

~~R. for milk, returns to pour for both, replaces milk, returns to sit.)~~

MRS. GIBBS. (*Xing to R. of GEORGE to set down butter.*) I'll speak to your father about it when he's rested. Seems to me twenty-five cents a week's enough for a boy of your age. (*Xing to stove to pour own coffee*) I declare I don't know how you spend it all.

GEORGE. Aw, Ma,—I gotta lotta things to buy.

MRS. GIBBS. Strawberry phosphates—that's what you spend it on. (*Xes to between CHILDREN with cup, rips.*)

GEORGE. I don't see how Rebecca comes to have so much money. She has more'n a dollar.

REBECCA. (*Spoon in mouth, dreamily, to the audience*) I've been saying it up gradual.

MRS. GIBBS. Well, dear, I think it's a good thing to spend some every now an' then.

REBECCA. Mama, do you know what I love most in the world, do you? Money.

MRS. GIBBS. Eat your breakfast. (*Xes to set cup above stove.*)

(*An old-fashioned SCHOOLBELL is heard in the distance, off L.*)

REBECCA. (*Rising, running front of table to pick up her books*) There's the first bell. I gotta go.

(*All CHILDREN rise and rush for their books, then out to meet down C. REBECCA and WALLY lead out, followed by GEORGE and EMILY. On meeting, they ad lib greetings and, as they hurry up C. and off L. the GIRLS pair together, as do GEORGE and WALLY, chatting gaily.*)

(*STAGE MANAGER drifts off down R. as they pass up Main Street.*)

~~MRS. WEBB. (*As they start, following them to trellis.*) Now walk fast, but you don't have to run. Wally pull up your pants at the knee. (*Clears table in two quick rips, putting dishes in sink, then gets two bowls from under sink.*)~~

~~MRS. GIBBS. (*As CHILDREN start, following them a few steps out of the trellis*) Tell Miss Foster I send her my best congratulations. Can you remember that?~~

~~REBECCA. Yes, Ma.~~

MRS. GIBBS. You look real nice, Rebecca. Pick up your feet! (*Goes in to cupboard, gets some cracked corn in her apron, and Xes through trellis to down R. C.*) (*Sounds of excited CHICKENS from off R.*)

MRS. GIBBS. (*Feeding chickens*) Here, chick-chick-chick— No, you go away, you— Here, chick-chick— What's the matter with you? Fight, fight, fight—that's all you do— You don't belong to me. Where'd you come from? (*Flings last of her feed, which causes loud clucks.*) (*MRS. WEBB, laden with two large bowls, Xes through trellis to sit L. end of bench, puts one bowl on floor, other on lap.*) Oh, don't be scared. Nobody's goin' to hurt you. (*MRS. WEBB strings beans into bowl on lap.*) (*MRS. GIBBS turning to catch sight of MRS. WEBB, hands on hip.*) Good morning, Myrtle. How's your cold?

MRS. WEBB. Well, I still get that tickling feeling in my throat. Told Charles I didn't know as I'd go to choir rehearsal tonight.

MRS. GIBBS. Have you tried singing over your voice?

MRS. WEBB. Yes, but somehow I can't do that and stay on the key. (*MRS. GIBBS Xes to sit R. of MRS. WEBB.*) While I am restin' myself I thought I'd string some of these beans.

MRS. GIBBS. Let me help you. Beans have been

good this year. (*Reaches for beans in bowl on ground.*)

MRS. WEBB. Aya, I decided to put up forty quarts if it kills me. Children say they hate 'em but I notice they're able to get 'em down all winter. (*Pause. CHICKEN NOISES.*)

MRS. GIBBS. (*After glance at chickens*) Now, Myrtle, I've got to tell you something, because if I don't tell somebody I'll burst.

MRS. WEBB. Why Julia Gibbs!

MRS. GIBBS. Myrtle, did one of those second-hand furniture men from Boston come to see you last Friday?

MRS. WEBB. (*Reaches for more beans*) No-o.

MRS. GIBBS. (*Reaches for more beans*) Well, he called on me. First I thought he was a patient wantin' to see Doctor Gibbs. (*BOTH stop work.*) 'N he wormed his way into my parlor, and, Myrtle Webb, he offered me three hundred and fifty dollars for Grandmother Wentworth's highboy, as I'm sitting here!

MRS. WEBB. Why, Julia Gibbs! (*Continues work.*)

MRS. GIBBS. (*Continues work*) He did! That old thing! Why, it was so big I didn't know where to put it and I almost give it to Cousin Hester Wilcox.

MRS. WEBB. Well, you're going to take it, aren't you?

MRS. GIBBS. I don't know.

MRS. WEBB. You don't know!—three hundred and fifty dollars? What's come over you?

MRS. GIBBS. Well, if I could get the Doctor to take the money and go away some place on a trip I'd sell it like that. (*Stops work.*) Y'know, Myrtle, it's been the dream of my life to see Paris, France. (*Glances stily at MRS. WEBB, who is shocked, then laughs, hand to face.*) Oh, I don't know. It sounds

crazy, I suppose, but for years I been promising myself that if we ever had the chance—

MRS. WEBB. How's Doctor feel about it?

MRS. GIBBS. (*Continues work through scene*) Well, I did beat about the bush a little and said that if I got a legacy—that's the way I put it—I'd make him take me.

MRS. WEBB. M-m-m— What did he say? (*Reaches for beans.*)

MRS. GIBBS. You know how he is. I haven't heard a serious word out of him, since I've known him. No, he said, it might make him discontented with Grover's Corners to go traipsin' about Europe; better let well enough alone, he says. Every two years he makes a trip to the battlefields of the Civil War and that's enough treat for anybody, he says.

MRS. WEBB. Well, Mr. Webb just *admires* the way Doctor Gibbs knows everything about the Civil War. Mr. Webb's a good mind to give up Napoleon and move over to the Civil War, only Doctor Gibbs being one of the greatest experts in the country just makes him despair.

MRS. GIBBS. It's a fact, Doctor Gibbs is never so happy as when he's at Antietam or Gettysburg. The times I've walked over those hills, Myrtle, stopping at every bush and pacing it all out, like we was going to buy it.

MRS. WEBB. Well, if that second-hand man's really serious about buyin' it, Julia, you sell it. And then you'll get to see Paris, all right. Just keep droppin' hints from time to time—that's how I got to see the Atlantic Ocean, y'know.

MRS. GIBBS. Oh, I'm sorry I mentioned it. Only it seems to me that once in your life before you die, you ought to see a country where they don't talk in English and don't even want to.

~~SCENE MANAGER~~ (*Entering briskly down R. Xc*)