic club. Our play comes off next week, "The Lion and the Mouse." What kind of a mouse do you think I'll make?

IRA—(Stopping work and coming a few steps toward Lucy.) I don't exactly think of you as a mouse, and I've seen you talking to your uncle in a way quite different from a mouse. No; you are not my idea of a mouse, and I ought to know.

LUCY—(Looks about with apprehension.) I abominate the little wretches. Do you mean there are mice in this bank?

IRA—No, I don't remember that I ever saw a mouse here, but in my palace-de-royal over the shed there are plenty. I think some fond mother has set up a nest in my corn husk mattress, by the sound.

LUCY—That sounds pleasant, but really I am in earnest about our dramatic club. Since all the boys went to camp and overseas we have the hardest time to get any men to do the male parts. Couldn't you come to the hall next Thursday evening?

IRA—Are you joking, Miss Lucy? What time do you think an officer like me has to join in good times? My job is here every night in the week, and your uncle has told me more than once that I am to trust to no substitute.

LUCY—How many hours do you work anyway?

IRA—I am on duty from seventy to eighty hours each week, and I hardly know a holiday unless someone reminds me.

LUCY—That isn't right; you ought to have at least one night a week to go to a dance, or to a social where you can forget everything but a good time.

IRA—That sounds fine when you talk about it like that, but I have my bread and butter to earn, and then there is mother, so here I am tied to my post with some quiet time to read. The books you have lent me, Lucy, are just like friends.

LUCY—Have you finished "Co-operative Banking"? I want to read it again.

IRA—Yes, I'll go and get it right

now. (Runs out door left.) (Lucy reads her paper.)

LUCY—Mr. Grimes. (Louder.) Grimes, come here a minute. (Grimes comes to Lucy.) Here is something that might interest you. (Shows Grimes advertisement in paper of audi-phone. He shakes his head skeptically. Reads.) "The audiphone guarantees a distinct sound, and will bring hearing back to nine out of ten. If given a thorough try it will gather up the minutest sounds and transmit them to the auditory nerves. Give it a fair try, and if it fails, return the instrument at our expense."

GRIMES—I haven't any faith in such a contrivance.

LUCY—I'll order that for you on trial if you will promise to follow my directions for at least two weeks.

GRIMES—If you really want the satisfaction of seeing it fail, I'll do the best I can to show you it's no use. I'll go through with it I suppose.

LUCY—It isn't a question whether you will go through it, but whether SOUND will go through it, and that is worth trying. It's a bargain, Grimes? (Grimes shakes hands and goes back to books.) (Lucy starts to write order on typewriter.) Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could get your hearing, Grimes? (Grimes does not hear.) (Ira returns with book. Gives it to Lucy.) That's my idea of business, everybody having a share and responsibility.

IRA—It is a wonderful idea. What do you say? Let's start a co-operative bank. You be the banker, and I drum up trade.

LUCY—We'll make a specialty of financing co-operative movements. We might get an entire village into one big co-operative company and then—

IRA—And then what?

LUCY—Be told by the wise bankers like my uncle that we are foolish dreamers.

IRA—Suppose he should, what difference would it make, if an entire village shared in the good things instead of one or two families?

LUCY—I shall lend you no more books, young man, depend on that. No such idealism has a ghost of a chance of realization. Socialism may be an ideal, but (imitating uncle) men are far

too selfish to live on any such theory; as my uncle would say.

IRA—I certainly don't see any opportunity of carrying anything out in this bank like co-operation. The salaries we get show how much your uncle wants to share his profits with us.

LUCY—Don't try to get me into an economic controversy. I hear uncle rave so often over what he calls robbery by employes, confiscation of legitimate profits by labor delegates, hold-ups, he calls them, that I refuse to take sides.

IRA—But they bring more to the bank.

LUCY—That is just it; as a banker who takes those savings and loans out money for rates from 5 to 100 per cent, he is not half so angry as he is as part owner in the factory.

IRA—How does it make you feel, Lucy, when those factory girls, hardly able to speak English, bring in their wages?

LUCY—Many of them are getting more than I do. Uncle says my job is respectable and worth something because of the position it gives me in Mapleton. I had rather be less respectable and have more money.

IRA—That is exactly what I told your uncle, and he grew angry. We bank employes have to take our pay in respectability; about four dollars worth of respectability with every three dollars in wages. I have hinted to your uncle, and I have frankly asked him a dozen times to raise my salary, but he won't do a thing.

LUCY—(Turning and facing Ira.) The trouble with you, Ira, is that you are altogether too meek with uncle. I've heard you speaking about the condition of the room he gives you, and I have also heard you putting the matter of wages up to him. You don't know how to talk to such a man. What he needs occasionally a good bowling out. Such men do not appreciate meekness. I advise you to go at him like you meant business.

IRA—Talk as though I would strike if he didn't pay attention to my requests?

LUCY—Certainly, why not?

IRA—That's all well enough, but you know perfectly well the reason I'm not in the factory or in the hay field is because I am not physically able to do

the work. What job could I get if I left here? If it were not for mother I might take a chance, but as things are I have to stick and make the best of it.

LUCY—You are too timid, Ira Hathaway, and if you keep on in this mouse fashion you'll never get a raise or a better room. I know that men are the rarest articles in the market just now, and there isn't anyone who could or would take your place. Of course, if uncle wanted to pay mill wages he might get someone, but even then there are few who would work so many hours. You have the whip hand if you only knew it and had the courage to face the music.

IRA—You have no right to say that I am not brave and lack courage. I'd be in the trenches with Ned Errickson and all the rest of them if they would have accepted me. You know that, Lucy.

LUCY—It isn't only in the trenches courage is required. If Ned were here at home he would be finding some way to show the red blood that is in him. It isn't only fighting at the front a girl admires. The fact is, I can't bear to think of our village boys killing anyone. I wish war would leave the killing out, and I hope Ned won't have to kill any of those poor deluded (shudders) enemy.

Just now the world needs courage at home as much as abroad, and it is a scarce article, Ira.

MAIL CARRIER—(Outside). Mail.

LUCY—There is the mail, bring it in, please, there may be word from Ned. (Ira brings in mail. Lucy looks it over and is disappointed as she finds nothing from Ned. Knowles, the banker, enters and is seen for a moment in the rear of the bank. Ira works industriously on his lock, while Lucy examines mail. Knowles enters inner bank and proceeds to take off wraps. Talks to Ira without looking at him.)

(Knowles is a typical appearing country banker wearing a gray suit. He is gray about the temples and is clean shaven. He is rather thick set, and his every move, look and gesture betrays him to be a money maker and a worshipper of the dollar. When inside the grill he speaks with irritation, imperiously, as an autocrat in his own domain.)

KNOWLES—What is the matter

with the sidewalk, Ira? It's indecent, absolutely indecent with old papers and leaves right up to the doorway. I should be ashamed to have a customer see that filth. I suppose you know the sidewalk is one of your lookouts?

IRA—Yes, sir; I was intending to get right at it.

KNOWLES—Well, do it at once; and hereafter make it one of your first chores—(looking significantly at Lucy)—and postpone your social calls. (Ira starts to make reply, but thinks better of it and goes out front.) (Knowles sits at his desk.) Come, Lucy, let's have the mail. I ought to be hearing from those oil shares. They tell me the Red Lands are beginning to spurt.

LUCY—Here are your letters and papers, uncle, and there is one from the Red Lands Oil Company.

KNOWLES—(Tearing letter open hastily and reading.) No, Higgins says the big day has not yet arrived, but a strike is looked for any moment. There's millions out there, Lucy, and Judge Hilton is one of the shrewdest financial organizers in the world. I told him once he would carry the earth in his vest pocket some day, and he knows how to handle labor better than any man living. (Discovers postal sticking to another envelope.) (Reads.) "We are in the thick of it now, Lucy, I can tell you——" Hello, what kind of business is this? It strikes me as queer banking. It's from Ned Errickson; so, ho, and it is addressed to Miss Lucy Knowles. (Lucy takes postal eagerly.) I think it would be better, young lady, if your gentlemen friends and soldiers doing duty in France would address you at home.

LUCY—Oh, uncle, Ned has been in a big engagement, and has come through without a scratch and with honors. How wonderful! He must own a charmed life.

KNOWLES—(Looking with kindly interest at Lucy.) I am inclined to believe he does own a charmed life, but that particular life may be right here in Mapleton instead of in the trenches.

LUCY—I don't know what you mean. Ned and I have never been intimate, but I do admire him for his spirit and courage. Somehow, I like to believe he wouldn't be rough and cruel like some soldiers I have read about. (Ira has entered and stands

silently in the rear, while Lucy is speaking of Ned and bravery. He is evidently much moved. When she finishes speaking he comes down to the banker with determination written on his face, and indicated by his bearing.)

KNOWLES—(Taking no notice of Ira.) You needn't hesitate, Lucy. He is one of the finest young men in this town, and with a great future before him. If it's pluck and bravery you like, he's got his full share of both. You can take it from me, if he finds himself in a nest of Huns it will be one sad day for his enemies, or they will find him dead at his post. There isn't a man with his courage in these parts.

IRA—May I have a word with you, sir, on business?

KNOWLES—(Nettled at interruption, but seeing that Ira is determined, motions Lucy to her desk.) Must we be alone? Would you prefer the young lady retire?

IRA—I should like to be alone with you, sir.

KNOWLES—(Looks curiously at Ira, and then motions for Lucy to retire.) (She takes her papers and goes out, but gives Ira an understanding look as she does so.)

LUCY—Very well, uncle, I shall be in the next room if you want me.

KNOWLES—(Sorting papers a moment, then looking keenly at the young man in front of him.) Well, what is it? This is a busy morning, as you know, and the mill people will be here with their pay envelopes before long. Be brief.

IRA—I want to speak about that room of mine again.

KNOWLES—(With rising anger.) So that's it, is it. What's the matter with that room anyway? I'm getting sick and tired of your complaints. That room over the shed is better than most of the people in this town enjoy, to say nothing of the mill hands. I suppose you want quarters in a parlor of the Ritz Carlton or some other New York hotel.

IRA—No, I do not. I want justice and fair treatment. I make it my business to guard this bank faithfully, and you trust me, and you know I would not leave my post in the face of danger—you know that.

KNOWLES—Well, that is what you are paid for aren't you?

IRA—Look here, Mr. Knowles, I've been special officer and general superintendent of this bank for six years, and in all that time you haven't given me a decent room to live in, and you know it. I'm tired of playing meek. I've asked you to give that room a good papering, to put new matting on the floor, and to replace that corn husk mattress with something more comfortable. There are lots of mice in that shed and worse in the walls.

KNOWLES—Someone has been putting notions in your head, and you better get rid of ideas which will make you continually discontented. You have got along pretty well in that room and I guess you can continue without much inconvenience as you are; however, I'll go so far as to send Martha down some day to look the place over and report what she thinks should be done.

IRA—(Exasperated.) Mr. Knowles, you have said that to me at least a half-dozen times, but Martha never comes. I won't be contented with being put off any longer.

KNOWLES—(Whistles.) You won't, eh?

IRA—No, sir, I won't; and now we are talking, I might as well relieve my mind on the matter of salary, too.

KNOWLES—You are coming it strong. What's the big idea now? A palace to live in and a hundred dollars a week?

IRA—I want a living wage, that's what I want, sir.

KNOWLES—A living wage. Oh, I know where you got that phrase. From some of those waps who aren't worth fifteen dollars a week, but who are pulling down thirty-five a week in the factory. So, the walking delegates have been talking a living wage to you, have they?

IRA—I haven't talked to any of them. I don't need to. I tell you I am getting too little from this bank to support myself and my mother properly and in good health. Eighteen dollars a week don't buy what it did three years ago, and you know that, sir. My hours are half again as long as the factory hours, and my pay less. Is that just or right?

KNOWLES—Yes, it's both just and

right. Wages, my dear young man, depend upon supply and demand, and it would be poor business for me to give a man incapacitated to do a full man's work a full man's pay. If you could go into the factory and work alongside the others, you could command their pay, but as you can't, I'm doing you a favor by keeping you in a position that is respectable—a gentleman's position.

IRA—I don't care two cents about respectability, as you call it. I want enough to live on, and I want at least one night off in which to enjoy myself like other young people in the town and factory.

KNOWLES—(Getting angry.) I have had enough of this, young man. You better understand when you are well off, and cut out demanding this and that. Suppose your hours are long, your work is largely loafing, with plenty of time to read and talk with your friends. You have a snap, you live on easy street in comparison with real workers and producers. I shall not raise your wages, so get along about your work and let me get to mine. (Starts to look over papers as though interview were over.)

IRA—(Stands silent a moment.) I have made up my mind to leave, sir, if you can't see your way to give me a raise and provide better, cleaner quarters.

KNOWLES—So that is the threat is it? So, the walking delegate has really been talking with you, and whispering his poison in your ear. Very well, you can go when you get ready, and I am inclined to discharge you on the spot. Don't think because the boys are all gone to war, or are working in the factory, that I can't replace you.

IRA—By next Thursday afternoon, sir, if you still refuse my just requests, I shall have an answer for you, whether I shall leave or not.

KNOWLES—You are a fine type of guardian, aren't you? You have the duty of protecting the people's savings, and because you think help is scarce you talk to me of leaving your trust. You are that sort of a hero are you? All your boasted devotion to duty melts away because you cannot get what you do not earn. You needn't look for anything from me next Thursday, so you had better consider very carefully who there is to give you a

job, the easy kind of employment which one of your disability must have. I think I have said my say—and you—(A young country couple enter the bank. Knowles pauses a moment.) You had better think well before you call a strike in the First National Mapleton bank, young man. It would look well, wouldn't it, in the Loganville Courier: "The trusted guardian of the Mapleton bank, who for six years has faithfully protected the savings of the people, has gone on strike and left the bank without protection." Think it over, Ira.

IRA—I have thought it over, and I ask you to do a little thinking also. (Goes out right.)

(Dennis W. Wiggs and Loretta Gilgum Wiggs stand at cashier's window waiting to be served. They have the awkward appearance of country newlyweds. Both sunburned. They bear their wedding clothes uneasily, and show they are about to take a journey.)

KNOWLES—(Going to cashier's window.) Well, well, Dennis and Loretta, I suppose the knot is tied, and you are man and wife.

DENNIS—(Grinning and giving Loretta a squeeze.) We be Mr. Knowles, she's promised to love, honor and obey, and I swore to cherish till death do us part.

LORETTA—You ought to have been at the weddin', Mr. Knowles. Mrs. Avery, she fixed up the parlor some-thin' swell; white ribbons, apple blossoms, asparagress and red and yellor paper chrystianthums right over where we got hitched.

DENNIS—How do you like our rigs, Mr. Knowles?

KNOWLES—I can't see, Dennis, the entire effect of your wedding clothes. Suppose you come in and let me have a look at you.

LORETTA—Come right in where you keep all your money? Ain't you afraid we'll steal some of it?

KNOWLES—I'll take the risk. Step right in and display yourselves. (Knowles opens door into bank.) (Dennis and Loretta enter. They are attired in poor taste, with striking bows, ties, stoekings, etc., not overdone or too grotesque.) You are pretty classy. What can I do for you, Dennis?

DENNIS—Mr. Knowles, Loretta and I are goin' to see Niagari and to hon-

eymoon around them Bridal Falls fer about a week. You see hayin' don't begin right away, and Avery giv us both a week to enjoy married life.

KNOWLES—You have come for some money, have you? How much do you want?

DENNIS—(With importanee.) One hundred dollars—a hundred dollar bill if you've got it. We're goin' it kind o' steep, but mebbe we won't either on us hev another chance for a wedding' trip, and so we are going to hev our fling, ain't we, Loretta?

LORETTA—It seems like a heap of money to spend in one week, but, ez Dennis says, it's just for onct.

KNOWLES—(Goes to safe.) We'll see what we can find. Here's just the bill, right from the United States treasury. It matches your wedding clothes. (The two look at bill with great interest.) Lucy, come see who we have here? (Enter Lucy.)

LUCY—What's all this? As I live if it isn't Loretta Gilgum and Dennis Wiggs. What does it mean?

LORETTA—(With injured dignity.) I am no longer Miss Gilgum. You are addressin' Mrs. Dennis W. Wiggs. (Bows stiffly.)

LUCY—Dennis, I congratulate you. Loretta, I hope you will be happy. (Shakes hands.) How fine you both look in your brand new clothes. Come, Loretta, sit down over here by my desk and let me examine your finery. (Lucy and Loretta go right, and the two men left.)

DENNIS—I would like to get a look into that big box where you keep all them hundred dollar bills.

KNOWLES—Certainly, come along. (The two examine safe. Loretta also takes a peep.)

DENNIS—You must have millions of dollars in that big iron chest. I wouldn't mind hev'in what you keep in that cupboard, ha, ha, ha. (Knowles and Dennis return to seats.)

KNOWLES—You will never get it, Dennis, pitching hay for Avery and milking his cows. Are you getting rich?

DENNIS—No, I'm not, Mr. Knowles, and it's damned hard work, too, from six in the mornin' till eight at night, and you can't wear togs like these as you kin in a bank.

KNOWLES—How would you like to have a job in the bank, Dennis?

DENNIS—It would suit me all right. It would be easier handin' out hundred dollar bills and takin' in the cash than sloppin' the hogs.

KNOWLES—I wasn't exactly thinkin' about the position of cashier for you because your experience has hardly prepared you for that, but you might make a good watchman if you have the courage.

DENNIS—What kind of courage do you mean?

KNOWLES—You know, where there is lots of money there may be people about who would like to get it, and who wouldn't care how they got it.

DENNIS—(Looking about uneasily.) That's right, Mr. Knowles, I've read of desprate characters blowin' up safes and committin' murder on bank officers. They told me in the post-office yesterday that there are two or three suspicious characters about town, and a-hangin' about the factory. It may be they've got their eyes on this very bank. I wouldn't be afraid in the day time, but I can't stand the pesky dark. I even git the shivers in the barn at night when I'm out very late.

KNOWLES—Of course, you could carry a gun.

DENNIS—That would make a difference, but what about Ira? Ain't he fillin' the job all right? He's been here a good many years.

KNOWLES—Ira may be leaving next week, and I want a real man, a strong upstanding man, one who could handle any intruder in such a way that he would not call again. You are just the man, Dennis; what do you say?

DENNIS—(Uneasy and scared over the job.) I'm sorry, Mr. Knowles, but Loretta and I hev set our hearts on this trip to Niagari, and it wouldn't be right to give it up now. I'm much obliged, but they are countin' on me at Avery's to do the hayin'.

KNOWLES—Oh, I didn't mean to keep you from your honeymoon, but suppose I should send for you to come to be here on Thursday afternoon to begin work. How would that suit?

DENNIS—(Uneasy.) I ain't got any gun, Mr. Knowles, and I dunno ez I could use one of I had it.

KNOWLES—(Laughing.) That was all a joke, Dennis. This bank is perfectly safe day and night. All the doors and windows are locked and barred.

You wouldn't be in the least danger.

DENNIS—Thursday would be kinda short for Loretta and me to break up honeymoonin'.

KNOWLES—It might be I could let you stay longer, say, till Friday or Saturday.

DENNIS—I guess I hed better stick to the farm, Mr. Knowles. Fact is, I ain't comfortable in these tight shoes and this derby hat. I b'lieve Avery's cow barn is as far ez—

LORETTA—(Who has caught the drift of what has been said)—What are you talking about, Dennis Wiggs? Of course you'll take the job if Mr. Knowles wants you! We can cut our sugarin' off a day or two if necessary. Ef you would feel safer at night I'll stay with you till ye git used to it. I'll show any burglars that Mrs. Loretta-Gilgum Wiggs ain't scared to meet any of them. You'll take the Job, Dennis.

DENNIS—Loretta, didn't that minister make you promise to love, honor and obey? It looks like you wuz tryin' to make me do the obeyin'.

LORETTA—Yes, Dennis Wiggs, and it isn't the last time you will obey me if you don't know for yourself what is good for ye. We'll take the position, Mr. Knowles, and come back Thursday if you say so.

KNOWLES—Does that go, Dennis?

DENNIS—(Giving hard looks at Loretta.) I suppose so ef Loretta hez got her mind set on being a banker. How much is the job wuth?

KNOWLES—What does Avery give you?

DENNIS—You hev to remember, Mr. Knowles, I've got Loretta to care for now. We couldn't git along on fifty dollars a month and keep.

KNOWLES—I'll do the right thing by you and Loretta. What do you say to eighty dollars a month and the two rooms over the shed? If Mrs. Wiggs wants to do the scrub—house-keeping about the bank there will be extra money for you. What do you say?

DENNIS—I reckon.

KNOWLES—Very well, Dennis, I shall expect you twelve hours after you receive my telegram telling you to come. (Taking roll of bills from pocket.) Here, Dennis, I want to make you a wedding present. There's two dollars to do what you like with. Don't

say anything about your new job until after you get my message to come.

LUCY—(Taking a five dollar bill from her purse)—Loretta, accept this five dollar bill for a wedding present; you may find some use for it when you set up housekeeping.

LORETTA—Oh, Miss Lucy, you are too good.

DENNIS—(Still worried over new job, rolls bill absently and sticks it in vest pocket. Puts on hat and starts to go.)

LUCY—Haven't you forgotten something, Dennis? Something very important?

DENNIS—(Feeling desperately for his hundred dollar bill, when he hears a sob from Loretta.) Wall, I'll be dog-goned; goin' off without Loretta, honey-moonin'—but I would have thought of her before I got to the station, that's a sure thing. (Takes Loretta by the arm.) I hev'n't got used to a wife, that's all. Don't take on so, Loretta; it's all right. Good-bye, Miss Lucy; so long, Mr Knowles. (Both go out.)

KNOWLES—(Gets up and goes over to where Lucy is sitting.) Lucy, take this dictation. (Lucy writes.) Judge David Hilton, Red Lands Oil Company, Red Lands, Arkansaw. Dear Judge: I have a small revolution in my bank. Those fakirs from the wire and munition factory have got to my man, Ira Hathaway, and put all kinds of notions in his head about a living wage and improved living conditions. It is a well-known fact that there is not a man to be had to take Ira's place, and what is more, he knows it. There is no doubt in my mind that he is in touch with union leaders, who say they will stand behind him. His tone has suddenly become arrogant and insulting. The unions will, of course, intimidate anyone who attempts to take Ira's place.

You once wrote me that you knew the head of our Metal Trades Union, Tom Walsh. I anticipate trouble with that fellow, who has, I believe, been organizing everyone into what he calls the "one big union."

If it were only a matter of my man alone the case would be simple. It isn't hours or wages that are bothering me, it's the principle of the thing. This dictatorial tone employes and labor generally are taking—as though the business of production belonged to them—is

reaching a limit. This seems to me a fine time to give the proletariat a black eye right here in Mapleton, and it might be heard of elsewhere with extreme satisfaction.

You, Judge, have been through all this many times, and on a much larger scale, and you know how to handle these radicals who threaten the very foundation of our commercial and political system. I understand the West has hit upon effective methods of treatment.

There is a kind of half-witted farm hand who will come, but he hasn't the courage of a chicken, and would only encourage trouble.

If I could once get hold of the skunk who stirred my man up to threaten strike I'd make jelly of him. You have my sentiments. Early advice will be appreciated.

Yours,

ROBERT P. KNOWLES.

Read that last paragraph, Lucy, it may sound a bit strong.

LUCY—(Reads.) (Knowles listens tensely and absent-mindedly grasps Lucy's shoulder.) "If I could get hold of the skunk who stirred my man up to threaten strike, I'd make jelly of him"—Uncle, you are hurting my shoulder.

KNOWLES—I beg your pardon, Lucy.

CURTAIN.

End of Act I.

Raise the Curtain for Act II.

ACT II.

Scene—the same as Act I.

Time—Noon-hour Saturday.

(Lucy and Grimes at cashier windows receiving deposits and savings from factory hands who have been paid off. It is the end of the line, and only a few stragglers are left. Grimes is busy with several men and a woman while the scene with Lucy and her customers is in progress.)

LUCY—(Jason, a young mill employe, stands before Lucy.) What can I do for you, Jason? You are almost the end of the line. I had given you up.

JASON—Add five more bucks to my account. (Passes in book, which Lucy signs and hands back.)

LUCY—You certainly are doing well, Jason; your little account is growing steadily.

JASON—We are making the coin, but it costs more to live. (Jason makes

way for a stocky little Italian, Tony Patroni.)

LUCY—More savings, Mr. Patroni? You are a good customer.

TONY—Worka hard, maka de mon. Pretty soon I send for de woman, and wea buya de house.

LUCY—That will be splendid. Does Mrs. Patroni want to come to America?

TONY—You beta, when I send her de mon, and dey giva de pass porta. (Takes printed paper from pay envelope and hands it to Lucy.) I found this witha my mon. What does it say? Reada, please? It may be citizenship papers, or what you think?

LUCY—(Reading paper to Tony. Others stop and listen.) “Workmen produce and prosper. Do you remember those two apple trees by the old stone wall? One bore apples and was laden with fruit every year. The other produced less apples each year. The farmer enriched the roots of the one which produced, and neglected the other, which was finally cut down and made into firewood. Will you be like the first tree or like the second? Will you produce and be enriched?”

TONY—Yes, I know. I goa buy a de farm, I raisa de fruit. I sella de apples; then I getta rich, eh?

LUCY—That is not exactly it, Tony. It means for you to go on producing more in the factory, and then you will get rich.

TONY—Den de bossa he getta de mon, Tony he getta de wage, eh?

TOM WALSH—(Strong, large man with intelligent face. Full of assurance and independence of spirit. He is the head of the large metal trades union.) That is certainly a fine sermon, Miss Knowles. We all get something like that in our pay envelopes. Some of us are getting tired producing more fruit for the bosses to pick. We are getting ready to pick our own fruit.

LUCY—Yes, I know that, and you, Mr. Walsh, are making a lot of trouble for the bosses, as you call them. They are coming to the end of their patience. You had better go slowly in your demands. There are forces at work to crush all your unionizing activities, and they are forces that are not accustomed to failure.

WALSH—I know you to be a good niece of your uncle, Miss Knowles.

(Counts out bills.) Please add that to the union’s account.

LUCY—Five hundred dollars. Is that right? The union must be prospering.

WALSH—We are learning as well as the capitalists that money talks. We owe our last raise to the union’s reserve fund. Where is Ira Hathaway? I hear he is thinking of leaving the bank.

LUCY—He will be in about noon.

WALSH—Tell him I am anxious to see him, and I will call around later.

LUCY—(Earnestly.) He needs a friend of the right kind, Mr. Walsh.

WALSH—You are a puzzle, Miss Knowles. I wonder sometimes whether you are a banker or a worker.

LUCY—I believe you go too fast and too far, but I admire your fighting spirit and the way thousands of you people get together and work for one end. I fail to follow you when you talk of changing a whole economic system.

WALSH—The time is not far distant when you will change your mind, because there are reasons which will compel you to follow us. Don’t forget to tell Ira. (Exit.) (All customers leave bank.)

LUCY—(Grimes and Lucy putting money away in safe.) We have done well today, Grimes.

GRIMES—What?

LUCY—(Close to Grimes’ ear.) I say the factory people have done well this week. (Lucy goes to her desk and takes out box containing ear trumpet and listening apparatus.) I have brought you something, Grimes. You remember your promise. (Loudly.) Grimes, come here a moment.

GRIMES—(Coming down slowly and looking with dismay at the instrument.) It’s no use, Miss Lucy, I can’t hear one word you say. A machine like that might be all right for some, but I am too far gone. I couldn’t hear anything you were saying to Tom Walsh or to Patroni.

LUCY—Now, Mr. Grimes, you said if I would send for this you would try it a month. Here it is and you must begin now.

GRIMES—My hearing days are over. It will only make me look foolish. I know what your uncle will say—foolish expenditure of money. Must I wear it in the bank?

LUCY—Of course you must, until

you get used to it. (Fastening it on Grimes' head and adjusting the ear piece.) Now stand over at your desk and listen. (Grimes does as told. At first there is a flush of hope in his face.) Now, can you hear me, Mr Grimes?

GRIMES—(Putting hand to ear as though in pain. I told you it's no use. Just a lot of rumbling and confusion. I heard my name, that's all. Here, take it back. It would make me ill with worry. (Starts to give audiphone back to Lucy.)

LUCY—Now, Mr. Grimes, you are not playing fair. You promised to try it long enough to get used to it. The first person who listened through a telephone couldn't hear distinctly. You needn't be ashamed. It's small, and uncle will never notice it. If you heard your name you can learn to hear other words.

GRIMES—It will be torture, but I suppose if I promised I must wear it a little while.

LUCY—You certainly must.

GRIMES—I shouldn't like your uncle to catch me trying this out. He would discharge me for insanity.

LUCY—All right, we can go into the clerk's office and give it a good test. (Rings electric bell for Ira, who enters immediately from right.) Grimes and I are working in the clerk's room. If uncle comes in and wants us, tell him to ring.

IRA—Certainly, Lucy. (He examines lock he was fixing and is by grill door when Banker Knowles enters, with a telegram in his hand.) Miss Lucy and Grimes are doing some work in the clerks' room, and she said to ring if you wanted them.

KNOWLES—It's all right, I'd rather be alone for a time. (Ira makes no move to go himself.) I said I would rather be alone. Isn't that plain? (Ira goes out quickly.) (Knowles reads telegram again.) The judge is a seven-day wonder. (Takes up telephone.) Give me 15-3—That you Morton? Can you leave the factory for a few moments?—Yes. Very important; concerns us both and the bank. —Thanks, I'll wait for you. (Rings phone again.) 438. Is Mr. Kramer in? Tell him I should like to see him right away—yes, matter of pressing importance. —Oh, I beg your pardon, I thought you knew my voice; I'm Knowles of the Maple-

ton bank. Please tell Kramer to rush right over—Thank you. (Takes newspaper out of pocket and begins to read. After a moment rings for Lucy.) (Lucy enters.)

LUCY—Did you want me, sir?

KNOWLES—What do you think of our half-page ad in the Courier, Lucy?

LUCY—(Looking over uncle's shoulder.) That ought to bring business. What do you hope for the added expense?

KNOWLES—I'm fishing for those shoe operatives over in Loganville. They are making big wages.

LUCY—Mr. Kramer ought to be pretty good to you when you give him so much business.

KNOWLES—He should, but he's not.

LUCY—I admire Kramer's independence and courage.

KNOWLES—He's too damned independent—I beg your pardon—but the editorials he put out during the last strike in the factory were absolutely disloyal to the country; they were seditious, and a body blow at every large and successful corporation. Those strikers got enough courage out of that rot to stick until they won.

LUCY—If you could see the way the deposits were coming in you wouldn't feel so badly. Walsh brought in five hundred dollars today.

KNOWLES—The deuce he did! More union funds. They are playing a shrewd game, those men. When they get eight or ten thousand they will strike again. Watch 'em. I would rather have that money to distribute among the stockholders than to have it go in the form of wages among men and women who haven't the slightest idea of the value of money.

LUCY—You are always preaching thrift, uncle, and now the factory people are saving more than ever before you ought not complain.

KNOWLES—Lucy, you talk like a radical. I only hope none of them get hold of you with their propaganda; I believe they would find you fertile soil.

If Ned Errickson were here he would be rolling up his sleeves and preparing to give Labor such a licking as would set it back to where it belongs, twenty years or more. (Reading paper.) Speaking of angels, here he is (Reads aloud.) 'Lt. Edward Errickson of Mapleton, U. S. A., 114 infantry, while out scout-

ing with a troop of French, was attacked and surrounded by six Huns. The young American battled like a superman and before the Germans had time to know what was happening he had thrust his bayonet into four with the approved twist—(Lucy utters a slight scream and sinks in chair)—and laid the other two low with revolver shots.

“When questioned about his exploit he only laughed and said he wished there had been six more. His bravery and prowess is the talk of the trenches and has brought him the honorable Croix de Guerre.”

How's that for fame and a fair lady? (Looking at Lucy, who has covered her face with her hands.) What's the matter with you, young lady, crying when you should be shouting for joy, and the glory of Mapleton?

LUCY—I know it's foolish. I wish I hadn't been born with such a vivid imagination. All I can see is Ned standing above those six Germans wiping the blood from his bayonet and laughing at the exploit. Perhaps each of those men had a home and children.

Oh, of course it's war and glory and all that, but how can I ever blot that picture from my mind? If he had shot them it wouldn't seem so bad, but to gore them like an angry bull, and then laugh—ugh. (Covers her face again.)

KNOWLES—You are a sentimentalist, Lucy, and I am ashamed of you. Ned's done a big and a glorious thing. I'm glad he isn't here to see how you take it.

LUCY—I admire bravery and true courage as much as anyone, and I know what it means for those boys to be over there sacrificing their lives for an ideal, but I simply can't think of Ned Errickson in quite the same way. I wish I could, but I can't. There's something wrong.

KNOWLES—You are a fool and I've no patience with you. You don't deserve a man like Ned. (Grimes enters from right.)

GRIMES—(As he comes in.) It's no use, Miss Lucy; it doesn't work.

LUCY—(Going quickly to Grimes.) Remember you promised you—

KNOWLES—Hello, what's all this? What won't work?

LUCY—(For a moment embarrassed.) What do you think, uncle? I

try to introduce an improvement into Grimes' bookkeeping and he refuses to admit any change.

KNOWLES—You could be employed to better advantage, Lucy, than trying to change anything that has been running in the same rut for twenty years. You ought to know better. Let the old fossil alone and tend to your own work. (Grimes, who has the hearing instrument attached to his ear, looks up, and an expression of pain comes over his face.) (He goes to work on his books and is quite forgotten. Lucy is busy at her desk.) (Morton of the factory enters. Knowles opens door into grill and welcomes him.)

I am glad to see you, Morton. Sorry to bring you away from your mill on a busy morning, but I have something to talk over. Sit down. Have you read of Ned Errickson's exploit, how he put six Huns under the sod?

MORTON—(Shrewd Yankee type of manufacturer. A man who has worked all his life and expects others to do the same. Tall and angular and a contrast to thick-set, solid Banker Knowles.) Yes, I read that in the Courier; great, wasn't it? I'm saving a place in the factory for that boy. He is the kind we are looking for, with the courage and manhood to tell Labor a few plain facts in a plain, blunt way. Have you noticed in the New York papers how this revolt of Labor is spreading all over the country?

KNOWLES—Notice it? I should say I had. The time is fast coming for a show-down between Capital and Labor. We either stop this thing or go out of business. I say stop it now.

MORTON—It takes a banker to talk big things, but there are limits even to what bankers can do.

KNOWLES—Sit down, Morton; there will be an important visitor here any moment. (Morton sits.)

MORTON—This sounds interesting. What's up?

KNOWLES—Everything is up. Small things become great. Straws show where the stream is running. There is a river needs damming in more ways than one, and I propose to begin right here in the bank.

MORTON—A vast number of schemes are hatched in the banks. We manufacturers know that. The financiers after all are the great world chess-play-

ers. What is on your mind? Out with it.

KNOWLES—I have labor troubles of my own, right here in the bank. Oh, you needn't look surprised. I have a threatened strike.

MORTON—A strike, you? Why, you haven't more than six employes altogether, and one of those is your right-hand man, Miss Lucy there, your own niece. You a strike, ha, ha, that makes me laugh. But if you have, I am glad of it because you have always had such good advice for me with my labor conflicts. Now you are calling on me to give you advice. That is good.

KNOWLES—You can laugh if you like. But this may concern you more nearly than you guess. You can help me or not as you like. I have always told you that Labor could be beaten if the forces of Capital got together and worked with brains.

I am going to give you a few pointers about a strike. My man Hathaway has threatened to walk out next Thursday afternoon unless his demands are granted.

MORTON—A one-man strike; that is better yet. (Laughs.)

KNOWLES—it now looks to me as though he thinks he can force me to yield, because he has the same people behind him who forced you to their terms. (Morton at once interested.) Now perhaps you will be serious.

MORTON—So! Tom Walsh again. You are in for trouble.

KNOWLES—So they think. Ira has been with me for six years as gentle as a lamb. Now he demands; now he threatens desertion. They beat you, now they think they can force my hands, Robert P. Knowles. But I'll see them to hell first.

Here's my man turning impudent, neglecting his work, reading questionable books, and—

LUCY—(Can stand it no longer and rises at her desk.) I can't sit here any longer and listen to your slander of Ira. (Crosses and confronts her uncle.)

KNOWLES—You can't, eh?

LUCY—No, I can't. You know perfectly well that Ira has been to you over and over again and asked you for a better room and higher pay. He's told you of his mother, whom he supports. You are wringing him when you say he is impudent and unfaithful. You should be fair.

KNOWLES—(Sits a moment amazed.) Since when, young lady, did you become champion for Ira Hathaway. What's between you?

LUCY—There is nothing between us, and if there was, you have no right to put such a question now. I ask only for justice and fair play as I would for anyone in your employ. Ira has served you faithfully and deserves better than this.

KNOWLES — Please, understand, Lucy, that this is a matter between Ira and myself, and we don't need your advice nor criticism. I think it is time you and I came to an understanding as to who shall run this bank. For the present you may take your books into the next room; I shall call if I want you.

LUCY—Very well, sir. (Takes her papers and goes out right.)

MORTON—Regular little spitfire, isn't she? Does she see anything in Ira?

KNOWLES—What! a Knowles see anything in a Hathaway? You are joking. You must think she has lost her mind.

MORTON—You never can tell. Ira is doing some thinking, and writes well. I've seen several of his letters in the Courier recently which show he has been busy with his books. Kramer told me the boy has brains that might land him somewhere with a little more education.

KNOWLES—Don't be misled. Lucy's heart is bound up in the trenches with a boy who has just received the Croix de Guerre. I must admit she didn't seem much delighted over his exploit, however.

MORTON—I should hate to disillusion the young lady, but my boy Ralph, who is in the same company with Ned Erickson writes me that Ned is terribly smitten with a French maid. If there has been anything serious between him and Lucy, it looks bad for her. (Takes letter from pocket.) Here, read for yourself. (Knowles reads.)

KNOWLES—Ned is going it pretty strong. Kind of tough on Lucy, I must admit. I guess the lads are lonely as hell over there, and flirtations are common enough. (Lays letter carelessly on desk.)

MORTON—Come, Knowles. What is at the bottom of your strike, as you call it, and why am I interested? (Looks

toward Grimes, who is working on the other side of the room.)

KNOWLES—Oh, he doesn't count. He's as deaf as a post and as reliable. He's about the most valuable asset this bank has, because he tends strictly to business and never knows what is going on around him. Ideal employe; I don't know how I could run this bank without him, but thank goodness he is unable to hear the arguments of such a man as Walsh. I am absolutely certain Walsh has filled Hathaway's head with revolt. That Labor leader is a radical as you know to your cost, and he's planning some kind of a revolution at the right moment. It is Walsh's business to get everyone into some kind of a big union, and he needs Ira.

MORTON—I see, you think Ira is but one link in a long chain. Break him, break the big idea; is that it?

KNOWLES—Yes. Ira represents a force. In this case he is the wedge backed by Labor impersonated by Walsh. Lick them this time, lick them next time, and set up a merry skid for Labor all along the line.

MORTON—But if Walsh and the whole metal trades are back of your man, what can you do?

KNOWLES—We can do everything. We can utterly discredit Hathaway, Walsh and the entire union. We can deposit the whole bunch in a way that will make them know it is but the first punch of a ten-round finish.

MORTON—You forget one important fact, Knowles.

KNOWLES—What is it?

MORTON—The sympathy of the people. Nothing can be done unless the mass of people are with you. The people of Mapleton and of the factory, yes, of Loganville, too, will stand back of Ira and make him a martyr. When you discharge him my employes will withdraw their savings. Have you thought of that?

KNOWLES—Now you have struck the crucial point. I admit the need of backing by the people of Mapleton and of the factory. There must be some way to turn public opinion, and I confess I need advice.

MORTON—You are lost, Knowles, unless you are wiser in getting the people with you than I was with my strikes. The whole community wanted to see the employes get more wages,

and I had to give in. You haven't the ghost of a show unless you can make the people think you are the injured party, and that their interests are endangered by your defeat.

KNOWLES—Now I will tell you the real reason why I got you over here this afternoon. There is one man whom I know well, who has put over some of the biggest financial deals this country has known, and who knows more about handling Labor than any other employer on the face of the earth, I believe. He has won strikes over and over again. He has studied this matter of public opinion until he has made a fine art of it. He can turn the trick for us.

MORTON—You refer to Judge James Hilton, I suppose.

KNOWLES—You have guessed it. I wrote him of my situation and of what I believe is behind it. I spoke of Tom Walsh, who is the only Labor leader who ever forced the judge to a compromise. Walsh used to be in Arkansas.

My answer from the judge has just arrived in the form of a telegram. He is coming here this afternoon, but cautioned me not to let it be known. He is on his way to Pennsylvania, where he has large oil interests and some new wells.

MORTON—I declare, Knowles, you talk as though you had the entire Labor problem on your shoulders, and that you were determined to solve it once and for all.

KNOWLES—Before we get through with this you will agree with me that the game is not small. When bankers turn their minds to a human problem like this we don't let go until something breaks.

MORTON—What do you think the judge can do for us?

KNOWLES—Frankly, I don't know, but if he is interested enough to come here in person, instead of writing he will have something worth while, depend on it.

You understand there are three parties to this game. You and the judge represent the great employing class, I the bankers who put up the money, and third comes the press, which must do our bidding and sing our songs. When we three go a-hunting there will be some big killing—

MORTON—(Shocked.) Killing? (As he draws back from the table he acci-

dentally sweeps his son's letter to the floor without noticing it.)

KNOWLES—Oh, don't get excited. I am not out with machine guns and that foolish kind of rot. This can be done by less rough methods.

MORTON—What about the press?

KNOWLES — I have telephoned Kramer of the Courier, and he will be over soon. I'd rather he and the judge did not meet, but it would make no great difference; I am sure Kramer can be influenced.

MORTON—In this case, Knowles, you will find that the press is against us. Kramer is more than half with Labor and he's mighty independent.

KNOWLES—How much advertising do you give the Courier?

MORTON—Some weeks three hundred; last week it ran as high as four hundred.

KNOWLES—Good; I do equally as well. The truth is, Kramer is absolutely dependent on us. I have looked into his finances carefully as a good banker should. He'd go bankrupt without us. (Outside door is heard to open.) That may be him now. (Knowles jumps up with evident excitement and goes into outer bank where he meets the judge as he enters.) (The judge is a man of over sixty, quite gray, vigorous and alert. Nothing distinctive about him except his face, which shows at once the judge is a man of very large affairs, a man who is rather the lawyer and financier than the typical captain of industry. His is the command of intellect, balance, experience and calculation, a winner in the game of life.)

KNOWLES—This is most kind of you, Judge; come right in. You are the one man on the face of the earth I want to see most. (Both men enter inner bank. Knowles takes the judge's coat and hat and hangs them up, talking at the same time.) Allow me to introduce Mr. Morton, president of the Morton Wire and Cartridge factory, and also one of the directors of this bank. He is one of us and knows the predicament in which the bank is placed.

JUDGE HILTON—Glad to meet you, Morton. I know all about you; twice beaten by your employes led by Tom Walsh. That's a pretty poor record, Morton; makes it harder for the rest of us. (Shakes hands.)

KNOWLES—I don't remember that

Mapleton ever had the honor of a visit from you before, Judge. Won't you reconsider and give the town an opportunity to welcome you in the town hall?

JUDGE—(Impatiently taking out his watch.) Knowles, I telegraphed you that I would have about half an hour with you, and that I didn't want it known that I came here. Matters of pressing importance call me to Pennsylvania. I am facing labor troubles of my own which makes yours appear like child's play. (Catching sight of Grimes he suspiciously nods his head in that direction.) We must be alone; is that distinctly understood?

KNOWLES—He is as deaf as his books and as faithful and trustworthy as a pet dog. You may feel perfectly free.

JUDGE—My presence here, I repeat, is strictly confidential, and when I leave you are to forget that I have been here. Your letter reached me as I was about to start east. What you said at first struck me as ridiculously trivial and inconsequential. But I believe we can make it important at a time when the unbridled forces of Labor are fast getting out of bounds.

MORTON—You are right, Judge Hilton, discontent is spreading with every workman's victory; take my own case—

JUDGE—(Nettled at the interruption.) Yes, you bungled matters as badly as you could, and have done your full share to bring us to our present pass. (Morton starts to reply, but is stopped by the judge with an imperious gesture.) Let me do the talking if you please.

JUDGE—I don't mind letting you know that the entire Labor situation is just about as bad as it could possibly be and production continue. Another big victory would be our complete defeat—that's for you, Morton. Defeat is staring us in the face. I'm no alarmist, you know that, Knowles, but I see what employers are up against. Do you mind getting me a glass of water, Knowles? (Pause while the water is brought.) Thanks. We are at locked horns with capital sinking to its knees. Study the strikes over the country for the last month. That's the answer. Detroit, Kansas City, Chicago; I tell you they are coming at us like a race horse.

KNOWLES—The bankers are alive to what's doing. Even the big bankers

down in New York have taken alarm. They don't talk for print, but they are scared. But what's to be done, Judge?

MORTON—Yes, Judge, where is this thing going to stop?

JUDGE—(Rising with slight signs of agitation. Taking several paces up stage, returning and facing the two other men.) It's going to stop right here in the town of Mapleton. (Pauses for it to sink in.) The reason your affair is not trivial is because you are dealing with Tom Walsh, the shrewdest, most determined, far-seeing radical in the country. He's the only union man with whom I have had to compromise. I'd go two thousand miles any time to give him the licking that is due him.

KNOWLES—We are here, Judge, to take our lesson and obey your commands. Morton and I have agreed on that.

JUDGE—I'll hold you to that agreement, never fear. I didn't come halfway across the country merely to talk, but to act. A thorough victory here will ease my troubles fifty per cent. This little affair will grow to headlines by the time it reaches my employes. (Turning a keen quick glance toward Knowles.) Are the people with you, Knowles?

KNOWLES—I am afraid not, if my man Hathaway leaves because his demands are not granted, I may lose half my deposits, if not more.

JUDGE—We can't win without public opinion. The public is as essential as the air we breathe. (To Morton.) They weren't with you were they, Morton, when you lost your fight?

MORTON—They certainly were not, sir. Neither the first nor the second time did they have any mercy on me, and the press was bitter in its denunciation of me. I was just telling Knowles that—

JUDGE—Never mind now what you were telling; the fact is established that the people of Mapleton, of the factory, yes, and of the county, are an essential factor in the defeat of a strike, in the humiliation of your man Hathaway, Walsh and their followers.

The people are against you; they must be for you.

It isn't always easy in these days of large profits and rising prices, but it can be done. It simply means the game

is more desperate; and more desperate means are required.

During this conversation Grimes' desk is so placed that he is facing the audience, shows by changing expressions that he is catching words. At first he thinks only that he is hearing words, and takes no note of the context. His face beams for a time as he gets more and more, but finally as the audiphone clears and full sentences reach him the purport of what he is hearing begins to dawn upon him. He senses the plot, and he realizes that something of secret importance is about to be revealed. He is conscience struck, but fears to show that he has heard as much as he has. He does not think to remove his listening instrument, but grows more and more uncomfortable.

KNOWLES—I believe I would walk through hell to win in this affair. It seems to me the entire established order is being threatened, not merely here in my bank, but all over the country, and anything to save it is not only justifiable, but even moral and legitimate.

JUDGE—Good! Hell these days is hell only when the means fails to gain the desired ends. If you follow my directions you will win. For the time being you must look upon me as your general and obey like soldiers.

KNOWLES—I don't see how you are going to turn the people.

JUDGE—It is because I thought you would not know that I am here. We are going to play a trump card. It will take nerve and the plunging spirit, but that should be meat and drink to you and me. (Leaning toward Knowles and with emphasis.) You have the savings of the county, rich and poor, have you not?

KNOWLES—I am proud to say I have, and I have built up my business on principles that—

JUDGE—Yes, I know, but that is not the point. Hathaway is the guardian of these savings. It is your desire to turn the whole population against your man, and thus disgrace and discredit him, and thereby discredit those who are associated with him. Is that not—

At this point Grimes reaches the breaking point. He starts to take his ledger and leave the room, but in his nervousness drops the book. The three

men start to their feet like guilty conspirators.

KNOWLES—What's the matter, Grimes? (Grimes while picking up his book and papers that fell out of it, manages to take off the audiphone and slip it into his pocket. He is once more completely deaf. Knowles goes toward Grimes and speaks louder.) What happened, Grimes?

GRIMES—(Apologetic.) I am sorry, sir, but I am afraid I heard some of the words you were saying, so I thought I better not stay.

KNOWLES—Did you hear who it was we were discussing?

GRIMES—Sir?

KNOWLES—(Louder.) Do you know who we were discussing?

GRIMES—(Not catching it.) The word hell, sir, distinctly the word hell.

JUDGE—(Slowly articulating.) If he heard what we were talking about he should be discharged and sent out of the county. Eavesdropping is a crime which may be punished by imprisonment. (Grimes hears nothing and shows by his face that he is utterly oblivious to the judge's threat.)

I don't think we need worry. Curious, though, he should have been so disturbed.

KNOWLES—(Loudly in Grimes' ear.) I've trusted you for ten years, and if you heard anything we said I hope I can still count on you not to repeat one word.

GRIMES—I shall repeat no word of what I—of what was said, sir. But I shall feel better to be in the office, and I shall come if you ring. (Exit.)

MORTON—Curious how he caught the word hell, when he was on the other side of the room, and couldn't get a word of what you were talking to him close to. He is not trying to deceive us, is he, Knowles?

KNOWLES—I'll vouch for his honesty and for his promise that he will divulge nothing, even if he did. Now, Judge, your plan.

JUDGE—The people must be with you. Fix that in your mind.

MORTON—Yes, yes, we understand that perfectly.

JUDGE—Something must happen to arouse the whole community.

KNOWLES—You are right, what shall it be?

JUDGE—The private and personal

interests of half the people of the county must be touched.

KNOWLES—Exactly, but how?

JUDGE—Hathaway deserts Thursday at 4 p. m.

KNOWLES—At 4 p. m. Thursday.

JUDGE—Try as you may, no one has been found to take your man's place. You expect someone, but he fails you.

KNOWLES—He will come when I telegraph.

JUDGE—(With meaning.) He will not come till Friday morning. Friday morning; understand that perfectly.

KNOWLES—You are too deep for me, Judge, what are you getting at?

JUDGE—Sharpen your wits. Thursday night the bank is unprotected, the safe is broken into and the people's money taken!

MORTON—Are you crazy, Judge? It would ruin us.

KNOWLES—(Turning pale, completely unnerved as he realizes what is in the judge's mind.) I couldn't think of it, Judge. I—I—why, man, I have built up my business and my reputation through years of effort. I should never recover. There must be some other way. The press, suppose I—

JUDGE—Suppose you remember that I am your general and superior officer for the time being. You have promised to follow orders. Now, both of you act like soldiers.

You are dipping into world finance; you are going to make a move which may do what King Canute couldn't do, turn the tide. This is your country's call; are you ready?

MORTON—That's a big idea, Judge, but how is it going to be carried out without ruining not only Knowles and me but half the county?

JUDGE—Did you ever hear of preparedness? If you know a thing is going to happen you can prepare, can't you?

MORTON—(Getting the full force of the judge's plan.) You are a wonder, Judge. Of course, leave but little for the thieves and let them do their damndest. The whole county is aroused, and Hathaway, the deserter, is run out of town, and Walsh and his gang utterly discredited.

The next time my factory hands talk of strike the public may have another point of view. Great!

KNOWLES—it is all very well for you, Morton, to see big benefit, and the judge may feel the reaction, but where do I come in who allowed such a calamity, who didn't provide for protection. Can I ever regain the position I now hold? I value the respect—

JUDGE—Your wits do not run as fast as I thought they would, Knowles. In the first place you need lose very little financially, and if the loss should be greater than expected, I shall be glad to help out. What's a hundred thousand or two in a game like this? Some of your western investments (with significance)—will turn out extremely well, and by much thrift and careful financiering you will be able to pay back your depositors what they lost.

Of course, you will be censured for a time for gross carelessness in risking a single night, but with the press with you, you can ride that out.

KNOWLES—But who is going to do the job? You hardly expect me to rob my own bank, do you?

JUDGE—Absurd, Knowles. Keep your hands and your conscience clean; be virtuously ignorant. Leave such details to me; I have a choice clientele, most of them in New York city. They are ready for anything, strike-breaking; stone-breaking or safe-breaking; it's all one to them.

You may have already noticed several strangers about town who don't seem to have much to do.

KNOWLES—You don't mean to say you have gone that far?

JUDGE—Why not? When I make up my mind to strike for oil I mark the hole and don't let the grass grow over the place before setting the drill. (Looking at watch.) My half-hour is about gone.

MORTON—But, Judge, surely you will go into details.

JUDGE—That is not my business. If you and Knowles have not brains enough to work it out you ought to fail.

Make use of the local paper. Oh, by the way, Knowles, there should be an article right away, making the date of Hathaway's walkout plain, and placing his case in as bad a light as possible. The press is very important. Here is a rough draft of what should be said;

the editor can work it out from this skeleton. Make it plain to your editor that nothing favorable to your man must be printed. (Putting on coat and hat, shaking hands.) Write me how things go. You can't fail (Significantly)—Knowles, if this succeeds, as it should, it may make you governor—perhaps better. (Exit.)

The two men sit down dazed with the task before them.

MORTON—It takes a moment to get one's breath after that kind of a proposition. This is just a small incident with him, like moving a pawn. A man who is watching the whole world before making a move; that strikes me as Godlike.

KNOWLES—I only trust it hasn't anything to do with the other gentleman who also makes world moves. We certainly have our bit cut out for us, Morton. (Takes article which the judge gave him from pocket and looks it over.) Think of his drawing up this article and having it all ready to give the editor.

MORTON—Are we going through with it?

KNOWLES—I suppose we are, and the first thing is Kramer. He will be here in a moment. These editors sometimes think they are independent, and make an unnecessary fuss when told to mind the whip. Kramer is no exception and may need a little prodding. (Door is heard to open and Kramer appears.) He is here now. (Kramer, the editor of the Courier, is dressed rather shabbily, baggy trousers, hair a trifle long. Has a good and intelligent face with strong jaw.)

KNOWLES—Come in, Kramer.

KRAMER—How are you, Morton? This looks like a prearranged gathering. What can the Daily Courier do for you, gentlemen?

KNOWLES—I may want to increase the size of my "Ad" next week; can you manage that?

KRAMER—Anything you say, Mr. Knowles. You and Mr. Morton give the life blood to the Courier.

MORTON—I can't say you always show proper appreciation.

KRAMER—I know what you refer to, Morton; these articles and editorials while your strike was on. I keep my news and editorial policy separate from the business office. Money doesn't

buy the Courier's ideas or ideals. That is my motto, and that was my father's motto before me.

KNOWLES—Morton didn't imply that he would influence you, but it is only natural he should expect fair treatment, and doesn't think he got it.

KRAMER—I did what I thought was right, and I trust, gentlemen, you did not invite me here to condemn my editorial policy.

KNOWLES—Not at all, Kramer; we are sure of your sincerity. We want your advice on an important matter.

KRAMER—I shall be pleased to be at your service.

KNOWLES—We heard that you had trouble with your printers.

KRAMER—That has all been fixed up. I was forced to grant a raise, but the shop is running smoothly now. Labor is going it a little strong, I admit.

KNOWLES—It's a shame when you have always treated your men squarely. There must come a halt somewhere, Kramer. Morton and I think that now is the time.

MORTON—Yes, that is our opinion and we must have your help. You are the public educator, the dispenser of truth and wisdom.

KRAMER—I thank you for the compliment. The Courier always stands ready to serve the public in any just cause.

KNOWLES—That's right, Kramer. Here is our situation. My watchman, Hathaway, who has taken charge of the bank for six years is going to strike. The unions are pushing him with the promise of their backing. We agree with you that things are going too far, and we propose to show radical labor where it comes to a stop.

MORTON—You know, Kramer, that the sympathy of the people of Mapleton and of the mills will be with Hathaway. Now, it is up to you to tell your readers some facts, and to let them know what's what. They are ready to swear by what they see in the Courier.

We are going to win this fight as the first of a series of battles looming ahead. Are you with us, Kramer?

KRAMER—You want me to turn the public against Ira Hathaway. Is that it?

KNOWLES—This thing is bigger

than any one man. We ask you to start an educational campaign, and the concrete question before you is, will you stand back of the bank and factory in showing the public that Hathaway is the kind of a man to desert his responsible post as guardian of the people's savings for selfish and sordid reasons that are purely personal? Back of Ira is Tom Walsh and all the heads of the unions. (Kramer starts to speak but is interrupted.)

MORTON—If you follow us, Kramer, your sheet can head straight for success. This affair is to have state-wide publicity; we shall see to that, and the Courier can start the biggest ink splatter since they deposed the Czar.

KRAMER—I appreciate your good wishes for the Courier, but I am afraid you have come to the wrong man. I have heard of Hathaway's demands, and believe they may be just. I couldn't use my paper to turn the people against him. No, I could not do it.

KNOWLES—I tell you, Kramer, the end in this case justifies the means. The critical situation over the country demands action, which in a less dangerous period would be called unethical, immoral perhaps, but this kind of revolt is war in its way, and you must be with the forces pushing for the right. Public sentiment is very important, and that you can make.

KRAMER—You have not only got to have public sentiment, but the continued confidence of the people. If you do wrong to secure a right, or use questionable means the people will eventually see through your camouflage and your propaganda. I can't accuse a man who is innocent.

MORTON—Think, Kramer, this country is going through a season of insanity and you have a chance through your columns to help bring it back to what is reasonable and sane. The press has got to work with capital and with the interests or be responsible for a state of anarchy.

KRAMER—My opinion is that a free, fearless press is the greatest safeguard the country can have today.

MORTON—A sensible, far-seeing press is more necessary. Every paper should line up with those who are trying to save the foundations of substantial American foundations.

KRAMER—I don't want to see

things go to smash, but how could I turn my editorial guns on one whom I believe is standing courageously for his rights?

KNOWLES—(Who has reached the limit of his patience, rising.) I could never see much use arguing with you, Kramer. You were always stubborn. We have explained why you should do this, and if you refuse we shall have to look elsewhere.

KRAMER—What do you mean?

KNOWLES—I mean we shall find a way to introduce into this county a newspaper which the sound conservative interests can depend upon. Oh, we shall not act rashly, of course, and we will give you plenty of time to think it over. (Handing article to Kramer.) Here is the outline of an article which states the case as we see it. I trust you will find it possible to agree with us. If you print it, we shall know that you have come to your senses. If not—well, that will be time enough to make other plans.

KRAMER—You have asked me to sell myself—(Knowles starts to reply.) Oh, don't try to smooth it over. It means ruin to me if I refuse to do this thing; I know it. You have the power; that is the hell of it. You know I have a wife and large family whom I can't see starve—it isn't fair (with emotion). If my father were here now he—

KNOWLES—(Interrupting.) Take a night to think it over, Kramer. That story is not the terrible thing you seem to think. Your better judgment will make it an easy matter. This is a crisis and you are not the man to stand in the way of reason with false sentimentality. Good day. (Holds out hand. Kramer goes without looking back, but has the article in his hand.)

MORTON—I think we have him on the hook. Now what?

Bell is heard and two men appear at cashier's window. Knowles goes quickly to the window.

KNOWLES—What can I do for you?

MAN—Will you please cash this ten dollar check?

KNOWLES—(Examining check.) Edward C. Bell. I don't know you, Mr. Bell, but if you can get this signed by two citizens I shall be glad to accommodate you. Where are you staying?

MAN—We are working at the muni-

tion factory here in town, but don't know anyone well enough to get them to sign. (Morton comes up and examines the men.)

MORTON—You are wrong there, my friends. You have never worked in my mill, and I have never seen you.

MAN—(Stumped for a moment.) I should say, sir, that we have just applied, and were told to come to work tomorrow.

MORTON—That will not do either; my manager has had strict orders not to employ anyone for a week.

KNOWLES—Look here, young men; you are in town for no good purpose. You have been hanging around town for several days, and the quicker you leave the better it will be for you. Now, clear out. (Both men look surlily about and then walk out.)

MORTON—I wouldn't be too hard on the gentlemen.

KNOWLES—Why?

MORTON—It might offend Judge Hilton. However, Knowles, if you take my advice you'll have the combination of your safe changed.

KNOWLES—(Puzzled a moment.) That is so; you may be right. I think I shall have the safe combination changed and take a few other precautions. (Goes to telephone.) Western Union, please. Take this telegram: Cascade Hotel, Niagara Falls. Dennis W. Wiggin. I shall expect you to be on duty Friday morning nine o'clock. Take Thursday night train. Robert P. Knowles.

(Presses desk button for Ira, who appears immediately.) Ira, I am leaving the safe open for the treasurer of the factory, who will be in with some money. When he has deposited it, see that the vault is locked. (To Morton.) You might as well ride up with me and have dinner. (Rings desk bell for Lucy. She enters.) We will close now, Lucy. You can go to lunch. (Starts to go and then turns back to Ira.) Have you changed your mind, young man?

IRA—I stand just where I did, sir. Thursday is my last day unless you see your way to grant my requests. I hope, sir, you will have someone on hand to—

KNOWLES—(Curtly interrupting.) Don't worry, this bank will have ample protector. (Knowles and Morton go out.)

THE SYMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE

LUCY—(Approaching Ira, who stands by Knowles' desk.) I have brought this trouble on you, Ira, but you have behaved like a man, and I can hardly say I am sorry.

IRA—You did right, Lucy, to stir me up, and now I am going through with it. Your uncle assures me he will have someone in my place. I wish, Lucy, I could find a way of showing you how much I really do appreciate the interest you have shown in my humble affairs. It means a whole lot to a fellow who has had the hard knocks that have come—

LUCY—(Sees young Morton's letter telling of Ned Errickson's perfidy, on the floor, picks it up and catches Ned Errickson's name. She reads on, and it is her expression which causes Ira to stop speaking. She reads down, crumples letter in her hand, sinks into chair as though she were about to faint, and then pulls herself together, bites her lips to keep grief and anger back and finally drops her head on desk.)

IRA—(Coming close behind Lucy.) What is it, Lucy? Is someone dead? (Lucy shakes head.) Has someone wronged you? If they have, give me a chance to show I am not the coward some people take me for. Can't you let me help you, Lucy?

LUCY—Please, Ira, I want to be alone. This is something for me alone to fight out, only it's hard, dreadfully hard—

IRA—You are not alone, Lucy. Won't you let me show what I think, what I feel? You have done so much for me, you have lifted me—can't I tell you how I—(In emotion lays hand on Lucy's shoulder).

LUCY—Ira Hathaway, don't you see I want to be alone? I asked you to go. It isn't fair to take advantage of my grief and persist in annoying me. I want to be alone. I don't believe there are any truly brave and chivalrous men, no, not one. (Ira is overwhelmed with mortification and shame.)

IRA—I wish someone would cut my tongue out. (Goes out left.)

LUCY—(Realizing she has hurt Ira, starts toward door.) Ira, Ira, I didn't mean what I said. I didn't know what I was saying. I do appreciate your sympathy—please forgive me. (Ira has

gone and the door is closed. Lucy returns to chair and looks again at crumpled letter.) And he laughed when he had killed six men; I wonder if he would laugh now. I had a letter from him only yesterday—and he said he had no one to love him, and no one to talk to. And I wrote him of his bravery and splendid courage. And SHE is wearing his noble French cross. (Grimes enters from right. Lucy brushes away tears and looks up.)

GRIMES—(Very much disturbed.) You gave me ears to hear, Miss Lucy, and words came to me. At first they were only words, and meant nothing, but all at once I realized what your uncle was saying, and what the other men were talking about. I ought not to have listened, but it seemed as though I couldn't help it. They were the first distinct words I had heard in years, and I blessed you and this little instrument. It was like a blind man gaining his sight.

And then I heard plots, Miss Lucy, wicked plots. It pains me to say it, but your uncle is not the man I thought him; he is not just, not even fair. There is wickedness in this bank—No I couldn't tell you what. I have promised. Great wrong will be done. And there is something you ought to know, something—

LUCY—Don't say any more, Grimes; I know, I found this letter where it had been dropped. And you heard this, too?

GRIMES—Don't blame me, Miss Lucy. It was this instrument, this that might have brought joy to me. (Takes audiphone from ear with vicious gesture, and in desperation throws it to the floor.) I wish to God I had remained deaf. (Takes hat and slowly goes out. Lucy puts on her coat and hat, comes down to waste basket and slowly tears letter to pieces.)

LUCY—And I wish I had been blind. (Rings desk bell for Ira, then goes up to grill door where she stands until Ira comes in. He enters.) I am going to lunch now, Ira. I—I am very, very sorry for what I said. I wasn't quite myself. I want you to forgive me. (Goes out quietly and door is heard to slam before Ira moves.)

CURTAIN

THE SYMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE

ACT III.

Scene—Same as Acts I. and II. Five minutes elapse between Acts II. and III.

Ira Hathaway is sitting at Knowles' desk reading while his revolver lies near at hand. He is waiting for the cashier from the factory so that he can close and lock the safe. Tom Walsh, head of Metal Trades Union, enters and can be seen through the grill.

WALSH—Are you in, Hathaway?

IRA—No, I'm out searching for a job; don't I look it?

WALSH—You take it good-naturally; you seem even happy over it.

IRA—I'm a natural born actor. I have been told that by the fairest judge I know, Mr. Walsh.

WALSH—There are few fair judges nowadays.

IRA—You haven't seen mine.

WALSH—You talk as though you owned a judge, like some other bankers I know about.

IRA—I wish I did own this one.

WALSH—Miss Knowles told me you would be in at this time. I want to talk to you, Hathaway. Can I come in?

IRA—Can't you drop in later. Knowles wouldn't like to find you here with me. We could meet in my room.

WALSH—Impossible; you don't expect the boss back this afternoon, do you?

IRA—No, but Miss Knowles will be back most any time.

WALSH—She won't make a fuss. It was she who encouraged me to come and see you; she said you needed a friend—of the right sort.

IRA—(Brightening up.) She said that?

WALSH—Sure.

IRA—Well, I'll take the risk, though it's against the rules. (Let's Walsh in.) Be seated. What is it you want?

WALSH—You are going to leave the bank, I hear.

IRA—How did you learn that? I haven't talked to anyone about it.

WALSH—It doesn't much matter how I learned about it; the secret is out, and it is pretty generally known why you are going to go.

IRA—(Nettled.) What right have you or anyone else to make my personal affairs matter for gossip? It's a pretty pass when one's own business cannot be considered private.

WALSH—You are wrong, Ira, and I'll tell you why. As industry is run today every wage earner the world over should have personal interest in every other wage earner. Perhaps you were not interested in the strike we had in the factory, and you may have thought it none of your business, but I happen to know at least half the extra wage we got goes right here into this bank.

IRA—Even then I cannot see how I am involved.

WALSH—But we at the factory see. We as wage earners do our part in bringing prosperity to this bank, and then we learn that not one cent extra pay has gone to the employes. We know that is dead wrong, and we stand ready to make a fight for you, even though you haven't a union card.

IRA—I haven't asked for sympathy. When I do it may be time to talk about it.

WALSH—Listen, Hathaway. Every last factory worker will be with you in this. And if I am any judge, three-fourths of the citizens of Mapleton will be on your side if the facts are known.

IRA—That is mighty good of them, but I can't yet see why the whole town and mill should fight my battles for me. It seems to me this is a matter between me and my employer.

WALSH—Yes, that is what you bank clerks, and the teachers, and the salesmen, and officers like you have thought for generations, and the result is you are the lowest paid workers in the country. You never would affiliate, and where are you?

IRA—I am not a radical, Walsh, and I am no revolutionist, as they tell me your are. I have heard that you are dangerous and a menace to the country. I don't know what you are driving at, and I guess I'll keep out of any industrial plots. What would you propose if I should agree to your proposition?

WALSH—(Moving close to Ira.) You can win your demands because you have the full sympathy of the people. We are all ready to stand behind you. If you say the word I shall see that two-thirds of the depositors of this bank withdraw their accounts at once, or threaten to do so if Knowles doesn't come to reason.

IRA—Is that all?

WALSH—No. There are twenty or

thirty bank employes in this county, all underpaid. I'll procure a charter for you, form a bank employes' union, and two million and a half workers will see to it that you are treated justly.

What do you think Knowles would do if he were handed such a threat?

IRA—I have no intention of ruining this bank. Knowles has been unjust to me, but he has kept me all these years, and I wouldn't feel right to force him to the wall for my own personal grievances, even if I thought I could.

WALSH—Force him to the wall; you talk simple. All he has to do is to give you the wage you ask and the living accommodations you deserve. If he isn't willing to do that, he ought to suffer.

IRA—I have read about this solidarity of labor. It looks big, and dangerous, to me. I am afraid of it. If the wage earners stuck together they could run the world, and who knows where they would run it?

Individual liberty, initiative and thinking still appeal to me, and I am inclined to believe Knowles is right when he says the men who work out their own careers, independent of large organizations, are the winners in the end.

WALSH—(Rising with impatience.) You talk like a child, Hathaway. You have read some, but not enough. Have you lived to be as old as you are now and don't know that the biggest and strongest organizations are made up of these very business men who talk the dangers of association to their employes? Let me make a bet with you.

IRA—What is it?

WALSH—I'll bet Knowles and Morton have already had their heads together over your case, and I understand Kramer of the Courier was seen coming out of this bank not an hour ago. It wouldn't surprise me in the least to learn that some of the biggest financiers in the country have been consulted. Those fellows are watching me closely, and they, no doubt, think I am with you.

The big fellows work together like clock mechanism. Don't make any mistake about that. (Strange man enters the bank and stands at the cashier's window.)

IRA—(Going to the window.) What do you want? The bank is closed.

MAN—I thought I might catch Mr. Knowles before he left. I am very anxious to see him. Can I wait?

IRA—Mr Knowles has gone for the day, and will not be back until Monday. Is there any message?

MAN—No, it's a personal matter. Good day. (Goes out and door is heard to slam.)

IRA—(Returning to Walsh.) There may be something in what you say, Walsh. If the men at the top have the right to scheme and plan together and work as a unit with understanding if not actual affiliation, perhaps the rest of us are foolish to stand alone.

WALSH—Now you begin to talk like a sensible man. Think it over tonight, Ira, and I shall be glad to see you again with a definite plan for affiliation. Here, take some of these pamphlets, they may help to open your eyes. So long. (While he is talking to Ira the man who pretended to go out appears for a moment behind the grill, and crosses to the right and disappears. Walsh goes out, but fails to latch door into grill.)

(Ira sits in chair by desk looking over pamphlets Walsh has given him. After a moment of silence the man appears and stealthily slips into inner bank, revolver in hand. Before Ira knows what is happening he is looking into the dangerous end of a gun. Ira tries to reach for his own revolver, which is on desk, but as the muzzle of the gun is pressed meaningly against his temple he thinks better of it.)

MAN—Up with your hands. (Ira slowly obeys. He is thinking very hard what to do. He knows the safe door is open four or five inches.) I will kill you if you make a sound. Go to the safe and unlock the door. Move!

(The two men cross the bank from left to right. The man keeps his revolver close to Ira's head all the way. Each eyes the other closely. For a moment they stand in front of the open safe which the man thinks locked.)

IRA—(Then stooping like a flash to the handle of the safe door he slams it closed, and to make sure, gives the combination a turn. He then straightens up and faces the man with teeth set.) Now you can shoot! (It takes a moment for the man fully to comprehend what has happened, and then he knows the game is up and that shooting will do no good.)

THE SYMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE

MAN—You damned skunk! (Gives Ira a heavy blow with the butt of his revolver and starts to run out when he meets his pal, who has been keeping watch. Ira falls limp and senseless to the floor.)

PAL—Where's de swag?

MAN—The cuss locked the safe in me face; blast him.

PAL—Did ye croke him?

MAN—Naw, he'll wiggle his fins soon enough.

PAL—I told ye it wouldn't do no good trying to double cross the judge. He's the game old cock, but he don't take no nonsense. He'll have us all pinched for this.

MAN—Yas, you're white-livered. You know the judge will do the double crossin'. If we wait till he says when, how much do you spose there'll be? Nothin'. I tell ye, nothin'! If I could have pulled this off there would have been something to talk about, but now—(Telephone rings).

PAL—We better take a sneak and make a getaway. Beat it. Come on, de bulls is comin'. (Both run out. After a moment of silence front door opens and Lucy enters, returning from lunch. She first sees the chair upset near her uncle's desk and then discovers Ira apparently lifeless on the floor near safe. She runs to him.)

LUCY—Ira! Ira! Oh, they have killed him. (Grows hysterical.) Ira, must you go, too? No, it can't be; he mustn't die. Ira, dear, open your eyes. (Lifts Ira's head on her knee and strokes the hair back. Sees blood streaming from his temple.) Someone has struck him. (Places Ira's head on floor and runs out sobbing. Returns immediately with glass of water. While she is out Ira moves slightly. Lucy again takes his head in her lap, and shows by her every motion her real affection for him. She sees his hand move.) Thank God, he is alive. (Takes her handkerchief and tries to tie it around his head, but it is too small. She then takes her white skirt, and after several efforts rips off part of the hem. She binds the wound and bathes his face until finally he opens his eyes.)

Ira, can't you tell what has happened? (He clutches feebly at her hand.) Who hit you, Ira? Can't you tell? This is terrible.

IRA—Where am I?

LUCY—You are right here in the bank.

IRA—Is the safe locked?

LUCY—Yes, who locked it?

IRA—I can't seem to remember. (Tries to lift himself, but his head falls back on Lucy's knee. She smooths his hair.)

LUCY—Wait till I get you some more water.

IRA—No, don't leave, please. (She begins to feel a little embarrassed.)

LUCY—Now, can't you remember what happened?

IRA—(Looking toward safe, then toward desk. Intelligence gradually comes into his face.) He—he—made me—go to the safe—he offered to shoot—and I—

LUCY—But he didn't shoot; he hit you—why? Did you try to open the safe and couldn't? You did not know the combination; that was it.

IRA—The safe was open when I got there and I couldn't—

LUCY—(Breaking in.) Oh, I see. (Makes a pillow of her coat and places Ira's head on it.) He took the money, then slammed the door, struck you and ran. (She goes to safe and frantically works at combination, almost sobbing.) If all the savings are gone, what will happen to those poor people? It is awful. What will uncle say? (Door to safe swings open and reveals the interior untouched.)

What does this mean, Ira? Can't you tell me? Not a penny has been disturbed. (She looks at safe, then at Ira and desk with revolver on it. She is plainly puzzled. Then it suddenly comes over her.) Do you mean to say that you went to the safe with that man pointing his revolver at you, and locked the door in his face? (Runs to Ira again and lifts him a little.) That was it, I know it. He might have shot you, and you knew it. (He smiles but says nothing.) You did a brave deed, Ira. That is what I call real courage, and you should be rewarded.

IRA—You said you admired bravery and that you liked red blood.

LUCY—But not coming out of your head in streams. You deserve the Croix de Guerre.

IRA—(Sitting up.) Lucy, I don't want any cross nor any honors pinned on me, but there is one thing—Help me up, please. I begin to feel strong

again. (Lucy helps him to the big chair by Knowles' desk. She places coat behind him.) You are very kind to me, Lucy.

LUCY—Ira, you have done a big thing for this bank, and if there is anything I can get for you, or that uncle—

IRA—Your uncle could not help much, but you could; yes, you could, Lucy.

LUCY—That is strange; I have so little.

IRA—Oh, I am not asking for any reward; I hope you don't think that of me. I simply did my duty, what any officer would have done. It was part of my day's work.

LUCY—I heard uncle say you were a coward, and I said I didn't believe there was any real courage left. I am proud of you, Ira.

IRA—You ought to be if there is anything to be proud of. You have given me inspiration, made me feel that I have powers and possibilities I never dared to believe I possessed. (Spreading out arms.) Observe your handiwork.

LUCY—If that swelled and bleeding head is my work, I think I am a poor moulder.

IRA—(Putting hand to head.) Do I look so bad? Why, Lucy, where did you get this ready-made bandage?

LUCY—(Embarrassed.) Oh, I have carried it with me for some time, for emergencies, you know.

IRA—(Beginning to feel quite himself.) You have been my teacher, my labor organizer and now my nurse.

LUCY—(Thoughtlessly.) I have run the gamut, haven't I? There isn't much left for me to be.

IRA—(Lucy's hand rests on desk, where Ira impulsively grasps it.) There is one more place you might occupy, Lucy. (Fervently.) It is you who have put the manhood in me. It is you who have awakened ambition in me, and shown me a goal I might reach.

LUCY—I am glad if my humble interest has helped you.

IRA—Helped me? Why, it has made life worth living. The books you have lent me opened my eyes to a new world where there is hope for the masses of mankind. Your ideas have so filled this bank with visions of better things that it has been like a college to me. I

wonder how you manage to keep so far above the sordid money schemes of your uncle.

LUCY—(Drawing her hand gently away.) You are a good deal of a sentimentalist, Ira. Men always have more sentiment than women.

IRA—(Pause while he is shaping words which come none too easy.) I admit sentiment, Lucy, and I am proud of it. But I believe I didn't have much before I met you. Sentiment has grown and grown in me until it is near the breaking point. Will you blame me very much, Lucy, if I tell you most all my sentiment revolves around and centers in one person, and that person is you!

LUCY—Why, Ira, what do you mean? That sounds foolish.

IRA—Foolish? Perhaps it is, and there may not be the slightest reason why I should expect any return from you, but you have your own self to blame.

LUCY—I to blame, how?

IRA—Because you are what you are, interested in everyone about you; never thinking of yourself, but only in seeing that others develop. If I love you it's because I couldn't help it. If I feel that I couldn't live away from where you are it is for the reason that every other place looks black.

LUCY—What are you trying to say, Ira? That blcw has unsettled your wits.

IRA—I was never more sane in my life. I came near leaving this bank without daring to say what was in my heart, but you keep talking about courage, and so you are to blame again. If you can't possibly ever think of me as I feel toward you, then I am brave enough to bear it—Oh, Lucy, do you see how I long for you, how I yearn—

LUCY—(Much affected and perplexed)—I never thought of this turn; truly, Ira, this comes to me as a surprise. Of course, any girl is pleased to be liked. The accident is accountable for this; tomorrow perhaps you would feel differently, and then—

IRA—And then—?

LUCY—Oh, Ira, this isn't the time to make love. Only a moment ago you were next to death's door. Let us be thankful that your life is saved.

IRA—Are you very thankful, Lucy?

LUCY—How can you ask? Of course I am.

THE SYMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE

IRA—While I was down there on the floor bleeding, it seemed as though you really cared—cared very much.

LUCY—I did, Ira, I did.

IRA—It makes me happy to hear you say that, but I am afraid, Lucy, your true heart was far away with someone else, even while you stroked my hair so tenderly. You were thinking of a really brave man.

LUCY—Yes, Ira. I was thinking of a truly brave man.

IRA—(Bitterly.) I knew it, and that is why you were so tender to me, because you were thinking of your hero.

LUCY—There are not a great many brave men in the world, Ira—I mean truly brave, and you mustn't blame me for feeling—proud of one who is.

IRA—If they had accepted me in the draft I might have given an account of myself, but—I know I have been a coward, Lucy, but you are always spurring me on to efforts to be courageous, and I am going to do the bravest thing a man can ever do.

LUCY—Now, Ira, how you talk; there is nothing braver than to stand up before a ruffian with a revolver at your head and lock the safe in his face.

IRA—Yes, there is something which takes ten times as much courage.

LUCY—You don't mean it.

IRA—I want you to be my wife, Lucy. I want to own you, and I want you to own me. There, I have said it now, and it has been in my heart for months. Don't turn away from me. If you do not feel that way, I'll be brave enough to hear it now. I—I—

LUCY—I appreciate your feeling for me, Ira, but I am frank with you when I say it comes as a real surprise.

IRA—Surprise, you are not blind are you, Lucy? Is there no hope for me?

LUCY—Ira, I—I—

IRA—No, don't say it now; I thought I wanted your answer this minute, but think it over a day or two; you may feel differently yet—you might—

LUCY—I hardly think I shall feel differently, but as you say time does strange things sometimes. You see—(Door bell is heard to ring.)

(Factory cashier appears at grill door with heavy leather bag.)

CASHIER—Hathaway here? (Ira tries to conceal bandage from cashier.)

LUCY—(Jumping up and going to cashier.) Yes, he is here, but he has a

slight fainting spell. I will attend to your money.

CASHIER—That is too bad. Thank you, Miss Knowles. Mr. Morton said the safe would be left open, and I see it is. (Talks while Lucy helps him put money away.) I hope you don't leave it unlocked like that very often. There is \$20,000 in that bag, and you can't afford to take chances. (To Ira.) Sorry you are going to leave, Hathaway, but I hope you don't go until there is someone to take your place. This bank means life to many a poor widow and laboring man.

IRA—Mr. Knowles has made arrangements for adequate protection.

CASHIER—I have to hurry back to the mill. Good luck. (Goes out.)

(Lucy, who has been impatient for the cashier to go, runs over to the telephone and takes up the receiver.)

IRA—What are you going to do, Lucy?

LUCY—Telephone uncle about what happened, of course.

IRA—(Reaching out hand to stop her.) No, please don't; it was nothing, and you can be sure that man won't come back. Promise me, Lucy, you won't breathe a word of this to your uncle or to anyone else. Promise, please? Your uncle would think I was playing for sympathy, and that I had staged something for my own ends. You won't tell a living soul, will you give me your word?

LUCY—I will, of course, if you insist, but don't you think you should inform the sheriff?

IRA—Yes, I will.

LUCY—You are bleeding again; let me fix this bandage right. (Takes off bandage, rearranges it and carefully binds wound again. She talks as she works.) Ira, I don't want you to leave this bank.

IRA—I have done only what you advised.

LUCY—I know that, and I feel responsible. What uncle is wild about is your affiliation with Tom Walsh and the unions. He thinks you have gone in with those radical organizers. He declared he wouldn't think of having a man in his bank taking orders from an outside authority. He is sure you are trying to get out a charter for bank employees in this county to form a union.

IRA—Your uncle is shrewd, but you know I haven't gone very far in that direction. I have had only one interview with Walsh, and that you helped to arrange.

LUCY—I know you haven't, but uncle thinks you have, and so he feels just as angry as though you had formed a union.

I am almost confident that he would keep you and give you what you ask if he could be assured that you would have nothing to do with Walsh and the others.

IRA—I don't believe it would make a particle of difference. He has made up his mind to get rid of me just to prove he is master, and what he says goes.

LUCY—I am as confident he will reconsider and keep you. If I could go to him and assure him that you will have no relations with Walsh and his union scheme, and that you will go on as you have in the past, he would be glad to let you stay. I know he is troubled and worried.

IRA—Lucy, I begin to think Walsh has a lot of good hard sense, and that his big union isn't much different from the kind of associations the bankers and employers form for their own protection. I am not ready to say he is right and that it would be a good thing to have a bank employes' union, but I am going to learn more about it.

LUCY—It seems to me he is too extreme, and wants to change everything good and bad. But if he wants to experiment, let him. You, Ira, can't afford to throw away a good position for any such uncertain revolutionary scheme. You have to think of your mother. I ask you to let me go to uncle and tell him you have nothing to do with Walsh and his plan for a charter if he has one.

IRA—Of course, I should like to stay on here in the bank, where I have really been happy most of the time. You know one very large reason why I want to be here; you know—

LUCY—Now, Ira, we agreed to say nothing more about that at present. Will you give me your promise so that I can tell uncle?

IRA—I still think you are mistaken, but if you really want to intercede in my behalf, I should be ungrateful not to do my part.

LUCY—Then that is settled, and I know you will stay. (Finishes binding Ira's head.) There, that will keep your red blood from spilling. You are going to have need for all you have got. (She takes her hat and coat and goes into office right. Speaks as she exits.) If you have any more callers with guns, let me know.

IRA—(Watching her go, and then taking up telephone.) Give me Sheriff Miller, please. Hello, that you, sheriff? No? When will he be in? Oh, tell him to call Hathaway of the Mapleton bank as soon as he comes in—yes, very important.

CURTAIN

Act III.—Scene Two
Thursday Evening

The bank is lit up; no one is seen but Grimes working over his books. He looks worried, but at the same time determined as though preparing for a crisis.

The outside door is heard to open, and Banker Knowles appears with two large dress suit cases. He shows at once that he does not want Grimes to see them, and after hurriedly looking for a place to put them, he opens door left and drops them inside and shuts door. He then sits at his desk and nervously glances at Grimes and then at watch. Grimes closes his books with unusual emphasis. Goes slowly into room right and comes out with coat and hat; puts them on slowly and then approaches the banker standing as erect as is possible with his bent shoulders. He is under some evident emotion.

Grimes then nervously fumbles in his inside pocket and brings out a sealed envelope which he holds in hand.

GRIMES—I have written something for you to read, sir.

KNOWLES—What's the matter, Grimes; have you lost your tongue? (Grimes does not hear and speaks louder.) Have you lost your tongue?

GRIMES—No, sir, but I couldn't say it very well. Mr. Knowles, I have worked for you for ten years, and I believe I have served this bank well.

KNOWLES—(Puzzled.) There has never been any doubt of that, Grimes. What is troubling you? The bank couldn't run without you, you know that.

GRIMES—(With emotion.) I have al-

ways believed in you, Mr. Knowles, always believed in your sense of justice and fair play. I heard more than you thought I did the other day when you and Mr. Morton and Judge Hilton were—

KNOWLES—(Standing up excited.) How did you know that was Judge Hilton?

GRIMES—I heard you introduce him to Mr. Morton. Yes, sir, and I heard most of what you were talking about in regard to Ira Hathaway; yes, sir, and I heard—

KNOWLES—(Coming close up to Grimes and savagely shouting in his ear.) So you have been playing the spy on the bank? Have you been a stool pigeon all these years that you have been pretending to be deaf. And who have you been telling secrets to—Tom Walsh?

GRIMES—You wrong me, sir. When I realized I was hearing your secrets and your wicked plots; I say wicked plots, I started to leave the room, as you may remember, sir, and I promised to tell no one anything I heard. I always keep my promises, Mr. Knowles.

KNOWLES—(Calming down.) Perhaps I was too hasty, Grimes. But I don't understand how you could hear then and not at other times. There is some mystery. You mustn't judge of what you heard unless you know what I have had to take from Hathaway. You don't know how he has tried to injure me and this bank.

GRIMES—I only heard what was said and I wish to God, sir, I had been stone deaf, for you have filled me with doubts, with misgivings, sir, and I wonder whether the old-fashioned honesty has gone, sir, yes, completely gone, sir.

I can say no more, Mr. Knowles. It has not been easy, not easy to speak, and you will find the rest in this envelope. (Hands letter to Knowles.) I have told no one what I heard, sir, and you may trust me, that I never will.

Can I be of any more service to you tonight?

KNOWLES—No, I shall not need you. (Close to Grimes.) Have you mentioned Judge Hilton's name?

GRIMES—No, sir, you need have no fear. Good night. (Exits.)

KNOWLES—(Slowly opening envelope when Lucy enters from right of-

fice. She is prepare^d to go out.) Work all done, Lucy?

LUCY—All except one matter I have been wanting to lift from my mind all day, but couldn't seem to get a word with you.

KNOWLES—very well, there is no better time than now.

LUCY—I hope you will not misunderstand me, Uncle?

KNOWLES—Don't I generally understand you? The fact is, Lucy, I understand you better than you understand yourself.

LUCY—Not in this case, Uncle. Several times lately you have failed to get my point of view in regard to Ira Hathaway.

KNOWLES—Well, perhaps I was too sensitive, and too ready to accuse you of other purposes than you professed in standing up for that man. But we should forget all that now. Hathaway has gone and shall never darken these doors again. We won't have to quarrel over him any more.

LUCY—I hope not, Uncle, because it is of him I want to speak. I should have come sooner, but you have been so much taken up with business, and out of town three days, that I couldn't seem to manage it.

KNOWLES—(Impatiently.) I am sorry we have to mention his name again; I thought I was done with that man.

LUCY—I gathered from what you have said that your chief count against Ira was his actual or supposed affiliation with Tom Walsh, and his supposed interest in joining some union, possibly a bank employes' union.

KNOWLES—You are perfectly right, Lucy. No man in my employ, especially one who is the guardian of private and public funds, shall be affiliated with a union of any kind. That is final and definite.

LUCY—I knew your sentiments, Uncle, and I have undertaken to straighten out this unfortunate affair, as least so far as I am able.

KNOWLES—(Losing all his affability.) And how, pray?

LUCY—I have been to Ira, and have told him exactly how you consider any kind of affiliation with trade unions, and he has promised. (Knowles starts to speak angrily.)

Please let me finish. He has promised to give up any ideas he may have of joining with Walsh and others. He told me frankly that—

KNOWLES—(Red in the face and thoroughly angry.) You are going too far in your interest for this man. He is no longer in my employ, and it is the best thing that could happen to this bank. He has left without knowing whether I had anyone to take his place. He has been thoroughly indifferent to what becomes of the people's money. Nothing that you can say, and nothing that he can do would make me change my mind and take him back. Let him go to Walsh and his unions if he likes. I'll best them all, and I will teach them a lesson they deserve, and which they will remember for a long time.

Don't come to me again with your pleadings for Hathaway because I will not listen. That is final. You can go.

LUCY—Good night, Uncle. I hope the time will come when you may find your senses and deal more justly. (Turns on her heel and walks out.)

KNOWLES—(In thoroughly bad humor, sits down and continues reading Grimes' note. Reads.) "I cannot work for a man who is not just and fair. I have served you many years, and expected to end my working days with you. It is hard to make a change at my age, but I could not stay and be happy. I should like to leave at the end of a week if that can be arranged."

Another damned ungrateful— (Clenches fist and striking it hard on desk.) It's all part of the conspiracy. They are all after old Knowles' scalp, are they? I'll show 'em. They will be singing a different tune when I get through with the gang of cut throats. (Goes to door left and gets suit cases and crosses to safe with them. He starts to turn the combination and reads the new numbers from a card in his hand, when a woman's cracked voice is heard singing in office right, coming toward inner bank.) Damn, there comes Lizzie. (He goes quickly to his desk, shoves suit cases under desk, places combination card in drawer and locks it, and pretends to be deeply engrossed when scrubwoman comes in with pail of suds and floor cloths. She has seen Knowles lock up card.

MAGGIE—(Typical country scrub-

woman who has the appearance of occasionally taking a nip. An old worn bonnet sits on the back of her head; her shoes are large and loose. She takes no notice of Knowles except for one keen, quick glance. Maggie is in reality one of Judge Hilton's gang from New York come up to do the job. He is trying to find out whether there will be any watchman that night, and whether the safe has been emptied by Knowles. He hopes to get more than is planned. Sings as she mops floor awkwardly.)

There was a man in a tattered gown
And he was wondrous wise;
He jumped into a petticoat
And camouflaged the town.

I see the young man going out with his suit case when I was comin' in.

KNOWLES—(Looking up sharply sees that woman is not the regular scrubwoman, Lizzie. I don't seem to know you. Why are you here instead of Lizzie?)

MAGGIE—(Awkwardly wringing out mop and allowing half the water to run on floor.) You see I hev been stoppin' with Liz for about a week. My folks they live in Noo York. It was like this, Liz went to a party last night and— (giggles)—I guess she had too much cider, so I said to Liz, said I, I'll scrub the bank for you tonight; so here I is instead of Liz. (Giggles again.)

KNOWLES—See that you do your work decently or Lizzie may lose her job. What is your name?

MAGGIE—They call me Maggie. I shouldn't want Liz to lose her job. (Scrubs for a minute.) People hev got a lot a sympathy for your man Hathaway; et least thet's what I hears. (Scrubs some more.) It ain't none o' my business, but thet's what they tell me.

KNOWLES—No, your business is to get this bank scrubbed and clear out as soon as you can. (Lizzie scrubs energetically.) So they think I have wronged Hathaway, do they? Because I am not willing to raise his pay and provide him with a parlor to live in. They will change their minds.

MAGGIE—Widow Dean, she's all nerved up for fear somethin' might happen to the bank afore you find a man to take Hathaway's place. I told her you ought to know what ye are about, but she's plumb skeered. (Works herself toward safe as she scrubs.)

THE SYMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE

KNOWLES—I told her not to worry, that there would be ample protection. If you see her, tell her Banker Knowles has the situation well in hand.

MAGGIE—I thought mebbe the new man would be here by now. Perhaps he won't git her tonight. (Looking keenly at Knowles.)

KNOWLES—You needn't worry. Your business is to get this place clean and then clear out.

MAGGIE—If I were a man I might volunteer to stay round here tonight, but I s'pose you don't want no women hangin' round and scarin' off burglars.

KNOWLES—Would you dare? I told you the bank is to be protected.

MAGGIE—(As she scrubs she examines safe, and begins to dust off the combination with great care. Sings again.)

There was a man in a tattered gown
And he was wondrous wise;
He jumped into a petticoat
And camouflaged the town.

And when he found that he was in
He dipped into a pail of suds,
And cursed the man who made the
duds.

KNOWLES—Maggie, you are here to work and not to sing.

MAGGIE—What did you say?

KNOWLES—I said you are not here to sing, sing.

MAGGIE—(The words sing-sing are too much for Maggie, who nearly collapses against the safe and lets the pail fall to the floor.)

KNOWLES—Now, what's the matter?

MAGGIE—You said sing-sing so kind of sternly, I almost fainted.

KNOWLES—I did mean it. Don't sing any more.

MAGGIE—(Works a moment and then giggles to self.)

KNOWLES—Now what's funny, can't you keep your jokes to yourself?

MAGGIE—I wuz thinkin' how Liz took her medicine and pills.

KNOWLES—How did she take them?

MAGGIE—In cider. (Giggles.)

KNOWLES—You have a low form of wit, Maggie.

MAGGIE—That's because of me profession of scrubbing. Mr. Knowles.

KNOWLES—(Looks with aroused in-

terest at this humorous scrubwoman.) So you think my man is right to strike and leave the people's savings unprotected at a time when it is almost impossible to find anyone to take his place?

MAGGIE—One hes to live; things are goin' up, and we wage earners hev to stick together. We hev a scrubwomen's union down in Noo York.

KNOWLES—(Observing the sloppy way Maggie is doing her work.) I thought there must be something of that sort by the way you do your work; the moment the union starts good work stops.

MAGGIE—It's better'n bein' a slave, as Jim Schwartz of the bartenders' union said to us.

KNOWLES—Did your union ever strike, Maggie?

MAGGIE—Yep, we went out on a sympathetic strike with the bartenders just to help 'em out. You see they'd helped us mor'n once.

KNOWLES—Yes, you look as though they had helped you considerably. I suppose you know what is going to happen to my man, Ira Hathaway, because he affiliates with the unions?

MAGGIE—He'll get another place. As I told Liz, let him strike when the ira is hot. (Giggles.)

KNOWLES—(Disgusted.) You'd do better to talk less and work more. Come, get this floor done. I'll go into the next room; knock on the door when you have finished. (Exits with papers. Maggie jumps up from the floor, goes quickly to Knowles' desk, lifts up skirt to get jimmie from hip pocket, and thereby lets audience into secret of his sex, pries open drawer, takes out card and copies combination on piece of paper. Then replaces card and shuts drawer. Quickly he pulls dress suit cases from under desk and makes sure they are empty. He then takes a careful look at safe and combination. Then goes to door of office where Knowles is. Knocks.)

MAGGIE—It's did, sir. Takes up pail and goes through grill door into outer bank.)

KNOWLES—(Comes in quickly to desk, looks cautiously about to see whether Maggie has gone. Draws suit cases from under desk and starts toward safe when door bell rings.)

KNOWLES—What in—! (Shoves

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suit cases under desk again; outside door slams as Sammie, 15-year-old high school boy, comes in with evening Courier.)

SAM—Paper?

KNOWLES—Bring it in, Sammie; any news tonight?

SAM—Nothing much, sir. There's an article about Ira Hathaway leaving the bank.

KNOWLES—(Smiles with satisfaction.) What does it say about him, Sammie? Read it to me.

SAM—(Reading in schoolboy fashion, stumbling over long words.) Ira Hathaway, special officer for the Mapleton National bank, who has guarded the people's savings for more than six years, has served notice on Banker Knowles that he will leave his post this afternoon unless demands for increased wages and better living apartments are granted.

As Hathaway has been seen lately in company with union leaders who are known to have radical tendencies, it is generally believed that he is the victim of unwise and vicious counsel. Indeed, Mr. Knowles believes there is a concerted conspiracy among extremists to form a union of bank employees of Saratoga county, and that a charter has already been granted.

While the banker declares he has no prejudice against unions in general he is absolutely opposed to divided control when it comes to those whose duty it is to guard and protect the people's money. Such employees are truly public servants, and must under no circumstances be subject to a strike call.

The Mapleton bank holds the savings of hundreds of widows and poor people who would be left in a pitiful condition should anything happen to the vaults. The banker, however, will do his best to procure someone in Hathaway's place and has assured the public that the situation is well in hand. Mr. Knowles declared this morning that—

KNOWLES—That will do, Sam.

SAM—Gee! I'm all out of breath.

KNOWLES—What are people saying about it up town, Sam?

SAM—They say you ought to give Ira more money and better rooms, but they think he has no right to join a union, and they say he ought to stay till you find someone to take his place.

KNOWLES—Thank you, Sam; here's a quarter for your good reading. (Gives money to Sam.)

SAM—Thank you, sir. Good night, sir. (Exit.) (Knowles is about to take suit cases from under desk, when Maggie appears in grill door.)

MAGGIE—I am going now; will you pay me for my work?

KNOWLES—(Showing disgust at another interruption.) No! What you have done isn't worth anything; your floor is a mess. I'll settle with Lizzie, and you needn't come back.) (Maggie goes out. Knowles goes again to safe and opens it when the outer door bell rings violently.) Oh, hell! Who is it this time? (Presses button which opens front door. Chucks suit cases into safe and shuts safe door. Enter Dennis Wiggs and Loretta quite excited.)

LORETTA—How do you do, Mr. Knowles; we thought you would be surprised. We got your telegram tellin' us to cum and git here Friday, but I says to Dennis that mebbey we better git home a little ahead o' time, and show you we ain't the kind what let's the grass grow under our feet.

KNOWLES—I had rather have employees who obey directions, and who do not think they know better than their employer what to do. I sent word to you not to come until Friday, and you didn't see fit to carry out my directions. Is that good business?

DENNIS—There, Loretta, didn't I tell you, but you wuz so plum certain. Now mebbey Mr. Knowles don't want us and it wud serve us right if—

KNOWLES—(Evidently much disturbed to know what to do with his visitors who have come to upset all his plans.) Did you just come from the train?

DENNIS—We walked right here from the station.

KNOWLES—Did you meet anyone who knew you?

LORETTA—Nope, not a soul, and we didn't even go into the station, but cum right up here hopin' to find you, and we are in luck. If you haven't got the rooms fixed up we could go to the hotel for tonight.

KNOWLES—Look here, you two. I wired you not to come until Friday, and that is what I meant. I am very much displeased that you thought you

knew best. I really ought to call our bargain off—

LORETTA—(Beginning to repent to the point of tears.) I am sorry, Mr. Knowles if we did wrong, but we wuz so anxious to take the place that we cum right along, and we have been practicing up, and—

KNOWLES—Practicing up? What do you mean?

LORETTA—Well, you see we met my cousin from Albany, who is a cop, and he showed Dennis how to use the stick and how to handle his revolver. Dennis said he wouldn't be afearod of nobody now, didn't you, Dennis?

DENNIS—I didn't make no such boast, but I says that I could give an account of myself.

LORETTA—See, Mr. Knowles, what we got. (Reaches down in her bag and pulls out a long polished policeman's club.) I guess thet'll stop most anything.

DENNIS—If it ain't dark; what I'm afraid of is that I can't see what to hit in the dark, and he might hit me first.

LORETTA—We never seen Hathaway wearin' a badge, but my cousin said a badge is as good as a gun sometimes, and let's 'em know the law is after 'em. Ed gave us one of his old ones. Show it to Mr. Knowles, Dennis. (Dennis turns back lapel of coat and displays an old-fashioned police badge. With stick in his hand and badge in evidence Dennis begins to feel important and courageous in front of Knowles, and swells out his chest a bit.)

KNOWLES—(Looking at his watch. He thinks how he can get rid of Dennis.) You look all right, Dennis, but the test comes when you are facing a gun sometime, held in your face by another man. There is not one man in ten thousand who can show courage then. I have a proposal to make to you two.

DENNIS—You don't mean you want me to look into the muzzle of a gun?

KNOWLES—You came home before your time was up. I know you thought you would please me, but you didn't; you provoked me more than I can tell you. There is an express to Cincinnati in just 15 minutes, but it does not stop here. I'll give you two another day for your honeymoon, and I shall let you

have \$20 for a real good time. I'll let John run you down to Ridgeway in my car. I do this on condition that you never breathe a word to anyone that you came here tonight. When you come back make believe you came by the way of Cincinnati. Will you promise?

DENNIS—(Glad of another day's delay.) Of course we will. You're mighty good, and the twenty will come in good.

LORETTA—It's a puzzle to me, Mr. Knowles, but if you want us to go we will.

KNOWLES—(Taking up phone.) Garage, please? This is Knowles, and I want to speak to John. John, come right round with the car. I want you to take a couple down to Ridgeway to catch the express; you'll have to hurry. (Turning to Dennis.) So, Dennis, you think you are ready for an emergency, do you?

DENNIS—Yes, sir, it gives courage to a feller to have a good piece of wood in his hand. I guess I have got as much courage as the next one.

KNOWLES—(Taking revolver out of desk drawer.) Do you think you could use that, Dennis?

DENNIS—I could learn to bead a man, Mr. Knowles, with a little practice. Is it loaded?

KNOWLES—Of course, with six perfectly good cartridges. I am going to try your courage, Dennis, by pointing this at you.

DENNIS—I know you wouldn't shoot, sir, but I—I—

KNOWLES—Suppose I am a burglar and it is your duty to arrest me. (He backs toward wall where switch button is.)

LORETTA—(Getting excited.) Now's your chance, Dennis. Remember George Washington and Napoleon and—go after him. (Dennis does not seem eager to go forward.)

KNOWLES—I am going to shoot, I am going to shoot.

(Dennis begins to back instead of going forward. Loretta gets behind him and tries to push him forward.)

LORETTA—Where's your courage, Dennis? Go after him.

KNOWLES—(By electric button.) I am going to shoot. (Pushes button and the bank becomes perfectly dark.) Take care, Dennis.

DENNIS—Don't, Mr. Knowles;

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please don't. Oh, don't shoot. (A chair is heard to overturn and there is noise of scuffling about the room.)

KNOWLES—(Turns on lights. Dennis is discovered over back of safe with both hands to his ears, the picture of abject terror. Loretta sees him and is completely disgusted.)

LORETTA—(Brings Dennis down by the arm.) And you said before we got married that you would be my hero, my soldier. (Picks up stick that Dennis has dropped.)

DENNIS—(Still weak from fright.) I guess I hed better go back to Avery's, Mr Knowles. Milkin' cows and pitchin hay is my profession, and fighten burglars ain't.

KNOWLES—I guess you are right, Dennis. (Auto horn is heard.) But anyway take a day to think it over. Here's the money I promised you. (Hands \$20 bill.) Remember, not one word to anyone. There is the machine, you'll have to hurry.

LORETTA—(Gathers up her things and starts.) Come on my hero, my soldier. (Both go out.) (Knowles, with a sigh of relief goes to safe, opens it and fills both bags with securities and money. Takes out one box, and places a handful of bills in it and places it back in safe. Closes door of safe, but manipulates combination first. Waits a moment and auto horn is heard again. Knowles turns out all lights but one in outer bank, goes out and door is heard to close. Auto heard departing, and horn gives sense of distance. After a few moments quiet a tapping is heard at window; it grows louder, and finally a hard blow smashes the plate glass window, but not in sight of audience.)

(Three men appear, among whom is Maggie, the crook, in his own man's clothes. One man climbs over the grill and unlocks grill door. Other two come in. They all make for the safe and begin to work with the idea of blowing it open. Maggie, the crook, concentrates on the combination, and in a moment takes hold of the handle and opens the door wide.)

SPIKE—Maggie, you're a wonder; how did you do it? (All eagerly examine strong boxes in safe, using jimnies to pry locks open.)

MAGGIE—Damn! Cleaned out. Double crossed. I told you. (Boxes

and papers are thrown out on the bank floor.)

SPIKE—This will cost someone a neat little pile; making fools of us. The guy who swept this safe might a left us carfare.

DUMPY—Hold on, there is something in this box. (Pries open box and takes out handful of bills.)

MAGGIE—What are they? Thousand dollar bills?

SPIKE—Naw, tenners (counting). Thirty of 'em; a hundred apiece fer doin' the job. Kind of 'em, wasn't it?

MAGGIE—Riskin' our precious lives for a hundred! Wait till we make our next call. This job is worth a thousand at least.

DUMPY—The old man was shrewd, and beat us to it.

SPIKE—(He is the man who held up Ira.) It's a shame I didn't get my fist on any of it when I was so close.

MAGGIE—What do you say we go up to the old man's house and make him tell us where it is?

SPIKE—Not on your life; he's got the dough where it's safe. You can bet on that.

MAGGIE—Suppose I call him up and give him a warnin'?

DUMPY—I dare you, Maggie; be a sport. I'll give you a tenner if you do.

MAGGIE—Ill take the bet.

SPIKE—You ain't got the nerve.

MAGGIE—(Looks in phone book for number, takes up receiver.) Give me 876—very important. (Angry voice over phone.) (Maggie puts hand over phone.) He's swearing bloody murder. I'll wait till the storm passes. (In Maggie, the woman's, voice.) Is this you, Mr. Knowles? I am Maggie who was doin' your scrubbin' at the bank this evening. What's that? No, I am at Lizzie's. I thought you might want to know what I heard ez I was going home tonight, Ez I cum by a street corner two men was talking kinda low and suspicious, so I hid in a doorway to listen. They wuz saying what a good night it would be to crack the safe in your bank. Yes, honest to God. Yes, I suppose I am foolish, but I thought you ought to know. What's that? The bank will be adequately protected? (Puts hand over receiver. To comrades. He says the bank will be adequately protected. (All laugh.) I am

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sorry to hev disturbed you, but I am up givin' Lizzie her pills. (Hangs up receiver.)

DUMPY—Now we better make our getaway before the sheriff is waked up. (All slip out.)

MAGGIE—(As he goes out looking back at floor). The bank will be adequately protected. (Exit.)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

Scene One

Six thirty a. m. Bank is still quite dark. Just before curtain rises distant factory whistle is heard. Mill hands on way to work discover broken window. Voices at first indistinct grow louder and more excited.

VOICES—Look at the window of the bank. Smashed—How do you suppose it happened.—Someone crawled in there; look at the footmarks.—Burglars, I bet. (Louder voice)—The bank is robbed; the bank is robbed.

ANNA SCHWARTZ—They couldn't break in the safe, could they?

JASON BILLINGS—Professionals could do anything. Let's go in.

ABE MORRIS—Perhaps the safe has been blown open.

WIDOW SMITH—(Beginning to get excited.) Won't someone go in and see if the money is gone.

BILLINGS—I'll go in.

HENNESSY—Take care you don't cut yourself. (Sounds of entering. Several people see entering the bank.) Everything looks all right so far. Look out for yourself, they may be in here yet.

TONY PATRONI—Hava they stola my mon? Alla my mon? Let me in.

WIDOW SMITH—(Insisting upon coming through broken window.) If my money is gone it will kill me; all my savings. Oh, my poor children; we may be ruined.

ANNA SCHWARTZ—Why don't someone climb over and find out whether the safe has been opened. (As the inner bank is in shadow nothing can be seen. The light in the outer bank casts its wierd radiance on the increasing crowd of faces outside the grill.)

JASON—I will go over if somebody holds the chair. (Starts to climb.)

MORRIS—(Pushes against grill door and it swings open. The whole crowd rush in. Abe turns on electric light near safe and reveals floor of bank

covered with empty boxes, papers and several empty money bags.) Cleaned out; the safe's empty!

HENNESSY—(Picking up empty cash box.) Number 83, that's the union's box, not a cint in it. Sure and there'll be hell to pay. (To people crowding around.) Stand back can't ye; there's no use pushing like this. Can't ye see it's all gone?

JASON—I'll call up Mr. Knowles. (Goes to phone.) Give me Mr. Knowles the banker. Hurry, please.—This you, Mr. Knowles? I have got bad news for you. Your bank has been broken into and the safe cleaned out. Yes, sir, the people are frantic. We will wait for you, sir.

WIDOW SMITH—I'm a beggar again, and I worked all these years to save. What shall I do?

PATRONI—I sava two, three, four hundred doll to senda my wife, and now they stola my mon.

HENNESSY—Mr. Morton ought to be called; he's one of the directors of the bank. (Takes up phone.) Give me 15—ring 3—I want to speak to Mr. Morton; no, not a minute. Hurry, please?—Mr. Morton, the Mapleton bank has been looted of ivery cint. I thought you ought to know. We found the window broken. In five minutes? All right. (To people.) He will be right over, and he will bring the sheriff.

ANNA—I had two hundred dollars, and it took me two years to save, and now where am I? Whose fault is this, that is what I would like to know?

JASON—If we can find that out someone will have a big bill to pay. I think I know who is to blame. Hathaway should not have left till Mr. Knowles found someone to take his place. Ira wasn't thinking of us. He wanted a raise, and was willing to leave the bank unprotected to gain his ends.

HENNESSY—(Growing angry.) You are right, Jason. Did you see what the Courier said? Listen? (Takes paper out of his pocket and reads.) "Ira Hathaway, special officer for the Mapleton Bank, who has guarded the people's savings for more than six years, has served notice on Banker Knowles that he will leave his post this afternoon unless demands for increased wages

and better living conditions are granted."

He did leave, and look at the result. (Continues reading.) "The Mapleton Bank holds the savings of hundreds of widows—(Widow Smith weeps)—and poor people who would be left in a pitiful condition should anything happen to the vaults. (The reading stirs up the crowd.)

ANNA SCHWARTZ—That's enough for me. I thought he had manhood enough to protect our savings until another watchman could be found. I said he ought to get more pay, but now look at him; he has ruined us.

JASON—He left the bank unprotected, when he must have known there were suspicious characters in town.

MRS. SMITH—He must pay me back; I can't lose all my savings; I simply can't.

PATRONI—I'll be Got damna; I puncha his head. Here I come to Americ, I work hard, I save all my mon and then they com and take it alla. I say damna. (Noise of approaching automobile. Morton and sheriff enter. The crowd makes way for the two men, who examine critically.)

MORTON—They certainly have made a clean job of it, sheriff.

SHERIFF MILLER—This looks like a professional job, sir. They must have had the combination, or they would have blown the safe. (Looking at safe.) Here's a place where they began to drill. I don't like to think it of Hathaway, but it looks to me as though he may have given the combination numbers.

MORTON—(With emphasis so all can hear.) It is hard to believe Hathaway would deliberately expose to robbers all the savings of those whom he called his friends. But when a man tries by threats of a strike to force his employer, then he cannot be trusted; he is a deserter.

VOICES IN CROWD—Yes, a deserter. (Lucy Knowles enters out of breath as though she had been running.)

LUCY—I have just heard of this awful thing. To think the bank was not safe for a single night. My poor friends, I am heartbroken for you; I know what it means, Mrs. Smith, and Tony, and all of you. Have you any clue, Mr. Miller?

SHERIFF—Nothing that would iden-

tify anybody, but there is always a chance when Hi Miller is on the job. The thing is to round 'em up before they spend what they got.

HENNESSY—The first thing is to find Ira Hathaway and learn what time he left, where he went and whether he was seen around the bank after he was supposed to go. (Lucy is absorbed in looking over the safe that she does not hear the discussion.)

SHERIFF MILLER—Does anyone know where Hathaway stayed last night?

JASON—Yes, I do; he took a room at Mrs. Shepherd's, and is there yet if he hasn't skipped out, and left town.

MILLER—I'll go fetch him. (Exit.)

MORTON—Friends, I know Mr. Knowles was trying to hire someone to take Ira's place, but you know how scarce help is. I hardly thought Hathaway was the kind of a man to take advantage of a short labor market. He wouldn't have taken such a step if union leaders had not advised him. Now look at the result.

ANNA—He ought to pay us back.

PATRONI—I will go to the judga. I will tella him to maka him giva my mon. (Enter Banker Knowles. Appears excited.)

KNOWLES—To think that such a thing could happen to the Mapleton bank! It is unbelievable. (Sinks into chair.)

HENNESSY—We are all ruined, sor; even the union has lost its funds. (Lizzie the scrub woman enters.)

LIZZIE—Is it true that the bank is robbed? And it was you, Mr. Knowles, who told me to save my money and to leave it in the bank. Here I have been slavin' and diggin' for ten years, and never spendin' anything but for necessities.

KNOWLES—I might have had you stay in the bank last night, Lizzie, but you didn't come and sent Maggie in your place, and I didn't dare trust her.

LIZZIE—Maggie, is it? I don't know any Maggie.

KNOWLES—Weren't you sick last night, and wasn't it you who sent that woman to scrub the bank in your place?

LIZZIE—For Lord's sake, Mr. Knowles, what be ye talking about? I was sick, but I didn't send no one, sir.

I didn't know the bank had been cleaned.

KNOWLES—(Puzzled.) Did anyone telephone to me from your house last night? Speak the truth, Lizzie.

LIZZIE—I swear, sir. There's been no one at my house but my four children and me old man, Ben. That's the God's truth, sir.

KNOWLES—So Maggie was a crook. (Sheriff enters with Ira. Crowd looks at him with anger in their faces.)

MRS. SMITH—Now he will have to tell us why he left the bank unprotected for burglars to rob. (Ira has a worried and disheveled appearance. He has his suit case.)

SHERIFF—There, sir, look at your work. Do you know you are responsible for this?

TONY—(Losing control of himself.) So you leava the bank; you deserta, you leta the burglars loota the bank, you maka me a beggar. I cannot send for my woman. I could killa you, I would— (As he rushes toward Ira, Sheriff Miller steps between.)

MILLER—That won't do any good, Tony, only make more trouble for you. But it ain't that he don't deserve it.

HENNESSY—We have lost our money, and some of us may have to spend our old age in the poorhouse, and it's you who are to blame, damn you.

WIDOW SMITH—Did you think of me and my children when you went on strike last night? You did not, you did not. (Weeps.)

IRA—Friends, I can't tell you how sorry I am that this has happened. I know it looks bad. I was told that everything would be all right, and I gave plenty of warning that I should go. I was told—(Morton breaks in.)

MORTON—I know what you were told, young man. Mr. Knowles told me just how matters stood, and how difficult it would be to fill your place. He was in hopes that you would change your mind, and stay on a few days. Why did you listen to Tom Walsh?

SHERIFF MILLER—Mr. Morton, I searched his rooms and found this. (Takes literature Walsh had given Ira out of his pocket.) This is what he reads: "Revolution," "A New Economic System," "The Rebel," "Workers Arise," "Own the Industries," "End of the Bourgeois," "Victory and

Votes." What does he care for banks and for those who save?

IRA—Believe me, friends, won't you hear what I have to say for myself? These papers are not mine, but were put in my hands to read. I don't believe most of what is in them. I never stood for revolution. I asked only for what all of your demand, a living wage, and decent rooms to live in.

I would have cut off my hand rather than to have had this happen.

MORTON—That sounds well, doesn't it? This man leaves his sacred trust, leaves the bank unprotected. He is caught with wild and radical literature in his room. He says it isn't his, but he had it to read, didn't he?

ANNA—The Courier called you a deserter; did you know that?

IRA—No, Kramer would not have lied about me. He is fair. I know he sympathized with me, and—

ANNA—(Thrusting paper into Ira's hands.) There, read for yourself.

IRA—(Reads.) "He shows himself to be indifferent to the welfare of the people of Mapleton; he deserts and betrays—(Puts hand to head, unconsciously touches place where burglar had hit him.) My God, friends! Did Kramer write that?"

MORTON—It is in his paper, isn't it? He saw what kind of a public trustee you are, and has spoken pretty frankly to his readers.

IRA—If Kramer wrote that he has sold his soul and his press to those who can pay. (Looks meaningly at Morton and Knowles. Turns to Knowles, who has been apparently numbed by the disaster.) You, Mr. Knowles, why don't you say something? You told me not to worry, that the bank would be protected. Don't let these people think I had no interest in them, and deserted.

KNOWLES—(Rises from chair in anger.) How can you appeal to me with this safe staring you in the face? I don't believe you robbed these people directly, but you have betrayed those who have been your friends. If you had cared to you could have learned that I had no one to take your place. I did think I had a man engaged, but no one came. I stand for law and order, and that is what the citizens of this county stand for, if I know them.

I'll have no union dictating over my head when it comes to the safety of the people's savings, and you will find that no bank will tolerate the kind of independence you believe in.

I made a mistake in not staying here in the bank myself last night, and I shall be the one to suffer, because so long as there is breath in my body I shall work to pay back what has been taken. I shall not look for one cent from you though we know you are morally responsible. The people are right. Kramer was right.

We bankers and manufacturers, yes, and publishers, too, are not going to let such as you and Tom Walsh run this country. Understand that. You will find every sane and good American lined up behind us in a government based on law and order.

Now you can go, and I think these people will agree the sooner you get out of this town the better it will be for you. No one will give you a job. You thought you would have the whole community with you and against me. You have played your cards and lost. I should have found ways of improving your condition if you had remained, but now wherever you go they will point to you as one who deserted his trust.

Hathaway, you have lost your position, the respect and confidence of the public, and your friends here in Mapleton. You find yourself absolutely alone. (Lucy who has been in the back of the crowd scarcely noticed now breaks through and takes her stand by Ira's side.)

LUCY—No, not alone, Uncle. I am going with him. Friends, this man has asked me to be his wife, and I am proud here and now to tell him before you all who are ready to tear him to pieces that I shall be honored to live and work with him. (Crowd amazed, Ira at first astonished and then overwhelmed.)

IRA—Lucy, do you mean that? (Grasps her hand with emotion.)

KNOWLES—You can't mean it, Lucy. You have lost your mind.

LUCY—No, I was never more sane in my life, but I begin to think it is you who have gone mad. No one feels worse about what has happened than I do, but, friends, it was not Ira's fault. It may be hard to make you see

it now, but some day you may understand there has been some wicked trickery here somewhere.

Do you think he willingly left this bank where he has been so long? I tell you within a few days he risked his life to save this bank and your money, but he is too modest to say anything about it.

It was not Tom Walsh who advised Ira to ask for more wages and to demand better rooms to live in; it was I. Yes, I told him it was not manly to go on year after year without making a fight for an American standard of living.

(To Knowles)—Why was the bank left unguarded last night, Uncle? You say you were careless; were you not—it is hard for a niece to say it—but I think you were criminal. You told me only yesterday the bank had adequate protection.

(To the people)—You turn against Ira as though he were a thief, but he is the victim of a power strong enough to crush you if you make great efforts to improve your condition.

If you are not meek and contented in your work, you, too, may be called radical and dangerous.

(To Uncle)—You make a mistake, sir, to believe you can continue to deceive the people in this way; you know in your heart you could have prevented this disaster.

KNOWLES—(Stepping forward almost beside himself with emotion.) Lucy, I am your uncle, your employer and I forbid—

LUCY—(Breaking in)—Just one moment and I am through. You are no longer my employer, and I am ashamed to call you my uncle. You have done your best to ruin this man in order to carry out some larger issue, which you think vital to your business. You have apparently succeeded. But you are taking a foolish course. You have succeeded in making at least two people more radical than they would have thought of being. You have made me believe there may be a better system than one which must stoop to such methods as you are willing to use.

WIDOW SMITH—But all this fine talk don't bring our money back. (Crowd joins in.)

CROWD—Naw, talk isn't money.

THE SYMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE

Let Hathaway bring our savings and then you could give us fine words.

HENNESSY—Ira left the bank when there was no one to take his place; you can't get around that, Miss Knowles. You can't talk to people who are ruined; it's money we want.

KNOWLES—(Coming toward Lucy as though to take her by force)—Lucy, you are crazy; I won't let you go with this man. I tell you—

IRA—(Stepping in front of him.) Stand back, Mr. Knowles. You have no legal hold over this girl. She is a free American citizen and master of her own labor. If she has made up her mind to go with me, you and all the bankers in the country can't prevent her. (To people)—You won't understand. I cannot blame you, perhaps, but the time may come when you will learn who the real culprits are, and who are your true friends. (To Knowles)—You say I have lost, do you? You have turned public opinion against me. It looks as though you had won your game, but the day will come when the truth, like murder, will out.

When you say I am alone you make a mistake. I shall take with me out of this town the best and strongest heart in it. I have gained the love and sympathy of one I value a hundred times more than my job here, and the respectability you, Mr. Knowles, thought you conferred on me.

I have lost much here in Mapleton, but I have gained a new sense of manhood, of American independence, of belief in myself.

I am ready to face the world now. Come, Lucy, we'll leave this town where we are not wanted. Some day there will be another shuffle to the cards, there will be another chapter to the story and another scene to the play.

Come, Lucy, there is a mother waiting for us. (Lucy and Ira go out.)

TONY—(Who has held in as long as he could, not understanding what was said.) But arn't you a-goin' to giva back my mon? I have lost alla my savings, you leta me be robbed.

WIDOW SMITH—Following Ira al-

most in hysteria.) Are you going off and do nothing about our money? You don't think of us.

HENNESSY—We won't let 'em get away so easy. We will go to the station with them; then perhaps we may find out where our money is.

CROWD—(Following out of bank, growling and behaving as though they thought Ira could tell them where their money is. It looks threatening for Ira.)

SHERIFF—I better go along and prevent trouble; I don't want any bloodshed. (Exit.) (Knowles and Morton left alone in the bank.)

MORTON—The Judge is a wonder, Knowles. Did you ever see anything so perfect. When people are aroused that way they never reason. They can be led like crazy sheep anywhere. We must get to the papers and send this story to New York and all over the country.

As the Judge predicted, the first blow is given, and it should be only the beginning of a whole series of defeats. They will hardly strike in my factory very soon. This is the biggest thing I ever saw pulled off.

KNOWLES—I am glad you can feel that way, Morton. But I—I really loved that girl; why, she was like my own daughter. I may have been hard on her at times, but it was for her good. I suppose you know Grimes gave in his resignation.

MORTON—No, you didn't tell me that.

KNOWLES—He heard too much of our plans that day. He promised to keep secret, but he left me. This begins to look like an empty victory for me. I am growing old, and I am not sure I like to pull the Judge's chestnuts out of the fire for him. (Telephone rings violently.) Answer it, Morton. I hope nothing has happened to Lucy. (Morton puts received to his ear. The news he hears puts a look of horror on his face. He drops receiver.)

MORTON—My God, Knowles; Kramer has shot himself.

CURTAIN.

The End.

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