

in consternation at the storm he had raised. How could they sit there so calmly when a human being was going to his death in such a fashion?

But when Portia came in, attired as the doctor of laws, William Mullins knew her immediately.

"That's Lucy!" he whispered. "Mother! That's our girl! Look at her!"

He sat now like a man entranced, starting at her. And when she confounded Shylock with her learning, when, after appealing to his humanity in vain, she ruthlessly unmasked the laws and drove him, suppliant, before the judge's seat, the father could restrain himself no longer.

He stood up in his seat and waved his hand.

"By Crickey, Lucy, you've got him!" he yelled. "Good girl! That's the way! Teach the rogue a lesson! Tell his honor not to let him get away with his life! No mercy!"

There were no longer whispers of remonstrance. Instead, there was an uproarious outburst of laughter, with a salvo of hearty handclapping to follow. And the old parents, shrinking back into their seats, the observed of every eye, saw that Lucy had seen them.

It was wonderful! How had their little girl acquired learning enough to confute the wily, blood-mad usurer?

They sat still in their seats, bewildered and dazed, long after the curtain had fallen and the theater had begun to empty. They were almost alone when they realized that the play was over. An usher came toward them.

"Mr. and Mrs. Mullins?" he inquired blandly, casting curious glances at the old couple. "Miss Margaret Lake would like to see you in her dressing room. Will you step this way, please?"

They followed him down the stairs, through a side door, and into a wonderful place behind the scenes, where properties of all kinds were stowed away. They could hardly take

their eyes off, and the usher was compelled to stop for them several times before he brought them to the comfortable room in which their daughter was waiting.

She was attired in her street gown, and she had carefully washed every trace of paint from her face. There was no reason why she should let them misunderstand.

As the old couple halted, rather sheepishly, at the door, Lucy ran toward them, and was clasped in their arm.

"Father!" she cried. "So you have found me out! And mother, too! Why didn't you let me know, and I would have had a box for you!"

"By gum, Lucy, what would we do with a box?" ejaculated her father. "Why, Lucy, we wanted to be somewhere where we could see you. We couldn't have seen you in a box. Lucy, the way you did up that Drylocks fellow was scrumptious. Some derved old tabby told us you were on the stage, and we come down here to save you from ruin—but I guess we don't mind now as much as we did—do we, mother?"

"O, Lucy!" exclaimed her mother, clasping her in her arms again.

And then Lucy insisted on introducing them to her friends—to Mr. Grosvenor, the "star," and to various subordinate members of the company. And Lucy was to drive them to their hotel in her own automobile. Altogether it was a night of surprises for the old people.

But, as they went out together, Lucy made an excuse to run back for something, and she caught Mr. Grosvenor by the arm.

"I wish we had told them everything!" she whispered. "Shall I, Philip?"

He nodded and she went on.

"Did you ever stop to think, my dear, it's just old people like these—our fathers and mothers in far-away villages—that make the stage as good as it is today, and keep so many