

The Girl from Colorado

OR

The Conversion of Aunty Suffridge

A PLAYLET WITH A PURPOSE

IN THREE ACTS.

BY SELINA SOLOMONS.

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127 Montgomery Street, San Francisco

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Constance Wright.....	The Girl from Colorado
Aunty (Mrs. Lavina) Suffridge.....	President S. C. W. C.
Rev. Jay Hawse-Chestnutt.....	A Sturdy Oak
Prof. Ernest Armstrong.....	Of the University of Stanley
Ivy Millstone.....	A "Peach" of Maidenhood
Willie Sapling.....	A College Youth
Mrs. Twaddler Jones, Mrs. Dudsleigh Wrinkle.....	
.....	Voters and Members of the S. C. W. C.
Mr. Twaddler Jones, Mr. Dudsleigh Wrinkle.....	Their Husbands (Voters)

Scene laid in the Town of Stanley, California, 1911.

Time required for performance, one hour.

This play is especially for the California Campaign of 1911, but may be performed in any State, by making slight changes in the wording. Many of the minor properties, music, etc., may be omitted in the representation, if inconvenient to provide same. Mr. and Mrs. Jones and Mr. and Mrs. Wrinkle may likewise be omitted as speaking characters.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE.—Living room of Aunty Suffridge's bungalow. Entrance from street, upper right. Hat rack. Door opening into bedroom upper right, another upper left. Door to kitchenette lower left. Tea-table with Samovar, and sideboard with tea-service, etc., left side of stage. Writing desk with telephone and couch right side. Five chairs. Bookcase between the two bedrooms, middle upper portion of stage.

As curtain rises, Aunty Suffridge comes out of bedroom u. l., clad in house-gown, open in the back, and admits Constance Wright at street door. Con. is in traveling dress, and carries a small-sized grip.

Aunt S.—(*Flurried manner.*) O here you are, my dear Constance. (*Embraces her.*) So sorry you had to come alone from the station. But it was simply impossible for me to meet you—was detained at an important meeting of the Club—you know I am President, and have to be there. (*Turns her back abruptly.*) Please button me up, dear. But I knew you'd find us, all right, as I am so well known in Stanley.

Con.—(*Setting down her grip and complying with request.*) O yes, certainly, Aunty. But where is Ivy?

Aunt S.—She had to take her French lesson over at College. But she'll be back directly and will doubtless bring Professor Armstrong back with her.

Con.—O, is Ivy going through College, then? Isn't that nice?

Aunt S.—O no. I don't quite approve of co-education. It is apt to make girls unwomanly and bold. But she is taking French, and goes to the library now and then. (*Goes up and opens door of other bedroom.*) This is your room, if you want to change your gown and refresh yourself before tea.

Con.—(*Depositing wraps and grip in bedroom.*) Thank you, Aunty. But I haven't anything to change with yet. My trunk will be here by and bye, I suppose. And I am not at all tired. (*Coming down.*) You know, Aunty, I am so delighted to be back in California in time for the election. To think that you and Ivy and all the other women are really going to vote! Isn't it glorious? (*Seizes hold of Aunty around the waist, and tries to waltz around the room with her.*)

Aunt S.—(*Standing stiffly and refusing to dance.*) No, I do not intend to vote, nor Ivy, either. I was opposed to the Amendment.

Con.—(*Stopping, disappointed.*) O, Aunty, you don't mean it!

Aunt S.—(*Proudly.*) Yes, I was present at the Legislative hearing at Sacramento, and read an original poem entitled "The Wail of a Remonstrant." Would you like to hear it? (*Begins without waiting for an assent.*) (*Constance seats herself on the couch to listen.*)

O honored and wise legislators
Who destinies guide of our State,
We trust that you will not prove traitors
But spare us a horrible fate;
The suffragists' clamor unheeding
Whom vulgar ambition controls
O turn a deaf ear to their pleading
Who'd drag us to vote at the polls!

No more rights than we have, we desire
We true women—mothers and wives;
For to politics we don't aspire,
And would cut it right out of our lives.
In your hands is the country's salvation
And in ours is the saving of souls;
So spare us the sad degradation
Of voting with you at the polls!

Then hark to our humble petition
O earnestly do we implore
And leave us our womanly mission
You to serve and obey, and adore.
This amendment, then, pass it sirs, never!
And where Honor its heroes enrolls
Your names we'll inscribe them forever
If you'll save us, O save, from the polls!

(*Seats herself on one of the chairs, and picks up a fan from the table, fanning herself after the effort.*) Several Senators congratulated me when I had finished. They said it would be a great help.

Con.—(*Dryly, amused.*) I have no doubt it was Aunty—to the suffragists! But now that the amendment has carried, and votes for women is an accomplished fact in California, you will surely vote, and Ivy, too!

Aunt S.—(*Positively.*) No, I shall not. I could never go through the ordeal. And as for Ivy, I do not wish the delicate bloom of her young womanhood rubbed off by contact with rough men and women at the polls. Ivy is so womanly and innocent. She has been brought up under my own eyes. Then the minister of our church, the Rev. Jay Hawse Chestnutt, does not approve of woman's voting.

Con.—(*Taking note of the fact.*) Ah, indeed!

Aunt S.—No. He has preached beautifully on the subject several times. I expect him any minute, as he usually drops in to take tea with us. Is my hair all right? (*Rises, putting up hands and patting hair.*)

Con.—O yes, Aunty. It looks very nice. (*Smiling and taking note again.*)

Aunt S.—I am surprised, Constance, at a good looking girl like you taking up with this fad of voting. It will make you so unattractive to men. And I advise you not to express your extreme views in the presence of Professor Armstrong.

Con.—Why not, Aunty? Armstrong! That's a queer name for a French professor. He's elderly and wears glasses, I dare say.

Aunt S.—Not at all. He's the new assistant professor in the Social Science Department, young and very good looking, and he is from Boston, highly cultured and conservative, of course. But I dare say it will not matter what you think, as he is quite devoted to Ivy. (*Knock at street door.*) Oh, there is Mr. Chestnutt now. (*Bustles up to door and opens it.*) (*Admits Rev. Hawse Chestnutt.*)

Rev. Chest.—(*Very effusively, grasping her hand and shaking it warmly.*) How are you this afternoon, my dear Mrs. Suffridge? (*Hangs his hat on rack near door.*)

Aunty.—This is my niece from Colorado. (*Constance rises from couch, and bows.*) Miss Constance Wright. I was just telling her that your ideas of woman's sphere quite conformed to my own. We shall have to get tea ourselves, as my maid left when she heard that company was coming.

Con.—(*Coming down towards kitchenette and opening door.*) O that doesn't matter, Aunty, I should think you'd hardly need a maid at all, in such a cozy bungalow as this. What a cunning little kitchen! I should love to cook in it. (*Aunty takes samovar from table, and goes into kitchenette.*) (*Con. comes up and addresses Rev. C. who has seated himself.*) I can scarcely believe that a man of your position would use it to injure the great cause of woman's equality.

Chest.—On the contrary, my dear young lady, I revere and worship Woman; Woman as the *inspirer* and helpmate; the tender vine that clings and twines her lovely tendrils about the sturdy oak—Man. (*Aunty returns with samovar, filled with water, and beams on him approvingly.*)

Con.—Just like a parasite, dragging him down.

Rev. C.—Through life's vicissitudes she is ever at his side, a ministering angel, cheering and consoling him, wiping the beady drops of perspiration from his brow, smiling, smiling— (*Aunty stands with the samovar in her hand beaming on him.*)

Con.—(*Prosaically.*) Even when she has the toothache, I suppose. (*Aunty goes to get a match and lights the alcohol lamp under the samovar.*)

Rev. C.—(*Rising from his chair and striking an attitude, as though in the pulpit.*) She is like the lovely modest violet nestled in the woodland grasses, the graceful, drooping lily of the valley; too pure, too precious to sully her dewy rose-petalled innocence in the mire of politics. Her sphere is the Home, the Little Child—

Con.—(*Innocently.*) But Aunty hasn't any little child, Mr. Chestnutt, or Ivy either; and I haven't heard of their adopting any!

Rev. C.—(*Continuing.*) Leaving to man the rough labor of the world and of government; the strenuous pursuits of industry, commerce and the professions. (*Aunty stands off left and regards him approvingly.*)

Con.—Especially the *high-salaried* positions, of course. It doesn't matter about her bending over the wash-tub all day.

Rev. C.—(*Ignoring the interruption.*) It is his manly function to tunnel the mountain, to span a continent, to cultivate the harvest, to build bridges—

Con.—(*Leaning forward confidentially.*) Tell me, Mr. Chestnutt, did you ever build any bridges, or tunnel a mountain?

Rev. C.—Far above the rude clamor of the market-place, serene as a goddess she stands upon the pedestal where the worshipful love of man has placed her. (*Aunty nods in assent.*)

Con.—(*Rising.*) Beside the idiot, criminal and lunatic!

Rev. C.—Why, my dear young lady! (*Gasping in astonishment.*)

Aunty.—Constance, what do you mean?

Con.—(*Firmly.*) That's the company she has up there on the pedestal in

those states where she hasn't a vote. They are all disfranchised together. Now I will go and get ready for tea. (*Goes up toward her bedroom, then turns back.*) By the way, Mr. Chestnutt, I need scarcely remind a man of your erudition, that the Greeks used the word "idiot" to signify a private citizen who took no interest in public affairs. They believed that participation in government was necessary to the right development of the intellect. (*Goes into bedroom u. r.*)

Aunty.—(*Recovering after a moment.*) Mr. Chestnutt, will you be so kind as to assist me in setting the table for tea?

Rev. C.—(*With alacrity.*) I shall be only too delighted, my dear Mrs. Suffridge, if you will give me *minute* instructions, as I am rather awkward about those little domestic details.

Aunty.—(*Taking the tea-pot from the sideboard.*) O, you only have to put on the tea things; five cups and saucers, the spoons and sugar bowl, which are all here. I will put some tea in this, as the kettle is nearly boiling. (*Goes into kitchenette.*)

Rev. C.—(*Gazes after her admiringly. Constance comes from bedroom and observes him. He begins to obey Aunty's behest, taking hold of the cups and saucers gingerly and carrying each one separately to the table.*)

Con.—(*Going over to writing-desk; picks up paper.*) O, this is interesting! (*Reads.*) Sixteenth Century Woman's Club, Calendar for week October 17th to 24th. Monday 10:30 A. M., Class in Ceramics; Art Potteries of the Ancients; Monday 2:30 P. M., High Art Section Study of Painting of John the Baptist's Foot, by an old master. Tuesday, 10:30 A. M., Lecture by Prof. Foss L. Stratton, War Implements of the Silurians. Tuesday, P. M., History Section. Exhibit of Shoe-Strings and other Relics of Louis XI. Wednesday, 10:30, Music Study Section. Handel's Oratorio as contrasted with Rag-time. Wednesday P. M. Social—Bridge Whist. (*Aunty comes in with tea-pot.*) But don't you ever discuss questions of the day, Aunty? And why do you call it the Sixteenth Century woman's Club?

Aunty.—(*Setting tea-pot on table.*) No; they are likely to cause inharmony. We confine ourselves to the Sixteenth Century and earlier. That is the limit. (*Takes cream pitcher into kitchenette.*)

Con.—Yes, Aunty, I should think it was. (*Continues to read from Calendar.*) Thursday A. M., Poetry Section; Allegorical Interpretation of Browning's "Muckle-Mouthed Meg." Thursday P. M., Dramatic Section; Discussion of Question raised by Commentators as to whether Shakespeare's Hamlet was Fat or Lean. (*Stops a moment to take this in.*) (*Aunty returns with cream pitcher. Rev. C. carries plates separately to the table.*) O, I see. You wanted to find out if the weight of authority leaned to the side of his weight or his leanness eh, Aunty? (*Continues to read.*) Friday A. M., Domestic Science and Sanitation in the 11th Century. Wasn't that the time of the plague? Friday P. M., Social Section. Bridge Whist. O, Aunty! So that was the important meeting you couldn't get away from! (*Laughs, and lays calendar back on desk.*)

Aunty.—(*Stiffly.*) As President of the Club, it is proper that I should attend all functions. (*Looks over at Rev. C. for support, but he is laboriously depositing plates on table.*)

Con.—(Gayly.) O yes, Aunt. But if you go to all these meetings, I don't wonder you have so little time to spend in Woman's true sphere—the home!

Aunt.—(Ignoring these remarks, goes to sideboard or takes from bottom portion a jar filled with cakes.) (Street door opens and Ivy enters, Professor Armstrong following her.) (Ivy is dressed in an exaggerated hobble skirt, a low-necked peek-a-boo waist, a Marie Antoinette muslin "baby" hat, and slippers with high Frenchy heels. Her hair is puffed out behind and at the sides with rats; her complexion powdered and rouged.)

Ivy.—(Bouncing up to Constance, as well as her high heels and hobble skirt will allow.) O, Connie, dear, I'm so awfully glad you've come! (Embracing her ecstatically, turns to Professor Armstrong.) This is my cousin from Colorado; Miss Constance Wright, Professor Armstrong. He came especially to meet you, this afternoon, you know, Connie. (Glancing sideways up at Prof. A. and then back at Con. with a conscious blush. Prof. A. acknowledged the introduction, and also greets Aunt and Rev. C.) Won't we have a perfectly lovely time together! (Skipping about with her peculiar "hobble" gait, throwing her hat and jacket on the couch, etc., while she talks.) Shopping in the city and going to the matinee, and bridge parties nearly every afternoon.

Con.—O, but I haven't any money to go shopping with, Ivy; I spent all I had to come to California. I never indulge in bridge, and don't care for the play unless it is a very good one. So I am afraid I will be a disappointment to you.

Ivy.—(Not at all impressed.) O my, how queer you are, Connie! Aren't you interested in anything at all? (Flopping down into a chair opposite Con., and looking at her with pitying amazement.) (Aunt and Rev. C. busy themselves in completing the preparations for tea, put plate of cakes on the table, set chairs around it, etc.)

Con.—(Deliberately.) Yes, Ivy. I have been telling Aunt Suffridge that I am very deeply interested in the election, and seeing the women of my native state exercising the highest privilege of citizenship, as they do in Colorado. (Prof. A. turns from the bookcase, and looks at her with interest.)

Ivy.—(Giving a little scream of horror.) O, you mean voting! Why we haven't any time for such things, have we Aunt (pronouncing it Arntie). And it's not womanly, you know! (Giggles, as though saying something smart or witty.)

Con.—Well, Ivy, in Colorado we don't consider it womanly to wear a hobbled skirt. You see ideas differ.

Ivy.—(Jumping up and pirouetting around.) Why, Connie, these are the very latest fashions from Paris. They are all the rage, and just too swell for anything, now!

Con.—Maybe. But we are all American women, not Parisians. You hardly seem to me like a Western girl, Ivy.

Aunt.—Tea is ready. Will you please sit here, Mr. Chestnutt? (Indicating seat at her left as she stands at the head of the table.) Prof. Armstrong, you will sit next to Ivy, of course (smiling sweetly at him); and Constance, you will be on my right. (They seat themselves as requested,

Prof. A. at the foot between Ivy and Constance.) (Aunt S. proceeds to pour the tea.)

Arm.—(To Con.) I believe it is claimed that woman's vote has not accomplished very much in Colorado.

Con.—(Quietly.) It has not brought about the millenium, if that is what you mean.

Aunt.—(Triumphantly.) There now! (Handing Mr. C. his cup of tea.) Cream and sugar, Mr. Chestnutt? (With a creamy and sugary glance.)

Prof. A.—But, after all, results are nothing to the point. You have voted, Miss Wright, have you not?

Con.—(Taking cup of tea from her aunt.) Thank you, Aunt. Only once—that was two years ago. I gave up my vote this time to come to California. You see this is my native state, and so when I heard that the vote had been won I just cried for joy! (Prof. A. looks at her with curious interest, as she passes him his cup of tea.)

Aunt.—Well, Constance, you are perfectly rabid on the subject (passes tea to Ivy and pours out a cup for herself.) But I could never unsex myself by voting. (Ivy simpers assent.)

Con.—Well, Aunt, if Nature made men and women so near alike that just putting a piece of paper in a box is going to make us into men, then I should think she might have saved time and energy by making only one sex! (Rev. C. sets down his cup of tea very hard.)

Aunt.—(Reprovingly.) Constance! What a shocking speech! What will the Rev. Mr. Chestnutt think of you? Have another cup of tea, Mr. C. (Takes his cup and refills it.)

Prof. Arm.—Do you consider your niece unsexed by her experience in voting, Mrs. Suffridge?

Aunt.—Well, Constance has voted only once, as she says; and it may not have had very much effect, as yet. Still I should like to see her as unsophisticated and girlish as Ivy. Do have some more of the cakes, Mr. Chestnutt.

Rev. C.—But my dear Mrs. Suffridge, Miss Ivy's so different. She takes more after you. (Drinking his tea, and helping himself liberally to the cakes.)

Ivy.—(Pleased and looking at Armstrong affectedly.) O, so I do; don't you think so, Professor?

Arm.—(Soberly.) I certainly do, Miss Millstone.

Rev. C.—"The ever-womanly," as the great German poet so beautifully puts it, "leads us upward and on." Do you not agree with me, Professor Armstrong? (Looking at Aunt admiringly.)

Arm.—(Drily.) That is undeniable, sir. You and Goethe are both correct. (Aunt and Chest. both look delighted.) But exactly what constitutes "the ever-womanly" is a somewhat disputed point.

Aunt.—But surely you don't consider it womanly to vote, Professor?

Prof.—Woman's most distinctive attribute being the care, nurture and provision for the well-being of the child (Aunt, Ivy and Chest. all nod approvingly), or consequently, of the race; then for her to have a hand in regard to pure food, sanitation, morals and education—choosing those who are to make and administer the laws which will ensure the well-being of

her own progeny and of posterity might justly be considered an act so pre-eminently womanly (*Aunty and Ivy look crest-fallen*) that it might even be called the *most womanly* that she could possibly perform. (*Sensation. Rev. Chest. chokes in his tea-cup.*)

Aunty.—(*After her recovery.*) But what is to become of the home, Professor, when women have deserted it and engage in the mad scramble for office.

Arm.—(*Calmly.*) Even if such a state of affairs were to come to pass, Mrs. Suffridge—even if the order of things described by Mill in his Subjection of Women were to be exactly revised, and man to become the subject sex—we should have to accept it as being in the natural course of social evolution, and bound to work out for the welfare of the race. (*Smiles at Constance.*)

Aunty.—(*Hastily taking Rev. C.'s cup.*) Let me give you another cup of tea, Mr. Chestnutt. (*Finding none in the pot.*) O, I am so sorry, there is no more here.

Rev. C.—O, it doesn't matter, my dear Mrs. Suffridge. I must really be going. The hour is getting late. (*Rises from his seat, and the others all do the same.*)

Con.—(*Holding out her hand.*) I thank you, Professor Armstrong, for what you have said. I wonder (*hesitating and smiling*) if it would not be possible to incorporate it into one of your lectures at College, and thus help to bring out a good large vote of the women of Stanley?

Arm.—(*Cordially, taking her hand and holding it, and looking into her face.*) It can be done, Miss Wright, and it will be done, if you will promise to attend the lecture. But we will speak of this further as I too, must take my departure.

(CURTAIN)

ACT SECOND.

Same scene—morning. Aunty busy at desk, writing, a large volume beside her. Sheets of paper scattered about. Does not look up as the door opens, and Constance comes in at the street-door, carrying a small basket of provisions.

Aunty.—O, Constance, is that you? I want you to help me with this paper on the Position and Influence of Woman in the Sixteenth Century. (*Importantly*) I must have it ready to read before the Social Science section of the Club day after tomorrow.

Con.—I've been doing the marketing for lunch, Aunty, I couldn't depend on the man to send the things in time, so I brought the lamb chops and strawberries, and some lettuce for salad. (*Takes things into the kitchenette, then goes up to bedroom to lay off hat.*)

Aunty.—(*Still intent on the pages of the Encyclopedia.*) O yes, (*indifferently*) it's too bad we haven't a maid. They promised to send me one from the office. This Encyclopedia doesn't say anything at all about Woman's Position, but perhaps Ivy will bring back a book from the University library. She has gone to ask Professor which are the best on the subject.

Con.—(*Coming down from bedroom with a white shirt-waist and fancy apron on.*) Well, Aunty, I don't believe there's much to tell about the Position and Influence of Woman in the 16th Century. (*Looks down at the open page of the Encyclopedia and reads here and there turning the pages now and then.*)

Here it says: "The commonest comforts of life such as we understand them, were lacking in this age. There was lavish luxury and display among the nobles and ruling class, but the condition of the common people was deplorable in the extreme. . . . The lord of the manor spent his days in riotous dissipation, when not engaged in fighting in the constant wars, and was half the time in a state of beastly intoxication. . . . The laborer in his squalid and filthy hut, that afforded no protection from the weather, was a prey to disease."——There, Aunty! now what do you suppose the condition of the women was? You see, the book doesn't say anything about the Position and Influence of Woman because—there isn't anything to say! She didn't have any. (*Goes down towards kitchenette.*)

Aunty.—(*Turning over the pages again industriously.*) I cannot believe it. But Ivy will be back soon with the right books, I hope.

Con.—(*Coming up, puts her arms around Aunty.*) Now, why won't you make up your mind to stop being a 16th Century Woman, Aunty, dear—and take more interest in the position and influence of woman in the twentieth century? Well, I must go and start lunch. (*Goes down to kitchenette, then looks back—teasingly.*) Say, Aunty, why don't you go and consult the Rev. Hawse Chestnutt on the subject, since you consider him such an authority on Woman generally?

Aunty.—That's not a bad idea, Constance. (*Rises.*) I should be apt to find him in his study at this hour, I dare say. I'll go and get ready at once. (*Goes up left and into a bedroom to dress.*)

Knocks at street-door.

(*Constance goes to open it. Admits Rev. Chestnutt.*)

Con.—Why, what a coincidence! Aunty was just going to call on you, Mr. Chestnutt. She wanted to consult you on a very important matter; her paper that she is going to read before the Club.

Chest.—(*Flattered.*) Ah, indeed! And I have come to—eh—call.

Con.—For the purpose of consulting her on a very important matter. Am I not right?

Chest.—You are—Miss Wright.

Con.—And I can just about guess what that important matter is, too. It concerns Aunty and—yourself. (*He looks rather startled, but cannot deny it.*) I believe that you admire my Aunty, Mr. Chestnutt.

Chest.—(*Heartily.*) O yes, yes indeed. Mrs. Suffridge is a very fine woman—
Con.—But not quite your ideal, Mr. Chestnutt. Is it not so? For I am sure that you, in common with all the great thinkers and leading divines of the country, believe that woman should use her influence for the good of the community.

Chest.—(*Flattered.*) You are right, my dear Miss Wright. She should use her influence and precisely—in a womanly way.

Con.—By direct participation in government, as Professor Armstrong was saying the other day. Now I feel confident, Mr. Chestnutt, that a public-spirited man like yourself must be deeply concerned in the election of honest and efficient men to office. Perhaps there is some candidate that you are especially interested in?

Chest.—(*Delighted.*) You have divined exactly, Miss Wright; with marvelous intuition. There is an old friend of mine, Grafton Ward, who is up for County Clerk, and approached me the other day on the matter.

Con.—Exactly. Just as I thought. Now, Mr. Chestnutt, you must use your *position* and *influence* with my Auntie to get her to vote for Ward, and use *her* position and influence with the other women of the 16th Century Club to do the same. I am quite sure that Auntie would be willing to sacrifice herself for the common good if she thought you wanted her to do it. There is still time, according to the new law, for Auntie and Ivy to register and vote. By the way, you know, Mr. Chestnutt, Auntie's first name is *Lavina*!

(*Auntie comes out of her room, clad in a tailor suit and large hat; starts back when she sees Chestnutt.*)

Con.—(*With an air of delightful mystery.*) Mr. Chestnutt anticipated your call, Auntie. He has come on a delicate and important mission, which he himself will tell you about.

Auntie.—(*With undisguised pleasure.*) O, indeed!

Con.—Now I must go and see about lunch. (*Goes into kitchenette.*)

Auntie.—(*Coming down and drawing up a chair opposite Chest.*) I am quite curious to know what this *delicate* and *important* mission can be! (*Flustered, putting up her hands to her head.*) But I am forgetting to remove my hat—

Chest.—(*Putting up his hand to prevent her.*) Do not, I beg of you, my dear Mrs. Suffridge. It is—eh, so extremely becoming!

(*Auntie acknowledges the compliment implied.*) You are looking extraordinarily well this morning. I feel—ahem!—that it is a propitious moment for my proposal— (*Auntie places her hand on her heart, with a little gasp.*) I should say my proposition. (*Auntie draws back slightly, with a disappointed look.*)

Auntie.—(*Stiffly.*) What is your proposition then, Mr. Chestnutt, may I ask?

Chest.—It is that you use your high social position and influence in Stanley to insure the election of my old friend, Grafton Ward, a most able and honest man, to the office of County Clerk.

Auntie.—Oh! you want me to use my *indirect* influence in favor of this candidate of yours.

Chest.—Ahem! Your *indirect* influence, my dear lady, and—ahem!—your *direct* influence as well, if I may put it that way.

Auntie.—(*Astonished.*) You mean that you want me to *vote*, Mr. Chestnutt? (*Enter Con. from kitchenette to see how things are going.*)

Con.—(*Opening door of kitchenette.*) O, Auntie; I forgot to ask you whether you like French chops or the other kind?

Auntie.—O, it doesn't matter, Constance. (*Rises and turns her back, annoyed.*)

Con.—(*Coming out and addressing Chest.*) And you, sir; I hope you will remain and lunch with us. (*Getting a chance for a word edgewise.*)

Lay it on thick about her being your ideal. (*Retires to kitchenette.*)

Auntie.—(*Coming down again.*) So this is the *delicate* matter you had so much at heart!

Chest.—Ah yes, my dear lady. For I feel, in common with other leading thinkers and divines, that woman's participation in politics is demanded, for the best good of the nation.

Auntie.—(*With some sarcasm.*) Ah! But these are not the sentiments I have heard you express in the pulpit, Mr. Chestnutt, as to lovely woman and her exalted mission, inspiring man to do his civic duty and never descending from her lofty pedestal into the pool of politics—

Chest.—But my dear Mrs. Suffridge, the rank and file of the women of my congregation are weak-minded creatures who like to hear that sort of slushy talk. (*Auntie gives a start.*) My *first* wife, the late Mrs. Chestnutt, was one of that kind, a mere *echo* of myself, and I will say to you in confidence, my dear Mrs. Suffridge, that it required at times all of my ethical culture and manly self-control to refrain from—a proceeding which would have been—ahem!—highly unjustifiable in a man of my vocation—to-wit, wiping up the floor with her!

Auntie.—(*Giving a little shriek.*) O—Mr. Chestnutt!

Chest.—(*Moving his chair closer.*) But you, my dear Mrs. Suffridge, are quite different. You are a woman of high ideals, who would not hesitate, I know, to sacrifice her personal feelings to the public good. Such is the *true* woman—such is my ideal! (*Puts out his hand to take hers; Auntie yields it coyly. Constance appears from kitchenette to see how things are progressing.*)

Con.—Shall I cream the potatoes, Auntie? (*Auntie gives a little scream, and draws her hand away from Chest.*) O, I beg pardon! (*Withdraws into kitchenette once more.*)

Auntie.—But how can I ever nerve myself to undergo this dreadful ordeal, from which I have always shrunk with horror!

Chest.—(*Getting possession of her hand again.*) And womanly modesty! But I will be at your side—Lavina! Oh, let me call you by that sweetly symbolic name, so suggestive in its relation to true womanhood! (*Bending forward.*) I will support you with my manly arm, and give you courage to perform the deed! (*Waxing more eloquent.*) I will even wade into the pool with you and lift you above its mud and mice, so that no trace of it shall soil your dainty skirts, like—Paul and Virginia! (*With a happy inspiration.*)

(*Constance opens door again and overhears last words.*)

Con.—(*Coming out.*) And then, Auntie dear, you will be Anti-Suffrage no longer! (*Both start and look at each other quietly and then at Constance.*) Of course, because you are going to vote. And Mr. Chestnutt is going to lead you to the polls first and afterwards—to the altar, of course. And then you will not be Auntie Suffridge any longer, either, but Auntie Chestnutt. (*Laughs gaily.*) Now, Mr. Chestnutt, isn't that so? Auntie has elected you to the highest position in her gift—by only one vote!

Chest.—You are quite right, Miss Constance. Lavina! through all life's vicissitudes and trials I shall be at your side.

Con.—As a sturdy oak should do.

Chest.—And you, Lavina, will twine your loving tendrils about me, even as the clinging vine. (*Catches hold of Auntie and attempts to illustrate; she bashfully resists, then yields.*) Let us exemplify this beautiful parable of the tender, clinging vine and the sturdy—

Con.—Chestnutt Tree! (*They proceed to exemplify.*) Street-door opens and Ivy and Professor Armstrong enter. They stand spellbound at the sight. Auntie and Chestnutt make haste to “break away.”

Con.—Aunty dear, I think you had better change the title of that paper of yours, now you are going to be a 20th Century Woman, you know. (*To Ivy and Arm.*): Aunty is going to vote at the election. Mr. Chestnutt will lead her to the polls, and afterwards to the altar, and she is not going to be Aunty Suffridge any longer, in any sense of the word.

Ivy.—(*Rushing down to her and embracing her.*) O Aunty, isn't it too perfectly lovely for any use!

Arm.—(*Coming down and shaking hands with both.*) Accept my felicitations.

Con.—Now there is just about time for you two to go and call upon some of the members of the Club and get them to promise to vote for Ward. It will be a graceful way for you to announce your engagement to be married.

Aunty.—By the way, Constance, what do you think I had better wear to the polls?

Chest.—Let us go, Lavina. You are right, Miss Constance. (*Both go out at street-door.*)

Ivy.—(*Gazing after them and giggling.*) Isn't it too delightful to have an engaged couple in the family! Let's have an extra good lunch, Connie, and you'll have to stay and celebrate with us. (*To Arm.*)

Arm.—O no, Miss Ivy, I only came to (*looking at Con.*) have a word with you about the—

Ivy.—O, I thought you came to help Auntie with her paper!

Arm.—And I am due at my boarding-house for luncheon.

Con.—We are going to have French chops and creamed potatoes; and I could make a bird's nest salad if I had some cottage cheese from the delicatessen store. Ivy, you might telephone for it—and some cream for the strawberries, right away.

Ivy.—(*Goes up left to 'phone and takes down receiver.*) Hello, I want the delicatessen store—O I don't know the number—on Main street. (*Sees Arm. go up to Con. out of the corner of her eye.*)

Arm.—I thought I might get a chance to speak to you about a plan I have—

Ivy.—O dear, I can't manage this at all. Won't you please come here and do it for me, professor? (*Lays receiver on 'phone.*) Ten cents worth of cottage cheese and a pint of cream. (*Goes into bedroom.*)

Con.—I must look after the potatoes now, and hull the strawberries. You don't get strawberries in November in Boston, Prof. Armstrong! (*Goes to kitchenette.*)

Arm.—(*At the 'phone.*) This is Prof. Armstrong, of the University. I wish to order some things. No, I don't want them sent to the University (*irritably*), but to Mrs. Suffridge's bungalow; cheese—no, I did not say Limburger cheese, cottage cream-cheese; no, not cream cheese, cottage

cheese and cream: Mrs. Lavina Suffridge's cottage—bungalow. Great Jumping Jupiter! (*Dashes down receiver and goes to door of kitchenette.*) Miss Constance, you will have to come and give this order. (*Stands and wipes the perspiration from his forehead.*)

Con.—(*Smoothly, telephoning.*) Please send at once to Mrs. Suffridge, 126 College Avenue, ten cents worth of cottage cheese and a pint of cream. Thank you so much. Good-bye.

Arm.—(*Looking at her admiringly.*) I have a plan for the election which I think will meet with your approval, Miss Constance—

Ivy.—(*Coming down in white waist and fetching apron.*) O, but we have to get lunch now, don't we, Connie? What shall I do first?

Con.—Well, you had better start setting the table now, Ivy. Perhaps Prof. Armstrong will help you. (*With mischievous intent.*)

Arm.—(*Hastily.*) Isn't there something I could do for you—in there? (*Pointing to kitchenette.*) And then I might tell you my plan—at the same time?

Con.—(*Smiling sweetly.*) O no, I never allow the missus, or college professors, in my kitchen. (*Turns and comes down.*)

Arm.—(*Desperately.*) Then let Miss Ivy help you, and I will return to my boarding-house. I am due there for luncheon.

Ivy.—(*Hobbles over to rack and takes possession of his hat.*) O no, you can't go. You've got to stay here and help me set the table. We'll have the best table cloth and dishes on; won't we, Connie? Because this is such a happy occasion!

Con.—Yes, and you and Prof. Armstrong can cut the bread and the cake—it's under the sideboard, you know, and put on a pitcher of water and the butter and—

Arm.—(*Appealingly to her.*) I thought you would be interested in my plan to bring out a large vote of the women—

Con.—(*Smiling back at him.*) O, yes, we'll discuss it after lunch. (*Goes into kitchenette.*)

Ivy.—Now we'll begin setting the table. (*Takes tablecloth and napkins from under sideboard.*) Here's the very best tablecloth, and napkins to match. Isn't it perfectly lovely to think of Auntie and Mr. Chestnutt being really engaged! (*Looks at him archly as she unfolds the cloth.*) How suddenly things do come about sometimes, when you'd never expect it!

Arm.—(*Ignoring this remark.*) Your cousin said the dishes were in there (*glancing down towards kitchenette.*) I will fetch them. (*Starts to go down, but Ivy intercepts him.*)

Ivy.—(*Dropping the tablecloth in a heap on the sideboard.*) O no, you needn't. I know just which ones to get. (*Pushing past him, then looks back.*) You may put on the tablecloth. (*Goes into kitchenette.*)

(*Arm. sends a look after her and mutters something under his breath.*) (*Goes up to bookcase and stands looking at books.*)

Ivy.—(*Returning with a tray of dishes.*) Here they are, professor. O, you haven't— (*Knock at street-door.*)

(*Ivy puts tray down, opens it—calls into kitchenette.*) The delicatessen things have come, Connie! (*Con. comes in with more dishes. Puts them down on table. Takes package from Ivy.*)

Con.—That's good. Now I can make the bird's nest salad right away.
(*Arm. turns around and comes down.*)

Ivy.—(*Tittering.*) Bird's nest salad. How awfully sweet and appropriate! Don't you think so, professor?

Arm.—(*Blandly.*) I did not quite catch your remark, Miss Millstone. (*Addressing himself to Constance.*) That lecture I am going to give—I wanted you to help me choose the title.

Ivy.—(*Fluttering around like a hen with her head cut off.*) O dear, I do feel so excited and happy this morning! Come on, professor, and help me set the table!

Con.—Yes, do get busy, you two. There's quite a lot to be done yet. (*Goes into kitchenette with things.*)

Arm.—(*Severely.*) Don't you think, Miss Millstone, that you had better assist your cousin in the kitchen? I think I can manage alone in here.

Ivy.—(*Calmly.*) O no; I'm not at all clever at cooking, tee-hee!

Arm.—(*Jerks dishes off table, and slams them on sideboard.*) No—I shouldn't imagine you were as clever at it as you are at other arts not domestic, Miss Millstone.

Ivy.—(*Giggling as though at a compliment.*) You see, we always had a girl, till Connie came. But I will devote more attention to housework some day—when I get married, you know! (*With arch significance.*)

Arm.—(*Seizes the tablecloth and strides over to the table with it.*) Well, we'd better get this table set, anyway, Miss Millstone. Bring on the dishes now, please. (*Lays cloth very unevenly.*)

Ivy.—(*Fluttering up.*) O, that isn't straight at all! I guess you don't know much more about housework than I do, professor! (*Takes hold of tablecloth to straighten it out, cocking her head to one side, affectedly.*) There! Now we can put the dishes on. O! (*with a shriek of delight as Con. comes in with salad on tray*) there are the birds' nests! Aren't they too cute!

Con.—(*Setting salads on table.*) What were you saying about the title of your lecture, Prof. Armstrong?

Arm.—Why, I thought of calling it "Patriots and Idiots."

Con.—Splendid. Now that Aunty is going to vote, I suppose you will be willing to vote, too, Ivy?

Ivy.—(*Coyly.*) O yes, if Professor Armstrong wants me to. You will tell me who to vote for, won't you, professor?

Con.—But you can never vote in that hobble skirt, Ivy. You'd be apt to tumble headlong into the pool. You must get a sensible skirt, and a real hat and shoes, with flat heels, and look like a truly womanly girl, exercising the highest function of citizenship.

Ivy.—(*Pleased at the notion of new clothes.*) All right, Connie. I'll go to Madame Stitcher's this very afternoon and order the dress. (*Constance goes back into kitchenette.*) But you'll have to promise to take me to the polls, professor, just like Mr. Chestnutt is going to take Aunty. (*Armstrong busies himself in putting napkins on the table.*) I am just tall enough to look well beside you! (*Sidles up and measures herself against him. Arm. moves away to get dishes.*) Of course, Willie Sapling could take me. He's just my age, twenty-one, and is going to cast his first

vote, too. But, then, he doesn't believe in women voting, you see, and you do. (*Takes knives and forks out of sideboard drawer, and looks up at him again with what is intended to be a captivating expression.*)

Arm.—Yes; (*aside*) wish I didn't. (*Seizes glass pitcher from sideboard and strides to kitchenette.*) May I get some water in this pitcher, Miss Constance?

Con.—(*Coming to door.*) I'll fill it for you. (*Takes pitcher.*)

Ivy.—O, professor! You didn't put those napkins on right at all. (*Con. brings pitcher back to door, filled.*)

Arm.—Thank you. (*Takes it.*) I am so glad you approve of the title. It was suggested to my mind—

Ivy.—(*Rearranging the napkins.*) And you forgot the spoons and the sugar bowl, and the butter dish!

Arm.—(*with an annoyed glance in her direction*)—by that Greek definition you mentioned the other day and—

Ivy.—(*Bouncing up to the sideboard.*) It's time to cut the bread and cake now, professor! (*Getting them from underneath.*) You do it while I put on the knives and forks, please. (*Arm., with an expressive look at Con., sets pitcher on table. Con. goes into kitchenette.*) Here's the bread knife, professor (*holding it out to him with a smile as he comes up.*) Only I hate to hand you anything sharp—they say it cuts friendship, you know. (*Tittering.*) (*Arm. looks at her absent-mindedly, takes knife.*) Now you have to say the little rhyme we used to say at school—and then it won't! (*Coquettishly.*) Don't you know it—about knives cutting love in two?

Arm.—(*Cutting bread in huge chunks.*) I—don't recollect any such rhyme, Miss Millstone. (*Ivy looks at him out of the corner of her eye, as she takes knives and forks from sideboard and places them around the table.*)

Arm. piles bread on plate, then attacks cake, slashing away at it fiercely.)

Ivy.—O, don't you? (*Innocently.*) Well, it begins "If you love me"—(*Giggles and look at him expectantly.*) (He piles cake on top of bread.)

O, professor! You musn't put the cake and the bread on the same plate! Is that the way they do at your boarding-house?

Arm.—Well, fix it to suit yourself, Miss Millstone. (*Turns away and goes up to bookcase. Stands facing it, his arms behind his back, whistling.*)

Ivy takes another plate, removes the slices of cake onto it, slowly and with an injured air, as she glances in his direction from time to time. Carries the plate of cake over to the table and puts it down.)

Ivy.—O! (*Claps her hand on her heart, with a die away expression. Arm. turns around.*) I feel so faint! (*Staggeres over to couch.*) I must sit down a moment. (*Flops down.*)

Arm.—(*Coming down slowly.*) Why, what is the matter, Miss Millstone?

Ivy.—(*Closing her eyes.*) I don't know (*in a faint voice*); I feel so weak. I must have been over-exerting myself—this morning. Would you mind—getting me a glass of water?

Arm.—Certainly not. (*Goes over to sideboard, takes glass to table and pours water from pitcher. Ivy poses herself becomingly on the couch, while his back is turned.*)

Ivy.—Won't you please—give it to me? (*Looks up at him like a sick calf, as he stands opposite her holding out the glass of water. He makes one stride, and puts the glass to her lips, placing his other hand at the back of her head, forcing her to swallow the entire contents of the glass.*) O—O! (*Spluttering and gasping.*) It's too much!

Arm.—(*Standing off and regarding her coldly.*) Yes, Miss Millstone—I think it is.

Ivy.—(*Stretching out her hands to him.*) Now—if you will help me—(*he makes no movement*) I think—I can rise—and finish—setting the table. (*Stands up; grabs him by the coat.*)

Arm.—(*Trying to disengage himself from her clutches.*) O, I think you are all right, Miss Millstone. Or, at least you will feel better after lunch. (*As she clings to him, he drags her over the table, reaches over and takes a piece of bread from the plate.*) Here, eat this. (*Crams it into her mouth.*)

Ivy.—(*Rejecting it.*) No, no! It's not hunger—but—O, I'm sure I'm going to faint! Save me! (*Drops her head with a thump on his shoulder.*) O, dear—professor! (*Clasping him tightly around the neck.*)

Con.—(*Coming out of kitchenette.*) Is everything fixed in there? (*Stands astonished at what she sees.*)

Arm.—(*Frantically trying to get Ivy's arms off.*) O yes, quite. If Miss Millstone will kindly—disengage herself.

Ivy.—(*Refusing to oblige him.*) O, O! I was going—to faint—(*in a voice like a squeaking mouse*), but he was here and caught me—

Arm.—(*Imploringly to Con.*) Won't you please come—and help your cousin to the couch? I think she will feel better lying down. (*Breathing hard, with set teeth.*)

Con.—(*Coming up to them.*) We had better carry her—hadn't we, since she is so weak. (*Stoops down to Ivy's feet and jerks at them so that she is forced to let go her hold on the professor.*) I'll take her by the feet and you—

Ivy.—(*As her arms slip down.*) O, O! (*Arm. takes her by the shoulders and together they carry her to the couch.*)

Con.—Lay her out perfectly flat. That's the best position for a fainting person. (*Arm. dumps her down, and Con. puts her feet together and adjusts her as though laying out a corpse.*) Please bring some water, Prof. Armstrong.

Ivy.—(*Trying to raise her head.*) O, no; I feel better; but I did faint, didn't I? (*Arm. goes over to table.*)

Con.—(*Forcing her head down again.*) Lie perfectly still, Ivy. (*Feeling her waist.*) Your corset is too tight. That's why you fainted. We must loosen it. (*Makes a motion to undo her waist. Arm. comes with pitcher of water.*)

Ivy.—(*Convulsively preventing her.*) O no—it isn't! But I— (*Shrieks and tries to spring from the couch as Arm. holds the pitcher of water as though about to deluge her with it.*)

Con.—(*Holding her down firmly.*) Just a few drops, Professor, please.

Arm.—Dashes some on her face with his free hand and distributes considerable more on her person as though sprinkling clothes to be ironed.

Street door is opened and Auntie enters, followed by Celest. Both stop short in amazement at sight.

Auntie.—What is this? Has anything happened to Ivy? (*Alarmed, advances to couch. Arm. sets pitcher back on table.*)

Con.—O, nothing much, Auntie. Only she felt a little faint, but Prof. Armstrong happened to be right there and—

Ivy.—(*Sitting up.*) He saved me! O, I am so happy! And I promised him—

Auntie.—What, Ivy dear? (*Looking at Arm., who stands, glaring at them all.*)

Arm.—Miss Millstone said she was not hungry, but I think she will feel better after lunch. (*Con. goes into k.*)

Ivy.—Promised to let him take me to the polls, just like you and Mr. Chest. But he couldn't remember the little rhyme about bird's nest salads, you know—

Auntie.—(*Sitting on couch and feeling Ivy's forehead.*) The dear child seems somewhat delirious. (*Severely to Arm.*): What are we to understand, Professor Armstrong?

Arm.—(*Coming down to rack and seizing hat.*) That your niece, Miss Millstone, is—a peach, Madam! (*Enter Con. from kitchenette.*)

Auntie.—(*echoing*)—a peach. O Jay! (*Falls on Chest's shoulder.*)

Con.—Lunch is all ready. (*Arm. claps hat on*): I must excuse myself. They will be waiting lunch for me at my boarding house. (*Turns abruptly to go.*)

Chest.—O no, they never wait lunch at a Stanley boarding house.

Con.—O, professor, let me fetch a clothes brush. Ivy has rubbed some of the bloom off on your shoulder. (*Arm. starts, scowls at shoulder, brushes it with his hand as he walks quickly upright and goes out.*) Tableau.

(CURTAIN.)

ACT THIRD.

(Scene—Main street, Stanley. A polling place. Election day. Afternoon. Voting booth just visible (small) at extreme lower left corner. Sign reading "100 feet from polls, etc." Florist's shop at lower right with rustic bench in front, potted palm. Ice cream and confectionery store, drug store, music store between. Mrs. Twaddler Jones seen coming from polls up right. Mr. and Mrs. Wrinkle going towards polls down left.) (*Enter Armstrong carrying badges, upper right.*)

Mrs. T. J.—O, good afternoon, Professor Armstrong, is it not? You see we are really voting, with our husbands, too. O, have you the badges there? What an excellent idea that was—to have the Committee appointed by our Club.

Arm.—(*Bowing.*) Ah, yes. Then you are a member of the 16th Century Club? Here are the badges. (*Producing them.*)

Mrs. T. J.—The 20th Century Club, if you please, Professor. You know the name was changed at a special meeting called by our President, Mrs. Lavina Suffridge, who is most anxious to see that all the members should do their civic duty. O, they are handsome! (*Arm. pins a badge in the national colors on her jacket. Mr. Twaddler Jones comes out of florist's with a chrysanthemum.*)

Mr. T. J.—(*Handing flower to Mrs. T. J.*) There, my dear, now you are a full-fledged American citizen.

Mrs. T. J.—(*Fondly.*) To be sure, Twaddler. (*Takes the chrysanthemum.*) I suppose flowers are going up (*to Arm.*) since every woman voter is to be presented with them by some masculine friend or relation. (*Mr. and Mrs. Dudsteich Wrinkle come from polls. Mr. D. W. goes into florist's.*)

Mrs. T. J.—(*Showing badge and chrysanthemum.*) See my "Good Citizen" badge, Mrs. Wrinkle. This is Professor Armstrong, who gave the lecture, you know.

Mrs. D. W.—(*Enthusiastically.*) O yes, indeed. I haven't had a chance to thank you for that inspiring lecture, Professor. I am sure it has helped us all to be good citizens today. (*Mr. D. W. comes out of florist's with another yellow chrysanthemum. Hands it to his wife. (Bows to the professor, lower right, as Constance enters. She likewise carries a lot of badges.)*)

Arm.—(*Face lighting up.*) O, I was wondering where you were. I haven't had a chance for a word with you today. (*Mrs. D. W. goes to vote.*)

Con.—(*Smiling.*) No, we've both been too busy. But there seems a lull just now. Well, our plans are working finely, are they not? O dear, it makes me want to vote myself.

Arm.—Simply great. These newspaper articles published all over the state have helped a whole lot, of course. Do sit down here and rest a moment. I want to talk to you.

Con.—(*Seating herself on bench.*) I only voted once, you know, but I am just like a tiger that has tasted blood. (*Laughing.*)

Arm.—Miss Constance, I've never had a chance to clear up that wretched misunderstanding the other day. Of course, I could not go to your Aunt's house again after what happened and I could only see you at college—but you know, Miss Constance, you treated me rather shabbily that day. I came to see you, and— (*Mrs. D. W. is seen to pass into election booth.*)

Con.—And Ivy took possession of you. But Auntie had given me to understand when I first came that you were paying attention to Ivy, and how could I be so unwomanly as to—

Arm.—(*Getting up from bench.*) I never paid any attention to that vain little idiot (*both laugh*)—if she is your cousin. She was always coming to my class room on some pretext or other.

Con.—Ivy is no worse than any average girl would be, brought up on Auntie Suffridge principles, without any occupation or purpose in life but to be womanly! (*Laughs.*) Well, I'm afraid you'll have to escort her to the polls, anyway. She says you promised.

Arm.—(*Firmly.*) I did not. She kept hinting, but I tell you, Miss Wright, that if your cousin, Miss Millstone, insists on hanging herself around my neck that I shall drag her to the wharves and drown us both in the Bay.

Con.—Well, you'll both be drowned and hanged then, but if you positively refuse we will have to find another strong arm. I'm sure there must be some college youth available. (*Thoughtfully*): It seems to me that I have heard her speak of one, but I forget his name.

Arm.—(*Eagerly snatching at a straw.*) Yes, she spoke to me of one, the same one, doubtless, but I can't think of his name either. (*Puts both hands to his head.*) O, wasn't it Willie something sappy—Sapling, that's it. Well, I'll go and hunt him up. (*Jumps up and goes off quickly; knocks against Rev. Chest.*)

Rev. Chest.—Oh, good day, Prof. Do you know whether Mrs. Suffridge and her niece— (*Mrs. D. W. comes back from the polls and gets badge.*)

Con.—They haven't come yet, Mr. Chest. Have you voted?

Chest.—Oh yes, but, eh—I was to meet Mrs. Suffridge and eh—could you advise me what kind of flowers would be most suitable to present her with—

Con.—(*Mischievously.*) Well, of course, you can't get violets at this time of the year and it's not the day for orange blossoms yet; I should think a bunch of American Beauty roses would be as nice as anything.

Chest.—(*Delighted.*) Just right exactly. You do possess remarkable intuition, my dear Miss Wright. A big bunch!—I shall certainly order at once. (*Goes into florist's.*)

(*Enter Auntie and Ivy, in new costumes, looking very conscious and important. Attending a social function. Mrs. Dudsteich Wrinkle and Constance go up to meet them.*)

Mrs. T. J.—O, so glad you've come, dear Mrs. Suffridge and Miss Millstone. I've voted.

Auntie.—Are we late? Where is Mr. Chestnutt? (*Looking around.*)

Con.—He'll be here right away, Auntie. He is ordering the flowers for you. (*Whispering.*) American Beauty Roses? (*Auntie and Mrs. T. J. converse.*)

Ivy.—(*To Con.*) My new suit just came home from Madame Stitcher's. That's why we couldn't come before. Isn't it sweet and stylish? (*Pirouetting around to show Con.*)

Con.—(*Drawing her down to the bench.*) It's very neat and becoming. Ivy, I want to speak to you about something. You know today is a very important day in your life. You are going to cast your first vote and become a true citizen of your nation, state and country. You are going to be a patriot and not an idiot, from now on. (*Chest. comes out of florist's.*)

Chest.—(*Going up to Auntie.*) O, how perfectly lovely you look my dear Lavina. Are you prepared to cast your ballot?

Ivy.—Yes, I know, and Prof. Armstrong is going to lead me to the polls and give me flowers for voting, like the paper said. Where is he?

Auntie.—(*Opens her shopping bag and extracts articles.*) O, yes, I am well prepared for the ordeal. Jay, dear; here are my smelling salts, my fan and handkerchief, and I hope I shall be able to do my civic duty.

Con.—(*Looking over at her, to Ivy.*) Why, he is very busy, Ivy, as chairman of the Badge Committee. He has gone to one of the other precincts and won't be here in time to escort. (*Rises from the bench and leaves Ivy there—goes up to Auntie.*) But Auntie you know who you are going to vote for, don't you? And how you are going to do it? They use the machine here, you know.

Auntie.—(*With dignity.*) O, yes, I have often heard of the political machine, Constance.

Con.—(Going back to Ivy—confidently seating herself again.) Now, Ivy, I want you to tell me whether you *really care* for Prof. Armstrong? I know you were *very much excited* that day of Aunty's engagement? We could not judge fairly of your feelings.

Ivy.—(Tossing her head.) O, I'm not so awfully stuck on him, if that's what you mean. Arntie always talked as if he was such a fine catch, and he's got a *mighty nice* position at the University and all that. But you can have him, Connie! Some of the college boys, Willie Sapling and others—have been much nicer to me than he has, and Willie is a fine football player, if he did get cinched in his classes.

Chest.—(To Aunty.) Now, you see, Lavina, these surroundings are not so very contaminating, now, are they? That nice, clean booth or the stores and the flower shop.

Aunty.—(Looking around.) Sure enough the drug store might come in handy if I should be overcome, wouldn't it?

Con.—(Coming up.) Sure, Aunty, and you can get a *disinfectant*, there, if you need one, you know.

Aunty.—(To Chest.) And you will be right here at my side, Jay!

Chest.—Yes, lean on me, Lavina. I will support you with my manly arm. (She takes his arm and starts to walk down toward the booth with slow, measured tread. Mrs. T. J. and Con. converse up right.) (Enter Willie Sapling lower right.)

W. S.—O, hello, Ivy! (Ivy jumps up from the bench, delighted.) Prof. Armstrong told me you were going to vote, so I came over. I cast my ballot first thing this morning. (Proudly.)

Ivy.—Yes, Willie! and will you take me to the polls, and you have to give me flowers afterwards, you know.

Aunty.—(Stopping after going a few steps.) I must pause a moment and consider the importance of the step I am about to take. (Closes her eyes and places hand over them.)

Con.—O, you are not going to be married just now, Aunty.

Ivy.—(Looking over at Aunty and imitating her.) You must let me lean on your arm, Willie, as I am only a girl, you know, and have never voted before.

Willie.—Aw, it's dead easy, Ivy; nothin' to be scared of. Come awn! (Takes hold of her by the arm, a little roughly.)

Ivy.—(Closing her eyes.) Be careful, Willie. I faint *very easily* (with languid air) and I wouldn't want to have to be carried into the drug store and be revived in the middle of voting, you know.

Willie.—Aw g'long, Ivy. You aughter be caught in a college rush. This ain't nothin'. Spunk up, Ivy and get some class to ye, like the co-eds have got. (Starts towards the booth with her.)

Aunty.—(Who has nearly reached the polls.) The thought that I am bearing my share of the burdens of state will uphold me!

Chest.—And my arm, Lavina. (Strains of "Merry Widow" waltz are heard from music store orchestra.) But I must leave you here. Only one person is allowed in the booth at a time. (Withdraws his manly support.)

Ivy.—(Tittering.) Isn't that too funny for anything? Well, Arntie won't be a Merry Widow much longer, and I'm going to be bridesmaid, Willie. (Enter Prof. Armstrong up right. Con goes up to speak to him.)

Aunty.—(To Chest.) But you will be here when I return, Jay, will you not, to conduct me from the polls, and take me home?

Chest.—(Encouragingly.) Certainly, Lavina, and don't forget to mark the name of Grafton Ward, for County Clerk, Lavina. (Aunty smiles at him sweetly, nerves herself with a strong effort and enters the booth. Chest comes down to florist's.)

Willie.—O, pshaw, Ivy! You oughtn't to think of such things when you're going to vote.

Chest.—(Goes up to her on his way to florist's.) All ready to do your civic duty, Miss Ivy? And you're going to vote for my friend Grafton Ward for County Clerk, are you not?

Ivy.—Yes, but Willie you'd better see about my flowers, you know, before they're all gone. There's plenty of time for me to vote! (Chest goes into florist's.) (Constance and Prof. Armstrong come down to bench.)

Arm.—Yes, I think there will be a very large vote of the women in all the precincts. You are certainly to be congratulated on the success of your little plot for the encouragement of true citizenship among the women of Stanley.

Ivy.—(To Willie.) Arntie is going to get American Beauty roses, and I think I ought to have some, too.

Willie.—(Reluctantly.) Well, I'll see about it, Ivy. But flowers are awfully dear today, you know.

Con.—A rosebud would be most appreciated for Ivy, Mr. Sapling. And some maidenhair fern. (Willie goes into florist's.)

Arm.—The men are getting awfully jealous: they say they have voted for years and never got any flowers for it.

Con.—It's been awfully good of you to put in your time like this to help us.

Arm.—And a whole month's salary, Miss Constance; presenting flowers to ladies who hadn't any male friends or relatives. But it's in a good cause.

(Aunty comes out of booth, advancing down stage with mien more self-important than ever. Chest emerges from florist's shop holding a single American Beauty rose in his hand goes to meet her.)

Con.—(Going up to Aunty.) Now, Aunty, haven't you got that self-respecting feeling? See, here's your badge, aren't you proud to wear it? and Prof. Armstrong says there's been a big vote polled by the women. And you had a lot to do with it. (Pins badge on her.)

Aunty.—(With self-satisfied smile.) Yes, Constance. (To Mr. Chest.) O, did you only get one? (Disappointed air.)

Chest.—(Making a good bluff.) Yes, Lavina. (Holding the rose off, and gazing at it admiringly.) Because there is only one American Beauty rose—like you. You are the only American Beauty around here and so was this rose. Will you allow me? (Fastens it on her corsage, with a flourish.)

Con.—(Going up to Ivy who is waiting for the flowers.) Now it's your turn, Ivy, and don't forget who the best candidates are. (Willie S. comes out of florist's with a single sprig of maidenhair fern.)

Willie.—Say, Ivy, this was all I could get, and I had to fight with that old Jay Chestnutt for it, too—wanted to give it to his Merry Widow; (*disgustedly*) and there was only one rose and not a single bud. He had to pay five dollars for it, though, you bet! (*Ivy pouts but pins on fern, takes Willie's arm and goes over to the polls.*)

Arm.—(*Coming up to Aunty.*) Allow me to congratulate you on coming safely through the ordeal!

Aunty.—(*Languidly.*) Yes—but I am quite fatigued. I must rest a moment. (*Seats herself on the bench. Chest. sits beside her. Plucks a palm leaf off the potted plant, and fans her with it. (Gramophone in music store, or orchestra, plays national air.)*)

Arm.—(*To Con.*) As I was saying, the experiment has been a great success, and I am only too happy to have borne my part in it. I fear to be perfectly candid, that my co-operation has been given mainly for your sake, to further your plans and to serve you.

Con.—(*Gaily.*) O, but that will never do, Professor Armstrong! That's just what *we women* are always accused of; acting from personal motives, and not for the highest good of the body politic. I am indeed shocked to hear you make such a confession. (*Turns away from him, and strolls over toward the bench.*)

Chest.—(*To Aunty.*) I think, Lavina, that you might enjoy some ice cream by way of refreshment after your political ordeal. And as this place is so convenient—— (*Both rise from the bench and go up to confectionery store.*) (*Gramophone or orchestra plays Wedding March.*)

Arm.—(*Standing before Constance, as she takes Aunty's place on bench.*) I am going to take you at your word, then. You have told me that you made some sacrifice in coming to California, giving up your school and leaving your mother in Colorado. (*Con. looks up at him inquiringly.*) Now, I am going to ask you to make a still greater sacrifice for the good of your native state. (*Pauses.*) I believe so thoroughly in your patriotism that I hope you will not hesitate——

Ivy.—(*Coming back beside Willie but not leaning on him*)—(*triumphantly.*) There! I've done it, I've voted! Now, where's my badge, Constance? (*Con. rises and pins it on.*) (*Professor Armstrong goes into florist's.*)

Willie.—(*Sheepishly, looking as though he wanted one, however.*) O shucks! We men don't have to wear them things!

Con.—Aunty and Mr. Chestnutt have gone to get ice cream.

Willie.—O gee! Let's us get some too, Ivy! (*Go into store.*) (*Professor Armstrong comes out of florist's carrying bouquet bunch of yellow roses.*)

Arm.—(*Holding out roses to Con.*) These are not American Beauties but—

Con.—(*Clasping her hands in delight.*) California!—O, but they are beauties! Where did you get them?

Arm.—(*Coming up to her and putting them into her hands.*) I had them reserved for you early this morning.

Con.—(*Inhaling their fragrance.*) That was so kind of you—and the color! Golden yellow for my native State, and for our great cause as well.