BIRD'S NEST

MYGATT
BIRD'S NEST

Price, 35 Cents
Royalty, $5.00 for Each Amateur Performance
# WIGS

## AND OTHER HAIR GOODS

### WHISKERS AND MUSTACHES

*State Color Wanted on Hair Goods.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Beard on Wire</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Beard on Gauze</td>
<td>$2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chin Beard on Gauze, 6 in. long</td>
<td>$1.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chin Beard on Gauze, 4 in. long</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chin Beard on Wire</td>
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<td>Tramp Beard on Cambric (black and brown only)</td>
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<td>Side Whiskers on Gauze</td>
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<td>Santa Claus Beard on Wire</td>
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<td>Mustache on Gauze</td>
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<td>Goatee on Gauze</td>
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### MEN'S WIGS

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<th>Item Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dress, with parting, all colors</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Uncle Josh&quot;</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>$6.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish, chamois top</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jew Character</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crop, Red and Blond</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
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<td>Other colors</td>
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<td>Court or Colonial</td>
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<td>Indian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modern Japanese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese, with Queue, chamois top</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clown, plain</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>With 3 knobs</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negro, black, for Minstrels, etc.</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negro, Old Man, White or Gray</td>
<td>$2.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negro, Bald, White or Gray</td>
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### LADIES' WIGS

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<td>Soubrette, all colors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Maid, all colors</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish Biddy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sis Hopkins</td>
<td>$6.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crepe Hair, Different colors, for making mustaches, etc.</td>
<td>$2.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per yard, .45; half yard</td>
<td>$0.25</td>
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**WALTER H. BAKER CO., Boston, Mass.**
BIRD'S NEST

A Fantasy in One Act

By

TRACY D. MYGATT

Author of "Children of Israel," "The Noose,"
"Good Friday," "A Passion Play of Now,"
and other plays

NOTE

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BIRD'S NEST

CHARACTERS

George Sanford — a bridegroom
Martin Doan — his man
Lydia
Richard — newly-married lovers

Scene.—The garden outside a cottage.
Time.—A night in May.

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Bird's Nest

Program of the first performance. The Village Studio Guild of Ogunquit, Maine, July 28, 1921. Produced under the direction of Mr. Leigh Lovel with the following cast:

George Sanford, a bridegroom - - Ray P. Hansom
Martin Doan, his man - - Mr. Leigh Lovel
Lydia
Richard \{ newly-married lovers \} Gladys G. Ascherman
\{ Richard Coolidge

The music for the Minuet was composed for the performance by Mr. Stanley Muschamp.

It was next produced by The Little Theatre of Denver, Colorado, December 8th and 9th, 1921, under the direction of Park French, and with the following cast:

George Sanford, a bridegroom - William G. Schweigert
Martin Doan, his man - - R. J. Willis
Lydia
Richard \{ newly-married lovers \} Rose Moro
\{ Norman Ives

The dance was directed by Miss Lillian Cushing.
Through the courtesy of Mr. Stanley Muschamp the very lovely music composed by him for the original performance of "Bird's Nest" is printed. It can be bought of Walter H. Baker Company for 50 cents per copy.
To

FRANCES WITHERSPOON

who knew the little house for Bird's Nest,
and whose fancy plaited straws with
mine in a May moonlight
PLEASE NOTICE

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Bird's Nest

SCENE.—A little low white cottage, approached by a gravel-path which winds up from gray, moss-grown steps at L., flanked by lilac-bushes. A sunken step leads across the tiny pillared porch, twined deep with honeysuckle which, together with the tall, recently-acquired French windows, stands open into the living-room, dark now except for its moonlit shadows. At the rise of the curtain there is a moment in which the dark and stillness permeate one; then there is a slight noise overhead, an electric light flashes in the upper hall, and a tallish, youthfully old figure that is MARTIN DOAN, wearing valet’s livery, can be made out, descending the little flight of stairs just inside. As he reaches the bottom, the heavy strokes of the clock in the church tower, faintly visible in the middle-distance, begin to boom out midnight. MARTIN pauses, listening. As the strokes proceed, he steps into the open doorway, and peers into the garden.

MARTIN.

[In soft unison with the bells.] Nine—ten—eleven—twelve——!

[Then, snapping the profound quiet which suc-
ceeds the ending of the chimes, there is an abrupt movement above stairs, and George Sanford’s voice, thick but vibrant with unwonted excitement, calls.

SANFORD.

That you, Martin?

MARTIN.

[Turning toward the cottage.] Yes, sir.

SANFORD.

[Jovially descending the stairs.] Well, well, Martin, what have you got to keep you awake?

MARTIN.

[Measuring a conscious distance in his voice.] I hardly know, sir! It was such a night, sir! I was going to bring up the ear-trumpet ——

SANFORD.

[Joining Martin on the door-step, his too-well-fitting clothes making an open secret of his stoutness.] Well, well, did you think you’d find it here, listening to those everlasting chimes? But I’m glad you reminded me, Martin! I shouldn’t have slept a wink if I hadn’t known it was all right, every way!

MARTIN.

[Again turning to go in.] Yes, sir, I put it on the table with the other packages ——

SANFORD.

Thanks. [Laying a protesting hand on Martin’s arm.] But don’t go in yet, Martin! I—I want to talk.
BIRD’S NEST

MARTIN.
Yes, sir.

SANFORD.
[Sentimentally looking up at the moon.] Just look at her! Isn’t she splendid? Doesn’t she —— [He breaks into a fat chuckle.] Now just listen to that, will you? Don’t that show the state I’m in—callin’ the moon “her” and “she”! Why, that’s what they say in the magazines. I was readin’ one last night—[With fatuous explicitness.] one of those love-stories! Why, Martin, I haven’t said “her” and “she” for forty years!

MARTIN.
[Dutifully.] Yes, sir.

SANFORD.
[Testily.] Well, don’t that show ——?

MARTIN.
[Dreamy eyes on the cedar over the cottage.] The moon’s beautiful, sir!

SANFORD.
[With a pitying snort.] Beautiful! Why, Martin, beautiful’s no word for it! She—she’s elegant! Magnificent—er—“magnifique,” I think the French would call it! Such a romantic language, French! Mrs. McCormorant’s kept a French maid for years! But of course you couldn’t be expected to know, or—[A sentimental hand on his heart.] or feel ——!

MARTIN.
[Suddenly attentive.] Not a pain, sir, in your heart?
SANFORD.

[Starting irritably.] Pain?—in my heart? What are you talking about?

MARTIN.

Beg pardon, sir, but I understood the doctor said——

SANFORD.

Damn the doctor! Don't you know I only went to satisfy Evelina—Mrs. McCormorant? Why, I never was fitter in my life! But she does love me so——[Sighing.] and I her! I her! Ah, Martin, again that is something you cannot understand—when two hearts beat as one! [Scornfully, as MARTIN says nothing.] I suppose you'd think it was a disease!

MARTIN.

Sir——?

SANFORD.

[ Holding him as both look into the garden. ] Ah, no matter! Just think, Martin, this time to-morrow night we shall be here—she and I—here in the Bird's Nest——[Chuckling.] Ha-ha—not bad, that, considering the nest-egg! I whispering sweet nothings into her little sea-shell ear!

MARTIN.

[ Edging away. ] Beg pardon, sir, but shall I fetch the ear-trumpet up to your room?

SANFORD.

[ Seizing him suspiciously. ] Eh? Now what did you mean by that, I'd like to know?
BIRD'S NEST

MARTIN.

[Impeccably.] Why, I thought you wanted it, sir!

SANFORD.

Yes, yes, I wanted it, but you see—I'd just been saying—er—I'd just been alluding—[As MARTIN regards him.] oh, damn it, no matter! No matter!

MARTIN.

Shall I fetch it, sir?

SANFORD.

[Reluctantly turning indoors with him.] I suppose so! But mind, if ever I find you insinuating things about Mrs. McCormorant's deafness—oh, well, you may take your month's pay and clear out! Why, it might gum the whole game!

MARTIN.

Yes, sir. In fact, sir, as you mentioned it, and a similar thought being in my own mind——

SANFORD.

[Hastily.] I'm not mentioning anything, Martin—and neither are you!—Assuredly not the night before my wedding!—when you know perfectly well, or would, if you had the least touch of romance—that I'm all of a flutter inside! [As they step, fumbling a little, into the living-room.] Now where's that confounded button? This jumpy moonlight makes everything disappear!

[MARTIN switches on the light, which illumines the old spinnet, L., and the portrait of an elderly woman in crude, modern evening dress, which hangs upon the wall.]
BIRD'S NEST

MARTIN.

Here, sir ——! [Going to the table, c., on which are several ear-trumpets.] Now you'll be able to see which ear-trumpet's the best, sir!

SANFORD.

[With a grunt, surveying the instruments before him.] Oh, you unwrapped them!

MARTIN.

Why, yes, seeing how important it was for tomorrow! I was very careful, sir ——

SANFORD.

Yes, yes, it would never do to let her go to church with her trumpet broken. Dear, dear, such an unfortunate accident—and the day before the wedding! Here, let's bring it all into the garden—— [As MARTIN obeys him, and as they carry the little table just outside.] Not to hear the vows—— [Sentimentally.] "Till death do us part!" [Then, practically, to MARTIN.] Look here—before I go upstairs, let's try them out—— [Giving MARTIN the rope end of one of the trumpets.] You go over there——[With a gesture, right foreground.] and say something!

MARTIN.

[Dubiously preparing to obey.] But you're not deaf, sir!

SANFORD.

[Slightly dashed.] No, I'm not deaf—but it might give us an idea—— [He backs away from MARTIN.] There! Now try it!
MARTIN.

[On a low note.] You'd best go to bed, sir!

SANFORD.

[With an irritability that shows he has heard.] I can't hear a word!

MARTIN.

[As before.] You wouldn't want rheumatism on your wedding day! You know what the doctor —

[Sanford puts down the trumpet crossly, jerks the other end from Martin, lays the instrument on the table, and hastily selects another.

SANFORD.

Here—let's try this one—and change places with me—and you hold the thing-um-a-bob to your ear! [Martin, with a faint shrug, complies, so that he stands where Sanford has been standing, therefore facing the garden. As the arrangement is completed, Sanford begins, speaking sentimentally into the tube.] Do you know, they say the Bird's Nest was built for lovers! Can you hear?

MARTIN.

[His eyes on the garden.] So I have heard, sir!

SANFORD.

[Practically.] That's good! [Suppressing a yawn.] Then I guess I'll give her this one—it's too late to try 'em all!

MARTIN.

[Suggestively.] Best try if I can hear the story, sir!
The story? Oh, yes! [At first he speaks into the tube, but as he continues, he seems to forget his original purpose, becoming engrossed in his subject.] Well, I had it from the man I bought Bird's Nest of, a year ago, before I put in the improvements. Queer! I don't believe I've thought of it since that day! And I asked him why he didn't put it in order himself, and he—he said that years ago his father was planning to bring his bride here when —–

[As Sanford breaks off.] Yes, sir?

[Beginning to laugh softly, as at a delicate joke he does not himself understand.] Why, he could! He simply couldn't! You see—Bird's Nest was built for lovers —–! [As Martin says nothing.] Lovers, Martin! Why don't you laugh? Don't you see the joke?

[Gravely.] No, sir. Is the story a joke, sir?

The story? Dear, no! A ghost-story, Martin—think of that! Brrr-rrr! [With a mock shiver, lowering his voice in coarse joviality.] Spooks—haunted! Nobody but me's had the nerve to think of living here for fifty years and more! Afraid the visitors mightn't approve. Visitors—ha-ha! Bear in mind, Martin—Bird's Nest was built for lovers. [As Sanford begins to laugh again, Martin regards him with a curious look. He is still laughing when
the grandfather clock in the parlor begins to strike midnight. Sanford, himself again, starts violently, takes a step toward Martin, then, as if rooted to the spot, stands listening. The face of Martin, too, has changed. Pallor, first, then, as the clock strikes on, light, reflected as from some deep centre within, covers his face. He casts one anxious glance at his master; then, as if surrendering himself to his profound absorption, he softly crosses to the porch and peers out. Sanford, as the strokes go on.] Whatever made you wind up that damned old clock, Martin?

Martin.

[At the door.] I didn't wind it!

Sanford.

You must have! It hasn't struck since I took the cottage!

Martin.

[Turning and regarding him significantly.] But it is striking, sir, isn't it? Striking midnight?

Sanford.

[Abruptly.] So you have heard the story?

[Without looking at him, Martin steps further into the garden where white moonlight now floods gravel-path and steps. Then, a note of repressed triumph in his voice.

Martin.

Yes, sir—! Ten—eleven—twelve—! [Then to himself, on a low note of joy.] Ah—!
BIRD'S NEST

SANFORD.

Built for lovers — — ! Well, why not? Why not?
Ain't love the strongest thing in the world? — Stronger
than death?

[As MARTIN, incapable of answer, stares into
the garden, SANFORD, with a grunt, turns
inside, and laboriously begins the ascent of
the little staircase. Once he pauses and
throws back a condescending glance. Perceiv­ing
it lost on his abstracted servant, he
resumes his journey, and presently passes
out of sight into the rooms above. There
is a moment of pregnant silence. Then,
with a smothered cry, MARTIN steps swiftly
forward, and, arms extended in a poignant,
yearning gesture, seems to greet the two per­
sons who, unaware of him, are rounding the
path to the garden. As, very close to one
another, they come onward to the cottage,
his arms drop, and as they mount the little
steps, he withdraws into the shadows of the
hedge. At this, the small feminine figure
in the colonial flowered lavender and quilted
poke-bonnet, slips her little black-mitted hand
even more closely into the arm of her grave
young escort. He wears a coat of deep
bright blue and snuff-colored trousers; a
high white stock is about his throat; on his
head, a square hat.

LYDIA.

[With clear approval, as MARTIN vanishes.] That
was very polite of him, dear Richard! Quite as if
he understood the circumstances,
RICHARD.

[Ardently.] Yes, yes, but pray do not let us think of that now, my darling! We are home—at last!

LYDIA.

[Caressing the lace ruffle on his sleeve.] Yes, of course, dear Richard! But [With vague unrest.] we must be particular about the people—I fear he is not the only one about!

RICHARD.

Must we think of them at once? Couldn’t we just settle down?

LYDIA.

[Rapping him playfully with her little prayer-book.] Settle down? Without knowing who’s about? The idea! Do you think my mamma brought me up to be that kind of a housekeeper?

RICHARD.

[With a courtly bend.] I’m sure you’re the best housekeeper a man ever had!

LYDIA.

[Sweeping him a courtesy.] Thank you, thank you, dear Richard! [Then, suddenly picking up her long flowered skirts so that the lavender clocks twinkle above the little slippered feet.] And I’ll prove it to you! [Puzzled, half to herself.] Though I don’t know why I said that about the people a minute ago. Things puzzle me so sometimes. I’ll race you to the kitchen—though it’s unladylike, I suppose, to run—but I do want to make you a pasty. Mamma always made them for my papa, and my marriage be-
ing so near, she taught me last week. I made them perfectly yesterday!

[Lydia breaks into a run; Richard catches her wrist, and together they are running into the cottage, when the ear-trumpets on the table meet their astonished eyes.]

Richard.

[Pausing and examining them.] Lydia! What are they? What on earth can they all be?

Lydia.

[Laying down her prayer-book and just touching them.] I haven’t the—the ghost of an idea! What do you think they are, Richard? You’ve studied so much,—wouldn’t the Rev. Mr. Heathcote have prepared you for them?

Richard.

[Fingering them cautiously.] He might have, I suppose, but I don’t believe I ever got that far advanced!

Lydia.

[Penitently.] That’s because I interfered with the pursuit of your studies, dear Richard! If you hadn’t stopped to marry me——

Richard.

Ah, Lydia, that’s the best thing my poor old tutor ever did,—marrying us to-day!

Lydia.

[Suddenly drawing very close and laying her little hands on his breast in a sort of piteous daring.] Today? Oh, Richard,—there’s the queer feeling again—it comes and goes! But if it was to-day,—[Very
poignantly.] Oh, Richard, why were we so long getting home?

**RICHARD.**

[Caressing her gently.] It was that little spill we had, my darling! That's why you're still a little shaken. I feel much the same way myself! Ajax was trotting along nicely and, after all, it was hardly strange how frightened he became at that steam-car!

**LYDIA.**

[Ruefully.] Poor little pony! I should think they might have waited for their old experiment till after our wedding! One thing, I am sure that when Papa informs Mr. Van Beuren about the accident, he will put a stop to any such ridiculous practises! [Tossing her curls.] Steam-cars, indeed!

**RICHARD.**

[Thoughtfully.] I suppose so. And yet, of course it isn't as if it had been a serious accident! Ajax stopped as soon as we upset! [He bends over her with sudden anxiety.] You—you're quite sure it didn't hurt you, my darling?

**LYDIA.**

[With a little laugh.] Why, Richard, you've asked me that a hundred times! Of course it didn't hurt! I was just a bit frightened—more for poor little Jaxy than myself. How he did run! That steam-car made such a queer noise—and moving that way without a thing to make it go. Positively creepy, I call it! [Rousing herself.] But my frock's all right! There's only this—

[She pushes back her bonnet and clustering curls to show his concerned eyes a tiny mark over her left temple.]
[Bending and kissing it.] Kiss it and make it well! [He plays a moment with her curls; then, gravely.] Dearest Lydia, how thankful I am it was nothing serious!

LYDIA.

[Nestling close.] And how thankful I am for you! Just what you showed me? No more?

RICHARD.

[Pointing to an imperceptible stain on his plum-colored waistcoat.] A mere scratch!

LYDIA.

[Softly.] Dear Richard—will you not think me foolish if——

RICHARD.

[Taking her face between his hands.] If what, Pet? Is it being my wife makes you so afraid of me? Indeed I've never noticed such behavior before!

LYDIA.

Don't laugh, dear Richard! I know I was never very religious! It is so good to be alive! [With a little shiver.] Alive——! Alive——! Religion is just for poor sick dead people, but——

RICHARD.

What, Lydia?

LYDIA.

Well, on Sunday, would you send a messenger to the Rev. Mr. Heathcote and have him offer that——
that thanksgiving in the prayer-book about a safe return? [With a desperate little sob.] Oh, Richard, I—I couldn't bear to have been hurt in the runaway—Not to be here, alive and happy, in Bird's Nest——

[She stops, panting, and he gathers her into safe, protecting arms.

RICHARD.

But we are in Bird's Nest, my dearest! We are! We are!

LYDIA.

[Looking up from his breast in frightened appeal.] Of course we are! But I'm glad to have you tell me so! You see, Richard, long before I was a married woman—one afternoon last spring it was—an old gipsy woman came to our house one day, and she read my palm—Mamma was out—or she never would have permitted it!—And she told me——

RICHARD.

What did she tell you?

LYDIA.

She said—"It will end where it began!"

RICHARD.

[With a laugh, though his eyes are troubled.] Was she referring to my Greek? That ended where it began!

LYDIA.

[Seriously, as they pass through the open door into the little parlor.] Mamma thought it meant my marriage! She consulted the Vicar, but he was too
highly educated to believe in such "nonsense," he called it! And I was always so happy—in spite of sister Eliza's being so much prettier than me—don't you think so, Richard?

**Richard.**

[Indignantly.] Eliza! Flibbertigibbets! Why, you're the prettiest girl in the world! [Turning her to the tall mirror at the side of the room.] There! See for yourself ——!

**Lydia.**

[Smiling.] How on earth can you think so? [Then she goes close and examines the cut for herself.] Lucky my hair curls, isn't it? This horrid little mark will never show. Now poor sister Eliza—of course she is much prettier than me, Richard—but her hair's straight as a poker, and do you know, whenever she tries to have curls, she invariably burns it!

[Richard, taking a turn about the room, during the last speech, has now brought up before the full-length portrait of Mrs. McCormorant that hangs upon the wall. Her pink satin and the diamond pendant about her substantial neck shine bright in the electric lamp beneath the portrait.

**Richard.**

Well, speaking of beauty —— [Confronted by the sight of the lamp, he touches the bulb gingerly.] Good gracious! Glass all round the lamp! How on earth would the smoke get out? And a string—oh, heavens ——! [As he puts out the light.] What have I done?
LYDIA.

[Helplessly, at his side.] Oh, Richard——!

RICHARD.

[Accidentally pulling the light on again.] How very strange!

LYDIA.

[Breaking into a peal of delicious laughter, as the picture flashes again into view.] Richard! My heavens! Did you ever see such clothes? She must have got them out of the Ark!

[Richard surveys the portrait with frank disgust, and then lets his eyes rest on his little bride with patent satisfaction.]

RICHARD.

Poor thing! I shall never complain again about women changing the fashions! What else was there for her grandchildren to do?

LYDIA.

[Scornfully.] Grandchildren! Why, Richard, I'm sure Grandmamma never wore such a frock! [Pointing to the portrait.] She must have been a great-great, at least!

RICHARD.

[With decision.] And not on my side! Possibly yours, Lydia?

LYDIA.

Not at all! [Puzzled.] But if she isn't on yours, Richard——? [A fear which she vainly tries to repress suddenly thrilling her voice.] But she must be on yours! Else why is she here?
RICHARD.

I tell you she isn't, Lydia! [Then, as Martin softly emerges from the shadows where he has been watching them.] Look! There he is again! Who can it be?

LYDIA.

[Tugging at his arm, fascinated by the portrait.] Oh, Richard, dear Richard, I—I don't like to look at her! It frightens me!

MARTIN.

[Approaching the door, and looking within.] I beg pardon, sir, but did you call?

RICHARD.

[Looking from Martin to Lydia.] Call? No!

MARTIN.

[Regarding Lydia fixedly.] Nor you, Madam?

LYDIA.

[Beckoning Martin to her with sudden decision.] Yes! Do you know who that lady was?

MARTIN.

Why, that, Madam, that is Mrs. McCormorant!

RICHARD.

"Is"! And what a name! "Mc" what? We never had such a name in our family!

LYDIA.

[Impatiently.] You've already said she wasn't in your family! And she certainly wasn't in mine!
[She turns peremptorily to Martin.] Will you please tell us who she was? And why her portrait is here?

Martin.

[Watching Lydia.] Why, Madam, Mr. Sanford had it put here to surprise her, her becoming his bride in the little church here to-morrow!

Lydia.

[With a great effort.] His bride—to-morrow?

Richard.

[Gravely.] Then she's alive?

Martin.

[Looking from one to the other.] Why, yes, sir, to be sure she's alive!

Richard.

[Puzzled.] But her frock? My wife was quite certain, and so was I, that her frock was—er—well, I don't like to say anything against the lady, but, well, you know, rather old-fashioned, to say the least! [With an admiring glance at Lydia's panniers.] You can see—there's rather a difference——!

Martin.

[With the ghost of a smile.] There is, indeed, sir! [Resuming, practically.] But I have often heard Mr. Sanford say, sir, that all Mrs. McCormorant's gowns are in the height of fashion!

Lydia.

[Prettily nettled.] I trust you don't mean to imply——
BIRD'S NEST

MARTIN.

[Courteously.] I imply nothing to your disfavor, Madam——!

LYDIA.

[Restlessly.] Of course her frock is of no consequence—nor her being married—but—why should her portrait be here—[A sudden break in her voice.] here in Bird's Nest?

RICHARD.

[With a note of authority.] Yes, that's what we don't care for! Why should her portrait be here, in our parlor?

MARTIN.

[Simply.] Why, so they can both admire it, I suppose, sir, after she comes to live here to-morrow!

LYDIA.

[Falling with a cry into RICHARD'S arms.] Oh, Richard! I—I feel faint!

RICHARD.

[Tenderly carrying her to the garden bench, MARTIN following them.] There, there, my darling! [On his knees, to her.] Shall I fetch your salts?

LYDIA.

[As she clings to him, MARTIN, regarding both, a faint, quizzical sadness in his eyes.] No, no, it's not my salts I need! Oh, what did he say, Richard? What did he say?
RICHARD.

[Caressing her gently.] It was nothing, my darling! We—[Vainly trying to repress a quiver in his voice.] we must have misunderstood him!

LYDIA.

[Softly repulsing him, sitting bolt upright.] No, I don’t think so! I—[Suddenly she hides her face in her hands, in an agony of remembrance.] Oh, Richard, don’t you know? We’ve been mistaken before about—about Bird’s Nest?

RICHARD.

[Helplessly, as he rises.] My dearest Lydia—!

LYDIA.

[Jumping up and confronting MARTIN with the piteous dignity of her little clasped hands.] You said just now that—that [With a gesture toward the portrait.] lady was alive—and going to be married, and that she—that they—plan to live here, in Bird’s Nest?

MARTIN.

[Very low.] Yes, Madam!

LYDIA.

[Drawing herself up.] But doesn’t she know that Richard and I are to live in Bird’s Nest?

MARTIN.

[Very gently.] Are you sure, Madam?

LYDIA.

[She looks long into his troubled, wistful eyes; then pitifully.] We were to live here! [Impetuously.] Oh, don’t you know? We were to live here—and
then—then Ajax was frightened by the steam-car, coming home from church this afternoon, and ever since——

MARTIN.

[Softly, as LYDIA stops, unable to proceed.] The folks about here always say Bird's Nest was built for lovers!

LYDIA.

[In a low voice.] The folks? Since when have they said that? I never heard it!

MARTIN.

[With a long look.] No, Madam,—it was not—in your day! [Then, softly to himself, looking from LYDIA to RICHARD.] Built for lovers——!

LYDIA.

[As before.] And are they—lovers?

MARTIN.

Mrs. McCormorant is very rich.

RICHARD.

[Shocked.] You keep saying, "Mrs."! She has been married before?

MARTIN.

Just so! An attractive woman some think, sir, in spite of her deafness.

RICHARD.

But why should she be deaf?

LYDIA.

[With sudden petulance.] What does it matter whether she's deaf or not when——
Martin.

[Imperturbably to Richard.] It's merely her age, sir——! Sixty-three she is, but——

Richard.

Good God! It's impossible! It's unnatural!

Martin.

[Watching Lydia narrowly.] She took a great fancy to Bird's Nest the day Mr. Sanford brought her over! It makes them both feel quite young again, so they say!

Lydia.

[Under her breath.] Young! Sixty-three——! I'm not eighteen——!

Martin.

[Watching her as before.] Haven't old people a right to happiness, Madam?

Lydia.

[Irrelevantly, a passionate ring in her voice.] The folks about here say Bird's Nest was built for lovers!

Martin.

[Gravely.] Quite so, Madam! [With an old-fashioned bow.] I am glad to have seen you, Madam—I had heard—so much. But I must go now. I have to make sure Mr. Sanford has taken his medicine before retiring—his heart's not just right.

Richard.

[In a level voice.] Mr. Sanford, I presume, is the bridegroom?
[Withdrawing with grave courtesy.] Er—yes, sir! And somewhat excited over to-morrow.

[Martin steps into the cottage, putting out the electric lights and goes up-stairs.]

Lydia.

[Regarding his retreating figure.] A nice-appearing old man, Richard! [She comes quite close to him; then, softly.] I'm glad he's not being married to-morrow!

Richard.

[Starting.] What do you mean?

Lydia.

[Practically.] Well, I prefer their being horrid—like that man and that dreadful woman in the house! [Reminiscently.] I couldn't help being sorry for the gentle lady that was here,—oh, you know, quite a while ago!

Richard.

You mean the one they called "Virginia"? That was visiting Bird's Nest before he brought her here to live?

Lydia.

Yes, Virginia! But he didn't really love her! We couldn't have had them about! What a cold she took that night! [Placidly.] I guess it settled on her lungs right away! [With a little smile.] They weren't here when we came back.

Richard.

[A trifle uncomfortably.] I know——!
And another year—that dark beauty. He was speaking a foreign tongue to her when we came. "Celeste," I think her name was. I think it is a French name. With what I had picked up at the Academy for Young Ladies, I could easily see they were planning to settle right here in a few weeks. She didn't love him at all! [With a mischievous laugh.] Do you remember how frightened she was, Richard? [Smoothing her little panniers.] Big women are always such cowards!

Richard.

[As before.] Yes, of course,—but——

Lydia.

[With a touch of asperity.] What is it, Richard?

Richard.

You—we've upset the plans of a good many people, haven't we? Need we bother any more about them? [Gently.] We have each other—to-night——!

Lydia.

[With infinite wistfulness.] Ah, Richard! Richard! You are only a man——! [Very low.] No one must live here! Don't you understand?

Richard.

[ Started.] You mean—else we couldn't come back?

Lydia.

We couldn't come back! Just think, Richard—[Caressing him gently.] we couldn't come back——!
We'd wait all the long, long year, and then—when to­night came—we couldn't come back——!

**RICHARD.**

*Drawing her passionately into his arms.* Oh, my darling! But we *must* come back! It is what we live for! It——

**LYDIA.**

*Gravely.* Just so, Richard! I know you always agree when you—remember——!

**RICHARD.**

*Regarding her with sudden anxiety.* Do you think you can manage it? The lady isn't here—this time.

**LYDIA.**

But he's here! And do you know, Richard, in spite of what Mamma has always taught me, I hardly think men are a bit braver than women!

**RICHARD.**

Oh, Lydia, you really think not!

**LYDIA.**

*Teasing him.* Really, really, dear Richard! But, oh, look at that moon! Isn't it a shame to worry about anything with that over our heads? Oh, Richard, I want to dance. If there were only music!

**RICHARD.**

*Falling into her mood.* Why not make it yourself? The spinnet is there—*Pointing within.* your papa's wedding present—he thought you would like it
the first night! Look, Lydia, how clear it stands in the moonlight!

**Lydia.**

[Running into the house.] I could play the minuet! [Seating herself at the spinnet, she plays a few bars of a minuet with delicate, old-fashioned precision, Richard, who has followed her, leaning over her. Presently, she stops, and wheels abruptly about.] But, oh, that isn't enough! [Jumping up, she drags him after her to the garden.] Come, Richard! Back to the garden! I want to dance!

**Richard.**

[As they pass outdoors.] But the music, dearest Lydia! I can never do the steps without the music! Don't you remember how you laughed at me that time last week?

[Without answering, Lydia places both herself and him in position for the minuet. Then, with low conviction.]

**Lydia.**

There will be music, dear Richard! Don't you remember—it used to go —— [Humming the minuet under her breath.] this way ——? [And presently, as if encouraged by her voice, the garden becomes full of throbbing fiddles and horns, as, with stately courtesy, she and Richard dance in and out among the flower-beds. A few moments pass; then, at a sound within the cottage, they stop dancing, and as George Sanford, this time in dressing-gown and slippers, slowly descends the staircase, the music quivers away, though still heard now and again, as at greater distance. Lydia softly draws Richard aside.] Sh—this must be he!
[In a slightly nervous whisper.] After all, Lydia, this is my house! Had I not better call him out and have done with it?

LYDIA.

[Watching Sanford.] Sh——!

[For a moment Sanford pauses at the table, outside, bright in the moonlight; picks up the ear-trumpet; with it, he heavily proceeds into the garden; then looking at the moon.]

SANFORD.

[With his fat chuckle.] Ah, romance! All very well for young folks. But [Tapping the ear-trumpet.] she'll hear my vows all right with this! And romance comes easy at $100,000!

RICHARD.

[Indignantly.] Lydia! It's desecration. Let me challenge him and end it!

LYDIA.

[A restraining hand on his arm.] Hush! Leave it to me—— And that—— [Pointing to the ear-trumpet.] He said that was to hear his vows with. How very strange!

SANFORD.

[Plumping down on the bench near him.] 'Might as well stay here. 'Can't sleep a wink.

RICHARD.

[Tears in his voice, as he feels the hour going.] Lydia! It's our one night! Make him go away!
LYDIA.

[Softly.] Ah, if he'd go away! [Louder.] If he'd burn that picture, and pack right up, and go away from Bird's Nest, and never come back!

SANFORD.

Damned pretty little house for Evelina and me! Damned lucky to get it, and so cheap, too! [With another chuckle.] Some clever Johnny must've made up that yarn about the ghosts to pull the prices down! Ghosts! Ha-ha-ha! When I sell, I'll sell high! I can swear I've never seen 'em!

LYDIA.

[Distinctly, as she emerges from the shadows, and sweeping him a mocking courtesy.] I suppose you don't see me, sir?

RICHARD.

[In a frightened whisper.] Dearest Lydia, pray be careful!

[LYDIA steals behind SANFORD, jerks up the trumpet, and, holding it to his ear.

LYDIA.

[Mischievously.] There, sir! Is it only your bride who can't hear?

[With a sleepy gesture, SANFORD brushes away the trumpet, which falls to the ground.

SANFORD.

[With a yawn.] Ah, never mind. Too much work—pick it up.
LYDIA.
[Slipping around in front of him.] Come, Richard!

RICHARD.
[Joining her somewhat hesitantly and taking her outstretched hands.] Is it quite safe, do you think?

LYDIA.
[To Sanford, dosing on the bench.] We don't want to hurt you, sir. Say it with me, Richard——

LYDIA and RICHARD.
[Repeating together.] But Bird's Nest is our very own! Will you go away? You don't love your bride! And you know—— [With low intensity.] Bird's Nest was built for lovers!

SANFORD.
[Sleepily.] $100,000, by George! That's enough to make up for a whole lot! And Bird's Nest——
[His head drops forward with a jerk. For an instant, Lydia bends and peers close into his face. Then, with a quick sigh of relief.]

LYDIA.
Come, Richard! Let us finish our dance.
[Again, invisible violins take up the tune for the minuetting lovers, and it is perhaps guided by this that Martin, a moment later, wistfully reenters the garden. But once there, he goes swiftly to Sanford and bends over him.

MARTIN.
[After a quick glance.] Dead! Oh, my God! [For a moment, with incredulous eyes, he watches
the delicate, rhythmic bending and swaying of the young forms; then, with a smothered cry, he rushes forward and raises indignant hands to stop them. And as, in their grave and gay abandon they dance on, Martin, seeming to derive fresh support from the backward glance he flings the body, tries to catch Lydia by her curls. Martin indignantly.] How dare you, you little—little——

[But, untouched, Lydia glides past him, her light laughter mingling with the wind. Then, as Martin slinks back, beaten, his eyes full of wonder, an impalpable tremor passes over the garden. The violins fade; the moonlight shivers blue and chill, and Lydia runs with a cry to Richard.

LYDIA.

Oh, my dearest—not yet! Not yet!

RICHARD.

[Tremulously, holding her fast.] We had just begun! We had waited a whole year!

LYDIA.

[In a panic of longing.] Oh, Richard! Richard! The church clock has struck! In a moment——

[Pointing a trembling finger within.] our clock!

RICHARD.

[As the whirring noise begins that precedes the stroke.] My darling—next year——

LYDIA.

[As before.] Oh, stop it! Stop it! [Her head against his breast.] Oh, Richard, I—I haven’t seen the nursery yet!
[Then, as the clock strikes ONE, her features change. She gathers up her little prayer-book, slips a decorous, mitted hand within the arm he gravely offers her, and together, passing Sanford's body without a glance, they turn away down the little path.

**MARTIN.**

[Stepping forward and leaning over the body.] Too bad! [Then, his eyes young and wistful as they follow the retreating figures.] But Bird's Nest was built for lovers!

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