

**"MISS
CIVILIZATION": A
COMEDY IN ONE ACT**

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"Miss Civilization": a comedy in one act by Richard Harding Davis

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RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

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A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

**CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK ::::::::::::::: 1905**

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CIVILIZATION" may do so, providing they apply for
permission to the editor of *Collier's Weekly*, in which
publication this play was first printed.

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PEOPLE IN THE PLAY

ALICE GARDNER, *daughter of James K. Gardner, President of the L. I. & W. Railroad*

“UNCLE” JOSEPH HATCH, *alias “Gentleman Joe”*

“BRICK” MEAKIN, *alias “Reddy, the Kid”*

HARRY HAYES, *alias “Grand Stand” Harry*

CAPTAIN LUCAS, *Chief of Police*

POLICEMEN, BRAKEMEN, ENGINEERS

“MISS CIVILIZATION”

SCENE.—The dining-room in the country house of James K. Gardner on Long Island. In the back wall is a double doorway opening into a hall. A curtain divided in the middle hangs across the entrance. On the wall on either side of the doorway are two electric lights, and to the left is a telephone. Further to the left is a side-board. On it are set silver salvers, candlesticks, and Christmas presents of silver. They still are in the red flannel bags in which they arrived. In the left wall is a recessed window hung with curtains. Against the right wall is a buffet on which is set a tea caddy, toast rack, and tea kettle. Below the buffet a door opens into the butler's pantry. A dinner table stands well down the stage with a chair at each end and on either side. Two chairs are set against the back wall to the right of the door. The walls and windows are decorated with holly and mistletoe and Christmas wreaths tied with bows of scarlet ribbon. When the window is opened there is a view of falling snow. At first the room is in complete darkness.

The time is the day after Christmas, near midnight.

After the curtain rises one hears the noise of a file scraping on iron. It comes apparently from outside the house at

a point distant from the dining-room. The filing is repeated cautiously, with a wait between each stroke, as though the person using the file had paused to listen.

ALICE GARDNER enters at centre, carrying a lighted candle in a silver candlestick. She wears a dressing gown, with swan's-down around her throat and at the edges of her sleeves. Her feet are in bedroom slippers topped with fur. Her hair hangs down in a braid. After listening intently to the sound of the file, she places candle on sideboard and goes to telephone. She speaks in a whisper.

ALICE

Hello, Central. Hello, Central. (*Impatiently.*) Wake up! Wake up! Is that you, Central? Give me the station agent at Bedford Junction—quick. What? I *can't* speak louder. Well, you *must* hear me. Give me the station agent at Bedford Junction. No, there's always a man there all night. Hurry, please, hurry. (*There is a pause, during which the sound of the file grows louder. ALICE listens apprehensively.*) Hello, are you the station agent? Good! Listen! I am Miss Gardner, James K. Gardner's daughter. Yes, James K. Gardner, the president of the road. This is his

house. My mother and I are here alone. There are three men trying to break in. Yes, burglars, of course. My mother is very ill. If they frighten her the shock might—might be very serious. Wake up the crew, and send the wrecking train here—at once. Send—the—crew—of—the—wrecking train here—quick. What? Then fire up an engine and get it here as fast as you can.

VOICE (*calling from second story*)

Alice!

ALICE (*at telephone*)

Yes, you have. The up-track's clear until "52" comes along. That's not until——

VOICE (*louder*)

Alice!

ALICE (*with dismay*)

Mother! (*At telephone.*) Hello, hold the wire. Don't go away! (*Runs to curtains, parts them, and looks up as though speaking to some one at top of stairs.*) Mother, why aren't you in bed?