

ORPHEUS



Shadow +
 P
 A
 ILLUSTRATED.
 TOMLINS.

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BOSTON

GEORGE M. BAKER & CO. PUBLISHERS

1882

SHADOW PANTOMIMES.

ILLUSTRATED.

No. 1. DRINK.

“ 2. DRIGGS AND HIS DOUBLE.

“ 3. ORPHEUS, THE ORGAN-GRINDER.

“ 4. ANONYMOUS.

“ 5. CINDERELLA.

“ 6. IN PAWN.

Price 25 cents each

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Author's design in offering this volume of Shadow Plays is threefold: first, to amuse such buyers as cannot read with the clever pictures supplied by the illustrator; second, to entertain such as *can* read but have no eye for Art with the appended productions of his own doggerel Muse; third, to provide lovers of the style of entertainment known as the "Shadow Pantomime" with a variety of pieces suitable for representation in that way, and to assist them, so far as lies in his power, in getting them up. The Author does not care for money — and perhaps it is just as well that he don't.

It is with these pieces considered as Shadow Pantomimes *only* that this Preface is concerned. The general style and scope of this form of entertainment is no doubt familiar to most of our readers through the great popularity of the "Ballad of Mary Jane" (originally published in Scribner's St. Nicholas), which has been represented in this manner very frequently and with remarkable success during the past few years. It consists, briefly, in the reading of a short narrative to which a continuous series of illustrations is supplied by means of a Shadow Pantomime. The reading is not necessarily continuous, but may be interrupted from time to time, for longer or shorter intervals, in order to give the actors opportunity for the elaboration of "business." The reader should attend all rehearsals, and familiarize himself with whatever action is intended to be introduced, — even noting its duration in each case upon the margin of his book, — in order to graduate his pauses as accurately as possible to the requirements of the actors. In addition to these rehearsed pauses he should stand prepared, even during the representation, to make others at a hint from any of the performers, in order to accommodate those inspirations in the way of comic "business" which frequently arrive too late for rehearsal; and to facilitate such communication

he is usually stationed behind the screen. He should at all times remember that he is in most respects a decidedly "second fiddle" in the performance, and should comport himself with becoming humility.

The actors, whose shadows form the illustrations to the narrative, are first in importance. Each one is assigned some particular character in the story, which he is to dress and enact as appropriately and amusingly as he can. In his entrances and exits, and in all critical "situations" in the plays, he should obey *literally* the demands of the text; elsewhere he may follow its general spirit merely, materializing it with whatever action he may deem best. As the success of the whole affair will depend upon his inventive genius for comical action, and as the reading is made subservient to his needs in this respect, he is urged to spare no pains in the invention of such "business," and to elaborate it to the utmost extent consistent with the appreciative powers of his audience.

A competent stage-manager — preferably some one not otherwise connected with the affair — is essential to the success of the entertainment. Upon his shoulders rest the mechanical arrangements of the piece and the general supervision of both rehearsals and performance. It should be his duty to keep in check the natural impetuosity of the reader, to prompt the performers from a carefully marked book in regard to their entrances, exits, and general responsibilities, and to see that they maintain always their proper positions relative to screen and light.

The means employed in producing the shadow-pictures are very simple, and, no doubt, quite familiar to most of our readers. The prime requisite is a screen or curtain of thin, white cloth. It is of little importance how this is arranged, so that it is strained as tightly and as free from inequalities as possible, and is as large as circumstances will permit. In default of a better substitute, a sheet, stretched across the opening of a pair of folding-doors, will do very nicely; but it is to be borne in mind that the larger the screen, in all cases, the greater will be the freedom of action permitted to the performers, and, consequently, the more satisfactory the effect. The front, or that side appropriated to the audience, should be kept entirely dark during the performance, while the back, or actors' side of the screen, should be illuminated by a single bright light placed exactly opposite its centre and as near to the floor as possible. For this purpose a low drop-light may be used, — where gas is available, — so placed as to present the *edge* of the flame toward the screen; or, in case the curtain be of small dimensions, a large candle may be very conveniently employed. The following contrivance also has been recommended: "A tin cup

filled with tallow, in the centre of which is a cotton wick secured by a wire coil soldered to the cup's bottom to prevent it from falling down when the tallow is melted." It is usually directed that, in use, "this lamp be placed in the centre of a flat dish filled with sand, as a precaution against accident" in the event of its being overturned. Whatever may be the source of light employed, it is to be borne in mind that no reflectors of any sort are to be used.

The proper distance of the light from the screen is, in all cases, directly proportional to the size of the latter; the larger the one, the nearer the other, and *vice versa*. Its exact position must be determined in every case by experiment; and it should be remembered that the greater the distance possible in any case, the better will be the effect of the shadow-pictures. To indicate the division into acts of such pieces as demand it, or to mark the close of the entertainment or of any of its parts, a small, opaque body—a large book, for example—may be placed directly in front of the light. This will effectually prevent the illumination of the screen, and yet leave light enough to enable the actors to prepare for the next piece or act.

To prevent the apparent partial amputation of the lower extremities of the shadows due to the impossibility of placing the light *exactly* level with the floor, a narrow platform is sometimes constructed, equal in height to the altitude of the source of light and extending across the stage at a distance of a foot or so from the screen, upon which the actors stand while engaged in the performance. This contrivance not only serves to throw the shadows of their feet into equal prominence with the rest of their bodies, but also, by keeping them always at the same distance from the screen, maintains their shadows constantly of the same bigness and gives them greater freedom of action.

Whatever action they may be engaged in, the performers should always strive to present the *profile* as nearly as possible toward the *light*—not toward the screen; for, owing to the great divergence of the light's rays in the case of a screen of any size, considerable distortion of all shadows cast at a distance from its centre is inevitable, unless the profiles of their objects be kept perpendicular to the rays. All performers who are not actually engaged in the business of the scene should be careful to stand *behind* the light; otherwise their shadows might intrude upon the picture rather inopportunately, and mar its effect.

Such scenery as is called for may, in most cases, be cut out of thick brown paper and pinned against the screen. It makes little difference, however, what material is employed, so that it be sufficiently opaque to cast a black shadow, or what outline be followed,

if only it satisfy the requirements of the text. In the case of "trick" scenery, — like the tree and cottage in "Drink," or the house in "Orpheus," — a light wooden frame covered with paper or pasteboard should be constructed of the proper form, and placed, when in use, close to the screen. The necessity of this will be apparent upon reading the appendices to those pantomimes. Scenery which is to be permanent throughout the piece, and which is not directly concerned in the action, may be very conveniently made of small dimensions, and placed *near the light* in order to cast an *enlarged* shadow. A very little experimenting will determine the proper position, relative to the light, necessary to produce the right effect.

Properties may, when possible, be real, though in every case pasteboard simulacra will, if carefully kept in profile, answer just as well and even cast a better shadow. But few are needed in the performance of these pantomimes, and such as are necessary are fully described in the several appendices, or represented in the pictures. Pasteboard may also be used in "making up" the characters; odd fancies in hats and in false noses, for example, may be realized in this manner with but little trouble, since the performer's *profile* only is concerned with producing the shadows. The flow of blood is usually imitated by sawdust, which is let fall from the actor's hand as he instinctively places it upon the wound. Similarly, tears may be counterfeited by marbles, which, dropping to the stage with a sharp rattle, will accentuate the performer's grief in a very remarkable and ludicrous manner. The pouring of liquids is best shown in shadow by the use of fine, *dry* sand. All furniture used in the pantomimes should be as narrow, reckoning from the screen backwards, as possible. This, because the upward inclination of the light's rays tends to distort the shadows of all objects whose perspective in relation to the light is considerable; casting, for example, the shadow of the back edge of a table at a point several inches higher than the real position of the top, and partially concealing whatever may be upon it. Hence, everything placed upon a table, in the performance, should be set as near to its *rear* edge as possible.

The only point in which these compositions resemble the works of the late William Shakespeare is in the use of labels to indicate, in default of any better means, changes in place and time where such changes occur; thus following the usage observed in the earlier representations of that gentleman's plays. These labels are to be cut out on cards of uniform size and shape, and hung against the inside of the top of the screen in whatever position is found most convenient for changing them when occasion requires. The various legends appropriate to them will be found in the several appendices.

It should be borne in mind that the actual performers in this style of entertainment are as nothing—their shadows everything; that what is trivial to the actual beholder of the *man* may yet be, to those who see only the *shadow*, ludicrous and wonderful in the extreme. Thus, a blow which really passes harmlessly *behind* a performer's head will strike his shadow full in the face, and a sword thrust under the man's left arm will be worth two death-blows to his shadow. So, too, with regard to costumes. Their material is a matter of little consequence, since it is with their shadows, not themselves, that their effect is concerned. Their style and cut are indicated for each piece, in a general way, by the illustrations, but may be varied and altered to any extent to suit the taste of the individual actor; he is asked, however, in making changes, to confine himself within the limits of appropriateness.

By way of conclusion are appended the following bits of advice which constitute the ten commandments of the Shadow Pantomimist.

1. Rehearse carefully and repeatedly not only the general action of the piece with and without the accompanying reading, but all the minor mechanical details; for any bungling during the performance may not only destroy the effect of that particular attempt but seriously mar the illusion of the whole affair.

2. Carefully think out every bit of "business" at rehearsal; leave nothing to chance on the evening of the performance; let there be no possibility of failure in any of the arrangements; for it will be better to attempt little and do it well, than to be ambitious and make a botch of it.

3. Remember that the actor is nothing—his shadow everything; and act for the best interests of your shadow—not yourself. In order to do so you may often feel obliged to make an ass of yourself. Do not mind that so long as nobody sees you, and your shadow is all right.

4. Remember that only at *rehearsal* is it allowable for the actor to *look* at his shadow. During the performance the face must be kept constantly in profile. On this account study carefully beforehand the shadow effect of the various attitudes and grimaces you propose introducing, in order to become independent of such forbidden peeps.

5. Be careful to keep your shadow distinct from those of the other performers. Never allow it to touch another unnecessarily; and, in case such contact is ordered by the text, carefully arrange and rehearse an effective attitude in which neither figure shall be blurred or confused more than is absolutely necessary.

6. If your "business" compels you to pass by or behind another actor, or to turn around and reverse your profile, do so as quickly as possible.

7. Do all your acting as nearly as convenient at the same distance from the screen, in order to keep your shadow always of the same size.

8. Stand always as near to the screen as possible, but never rub against, nor touch it.

9. Keep your eyes open and your wits alive at rehearsals, and you will learn far more about Shadow Pantomimes from experience than you can get from any book — even this.

10. Above all, remember that the success of the whole affair rests on your shoulders; and as, in case you make a "hit," you will probably appropriate all the credit, so, in the event of failure, you are to take all the blame, and not try to throw it on

THE AUTHOR.

ORPHEUS THE ORGAN-GRINDER.

A MUSICAL SHADOW PANTOMIME.

51

ORPHEUS THE ORGAN-GRINDER.

A MUSICAL SHADOW PANTOMIME.

(Music plays some time-honored hand-organ air.)

OF Orpheus now I troll

A melancholy lay.

He was a clever soul —

At least, so people say.

Observe him, please, a-grinding out a tune,

Soliciting reward with eager hand,

Though why he hangs his hat upon the moon

Is something that I do not understand.



Orpheus I

“Observe him, please, a-grinding out a tune,
Soliciting reward with eager hand;”

(Music continues to play the same air.)

He earned his daily bread
By organ-grinding arts ;
His skill, I've heard it said,
Could touch the hardest hearts.
The peach-tree, in his hand, drops peaches red ;
In joy, the palm a cocoanut lets fall,
But why on earth it drops it on his head
Is something that I can't make out at all.

(Music changes to some lively dance-tune.)

His organ's dulcet tones
Made trees, against their wills,
Unite with sluggish stones
In waltzes and quadrilles.
Observe the peach-tree's very graceful *boughs* ;
The palm-tree, having none, can only bend ;
But what the climate is that thus allows
Such different trees, I cannot comprehend.

(Music changes again to some very plaintive air.)

A happy man, you say?

Well, yes, until his wife,

Eurydice, one day

Departed from this life.

Now Orpheus plays a very plaintive strain —

He's thinking of his wife, Eurydice;

And both the trees let fall their tears like rain,

Though why the deuce they do it puzzles me.

(Music continues the plaintive air down to,—"The idea," from this point it plays a "hurry," ending, at "Presto," with a strong chord.)

It cut him to the quick

To lose his wife, and so

He went to the Old Nick,

But not as most men go.

The idea comes upon him like a flash;

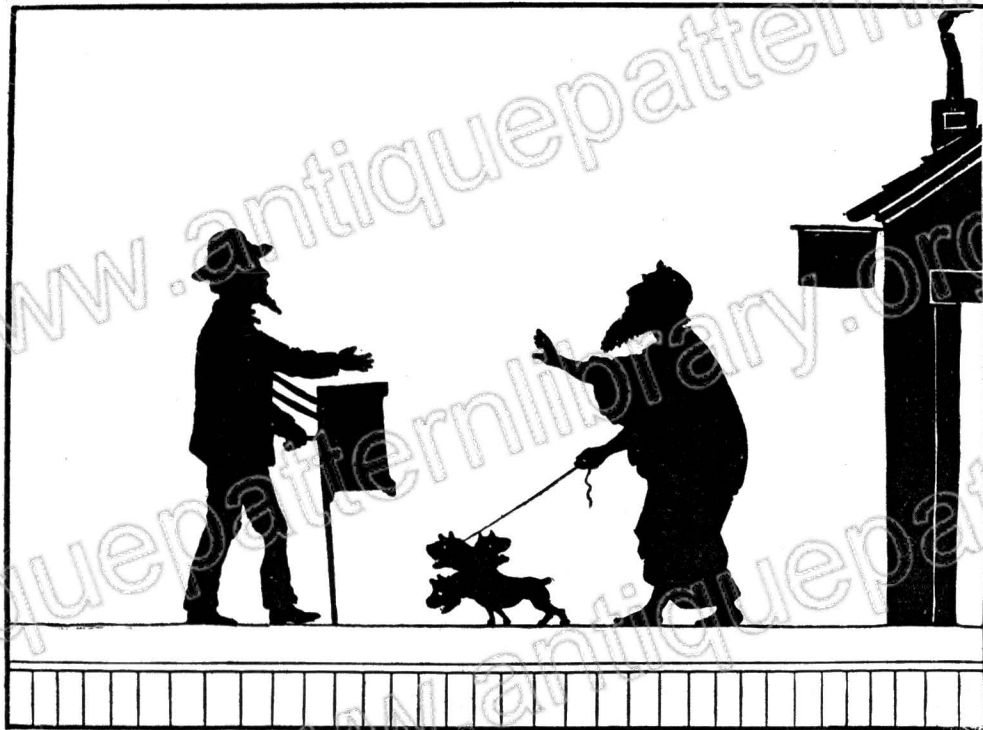
He plays an air expressing mystery.

Presto! The scene's supposed to change to —,

Though things don't look much different to me.

(Music plays “Little Buttercup,” at first very softly, but at the “cue” — “cunning one” — loudly and triumphantly.)

At Hades' frowning door
Admittance was denied;
He played some “Pinafore,” —
The gates were opened wide.
Old Charon, with his triple-headed pup,
Refuses to admit the cunning one,
But flees on hearing “Little Buttercup,”
As I myself should certainly have done.



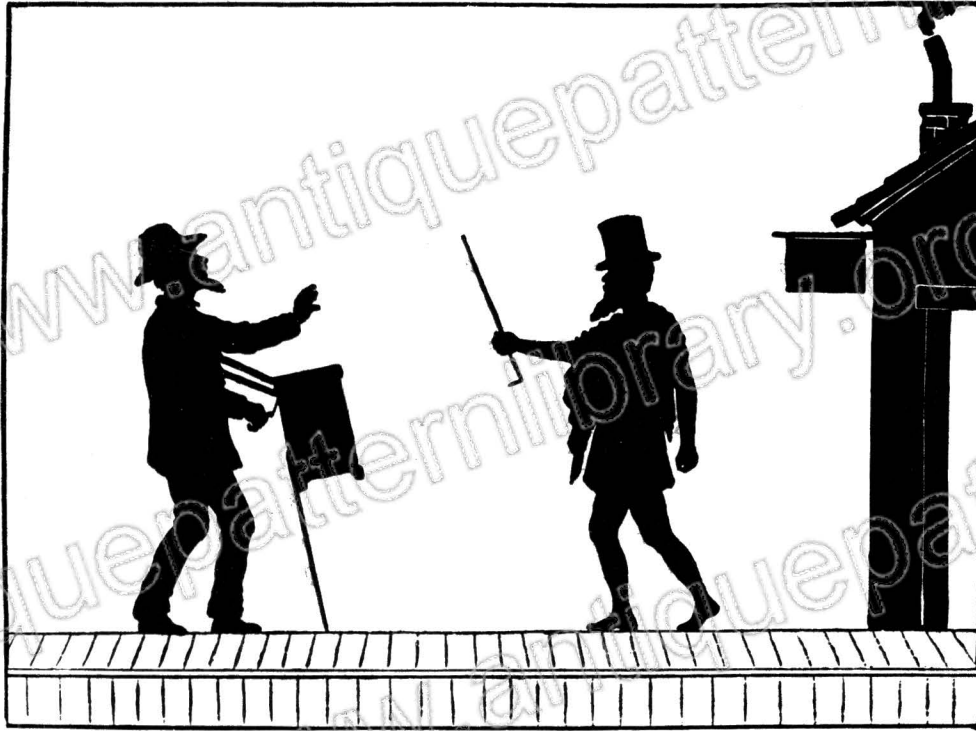
2 "Old Charon, with his triple-headed pup,
Refuses to admit the cunning one."

(Music resumes the fossil hand-organ air with which the piece began.)

**King Pluto, at his call,
Irascibly came out.**

**Said he : “ Now what is all
This beastly row about ? ”**

**King Pluto is the ancient party that
Is threatening poor Orpheus with a cane ;
But why the deuce he wears a stove-pipe hat
I’m not prepared at present to explain.**



3 “King Pluto is the ancient party that
Is threatening poor Orpheus with a cane;”

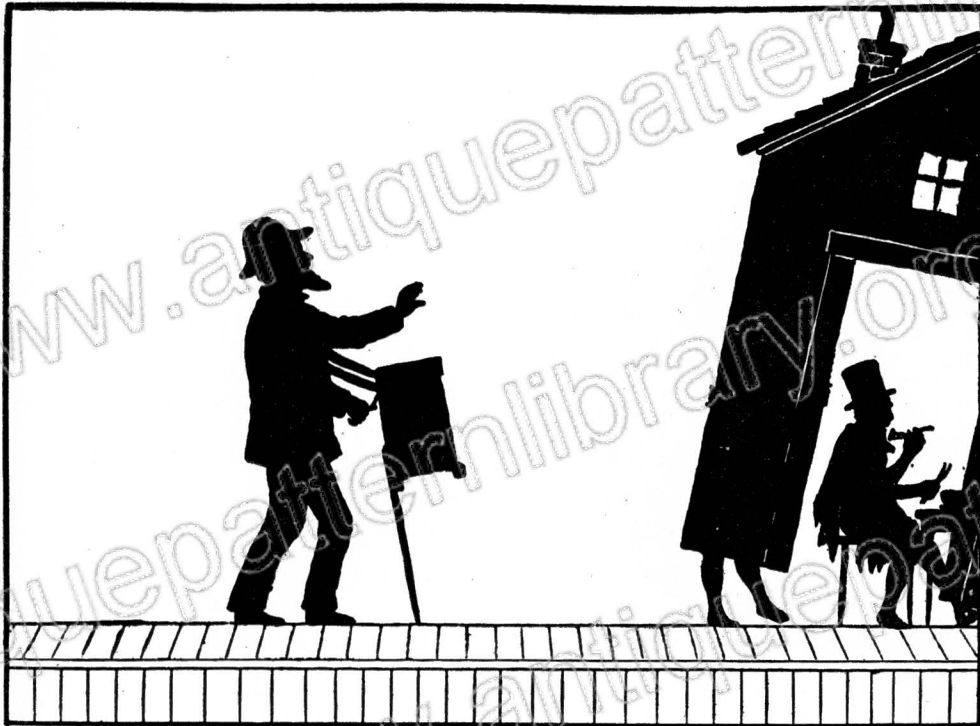
(Music plays a polka ; very softly to, — “key of G,” then loudly.)

“You have my wife, I think,
Within your castle grim.”

King Pluto gave a wink.

“I have,” said he to him.

You see he slams the door in Orpheus’ face,
Who simply plays a polka, — key of *G*, —
When dances off King Pluto’s dwelling-place
In way incomprehensible to me.



4

“When dances off King Pluto’s dwelling-place
In way incomprehensible to me.”

(Music plays “Baby Mine,” softly, to — “grinds for very joy,” then more loudly.)

“Now give her up, oh, king!”

But Pluto said : “I can’t.

You ask, my boy, a thing

I really cannot grant.”

Eurydice runs quickly to her lord,

Who folds her to his heart in close embrace,

And grinds, for very joy, a simple chord ;

As I’d have done myself in Orpheus’ place.



5

“Eurydice runs quickly to her lord,
Who folds her to his heart in close embrace,”

(Music plays "Baby Mine" to, — "she is thine," then stops.)

The organ's strident tones

Played loudly, "Baby Mine."

"Stop, stop!" the monarch groans.

"Go, take her, she is thine."

Poor Pluto flies in haste the hated sound.

The re-united pair together go

Back to their happy home above the ground ;

But where that home may be I do not know.



6

“The re-united pair together go
Back to their happy home above the ground.”

APPENDIX TO ORPHEUS THE ORGAN-GRINDER.

THE musical accompaniment of this pantomime is intended to be supplied by a piano or cabinet-organ; Orpheus' hand-organ, constructed of a soap-box and a clothes-wringer, being naturally incapable of any sound whatsoever. It is designed to serve as running accompaniment to the reading, and should be very *piano* indeed, except in those portions where loudness is especially called for; even then it should be only loud enough to make plausible, by a distinct appeal to the ears of the spectators, its alleged effect upon the action of the piece, and by no means be so emphatic as to drown the reader's voice. As it is intended, as well, to reflect the sentiments expressed, the airs which are used should be selected — where selection is optional — with due regard to their appropriateness.

The text will amply suggest the appropriate scenery, costumes, and action; still, a few hints may not be out of place. The animated trees, which dance, weep, and contribute their

charitable mite under the potent influence of Orpheus' music, are merely boys, costumed in any fanciful way which may occur to the getters-up of the pantomime, but suggesting as strongly as may be their alleged species. They should be provided with (stuffed) fruit and (saw-dust) tears, and encouraged to "work up" the "business" of their dance in the most humorous way that lies in their power. By what sort of action the birth of an idea may be best represented is left to the personator of Orpheus to decide, but it is imperative that he remove, at the word "Presto," his hat from the (pasteboard) moon upon which he has previously hung it; for at that "cue" the scene changes — moon and trees both disappearing, and giving place to a profile-house, which is pushed on from the side as in the illustration. This house may bear the legend: H. Clay Pluto. "All hope abandon ye who enter here," and is to take on the functions of animated and ambulatory life, at the proper

"cue," by the same means employed in the case of the trees — a small boy who picks it up and dances it from over Pluto's head.

If the performers of this pantomime do not happen to have a three-headed dog in the house, and cannot borrow one, let them not go to the expense of purchasing such a *lusus naturæ* merely to meet the demands of the piece, since a pasteboard canine will do, on a pinch. In case it is feared that the spectators may not grasp the fact of the change of scene, a label reading, "Earth," might be employed in the earlier portions of the piece, and replaced, at the proper time, by another bearing the suggestive legend: "—." The final exit of Orpheus should be effected by stepping *sideways* over the light; he to go first, and

Eurydice to follow. This proceeding will have the shadow effect of an ascent into the ceiling, and, if done with due care not to upset the light, will make a very amusing and appropriate ending to the piece. If desired, he may also leave the stage just before the change of scene, and return by a reversal of the process described above; thus indicating forcibly the lowness of the locality in which the scene lies, and giving ocular proof of the assertion: "facilis descensus Averno."

In this as in the other pantomimes the author humbly requests the collaboration of its possible performers in the invention of comic "business;" for without copious "padding" of this description the representation must inevitably be very flat.

Plays for Amateurs Theatricals.

BY **GEORGE M. BAKER,**

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DRAMAS.

In Four Acts.

Better Than Gold. 7 male, 4 female char. 25

In Three Acts.

Our Folks. 6 male, 5 female char. 15
 The Flower of the Family. 5 male, 3 female char. 15
 ENLISTED FOR THE WAR. 7 male, 3 female characters. 15
 MY BROTHER'S KEEPER. 5 male, 3 female char. 15
 The Little Brown Jug. 5 male, 3 female char. 15

In Two Acts.

Above the Clouds. 7 male, 3 female characters. 15
 One Hundred Years Ago. 7 male, 4 female char. 15
 AMONG THE BREAKERS. 6 male, 4 female char. 15
 BREAD ON THE WATERS. 5 male, 3 female char. 15
 DOWN BY THE SEA. 6 male, 3 female char. 15
 ONCE ON A TIME. 4 male, 2 female char. 15
 The Lost Leaf. 5 male, 3 female char. 15

In One Act.

STAND BY THE FLAG. 5 male char. 15
 The Tempter. 3 male, 1 female char. 15

COMEDIES AND FARCES.

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