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H. E. Chatfield Taylor

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1899 - January

THE CRUSADERS



THE CRUSADERS

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY
OF MODERN LONDON LIFE

BY

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

AUTHOR OF

"THE DANCING GIRL," "JUDAH," "THE MIDDLEMAN"
"WEALTH," ETC.

PRODUCED AT THE AVENUE THEATRE, LONDON
ON THE 2ND NOVEMBER, 1891

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P R E F A C E

IN some foreign picture-galleries the visitor is provided with japanned tin "blinkers," like stereoscopes with the glass knocked out, through which to examine the pictures. I do not know what is supposed to be the effect of this device, but I fancy that in most cases it simply serves to concentrate the attention of the observer, and so to intensify his vision. That, I take it, should be the function of a critical preface. It should neither be an arraignment nor an apology, but simply an exposition. The writer's likes and dislikes, his prejudices and preferences, are neither here nor there. If they are suffered to peep out, that is only because there is a great deal of human nature in man. The work of art is there, before the reader's eyes, and, by the act of publication, submitted to his judgment. Any attempt to dictate that judgment would be a self-defeating impertinence. All one can do—all I would here attempt—is to place the reader at what seems to be the right point of view, and to aid him in discerning the author's intentions. The merit of these intentions and of their execution is entirely a matter for the jury.

First comes the question of categories: What description of play has Mr. Jones set forth to write? He calls *The Crusaders* a comedy; but from the word "comedy" we nowadays learn nothing more definite than that the stage is not drenched in gore. "Satirical romance" would perhaps fit the play as exactly as any label of equal brevity. That is to say, it is not primarily a drama of individual character, but a sketch of a social group, a study of a certain intellectual and emotional tendency in modern life. In this it differs from the most notable of Mr. Jones's previous works. *Judah* and *The Dancing Girl* were, or ought to have been, dramas of individual character. They obviously sprang from the conception of the spiritual enthusiast and the half-innocent charlatan, the reprobate duke and "the beautiful pagan." In *The Crusaders*, on the other hand, the conception of the "milieu" evidently preceded and conditioned that of the plot and characters. The germ of the play in the author's mind was not a personage or a situation, but a theme — that of social idealism. Let me illustrate this distinction — between the drama of character and the social satire — by a reference to the works of other playwrights. Dumas's *Monsieur Alphonse*, *Denise*, and *Francillon* are dramas of character; *Le Demi-Monde* is a social satire. To the former class belong Augier's *L'Aventurière* and *Les Fourchambault*; to the latter, *Les Effrontés* and *Le Fils de Giboyer*. *Frou-frou* is the portrait of a woman; *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie* is the picture of a coterie.

Frou-frou without Gilberte would be a contradiction in terms; whereas in *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie* no single personage, and still less the particular thread of plot on which the scenes are strung, is essential to the author's conception. Pailleron's play portrays, not a passion or a character, but a salon or a cluster of salons, a corner of society, a craze, an affectation, a foible of the hour, of the day, at most of the decade. The same description applies almost exactly to *The Crusaders*, except that the social idealism with which it deals is a phenomenon of deeper and more abiding interest than the pedantry ridiculed in the French play. I will go further and say that there is probably no larger and more fruitful theme at present open to the dramatic satirist than this on which Mr. Jones has laid hand. The banner of Social Reform serves as a rallying-point for all that is noblest and basest, wisest and foolishest, in the world of to-day. Self-less enthusiasm and self-seeking vanity, fanaticism and hypocrisy, magnanimity and pusillanimity, the profoundest science and the shallowest sciolism, earnestness and affectation, paganism, puritanism, asceticism, sensuality, worldliness and other-worldliness — these, and a hundred other phases and attributes of human nature, stand forth in their highest intensity within the sphere of our latter-day meliorism. This movement is in truth as dramatic an element in the life of the nineteenth century as were the Crusades in that of the thirteenth. It is for the jury to determine whether Mr. Jones has risen to the height of

his argument. One thing alone is certain: to wit, that he has not exhausted a theme which is compact of

Exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

The satire of *The Crusaders* — this is a matter of fact rather than of opinion — is contemplative, not militant. Mr. Jones writes as a judicious observer, not as a partisan. “What is the use of satire,” some ardent spirits may ask, “which leaves everybody's withers unwrung? The satirist's weapon is the lash. Satire which hurts nobody is the merest empty persiflage.” But are contempt, hatred, and the desire to inflict pain really inherent in the idea of satire? Is there no virtue in the genial raillery which throws our foibles into relief without arousing that spirit of resentment which tempts us, in sheer defiance, to persevere in them? Mr. Jones has done his best to be fair to all parties. He has embodied — one might almost say symbolised — whole-hearted enthusiasm in Philos Ingarfield and Una Dell. The imitative idealism which arises from a potent personal influence, and vanishes with the withdrawal of that influence, finds its representative in Cynthia Greenslade. In Mrs. Champion-Blake we have the good-natured busybody who makes philanthropy subserve her social ambition, and place her on the visiting-list of “the dear Duchess.” Lord Burnham is the genial cynic who has no ideals of his own — has he not “been in Parliament since he was twenty-two”? — but who holds it a part of political sagacity to humour, and perhaps util-

ise, the idealism of others. Mr. Palsam is the narrow-minded (yet not hypocritical) moralist, who would have all the world virtuous after his own conventional pattern, and finds in scandalmongering a congenial method of making himself a terror to evil-doers, if not (and this he cares less about) a praise to such as do well. Finally, we have in Burge Jawle the necessary opposition of pessimism to meliorism, of the quietist to the radical; while his satellite, Figg, typifies the craze for co-operative hero-worship which has of late been so rampant. It would not have been easy, I think, to exhibit within the compass of three acts a more representative group of social "crusaders" and camp-followers. Whether Mr. Jones has made more than a superficial study of his types is a question for the jury; also whether he has been quite successful in resisting the temptation to inartistic extravagance of caricature. I will only remark, on this score, that the same questions force themselves with no less insistence upon the readers of *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*, a play which M. Sarcey is for ranking among the perennial classics of the French stage.

Now let me note a technical difference between Mr. Jones's work and M. Pailleron's. So far as story is concerned, the French play may be classed as a comedy, almost a farce; whereas the English play is a romance, almost a fairy-tale. There is nothing incredible in *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*. For aught we know, the incidents might have happened: their probability may be

open to question, but they do not conflict with common knowledge. *The Crusaders*, on the other hand, is as patently fantastic as *Piccadilly* or *The Battle of Dorking*. It sets forth events which purport to be, but are not, matters of history. They may be more or less possible and probable, but their "factual" unreality is obvious from the outset. Of course we do not believe that the events of any work of imagination ever actually happened; but, while witnessing *Forget-me-not*, or *The Profligate*, or *Judah*, we lend, or try to lend, to the occurrences presented a sort of provisional credence. In the case of *The Crusaders* even this provisional acceptance is impossible. We know that no London Reformation League ever set about its task with a million and a half at its back. We know that there is not, and never was, a rose-farm at Wimbledon, tended by five hundred East End seamstresses. We know that no government—Tory, Whig, or Radical—ever "guaranteed" such a man as Philos Ingarfield as a fit and proper personal-conductor for a consignment of "ne'er-do-wells" to Costa Rica. We know that no revolution in Costa Rica ever led to a change of government in England and an additional twopence on the income-tax. If, in short, we are to place this fable on the common earth at all, it must be in the future, not in the present or past. Mr. Jones, like the authors of *Looking Backward* and *News from Nowhere*, fantasticates in the future, though his future may be conceived as somewhat nearer than Mr. Bellamy's or Mr.

Morris's millennium. And it is here, as it seems to me, that Mr. Jones has, consciously or unconsciously, hit upon a technical device of wide application. In such "fairy-tales of the possible future" the dramatic satirist may perhaps find his most convenient form of utterance. Even the genius of an Aristophanes might shrink from the attempt to rescue extravaganza from its present degradation; and, failing extravaganza, quasi-realistic romance may prove to be the satirist's readiest weapon. Observe that I do not attempt to determine whether Mr. Jones handles this peculiar weapon with all desirable grace and skill. That, again, is a question for the jury. It may be that his "possible future" will seem too wildly impossible, that such an incident as Lord Burnham's renunciation of his racing-stable may be held to out-fantasticate fantasy, and that the element of intrigue and serious emotion in the latter half of the play may appear out of keeping with the general tone of the fairy-tale. On these points, and many others, I offer no opinion. My effort has simply been to deprecate the Beau-Tibbs attitude of mind, and to beg the reader not to condemn a satiric romance because it is not "a tragedy or an epic poem, stap my vitals!" I have sought to bring into evidence what Mr. Jones has attempted to do, and how he has attempted to do it. The merit of his endeavour and the measure of his success are, for the present, matters beyond my competence.

"But hold!" cries the reader. "In the very fact of

writing this preface (a task you were doubtless at perfect liberty to decline) you commit yourself to an opinion on the merits of the play. You assert, by clear implication, that it is at least worthy of serious study and criticism." Why, yes; you have me there. Let me, then, drop dissimulation and confess that when Mr. Jones honoured me by suggesting that I should introduce *The Crusaders* to the reading public, I willingly consented, because I believed the play to be, with all its faults, a piece of "live" dramatic work and a step in the right direction.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

LONDON, October 12, 1892.

AVENUE THEATRE. PLAYBILL OF THE FIRST
PERFORMANCE OF "THE CRUSADERS" ON MON-
DAY, NOVEMBER THE SECOND, 1891.

AVENUE THEATRE. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones begs to announce that his new comedy of modern London life, in three acts, called THE CRUSADERS, will be played to-night, November 2nd, 1891, for the first time.

"Rely on the laws of gravity. Every stone will fall where it is due. The good globe is faithful and carries us securely through the celestial spaces. We need not interfere to help it on. We need not assist the administration of the universe." — EMERSON'S ESSAYS.

LORD BURNHAM, the Foreign Sec- retary	Mr. ARTHUR CECIL.
The Hon. DICK RUSPER, his son .	Mr. YORKE STEPHENS.
PHILOS INGARFIELD	Mr. LEWIS WALLER.
Mr. PALSAM, Vice-President of the London Reformation League .	Mr. WEEDON GROSSMITH.
Mr. BURGE JAWLE, the Great Pessi- mist Philosopher	Mr. HENRY KEMBLE.
(By the kind permission of Mr. BEERBOHM TREE.)	
Mr. FIGG, the founder of the Jawle Guild	Mr. SANT MATTHEWS.
Rev. ALGERNON PORTAL, Curate of Saint Botolph's, Wimbledon .	Mr. ALLAN AYNESWORTH.
WORRELL	Mr. G. L. LEITH.
CYNTHIA GREENSLADE	Miss WINIFRED EMERY.
Mrs. CAMPION-BLAKE, Hon. Secre- tary of the London Reforma- tion League	Lady MONCKTON.
The Queen of the Marshal Niels .	Miss LILLIE BELMORE.
The Lady Gloire de Dijon . . .	Miss ETTIE WILLIAMS.
VICTORINE	Miss TÉRÈSE MAYER.
UNA DELL	Miss OLGA BRANDON.

THE FIRST ACT.

YOUNG DON QUIXOTE COMES FROM PECKHAM.

The Scene is Mrs. Greenslade's Drawing-room in Mayfair.

(Fifteen months pass.)

THE SECOND ACT.

UTOPIA ARISES WITHIN AN EASY DRIVE FROM HYDE PARK
CORNER.

The scene is the Rose Farm and Rose Cottages
near Wimbledon, at full Midsummer.

(One night passes.)

THE THIRD ACT.

THE PARSLEY GARLAND.

The scene is the Morning-room at the Rose Cottage,
Wimbledon.

The indulgence of the audience is asked on the first night between the acts, as the stage is small and the scenery is rather elaborate.

The furniture and draperies have been made by Messrs. William Morris and Company, 449 Oxford street. The new scenery has been painted by Mr. Walter Hann. The orchestra is the Viennese White Band, under the direction of Herr Wurm. The song in the second act is sung by Mr. Stedman's choir. The Stage-Manager is Mr. C. M. Appleby. The prices of admission are as follows:—Private boxes, £1 11s. 6d. to £4 4s. Orchestra Stalls, 10s. 6d. Balcony Stalls, 7s. Dress Circle (bonnets allowed in last row), 5s. Upper Circle (first row booked), 3s. Pit, 2s. Gallery, 1s. The Box Office (Mr. Melton) is open from 10 till 5 daily and during the evening performance. The doors will be opened at 7.30, the overture will be played at 8, and the curtain will rise at 8.15. All communications are to be addressed to Mr. G. D. Day, the business manager at the theatre.

ACT I

SCENE — Mrs. GREENSLADE'S DRAWING-ROOM in Mayfair, a very richly and tastefully furnished apartment. At back a handsome row of pillars, which flank staircases running at right angles to spectator, and leading to upper apartments. A large bowl of beautiful roses on a small table down the stage.

A door and a fireplace on the left side of the stage.

A door on the right side of the stage, near the footlights.

Handsome settees, sofas, cabinets, etc.; the whole apartment giving evidence of great wealth and taste.

After curtain has risen a few moments, CYNTHIA'S face, in widow's head-dress, is seen at back, peeping through the curtains on left side. She listens intently for a few moments, then withdraws; the curtains close, and a moment later she appears at bottom of stairs, still listening. She is in widow's mourning; about twenty-five years of age, with fascinating, coquettish manners. After listening a moment towards door right very intently, she smiles, then runs quickly to sofa, curls herself upon it, listens again, and, as WORRELL enters, feigns to be asleep.

Enter, door right, WORRELL, a very respectable manservant, bald, stout, about forty-five.

WORRELL *announces* MR. RUSPER.

Enter the Honourable DICK RUSPER, about thirty; an easy, affable, good-looking English gentleman.

(Exit WORRELL right.)

DICK *comes down, sees CYNTHIA, stops suddenly, contemplates her with great admiration.*

DICK. Fast asleep! How interesting! How innocent! *(Pause, full of admiration.)* Devilish pretty woman! *(Steals noiselessly across to back of sofa, bends over her.)*

(CYNTHIA opens her eyes, affects not to see him, yawns, stretches her arms, then suddenly looks at him, pretends to start, sits quickly bolt upright on sofa, stares at him as if just wakened from sleep.)

CYNTHIA. How stupid of me! *(Jumps up quickly, goes to him, extends her hand cordially, eagerly.)* Well, will Lord Burnham be president?

DICK. Yes, I've rushed him into it.

CYNTHIA. How good of you! Then London is reformed already!

(Clapping her hands with delight, crossing to the bowl of roses, buries her head in the roses.)

DICK. It ought to be, with my dad to boss the— what d'ye call the concern?

CYNTHIA. The London Reformation League. (*Smells the roses delicately and luxuriously.*) Aren't these roses exquisite? (*Gathers a rose, plays with it.*)

DICK (*comes up to table, speaks in a low, soft, winning voice*). I wish you'd let me be on your committee.

CYNTHIA (*shakes her head*). Mr. Palsam objects.

DICK. Why?

CYNTHIA. Because you're married.

DICK. So are most of the other members.

CYNTHIA. Yes, but they— (*longish pause, drops her voice*) they *continue* married.

DICK. So do I—at a distance. My wife and I found out that when we were together we were miserable, and when we were away from each other we were happy; so we parted. She does as she likes; I do as I like. A jolly sensible arrangement!

CYNTHIA. Yes, but—you can't reform London that way.

DICK (*approaching her*). I don't want to reform London *at all*.

CYNTHIA (*getting away from him*). Ah! I knew you weren't in earnest! Nobody is in earnest except Mr. Ingarfield.

DICK. No; and nobody wants to be, when they've once seen him.

CYNTHIA (*reproachfully*). You don't believe in our great scheme!

DICK (*comes up to her, in a very insinuating whisper*). Yes I do, if it brings me near you !

CYNTHIA (*coldly, severely*). Please don't trifle. I have a terrible responsibility resting on me !

DICK (*looks at her, laughs*). Since when ?

CYNTHIA. Ever since I met Mr. Ingarfield. My whole character has completely changed.

DICK (*shakes his head*). Characters don't change. You're the same wicked torment of a flirt that you were six years ago, when you plagued the life out of Fred Rossiter and me, and threw us both over to marry Mr. Greenslade. You've taken up this London Reformation scheme just as you took up the cottagers' poultry scheme, and by-and-bye you'll find this Ingarfield as great a bore as that old Cochin China, and you'll wring his neck and stop his crowing for ever !

CYNTHIA (*indignantly*). How can you speak so ? How little you know me !

DICK. How little you know yourself !

CYNTHIA. The last four months life has become charged with terrible meaning to me. My whole future is devoted to carrying out my husband's will.

DICK. It isn't his will. It was never signed.

CYNTHIA. It would have been if he had lived another hour. I promised him I would carry it out.

DICK. But he wasn't —

CYNTHIA. What ?

DICK. I should pain you.

CYNTHIA. No ; it's nearly a year. Go on.

DICK. His health — his mind —

CYNTHIA. Yes, poor man! But he was quite harmless, only very eccentric. And he was a great public benefactor.

DICK. He made a splendid fortune out of his non-intoxicant beverages.

CYNTHIA. It was the building-land that made his fortune. (*Rises indignantly.*) I hate you!

DICK. Why?

CYNTHIA. You don't believe in anything!

DICK. I don't believe in temperance champagne. But I'll believe in reforming London if (*approaching her tenderly*) you'll let me be on the committee.

CYNTHIA. Ask Mr. Palsam. If he objects, you could still —

DICK. What?

CYNTHIA (*retreats from him up stage*). Help Mr. Ingarfield.

(She throws the rose coquettishly down stage. He looks at her a moment, then goes and picks it up, kisses it, puts it in his button-hole.)

WORRELL *enters right, announces* MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE.

Enter, door right, MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE, a fussy, energetic, talkative society woman, rather showily dressed.

She comes down stage centre. Exit WORRELL.

CYNTHIA *advances to shake hands with* MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE.

DICK *puts rose in button-hole, regards it affectionately.*

MRS. CAM. My dear, congratulate me. I've got Lord Rodbaston to join the committee. (*Shaking hands.*)

CYNTHIA. Lord Rodbaston?

MRS. CAM. The great brewers, Hooper, Barkin & Co. Rodbaston promises to take a very active part in the League, only, of course, we shall have to put the temperance question a little in the background.

CYNTHIA (*dubiously*). But our programme! (*Quoting.*) "London sober! London clean! London honest!"

MRS. CAM. We'll make London clean and honest first —

CYNTHIA. But Mr. Ingarfield —

MRS. CAM. My dear child, we shall never reform London if we begin by offending everybody. Ah! How d'ye do, Mr. Rusper? (*Comes to DICK, shakes hands.*) Now tell me, Lord Burnham must positively be president!

DICK. Yes; he's coming here this afternoon to meet Mr. Ingarfield.

MRS. CAM. (*shows great satisfaction*). There's a dear fellow. It's a million pities we can't get the Marquis of Bicester!

CYNTHIA. Can't we? (*Playing with her rose listlessly.*)

MRS. CAM. My dear, can you ask, after Mr. Ingarfield's attacks upon the great ground landlords of London? Mr. Ingarfield is so impracticable! So injudicious!

Enter WORRELL, right door. He announces MR. PALSAM, and exit.

Enter right, MR. PALSAM, a thin, pale, weedy, nervous, unhealthy-looking little man, about thirty-five to forty, very short-sighted, precise, fidgetty, excitable, waspish, narrow, sincere, with a constant habit of nervously washing his hands, and a painfully earnest manner. DICK nods coolly to PALSAM as he passes. MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE bows slightly. PALSAM comes to CYNTHIA, shakes hands.

PALSAM (*he always speaks in the same painfully earnest manner*). I must speak to you! It's most important!

(*CYNTHIA and PALSAM move down stage.*

MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE goes to DICK and talks with him.)

PALSAM. Your new French maid.

CYNTHIA. Victorine?

PALSAM. Where was she last Sunday afternoon?

CYNTHIA. She went out.

PALSAM. Where?

CYNTHIA. I didn't ask. It's no business of mine.

PALSAM (*pained beyond measure*). Oh! my dear Mrs. Greenslade, no business of yours? I saw her in the Green Park, walking with a soldier — at least, I'm almost sure it was she — I'm very short-sighted — his arm was round her waist. (*Reprovingly.*) No business of yours!

CYNTHIA. But you're not sure.

PALSAM. Promise me you'll question her.

CYNTHIA. She wouldn't tell me.

PALSAM. Yes she would, if you approached her in the right way. There's a *way* of getting at the truth in these cases. Besides, wouldn't it be much better to err on the right side, and accuse her wrongfully, rather than let her escape if she's guilty?

CYNTHIA. Guilty of what?

PALSAM. Well, she's French. I'm sorry to say it, but such a thing as real, genuine morality, as we know it in England, doesn't exist in the whole of the French nation. Besides, we can't be too particular —

CYNTHIA. Really, Mr. Palsam — (*going away from him*).

PALSAM. Well, I thought it my duty to caution you. (*Following her up.*) *I implore* you not to let the matter rest. I felt *so grieved* when I heard you had taken a French maid; it upset me for days! I *do* think it's *so wicked* of people! — (*He goes muttering up to chair, seats himself, genuinely distressed.*)

DICK (*to* MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE). Jolly lot of nice people on your committee.

MRS. CAM. (*rattling on to DICK*). Yes, it's quite a democratic movement amongst the aristocracy. The Duchess of Launceston said to me the other day—such a charming woman, the duchess—the duchess said, “Mrs. Champion-Blake, this London Reformation League is bound to succeed. You're all so terribly in earnest.” And with Lord Burnham as president—

PALSAM (*jumps up, startled*). The Bishop of Huntingdon is to be president—

MRS. CAM. My dear Mr. Palsam, you're dreaming. The Bishop of Huntingdon has no social influence whatever. Besides, he's Low Church, and really one might as well be dead and buried at once! No; Lord Burnham has consented.

PALSAM (*vigorously*). I really must protest against the way in which everything is being taken out of my hands. As Mr. Greenslade's acting trustee I am empowered—

MRS. CAM. Pardon me! Mr. Greenslade's first will remains in force—everything is legally Mrs. Greenslade's.

PALSAM. That makes no difference. I—

MRS. CAM. But listen a moment—

PALSAM. I cannot! I will not argue! It always excites me so! and I'm not strong. I have decided that the Bishop of Huntingdon shall be the president. (*Seating himself resolutely.*)

MRS. CAM. And *we* have decided that Lord Burn-

ham shall be president. (*Seating herself resolutely.*)
Haven't we, dear?

CYNTHIA (*holding the rose over her head, playing with it above her nose*). I wish we could reform London without quarrelling like cats and dogs every time we meet. (*Going slowly to table, burying her face in the rose-tree.*)

MRS. CAM. (*resignedly*). Of course the decision rests entirely with you.

Enter WORRELL, who announces LORD BURNHAM.

Enter LORD BURNHAM, a very distinguished-looking man about sixty; affable, shrewd, well-bred, a genial cynic. (*Exit WORRELL.*)

LORD BURNHAM *comes down to CYNTHIA, bows to MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE.*

CYNTHIA. How d'ye do? (*Shaking hands.*) It's so kind of you to be our president. (*PALSAM listens attentively, MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE also.*) Now we shall begin work in real earnest!

(*PALSAM shows angry despair, turns half round in his chair with a despairing gesture, crosses his legs, bites his thumb.*
MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *shows triumph.*)

CYNTHIA (*noticing PALSAM*). Mr. Palsam (*very engagingly*), I'm sure you'll consider it an honour to

aid Lord Burnham in our great work. (PALSAM *comes forward*. CYNTHIA *introduces*.) Mr. Palsam, our vice-president! Lord Burnham, our *president!* (*emphatically*. *The two men bow*.)

PALSAM. Of course, if Lord Burnham has considered the solemn responsibility!—

LORD BURNHAM. Well, on second thoughts, I'm afraid I'm scarcely fitted for the post—

MRS. CAM. (*quickly*). You are positively the only man in London who is fitted!

PALSAM. You'll pardon me, but—

CYNTHIA (*sweetly*). Mr. Palsam, it is quite settled. Will you be seated? (*Points to sofa*.)

PALSAM (*goes to sofa, muttering*). It is so wrong of people! But he'll do something, and then (*joyfully*) I'll make an example of him!

LORD BURNHAM (*looking at PALSAM*). (*Aside*.) Rather a mangy vice-president! (*Aloud*.) Yes, on consideration, I'm a busy man, and—

MRS. CAM. Oh, but the president's position is quite honorary. There is nothing to do.

LORD BURNHAM. I shall not be expected to undertake the reformation of any individual Londoner?

MRS. CAM. Oh, not at all!

LORD BURNHAM. Not even myself?

PALSAM (*solemnly*). The committee of the London Reformation League do not stand in need of any reformation themselves, except in trifles.

CYNTHIA. We all approach perfection as nearly as is endurable for our neighbours, except in trifles !

DICK (*strikes in cheerfully*). I know I've been getting better ever since I've been coming here ; and now I feel good enough for anything, — good enough to be on the committee !

LORD BURNHAM. I've no doubt the moral atmosphere is bracing, and (*glancing at CYNTHIA and MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE*) enchanting. And if I consulted only my own narrow, selfish wish to improve my own character, I'm sure I couldn't do it under better auspices. But I've always considered it a peculiarly base kind of treachery to be any better than my neighbours. It's leaving them in the lurch, and I can't do it. Now I'm fond of racing — (*PALSAM shows great pain and disgust.*)

MRS. CAM. Why not? A fine, manly, English sport ! There's nothing in horse-racing incompatible with the London Reformation League. Besides, if you lend us the support of your name to improve society in *some* ways, that surely gives you a little license to — a — exercise your discretion in — a — *some other* ways.

LORD BURNHAM. It isn't my *discretion* I want to exercise, it's my *indiscretion* that I want to have an occasional galop.

CYNTHIA (*imploringly*). Oh, but you could help us so much ! Your name alone would be so valuable !

LORD BURNHAM. Well, if my name will improve society —

MRS. CAM. Oh, it will! it will! An old title carries so much weight! (*Very coaxingly.*) You *will* be our first president?

LORD BURNHAM. Well, till you can get somebody better. (*Rises.*) Now tell me, what are we doing? How far have we reformed London at present? Have we made a start?

CYNTHIA. Oh yes! We have taken five hundred poor seamstresses out of the worst sweating shops in the East End, and set them to grow roses on a rose-farm near Wimbledon Common. Look! (*pointing to the rose-tree*). This is the result.

LORD BURNHAM (*smells roses*). Delicious!

CYNTHIA (*enthusiastically*). One can't have too many roses! And it's such a lovely industry!

LORD BURNHAM. Did they grow these?

CYNTHIA. Yes; under gardeners, of course. We have forty experienced gardeners to teach them.

LORD BURNHAM. Does the rose-farm pay?

CYNTHIA. Not at present. But it doesn't matter, because we've so much money coming in, we don't know what to do with it.

LORD BURNHAM. May I ask what is the precise sum we have available for the reformation of London?

CYNTHIA. Mr. Greenslade left over a million and a half. Except his ample provision for me, it all goes to carry out Mr. Ingarfield's scheme.

LORD BURNHAM. How is it invested?

PALSAM. In modern residences in Peckham and Camberwell.

LORD BURNHAM. Of course! Mr. Greenslade had large building speculations in the south of London.

PALSAM. Yes; he built quite a superior style of residence for forty pounds a year; you might almost call it a suburban mansion.

LORD BURNHAM. In fact, we may be said to owe modern Peckham and Camberwell to Mr. Greenslade, eh?

PALSAM. And parts of Clapham and Wimbledon.

LORD BURNHAM. What else did he do?

PALSAM. He discovered several temperance tonics. I have derived great benefit from his beverages.

LORD BURNHAM. He seems to have done a great deal of reformation altogether.

PALSAM. Yes. My lord, I never allow a drop of alcohol inside my house, and, if I may suggest, it would set a very beneficial example if you, as president of the League, would also make a strict rule —

LORD BURNHAM (*aghast*). Yes! Yes! I've rather a good cellar just at present, Mr. Palsam, but — I'll think it over. (*Hastily*.) Now about this rose-farm; very delightful place, eh, Dick?

DICK. Jolliest place in the world. You'd think you were a hundred miles in the country. And the rose-farmers in their pretty dresses, and singing their

songs! A most charming idea, Mrs. Greenslade!
(*Leans over CYNTHIA's chair.*)

LORD BURNHAM. The rose-farm was your idea, Mrs. Greenslade?

CYNTHIA. Mr. Ingarfield's and mine. Mr. Greenslade bought the forty acres for building, but there were two such pretty old-fashioned cottages—

MRS. CAM. (*gushingly*). Perfect dreams of cottages!

CYNTHIA. So I persuaded him to give it to me. I keep the cottages furnished, and we have built some new houses for the rose-farmers.

LORD BURNHAM. And these young persons, young girls, young women, or whatever they are—

MRS. CAM. Most of them have titles.

LORD BURNHAM (*surprised*). Titles!

MRS. CAM. Yes. That was my idea. A title is such a powerful incentive to good conduct. So we give them titles for rewards. One is called "The Queen of the Marshal Niels," another "The Lady Gloire de Dijon," and so on.

LORD BURNHAM. Do these titles imply a moral or a horticultural distinction?

MRS. CAM. Both moral and horticultural.

PALSAM. During the winter I have arranged for nightly lectures of an improving nature.

LORD BURNHAM. Ah! that sounds cheerful!

Enter WORRELL, door right, comes down stage a little.

WORRELL. The workingmen members have arrived, ma'am.

CYNTHIA. Show them upstairs —

MRS. CAM. The other way —

CYNTHIA. And have some lunch prepared for Mr. Ingarfield in the next room.

(WORRELL goes back to door right.)

LORD BURNHAM. We have workingmen on our committee?

MRS. CAM. Only three. It pleases the working-classes, and (*benevolently*) it doesn't do any harm.

WORRELL (*looking off*). Mr. Ingarfield and Miss Dell have just come in, ma'am.

CYNTHIA (*shows some slight agitation at the mention of INGARFIELD'S name*). Show them in here. No (*rises*), I'll speak to them first in the library.

(PALSAM watches CYNTHIA very suspiciously.)

(Exit WORRELL. CYNTHIA follows him.)

PALSAM (*has been watching her sourly and suspiciously*). (*Aside*.) She's gone to settle something important behind my back. (*Going up to door right*.) (*Aside*.) They're always settling things without consulting me! (*Goes off, muttering*.)

LORD BURNHAM, DICK, and MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE have watched him off.

(LORD BURNHAM looks grave.)

DICK. You're in for a good thing, sir!

LORD BURNHAM (*rises*). I shall never live up to it, Dick. (*Comes down stage a few steps till he is on a level with DICK. The two men look at each other. DICK laughs at his father. LORD BURNHAM walks gravely and moodily down to sofa, sits, looks anxious and solemn.*)

DICK. I say, Mrs. Blake, I've just taken a little place near the rose-farm at Wimbledon, and I can come over occasionally.

MRS. CAM. That will be sweet of you.

LORD BURNHAM (*has been listening*). Dick!

DICK (*comes down to LORD BURNHAM*). Sir!

MRS. CAM. (*rises, takes out her watch*). It's nearly time for the committee. (*Goes up to foot of staircase, looks up at it attentively, listening.*)

LORD BURNHAM (*confidentially, in a tone of kind reproof*). No damned nonsense with this Mrs. Green-slade!

DICK. Damned nonsense, sir?

LORD BURNHAM. Yes. This house you've taken at Wimbledon! I'm not straitlaced, but one must think a little about public opinion. It doesn't do to get found out—it's so awkward all round.

DICK. I assure you, sir, there isn't the least foundation.

MRS. CAM. (*coming down stage*). As usual! Our workingmen members are quarrelling amongst themselves.

LORD BURNHAM. Apparently we are a hybrid committee. What's this Ingarfield like?

MRS. CAM. Oh, he's a new variety of inspired idiot. Something between an angel, a fool, and a poet. And atrociously in earnest! A sort of Shelley from Peckham Rye. Poor old Greenslade was as mad as a hatter, and Mr. Palsam worried him into a death-bed repentance, and got him to leave all his money to this scheme of Ingarfield's.

LORD BURNHAM. And that's how we come to be reforming London at this prodigious rate.

MRS. CAM. Yes. Well, if we don't do any good, we shan't do any harm. Oh, I want you to dine with us one evening, and I'll ask Mr. Ingarfield. He's rather good fun, if you take him in small doses.

LORD BURNHAM. Thank you, I — a — I —

MRS. CAM. You're going to say "No," but you shall choose your own evening. And you shan't be bored. I'll ask Madame Fanny Blower, the American gymnast. Have you seen her performance?

LORD BURNHAM. No — I —

MRS. CAM. Oh, she's *adorable*! She gives drawing-room gymnastics after dinner. It isn't the least indelicate — after the first shock. It's a splendid lesson in digestion to all diners-out.

DICK. I've seen her. Very fine woman, and not at all overdressed.

MRS. CAM. You'll come too, Mr. Rusper?

DICK. Delighted. I say, who's this Miss Una Dell?

MRS. CAM. She's the grand-daughter of the mad Chartist poet. She's a good deal madder than poor dear Ingarfield —

Door right opens.

DICK (*warningly*). Hush !

Enter door right CYNTHIA and PHILOS INGARFIELD ; he is about thirty, long light curly hair parted in the middle, worn eager face, high narrow forehead ; lean, nervous, dreamy, absorbed. They come down stage towards table, CYNTHIA a step or two in advance of INGARFIELD.

UNA DELL, *a sensitive, shy, enthusiastic girl, about twenty, comes to door right, enters a step or two and stands there.*

CYNTHIA (*to INGARFIELD, with great concern*). You're tired ! You're hungry !

PHILOS (*looking at her with great tenderness*). No ! My work is food and rest to me ! My work ! (*aside, very softly*) and my love for you !

DICK (*aside, jealously*). That long-haired chap's bowling me out !

CYNTHIA. Lord Burnham, may I present Mr. Philos Ingarfield ?

(INGARFIELD *and* LORD BURNHAM *bow.*)

(MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *engages* PHILOS, *talks to him.*)

CYNTHIA. And (*looking round for UNA, who stands against door*). Where's — Oh, there you are! Come here!
(*UNA comes down.*)

WORRELL *enters right, comes down to CYNTHIA.*

CYNTHIA (*continuing, as UNA comes down*). Lord Burnham, this is Miss Una Dell. On a platform she can talk to three thousand miners. In a drawing-room she hasn't a word to say.

LORD BURNHAM (*bows to UNA, motions her to a seat on sofa*). I hope we shall find some subject.

CYNTHIA (*laughing*). Try social science. (*Goes a step or two back, where she is joined by WORRELL, who whispers her.*)

MRS. CAM. (*to PHILOS*). Sit down! You are really killing yourself. (*Gets PHILOS into chair.*) Now you must be very nice to Lord Burnham! He can be of the greatest use to your scheme.

PHILOS (*very earnestly*). Does he love his fellow-men?

MRS. CAM. (*dubiously*). Well, not particularly — but he has immense social influence. I'm afraid he's rather worldly (*shaking her head sadly*), not serious, not earnest, not one of us. Still, we must put up with his frivolity for the good of London.

CYNTHIA (*to WORRELL*). Yes; in that room (*indicating door left*). (*Exit WORRELL door left.*)

(*CYNTHIA joins PHILOS and MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE.*)

DICK (*has been watching* MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *fussing about* PHILOS — *aside*). What women can see in that fellow! I wish I could ship him off to Costa Rica along with his ne'er-do-wells. (*Watches* CYNTHIA *and* MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE.)

UNA (*has been talking enthusiastically to* LORD BURNHAM, *suddenly*). Oh, but I love blackguards! I love gaol-birds! I love outcasts of all sorts! I love everybody that's unfortunate, and miserable, and ugly, and wicked, and stupid! Don't you love them?

LORD BURNHAM. At some distance.

UNA. Oh, but you'll have to love them if you want to reform them. You'll never do it without *love*.

LORD BURNHAM (*looks disconcerted*). (*Aside.*) I shall resign the first chance I get.

MRS. CAM. (*effusively to* PHILOS). Yes; you must! Lord Burnham is positively *dying* to dine with you!

PHILOS. My dinner wouldn't suit Lord Burnham.

LORD BURNHAM. Why not?

PHILOS. It's so plain.

CYNTHIA. Why do you live like a hermit?

PHILOS. I can't feast while my brothers and sisters are starving.

MRS. CAM. Your brothers and sisters? Where are they?

PHILOS. In the gutters, in the alleys, in the gaols and work-houses. There are hundreds of thousands of them in the East of London that never smile.

MRS. CAM. Poor creatures ! Well, now Lord Burnham is president, we shall soon put matters right for them ! You'll put Mr. Ingarfield's scheme into operation at once, Lord Burnham.

LORD BURNHAM. Certainly. Perhaps Mr. Ingarfield will give me a few details. Where do we start ?

PHILOS. I start with the condition of London at the present moment. What have we made of our city ? What are we going to make of it ? Put up twenty-story flats all over the West End as far as Richmond, build Clapham Junctions all over the suburbs, and let the East End sprawl in its misery till it covers Essex. That's London's present ideal. Is it yours ?

LORD BURNHAM. I regret to say I have no ideals.

UNA. No ideals ?

LORD BURNHAM. No ; you see I've been in Parliament since I was twenty-two.

PHILOS. I want to put an ideal London before every Londoner. I want all good citizens to stand in line and say to London filth, to London ugliness, to food adulteration, to slums, to bad drains, to legal chicanery, to horse-racing, to the Stock Exchange, and to all other ways of living upon your neighbour without working for him, to the thief, to the idle, to the drunkard, to the jerry house-builder,—I want Londoners to say to all of them,—“We'll abolish you !”

LORD BURNHAM. And what do you suppose all these good folks will say in reply ?

DICK (*in a low aside*). "We'll see you damned first!"

Enter WORRELL door left.

PHILOS (*continuing excitedly*). I begin —

WORRELL. Mr. Ingarfield's luncheon is served.

(*Crosses to door right, exit.*)

LORD BURNHAM. Well, where do we begin?

PHILOS. Everywhere where there is dishonesty, misery, disease, despair! I want to make every Londoner feel that every broken waif of humanity in this city, no matter how evil, wretched, ignorant, sunken, diseased, is his brother, his sister, his child!

LORD BURNHAM. I fancy we've heard something like this before.

UNA. Yes; it's two thousand years old, or thereabouts. Mr. Ingarfield only preaches what everybody believes, and nobody practises.

PHILOS (*absorbed, continuing*). I want to bind all Londoners in one task, not to cease or rest till they have made London beautiful, London happy, London honest, London healthy, London sober, London clean, London free, from north to south, from west to east, in every street, in every home!

LORD BURNHAM. I don't quite catch the method!

UNA. Don't you? It's so easy! By persuasion! There's no other way of making people better. Men don't keep on being foolish for ever. They used to

cut one another's throats. They're beginning to see that's absurd. By-and-bye they'll see it's just as absurd to cheat and lie to one another !

LORD BURNHAM (*shakes his head*). My dear young lady, believe me, lying is far too venerable and *useful* an accomplishment for humanity to see its absurd aspect — in our day at least.

WORRELL *enters at door right with two telegrams; brings them to PHILOS. PALSAM follows him, watching him closely.*

PHILOS (*taking telegrams from WORRELL*). Excuse me. (*Opens them.*)

WORRELL *goes to door right, watched by PALSAM. Exit.*

PALSAM (*watching WORRELL off very suspiciously*). It can't be right to bring that French maid into this house ! (*Stands moody, distressed.*)

PHILOS (*having read telegram*). My poor ne'er-do-wells ! (*DICK listens very attentively.*)

CYNTHIA. Where are they ?

PHILOS. On board the *Avenger*, at Portsmouth. The President of Costa Rica refuses to receive them unless they are accompanied by a suitable guardian guaranteed by the English government.

DICK. Perhaps the Foreign Office can help you, Mr. Ingarfield. My father is Foreign Secretary —

(LORD BURNHAM *looks anxious, frowns, shakes his head at DICK.*)

PHILOS. It would be kind of you. Read these telegrams. (*Gives telegrams to DICK.*)

LORD BURNHAM. Who are these ne'er-do-wells of yours, Mr. Ingarfield?

PHILOS. Those who have been beaten and trodden underfoot in the struggle for life,—the weak, the diseased, the ignorant.

LORD BURNHAM. A good many bad characters.

PHILOS. You shouldn't call any man a bad character till you've changed places with him.

LORD BURNHAM. What shall you do with them?

PHILOS. I don't know. They've broken loose at Portsmouth; and the authorities threaten to prosecute me, unless I remove them—

DICK (*having read telegrams, rises, and hands them back to PHILOS.*) There's only one way, Mr. Ingarfield! You must go to Costa Rica yourself!

(*UNA shows interest and slight alarm.*)

PHILOS. Myself!

CYNTHIA. Impossible! Mr. Ingarfield cannot be spared from London!

MRS. CAM. Not till his scheme is in working order.

DICK. Mr. Ingarfield will either have to go to Costa Rica, or be prosecuted. This telegram from the mayor of Portsmouth uses pretty strong language. The Portsmouth people don't seem to like ne'er-do-wells. (*DICK hands telegrams to MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE and CYNTHIA, who read them eagerly.*) All Mr. In-

garfield has to do is to run over to Costa Rica, establish his colony, and leave his scheme in our hands —

PALSAM (*authoritatively*). I believe I am the vice-president of this League —

DICK (*amiably, soothingly*). Quite so, Mr. Palsam — leave the scheme in Mr. Palsam's hands. We can make it all right with the Costa Rica government —

LORD BURNHAM (*warningly*). I'm not sure, Dick —

DICK. We can guarantee Mr. Ingarfield as a suitable person to look after ne'er-do-wells. It's a mere formality.

LORD BURNHAM (*rises*). May I see the telegrams?

(*Joins CYNTHIA and MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE.*

They hand telegrams to him.)

DICK (*continues, glowingly*). And it's a lovely country! Don't I wish I had the chance of going!

PHILOS (*absorbed*). I've given my word to them. If I forsake them, what will become of them?

DICK. The Portsmouth magistrates will deal with them.

PHILOS (*scarcely listening to DICK*). And I could see for myself how far the country's suited to receive my oppressed ones. (*Sits in armchair, absorbed, deliberating.*)

DICK (*plying him*). The country's a perfect paradise for all classes of people who can't get on here. Why can't they get on here? Because, from constitutional reasons, they either don't, or can't, or won't, work. Well, in Costa Rica there's no need for much

work, nothing beyond that slight amount which is a pleasurable activity. There's the coffee! All you've got to do is to let it grow, and dry it! There are the bananas! All you've got to do is to let them grow, and gather them! And the vines! (PALSAM *looks ferocious.*) Talk about *Château Lafitte* —

PALSAM (*very waspishly*). I object to the Green-slade bequest being squandered in the pernicious industry of intoxication —

DICK (*comes to him good-humouredly, walks him to sofa*). Quite so, Mr. Palsam. We'll stick to the coffee and bananas. We must take care these poor ne'er-do-wells don't get rich too suddenly. (*Gets PALSAM soothed, and seated on sofa.*) It might upset them. And when we see each one of them owning a flourishing coffee and banana plantation, instead of loafing about a public-house — by Jove, we shall be happy!

PHILOS (*suddenly*). I'll go with them! It's my duty, and I'll go!

DICK (*aside, joyfully*). Landed him!

CYNTHIA and MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE, *very much concerned, come to PHILOS.*

CYNTHIA. But you can't be spared.

MRS. CAM. Positively you shan't go.

PHILOS. I must.

CYNTHIA. Is there nothing that would keep you?
(PHILOS *looks at her.*)

UNA (*aside, watching*). Yes. His love for her.

PHILOS. Nothing must keep me.

MRS. CAM. What object is there in your going?

PHILOS. The welfare of seven hundred and sixty poor souls who trust to me.

CYNTHIA. Don't decide now. Let it wait. (*Giving back telegrams.*) Your lunch—it's waiting in that room. Una, lunch. (*To PHILOS.*) You won't go? (*Imploringly.*)

PHILOS. If I don't, who will?

UNA (*suddenly*). I will! Let me take them!

DICK. You! Impossible! An emigrant ship is no place for a lady.

UNA. I'm not much of a lady. I'm a good deal of a woman. I'm safe amongst the miners of Northumberland, and amongst the thieves of the East End.

DICK. But you wouldn't be safe in the *Avenger*. It's the rottenest old tub—

UNA. And you want Mr. Ingarfield to go! (*To PHILOS.*) Did you hear? You won't go in that ship?

PHILOS. Yes. Don't fear.

(UNA *pauses, looks at him, then exit left.*)

(PHILOS *is going after her.*)

CYNTHIA (*stopping him*). Surely you won't risk your life. The ship is dangerous—

PHILOS (*shakes his head, smiles, with calm assurance*). No ship will sink with me while my work remains undone. (*Exit door left.*)

DICK (*aside*). He'll go. And if I don't bowl him out before he comes back —

(CYNTHIA *has watched* INGARFIELD *off left; stands at door watching.*)

WORRELL *enters door right, announces* MR. FIGG, MR. BURGE JAWLE.

FIGG, *a dapper, polite, insinuating, finicky, facile, plausible, bald man of forty, enters right, followed by* BURGE JAWLE, *a fat, jaundiced, heavy, torpid, olive-complexioned man of fifty; he waddles slowly down stage after* FIGG. CYNTHIA *closes door left, comes to centre of stage, meets* FIGG. *Exit* WORRELL *right.*

FIGG. How d'ye do? (*Shaking hands with* CYNTHIA.) You asked me to bring our great social philosopher, Mr. Burge Jawle.

(JAWLE *waddles down slowly in an unconcerned, torpid way.*)

FIGG (*introducing*). Mrs. Greenslade.

CYNTHIA. How d'ye do? (*Offering hand.*)

JAWLE (*waddles up, puts his heavy fat paw in* CYNTHIA'S *hand, speaks in a heavy drawl without any animation or excitement*). Thank you. I am as usual. My health is never robust. My vital processes are extremely slow. I nourish myself with great difficulty. (*Holding* CYNTHIA'S *hand — a slight pause.*)

CYNTHIA (*a little embarrassed*). I'm sorry —

JAWLE. Standing fatigues me. I think I'll sit down.
(*Looks round.*)

(LORD BURNHAM *rises, offers his chair.*)

JAWLE (*looks at it, looks all round, spies a very comfortable armchair down in corner*). No—that chair seems to be especially adapted to my requirements. (*Waddles very slowly down, seats himself with great precision, leans back, places his hands on his stomach, sits placidly absorbed, utterly oblivious of what is going on.*)

PALSAM (*To FIGG—CYNTHIA listening*). You were saying that Mr. Jawle's social philosophy will assist us in reforming London.

FIGG (*confidently*). You can't reform London without it. He has devoted his whole life to it, and he is at this moment absolutely penniless. The herd do not understand Jawle. By the way (*dropping his voice*) you could not put Mr. Greenslade's bequest to a better use than by substantially rewarding Jawle's immense services to humanity.

CYNTHIA. Of course if his philosophy helps us to reform London, we ought to pay him for it. Would he accept—

FIGG. I'll put it delicately to him. I think I can conquer his scruples. (JAWLE *gives vent to a peculiar melancholy chuckle, still sitting sublimely unconscious in his armchair.*) Look! (*Calls everybody's attention to JAWLE, who continues to sit unmoved, with his fat hands on his stomach. All look at JAWLE.*) He's

often like that for hours! He has that rare faculty of burying himself! He's quite unaware of our presence! We might discuss his whole system of philosophy without his knowing it.

PALSAM (*who has been anxiously waiting to question FIGG*). Are you quite sure his principles have an improving tendency for young men?

FIGG (*glibly*). My dear sir, Jawle has swept away all the older philosophies entirely. Jawle's is the only rational system of ethics.

CYNTHIA (*dubiously*). What does he teach?

FIGG (*same glib tone*). Jawle's fundamental doctrine is the immorality of marriage.

(*Great surprise on the part of MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE and CYNTHIA. PALSAM jumps up aghast. DICK and LORD BURNHAM chuckle. JAWLE preserves his attitude of placid self-absorption in the armchair.*)

LORD BURNHAM (*after the consternation has subsided — very quietly*). And what follows?

PALSAM (*much disturbed*). What?

FIGG (*bland, soothing*). Pray don't misunderstand me. Jawle has no objection to marriage in itself, but only as the one great means of promoting human misery. Jawle entertains equal objections to every other method of perpetuating the human race. Am I not right? (*Crosses to JAWLE, stands over his chair — rather loudly to JAWLE, prompting him.*) Marriage!

JAWLE (*faintly rouses himself, speaks very sententiously and authoritatively*). There being an immense balance of misery and suffering in every human lot, it necessarily follows that marriage, as the chief means of increasing that misery and suffering, is a criminal and anti-social action. (*Relapses into his self-absorption, takes no notice whatever of what is going on.*)

(DICK and LORD BURNHAM *are amused.*)

CYNTHIA (*puzzled*). But — if nobody married —

FIGG (*addresses himself to PALSAM*). I'm sure you agree with us, Mr. Palsam, that the rapid increase of the human herd is a matter for the gravest alarm —

PALSAM (*moodily*). I've always thought there was far too great a propensity — I can't understand it!

FIGG. Jawle calculates that at the present rate the human race will infallibly exhaust every possible means of subsistence in six generations!

PALSAM. Dear me! Dear me! What can be done? (*Retires to fireplace, stands terribly distressed, his lips muttering occasionally.*)

FIGG. Jawle's system delivers us. (*Smiling blandly all around.*) I must persuade you all to become members of the Jawle guild. (*With proud satisfaction.*) I founded the Jawle guild. I was the first to understand Jawle. Mrs. Greenslade, you'll join our guild?

CYNTHIA. Ye — es. What do you do?

FIGG. We discuss Jawle's doctrines. Sometimes

Jawle himself comes. But his health is very precarious, is it not? (*appealing to JAWLE. JAWLE takes no notice. FIGG prompting JAWLE in a loud tone.*) Your health.

JAWLE (*arousing himself slightly as before*). Yes; my vital processes are so abnormally slow that at any moment it may become advisable to bring them to a conclusion. (*Relapses into self-absorption.*)

(CYNTHIA looks inquiringly at FIGG for an explanation.)

FIGG (*in a low, reverential tone*). Jawle advocates the forcible and abrupt extinction of human life in certain cases — his own included.

CYNTHIA (*alarmed*). Not suicide?

FIGG (*reverently*). We trust he won't consider it necessary till he has completed his social philosophy.

CYNTHIA. Oh! (*Leans back in her chair, bewildered, gazing at JAWLE, who preserves his attitude of impenetrable self-absorption.*)

(DICK, LORD BURNHAM, and MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE have been talking together.)

MRS. CAM. (*gushingly to LORD BURNHAM*). I'm sure you can persuade the Duchess of Launceston to join us. It's so necessary that the reformation of London should be done by our own class, and not allowed to fall into the hands of agitators —

(*During MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE'S speech, WORRELL has entered on stairs right and come down to foot of staircase.*)

WORRELL (*rather alarmed*). I beg pardon, madam — the three parties upstairs —

MRS. CAM. (*to LORD BURNHAM*). Our workingmen members —

CYNTHIA. Well?

WORRELL. They're using coarse language to each other, and one of the parties has assumed a threatening attitude towards the other two parties.

(*A great smash heard off.*)

(*WORRELL goes quickly upstairs and off right, followed by CYNTHIA, DICK, and FIGG.*)

(*MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE and LORD BURNHAM rise. PALSAM stands undecided.*)

LORD BURNHAM. I'm afraid our workingmen members have not learnt drawing-room methods of reforming London. (*Looking at watch.*) I must be going.

MRS. CAM. No — you must attend one committee-meeting, and start us! Just one!

LORD BURNHAM (*going off left with MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE*). Very well — just one, but only one.

(*Excunt MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE and LORD BURNHAM.*)

(*JAWLE has preserved an attitude of impenetrable calm, has not moved a muscle all through; he sits with hands placidly resting on stomach, and gives vent to his melancholy chuckle. PALSAM has made a movement up stage to follow the others, but hearing JAWLE, hesitates, fidgets down to JAWLE, evidently anxious to question him.*)

PALSAM (*fidgeting round JAWLE*). I'm deeply interested in your proposal for legislating against this terrible increase of the human race.

JAWLE (*shaking his head slowly*). I've no faith in legislation.

PALSAM. Perhaps a course of public meetings and lectures —

JAWLE (*shaking his head*). I've no faith in public meetings and lectures.

PALSAM (*distressed*). No? Perhaps talking to people — that's my way; when I see anybody doing anything wicked I talk to them.

JAWLE. I've no faith in talking to people.

PALSAM (*plaintively*). Dear me! Then what is to be done?

JAWLE (*authoritatively, with solemn conviction*). Nothing can be done!

FIGG (*has entered on stairs*). Jawle, the London Reformation Committee is just going to sit. I want you to give them your views.

JAWLE (*rising with great difficulty, to PALSAM*). I'll trouble you for your arm. (PALSAM gives it, and helps JAWLE up stage to staircase.)

JAWLE (*to FIGG on staircase*). I'm not prepared for any large expenditure of vital force this afternoon. (*Waddling up with PALSAM.*)

FIGG. No; you can just prove to them in a dozen words that they are utterly wrong and mistaken in all they're doing. That's all that's necessary.

Enter PHILOS, door left, with telegrams. PALSAM, going upstairs with JAWLE, turns and calls to PHILOS.

PALSAM. Mr. Ingarfield, in talking to Lord Burnham just now, you didn't lash the vices of high life. Think how much good it would do if we could make an example of somebody.

(PHILOS, absorbed, takes no notice. Exeunt PALSAM, JAWLE, and FIGG upstairs, and off right. UNA enters left.)

PHILOS *(reading telegrams)*. Either I must forsake them and leave them to perish, or I must go through with it. And yet, how shall I leave her? *(Seeing UNA.)* Well, comrade?

UNA *(shakes her head sadly)*. I'm not your comrade now.

PHILOS. Yes, my comrade, my sister always.

UNA. No, I was your comrade three years ago, on that Sunday evening in the old garden when you first told my father and me all your dreams and plans. Ah! those old days! They'll never come again. How mad we were!

(Laughs a little bitterly, goes two or three steps down stage, right.)

PHILOS *(rises, follows her)*. These days are better. There's nothing changed.

UNA. Yes, the wind has *(with a little shiver)*. You'll go to Costa Rica?

PHILOS. I must.

UNA. And leave your work here to — your comrade?
(*Glancing up at him for a moment.*)

PHILOS (*tenderly*). Yes, to you — and to —

UNA (*going away from him*). No, not to me; I mean to your new comrade.

(*CYNTHIA comes down stairs, right.*)

PHILOS (*sees CYNTHIA*). Hush!

UNA (*running past him towards stairs, with a laugh*). Good luck to you and your new comrade!

(*CYNTHIA comes down centre, rather indignantly, taking no notice of UNA, flings herself rather angrily into chair.*)

PHILOS (*goes to CYNTHIA, bends over her*). What is it?

UNA (*going upstairs, peeps through curtains; aside, bitterly*). She won't be his comrade for three years.
(*Exit.*)

PHILOS (*bending over CYNTHIA*). What has displeased you?

CYNTHIA. Everything. They're quarrelling like bears. Oh, I'm tired of them! They're silly, and fussy, and selfish. You are the only one of us whose heart is in the work. All the money is legally mine. Take it all! Carry out your plans your own way!

PHILOS. Mrs. Greenslade — if I dared tell you.

CYNTHIA. What?

PHILOS. Perhaps you would despise me.

CYNTHIA. Despise you?

PHILOS. I will tell you. In two days I shall have left England.

CYNTHIA. You must go? (*Quickly, anxiously.*)

PHILOS. Would you have me stay?

(*She looks at him, says nothing, turns, sits on sofa.*)

PHILOS. Ah! you don't know what wild hopes you raise in me! I love you! (*CYNTHIA'S face shows great satisfaction and pride through all the speech.*) You're life, and food, and air, and summer, and sun, and strength, and breath to me. Your presence is my very heaven. I love you! I have loved you ever since — ah, I must tell you — from the moment I saw you my life was changed! Before my heart was aware of it, I loved you; before I dared breathe it to myself! (*Dropping his voice.*) When you belonged to *him* I found a secret passion in my soul I could not kill. I strove against it, but it would rebel against me and live. Don't think me willingly base. Be sure my least thought has never sullied you. Be sure I would have gone through fire rather than breathe it to you. (*Pause, calmer.*) I could not crush it, so I turned its course. The love it would have been sacrilege and infamy to offer to you, I tried to fling broadcast among mankind, for your sake. You gave me new hopes, new ideals, new resolves. It was you that filled me with this great scheme. Your lips breathed it to me when you spoke the simplest words. My dream has been to make this great city wear

some image of your beauty, catch some reflection from you, and be a fit resting-place for you, that you might breathe its air for a moment as you passed by.

CYNTHIA (*highly gratified, softly*). I like you to speak like this. How you love me! You make me feel I could do anything if you were beside me. Oh, let me help you! What can I do?

PHILOS. You love me! (*She looks down; he takes her hand.*) I know you do! Take up my work while I am away from England.

CYNTHIA (*pained*). Oh, but I don't want you to leave me!

PHILOS (*very tenderly*). You don't wish me to do my duty?

CYNTHIA. Yes, of course, but I don't want you to leave me.

PHILOS (*after a pause, sad, resigned*). I'll stay.

CYNTHIA. No, — go! I won't say another word.

PHILOS. Una Dell will help us. She's beaten gold.

CYNTHIA. I don't want any one to help you except me. I want it to be all our work.

PHILOS. Let it be ours; but if you need a counsellor at any time, go to her.

CYNTHIA. How long shall you be away?

PHILOS. Six months at most.

CYNTHIA. Oh, but that's eternity! It's cruel of you. Must you go?

PHILOS (*after a pause*). No, I'll stay. (*Sighs.*)

CYNTHIA. No, no ; it's selfish of me.

PHILOS. It's selfish of me to ask you to share such a life as mine. Have you counted the cost? It will not be easy.

CYNTHIA. You doubt me? I'll take any vow, any promise —

PHILOS. There is no need of that.

CYNTHIA. You trust me?

PHILOS. As my own soul. When I return it will be to claim my bride?

CYNTHIA. There's my hand ; it's yours.

PHILOS (*takes it, kisses it reverently, whispers*). Your lips? (*She bends towards him ; he is about to kiss her.*) No. I would have you still above me, still out of my reach. And let it show how sacred was my love for you, that lest there should be the least dishonour in my first love for you, I will not kiss your lips till I return. You'll keep that kiss for me?

CYNTHIA. Till you return to claim your bride.

(*He kisses her hand again reverently.*)

CURTAIN FALLS.

(*Fifteen months pass between Acts I. and II.*)

ACT II

SCENE—THE COTTAGES AND ROSE-FARM AT WIMBLEDON.

Two deeply thatched cottages, one on left side running from footlights up to back of stage; the other and larger one is built diagonally across stage on the right. They are both very quaint and old-fashioned, and are completely smothered in roses of all kinds.

Roses everywhere about the garden.

Doors leading into each cottage.

An arch of roses stretches from one cottage to another at back.

Garden seats and an old tree-trunk down stage.

It is the height of summer.

A summer sunset at the beginning of act; moonlight during the later part.

Enter DICK in evening dress from door of cottage at back, comes down to back of garden seat, looks up at balcony.

DICK. How much longer do you mean to keep me dangling after you, madam? I've wasted fifteen months on your committee, and I've neither reformed London, nor unreformed you. (*Walking up towards*

balcony.) I wonder whether she knows where that Ingarfield fellow really is. He's been back in England more than a week. I've bowled him out. But when does my innings begin? (*Looking round.*) I've a good mind to risk it to-night. (*Going up balcony, steps cautiously.*)

Enter from cottage at back LORD BURNHAM *in evening dress, with telegrams and despatches in hand, evidently excited and in bad temper.*

DICK (*on balcony, opens window*). Window open! Her room! (*Looks in, comes back to front.*) It's too bad to throw temptation in my way like this!

LORD BURNHAM (*turning in vexation, catches sight of DICK*). Dick!

DICK (*surprised, comes hurriedly down*). Sir?

LORD BURNHAM. What the devil are you doing there?

DICK (*lamely*). I was just a— (*seeing the despatches in LORD BURNHAM'S hand*). More bad news from Costa Rica, sir?

LORD BURNHAM. I wish Costa Rica was at the bottom of the sea!

DICK (*following him*). Who could have imagined that confounded Ingarfield would have got us into such a mess with the Costa Rica Government?

LORD BURNHAM. Who could have imagined anything else? (*Sitting on garden seat.*)

DICK. We can't really be liable.

LORD BURNHAM. We gave a guarantee that he should look after his damned ne'er-do-wells. Well, naturally the Costa Rica Government say the ne'er-do-wells weren't looked after, or the rioting and plundering would never have happened; and we shall have to pay four or five million damages.

DICK (*cheerfully*). There must be some way out of it. International law is so jolly foggy. Can't we bring a big claim against Costa Rica for unlawfully imprisoning Ingarfield?

LORD BURNHAM. It was his escape that was unlawful. They're demanding we should send him back to stand his trial.

DICK. Well, let's catch him, and send him back, and tell them to take it out of him.

LORD BURNHAM. So I would, but the political dissenters have taken it up, and they're making a hero and a martyr of Ingarfield. This country would be easy to govern if it were not for the political dissenters. They're calling mass-meetings against the government everywhere, — Manchester to-morrow, Newcastle on Thursday. (*Rises angrily, comes up to DICK.*) Now understand me, I've had enough of this tomfoolery!

DICK. You don't call reforming London, tomfoolery, sir?

LORD BURNHAM. Reform my grandmother!

DICK. Well, sir, you're President, and if you bring

forward a comprehensive scheme of ancestral improvement, I daresay we can work it in.

LORD BURNHAM (*hurt*). It's good taste to jeer at me, Dick, after having ruined my reputation before the country!

DICK. I beg your pardon, sir.

LORD BURNHAM. Then don't disgrace me any further!

DICK. What do you mean?

LORD BURNHAM. You're a married man. People are talking about you and Mrs. Greenslade.

DICK. On my honour, there's been no more than a harmless flirtation.

LORD BURNHAM. Then break it off, give up your house down here, come back to town with me to-night, and don't see her any more.

DICK (*shuffling away*). I can't come back to-night.

LORD BURNHAM. You won't? I haven't been a bad father to you, Dick.

DICK. I promise you, sir, there shall be no occasion for any future gossip about me and that lady. (*Holds out hand.*)

LORD BURNHAM (*looks at him*). I believe you. (*Takes hand, shakes it cordially.*) And we'll give up reforming London. I've had enough of it. I shall resign at once. If we could only find where this fellow Ingarfield is! Read those. (*Giving telegrams and despatches to DICK, who goes to seat and reads them.*)

CYNTHIA *in evening dress, without wrap, enters from cottage at back, comes down.*

LORD BURNHAM. I wish the Costa Rica people had hanged him —

DICK. Eh?

LORD BURNHAM. By mistake. They could have apologised for it.

CYNTHIA. What's the matter, Lord Burnham?

LORD BURNHAM. I'm very sorry, Mrs. Greenslade, that we ever tried our hand at improving this very excellent planet, just as it was revolving on its own axis so comfortably.

CYNTHIA. You've heard of the public meeting.

LORD BURNHAM. At Newcastle?

CYNTHIA. Newcastle? No; here in Wimbledon.

LORD BURNHAM. Wimbledon?

CYNTHIA. The residents have summoned a public meeting calling upon us to remove the rose-farm, because they say the rose-farming girls have not been behaving nicely, and are spoiling the neighbourhood.

LORD BURNHAM. They don't put it down to the government?

CYNTHIA. No; not at present.

LORD BURNHAM. That's lucky. I must resign my presidency before they do.

CYNTHIA. Oh, you won't desert us just as everything is going wrong!

LORD BURNHAM. I'm afraid I must.

DICK (*aside, looking at CYNTHIA*). She's more charming than ever. What a fool I was to promise to give her up! I won't!

LORD BURNHAM. You told me Mr. Ingarfield might be here to-night.

CYNTHIA (*embarrassed*). I thought he might be. (*Turns away.*)

LORD BURNHAM. You've not seen him since his return from Costa Rica?

CYNTHIA. No.

LORD BURNHAM. It would be wise for him to meet me.

CYNTHIA. Why won't you tell me if the Government will send him back to stand his trial?

LORD BURNHAM. I must not pledge myself. Are you in personal communication with him?

CYNTHIA. No; but I could send him a message.

LORD BURNHAM. Tell him I wish to see him at once in your presence —

CYNTHIA. In my presence?

LORD BURNHAM. Is there any objection?

CYNTHIA. No. When and where shall it be?

LORD BURNHAM. If I could see him before the Cabinet meeting to-morrow afternoon. Would to-morrow at eleven here be convenient to you?

CYNTHIA. Yes. (*Aside.*) I shall have to meet him! (*Looks rather perplexed.*)

PALSAM *in evening dress enters from cottage at back, comes gingerly down.*

(DICK *has risen, brings telegrams and despatches to LORD BURNHAM.*)

DICK. What's to be done, sir?

LORD BURNHAM. Resign, go to the country, and get kicked out. (*Catching sight of PALSAM.*) Here's that little mongrel! (*Hurries to garden seat, sits and assumes profound interest in the despatches.*)

(DICK *hurriedly crosses over to CYNTHIA, talks with her.*)

(PALSAM *looks on each side to see whom he shall victimise.*)

WORRELL *enters from cottage at back with coffee on tray, comes down to CYNTHIA and DICK, gives them coffee.*

(PALSAM *finally decides to victimise LORD BURNHAM, comes to back of garden seat, leans amiably over to LORD BURNHAM, who is profoundly occupied with his despatches.*)

(CYNTHIA *and DICK take coffee from WORRELL.*)

PALSAM (*coughs, fidgets, then in a very insinuating way*). How very terrible these recent turf-frauds are, my lord!

LORD BURNHAM (*without looking up*). Shocking! Shocking!

PALSAM. And one of your trainers was concerned.

LORD BURNHAM. Was he?

PALSAM (*in his pleasantest manner, with a sweet insinuating smile*). Can't I tempt you to give up horse-racing, my lord?

LORD BURNHAM (*with affable contempt, in quite an indifferent tone*). I don't think so, Mr. Palsam. I don't think so. (*Calls DICK from CYNTHIA, takes him a step or two up stage.*)

(WORRELL *crosses with coffee to PALSAM.*)

LORD BURNHAM (*pointing out something in despatch as if calling DICK's attention to it, in a low tone to DICK*). If somebody doesn't kick Palsam, I shall. (*Pockets despatches.*)

DICK. I think I would. (*Talks to CYNTHIA.*)

CYNTHIA (*to WORRELL, who is going up stage*). Worrell! (*WORRELL stops. PALSAM watches WORRELL suspiciously.*)

CYNTHIA. Ask Victorine to bring my lace shawl.

WORRELL. Yes, madam.

(*Exit into cottage right, watched by PALSAM, who the moment he has gone off, turns to CYNTHIA.*)

PALSAM. Is that — quite — prudent?

CYNTHIA (*blankly*). What?

PALSAM. There was quite a guilty look on his face when you mentioned Victorine.

CYNTHIA (*stares at PALSAM, calmly*). What do you mean, Mr. Palsam?

PALSAM (*quickly, nervously*). Oh, I don't positively accuse him; but she *is* French, you know.

CYNTHIA. Worrell is a most respectable man.

PALSAM (*eagerly*). That's it! that's it! You never know what's underneath outward respectability.

CYNTHIA (*rises, calmly indignant*). I don't wish to know.

PALSAM (*aside*). There's something wrong going on here. I feel it's my duty to miss my last train and find out what it is. I will!

(VICTORINE, a smart, good-looking French maid, enters from cottage at back with CYNTHIA'S shawl.)

VICTORINE. Madame's shawl.

(DICK takes shawl from VICTORINE and goes down to CYNTHIA with it. PALSAM watches VICTORINE very closely. DICK wraps shawl round CYNTHIA.)

VICTORINE. Which cottage will madame please to occupy to-night?

CYNTHIA. My own, Victorine.

(DICK, who is cloaking CYNTHIA, shows he notices this.)

WORRELL enters, collects coffee cups, waits.

VICTORINE. And Madame Blake?

CYNTHIA. Mrs. Blake will stay as usual in her own rooms in the visitors' cottage.

PALSAM (*aside*). That creature is asking those questions for some purpose. (*To CYNTHIA.*) Don't you find it very inconvenient having visitors here?

CYNTHIA. Rather, the cottages being divided.

PALSAM. How do you arrange the — a — accommodation?

CYNTHIA. I reserve that cottage (*pointing left*) entirely for my lady visitors, and I send my gentlemen to the little inn — it's very comfortable. My own rooms and the reception-rooms are all on that side. (*Pointing right.*) Why?

PALSAM. Oh, nothing, nothing. (*Watching VICTORINE and WORRELL.*)

WORRELL (*has been watching his chance to speak to CYNTHIA*). Mr. Portal is in the drawing-room, madam, and would like to see you and Lord Burnham.

LORD BURNHAM. See me?

CYNTHIA. He is the curate here. I suppose he has come about the rose-farmers.

PALSAM (*all alive with curiosity*). We'd better all go into the drawing-room. My lord — if you'll come —

LORD BURNHAM. Thank you. I'm very comfortable where I am. (*Seated with CYNTHIA.*)

CYNTHIA. Show Mr. Portal to us here.

(*Exit WORRELL at back.*)

VICTORINE (*waiting*). Madame has no further commands?

CYNTHIA. Wait for me in my sitting-room downstairs, Victorine. (*Exit VICTORINE at back.*)

PALSAM. It's terrible to think what may have been going on at this rose-farm in our absence. This matter must be thoroughly probed. (*In great glee.*) We mustn't shrink from knowing the truth merely because it may be shocking and disgusting. (*Fussing — all alert.*)

Enter WORRELL at back, showing in the REV. ALGERNON PORTAL, a bland curate, with lank, sandy hair, and precise, rather nervous manners.

WORRELL (*announces*). Mr. Portal! (*Exit.*)

PORTAL (*with precise, nervous, cordial manner*). My dear Mrs. Greenslade, I've taken the really unpardonable liberty of calling at this hour because I heard that Lord Burnham was with you. (*Nervous little chuckle — looking at LORD BURNHAM.*)

CYNTHIA (*presents*). Mr. Portal — Lord Burnham.

PORTAL. I am charged to convey to you a very important decision arrived at by the inhabitants of Wimbledon with respect to these young persons employed on your rose-farm —

PALSAM (*very distressed and agitated*). Dear me! dear me!

PORTAL (*glances at PALSAM sympathisingly*). Yes, it is indeed a painful subject. (*Turns to LORD BURNHAM.*) I thought it might be advantageous to you,

Lord Burnham, to know that unless the rose-farm is immediately removed from Wimbledon, our member will question the Home Secretary on the subject. I need not add the inhabitants of Wimbledon are warm supporters of the Government, but — really — you — a — understand. (*Ends in a little nervous chuckle.*)

LORD BURNHAM. Not quite. Who is aggrieved?

PORTAL. The better class of residents in Wimbledon. I have had constant complaints.

PALSAM. Dear me!

PORTAL (*looks sympathisingly at PALSAM*). Ye-es! (*Turns to LORD BURNHAM.*) Wimbledon being a respectable residential neighbourhood, of course the mission of the Church in a respectable neighbourhood is — a — naturally to attend to the needs of the respectable residential — a — a — residents, and really, when a quantity of badly behaved persons are brought into a respectable neighbourhood, I am sure, my lord, you'll agree with me that a — it is — a — (*nervous little chuckle*) a — most embarrassing.

LORD BURNHAM. Decidedly, Mr. Portal, wicked people are very embarrassing, and the question what to do with them — both in this world and the next — is beset with difficulties.

CYNTHIA. But we have engaged most respectable matrons.

PORTAL. I fear you cannot rely upon them.

PALSAM. I knew those matrons weren't to be trusted.

PORTAL. The most extraordinary conduct is frequent.

PALSAM. Dear me ! dear me !

PORTAL. I have myself witnessed — a —

PALSAM (*eagerly*). Yes — what ?

PORTAL. Some very indecorous behaviour.

PALSAM. Could you point out the young persons ?

PORTAL. There is one in particular. She is known amongst her companions as the Queen of the Marshal Niels.

CYNTHIA. But that's our model girl !

DICK (*half aside*). What must all the rest be like !

PALSAM. My lord, this is terrible, and I think you, as President —

LORD BURNHAM. I trust I shall not be held responsible for the very natural consequences of taking these poor, ignorant women from a state of semi-starvation, feeding them well, and turning them loose in a place like this. Excuse me, Mr. Portal (*rises*), I cannot consider this as any business of mine (*taking out cigar-case, selecting cigar*).

PALSAM. Oh, my lord, when anything wicked is taking place, it's everybody's business — it's your business, it's my business —

LORD BURNHAM. Ah, well, then, perhaps you'll be good enough to attend to it while I smoke my cigar.

(*Exit along garden path.*)

PALSAM. Mr. Portal, we must look into this at

once. If you'll come with me, I'll conduct you to these young women's quarters. Mrs. Greenslade, perhaps you'll accompany us, and then we can thoroughly discuss all the particulars.

CYNTHIA. I really can't leave my guests.

PALSAM. Come along, Mr. Portal. (*PORTAL joins him at back of seat; affectionately links his arm in PORTAL'S, and takes him up to archway at back. As they are going off, looks up at PORTAL.*) Of what nature was this indecorous behaviour?

(*Exit with PORTAL very slowly at archway.*)

(*DICK watches PALSAM off, comes to back of seat.*)

DICK. Mrs. Greenslade —

CYNTHIA. Well?

DICK. I've promised my father to break it off.

CYNTHIA. Break what off?

DICK. My attachment to you.

CYNTHIA. Shall you keep your promise?

DICK. Yes — after to-morrow.

CYNTHIA. Why not to-night?

DICK (*approaching her passionately*). Because this place was built on purpose to play Romeo and Juliet —

CYNTHIA. Indeed it wasn't; it was built for a farmhouse.

DICK (*passionately*). Cynthia!

CYNTHIA. Take care! Mrs. Blake can see us.

DICK (*following her*). I've followed you like a spaniel, and how have you rewarded me?

CYNTHIA. I've given you thousands of civil words, hundreds of smiles, dozens of roses, and several pressures of the hand.

DICK. Do you call that rewarding?

CYNTHIA. You talk of "rewarding"? You don't know what love means.

MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *enters from cottage, door right.*

DICK. Cynthia, for Heaven's sake don't play cat and mouse with me any longer! Tell me, is there any hope? (*Leaning over the seat close to her.*)

(MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *comes down behind* DICK.)

MRS. CAM. Bad children! (DICK *steps backwards*, CYNTHIA *shows a little confusion.*) Bad children! (*To* DICK.) Run away! I want to speak to Mrs. Greenslade. (*More commandingly.*) Run away! I'm ashamed of you! (*Comes left of seat beside* CYNTHIA.)

(DICK *exits sulkily right.*)

MRS. CAM. (*very reprovingly*). Now, my dear, this must positively stop!

CYNTHIA (*innocently*). What must?

MRS. CAM. Don't fence! If Mr. Palsam finds out anything, what will be the end of it?

CYNTHIA. Oh, Mr. Palsam is so busy suspecting all the innocent people, he has no time to attend to— (*Stops, confused.*)

MRS. CAM. The guilty!

CYNTHIA. No — no, indeed!

MRS. CAM. Well, shall we say — the not proven?

CYNTHIA. But you encouraged Mr. Rusper's visits.

MRS. CAM. I know I did. I wanted him and his father to join the League. How was I to know that you would be so foolish as to allow him to make love to you? However, now that the Duchess of Launceston has joined us, we can do very well without them. The Duchess is the dearest woman! the sweetest woman! — I never met with any woman with whom I had so much real sympathy as the Duchess! — but she is just a little bit prudish, and I wouldn't have that dear creature's name connected with the faintest breath of scandal.

CYNTHIA (*a little hotly*). You need not fear. There will be no scandal.

MRS. CAM. That's precisely what Lady Barringer said the very night before she eloped with her groom. Now, my dear, for the Duchess's sake as well as for your own, you must give Mr. Rusper his *congé*. Besides, wasn't there some kind of an understanding between you and Mr. Ingarfield? (*Watching CYNTHIA closely.*)

CYNTHIA (*rather confused*). No — at least — I did think I cared for him, but that was more than a year ago.

MRS. CAM. He has no claim on you?

CYNTHIA. No — except — well, I was foolish enough to promise him one kiss when he returned from Costa Rica, but I meant at the end of a few weeks or months,

and I didn't suppose that everything was going wrong as it has done.

MRS. CAM. Just so! We must reorganise the reformation of London on a totally new basis. Burnham wants to resign. We'll let him. Mr. Palsam and Mr. Ingarfield must both be got rid of, and we must take the matter in our own hands.

CYNTHIA. Whose hands?

MRS. CAM. Yours and mine, with the Duchess for President. And then we shall reform London in real earnest.

CYNTHIA. But the Duchess is very high church, and Mr. Greenslade detested high church.

MRS. CAM. My dear, poor Mr. Greenslade was not in a fit mental state to be able to judge; it requires a very profound intellect to understand such things. Depend on it, it's the only way.

(CYNTHIA *walks slowly to right and plucks roses.*)

MRS. CAM. (*looking at CYNTHIA*). Ingarfield will spoil everything again if he interferes. He must be got rid of somehow! The Duchess would never endure him! (*Exit into cottage, left.*)

CYNTHIA. Throw over Mr. Ingarfield! I wish Una Dell would come. I wonder if my letter reached her. (*Goes up to balcony-steps behind seat.*)

Enter at back BURGE JAWLE *and* FIGG *in evening dress.*

JAWLE (*continues his discourse as he waddles down stage*). FIGG *brings cushion to seat, very obsequious*

and attentive). Yes, the feminine nature is essentially vile, small, narrow, malignant, treacherous — (*pauses, surveys the different seats, sees comfortable corner*). I think I will occupy that seat. (*Waddles up to it, arranges his cushion, makes himself comfortable*.) I have not assimilated that cold veal pie I had for breakfast yesterday morning. (*Tapping his chest*.)

FIGG. No. I've never been able to understand the rabid admiration current in artistic circles for what is nauseously termed the female form divine.

JAWLE (*arranging his cushion*). True! (*Leans, comfortably*.) The natural outline of the female figure is hideous and repellent in the extreme.

CYNTHIA (*comes down to seat with her rose*). What are you saying, Mr. Jawle?

JAWLE. The truth. Take your own case. You are supposed to have considerable personal attractions. Analyse your personal attractions. Take a microscope. Look at your hand. (*Taking her hand*.) What is it? A coarse, scaly epidermis, studded with huge bristles —

CYNTHIA (*angrily withdrawing her hand*). But ladies' hands are not meant to be looked at under microscopes.

JAWLE. What are they meant for?

CYNTHIA (*looking at her hand, holding it up in front of her*). To be kissed on great occasions.

JAWLE (*shakes his head*). Go a step further. Your so-called beauty is built up by the processes of nutrition. Follow the stages of nutrition —

CYNTHIA (*disgusted*). Oh, please not, just after dinner!

JAWLE (*to FIGG*). See how people resent the truth!
(*Composes himself.*)

(*FIGG shrugs his shoulders and lifts his eyebrows in sympathy, rises, and goes down to CYNTHIA. JAWLE composes himself, places his hands on his stomach, and goes into a reverie.*)

(*Lights appear in the cottage windows.*)

FIGG (*to CYNTHIA*). You mustn't be offended with him. We shall not have him with us long.

CYNTHIA. What do you mean?

FIGG. He has finished the last volume of his social philosophy. By the way, what is the depth of that large pond at the end of the grounds?

CYNTHIA. From six to nine feet. Why?

FIGG. Nothing. He contemplated it for more than an hour this morning. I've always thought that the end would come by drowning.

CYNTHIA. Surely Mr. Jawle is not in earnest?

FIGG (*in a tone of benevolent pity*). Not in earnest?

CYNTHIA. At least he won't do it here?

FIGG (*solemnly*). Everything is prepared. I am his sole executor.

(*All the while JAWLE remains in absorbed contemplation, quite regardless.*)

CYNTHIA (*rather alarmed*). Then, if there is the least danger of his doing anything so foolish and

wicked, I beg you'll take him back to town to-night. Tell him so, please! I really can't have it happen here. (*Goes up, meets LORD BURNHAM, then comes down, and sits on rockwork left.*)

(*FIGG goes over to JAWLE, looks at him. JAWLE remains sublimely unconscious. FIGG assumes a worshipful attitude.*)

(*LORD BURNHAM and DICK stroll on right, smoking. DICK sees FIGG worshipping JAWLE, and stays at back of seat to look at JAWLE.*)

FIGG (*to DICK*). How wonderful! He has the rarest faculty for burying himself.

DICK. Ah! that'll come in useful when he commits suicide. (*Strolls up to balcony steps, and sits and smokes.*)

Enter from archway at back PALSAM, very excited and self-important.

PALSAM (*coming on a step or two, calls off*). This way, madam! (*very sternly*).

Enter at archway the QUEEN OF THE MARSHAL NEILS, a saucy, sly, pretty, common London girl, in a smart cotton gown. She comes in with a great affectation of modesty and shamefacedness, curtsying profoundly all round.

PALSAM (*calls off*). You, madam, stay there till you're wanted. We shall require you, Mr. Portal.

My lord, you said this was no business of yours—listen to this!

PORTAL *comes in at archway rather bashfully*; PALSAM *follows a step or two on his right, very severe and consequential.*

PALSAM (*motions QUEEN to step forward*). Now! The whole truth, and nothing but the truth!

QUEEN (*coming forward, curtseying*). Oh, if you please, sir, and kind ladies and gentlemen all, it's no denying there have been dreadful carryings on, and sich conduct as it's made my heart bleed for to see. But it isn't me! It's all that Glory Deejohn!

PALSAM. Take care, hussy! I have the plainest evidence against you!

QUEEN. Have you, sir?

PALSAM (*taking out pencil and pocketbook*). And I shall take down every word you say.

QUEEN (*snivel—snivel—and then a sudden outburst of tears*). Oh, if you please, ladies and gentlemen, there never was a poor girl so worried and buffeted with temptation as I've been; and if I have give way at times, there have been other times when I've been quite a pattern!

PALSAM. A pattern!

QUEEN. Yes, sir. Ask any of the girls else. I've talked to 'em about the wickedness of their ways, till I've drawed streaming tears down their cheeks. And

the bewtiful language I've used! I'm sure the dear good gentleman himself (*glancing at PORTAL, ogling him*) couldn't have used more bewtiful language than I did! (*PORTAL moves a little, coughs, blushes, and looks nervous.*) Oh, sir (*to PORTAL, with a renewed burst of tears*), you would have been joyful if you could have heard me! (*Further embarrassment on the part of PORTAL.*) And several other dear, kind gentlemen have been quite struck with the pretty innocence of my ways. And now to stand here and be scorned and inspected by everybody! (*Again bursts into tears.*) (*FIGG has been listening attentively to the foregoing proceedings. JAWLE has been perfectly absorbed, his large bland face lifted upwards, quite regardless of what has taken place.*)

The LADY GLOIRE DE DIJON enters at left archway.

QUEEN (*recovering from her sobs*). It can't be me, because my conscience always accuses me when I've done wrong, and my conscience don't accuse me a bit. It's a case of mistaken idemnity—it's that Glory Deejohn that's at the bottom of it. Oh, she is a real downright bad lot, that Glory Deejohn is! If I was to tell you all—

PALSAM (*encouragingly*). Go on! go on!

(*The LADY GLOIRE DE DIJON runs down to the side of PALSAM.*)

LADY GLOIRE (*bursting in*). Ask her to tell you all

about 'erself! Why, on'y last Sunday evening as ever was —

QUEEN (*very quickly*). Oh! oh! oh! Glory Deejohn, how can you stand there and tell such wicked falsehoods, and not be afraid as something'll happen to you! Oh! (*appealing to PORTAL*). On'y fancy, good gentleman, on Sunday evening, after listening to them lovely words as flowed from your lips — (*PORTAL again shows embarrassment.*) Oh! I blush for you, Glory Deejohn! — I blush for you!

LADY GLOIRE. Blush for yourself! (*rushing at QUEEN.*)

PALSAM (*authoritatively*). Silence!

(*LADY GLOIRE and QUEEN both make motions as if about to speak.*)

PALSAM. Silence! We all wish to learn (*LORD BURNHAM takes out his watch*) about last Sunday evening.

LORD BURNHAM (*stepping forward*). Excuse me, I don't. I've only ten minutes to catch my train back to town.

(*LADY GLOIRE comes down to front of seat, and an angry dispute in dumb show takes place between her and the QUEEN.*)

PALSAM. But, my lord, it's most important!

LORD BURNHAM. Thank you; I think I can dispense with knowing what happened on Sunday evening. (*PALSAM, rather snubbed, goes to QUEEN and LADY GLOIRE, who are quarrelling.*)

LORD BURNHAM (*takes an envelope out of pocket*).
Mrs. Greenslade. (CYNTHIA *comes to him*.) I've scribbled a few lines to Mr. Ingarfield. Will you see that he has them to-night?

CYNTHIA (*taking letter, putting it in pocket*). Yes, if possible.

LORD BURNHAM. Thank you.

LADY GLOIRE (*loudly*). Ask Miss Pattison else!

QUEEN. Well, ask Miss Pattison!

LORD BURNHAM. Dick, you'll come to the station with me?

DICK. Certainly, sir.

LORD BURNHAM (*goes to PORTAL*). Good evening, Mr. Portal. You have my sincere sympathy in your efforts to preserve the respectability of Wimbledon.

PORTAL. What would you recommend should be done with these young — a — persons?

LORD BURNHAM (*glancing at the group of PALSAM, QUEEN, and LADY GLOIRE*). I should leave them entirely in Mr. Palsam's hands.

PALSAM. Silence! I will subject Miss Pattison to a strict cross-examination. (*Takes out watch*.) I shall have time to question her before the rose-song is sung. Go back to the dormitories — at once!

(*They pass in front of him, LADY GLOIRE first. QUEEN turns round and curtsseys elaborately.*)

QUEEN (*ogling PORTAL*). The dear good gentleman will stipify to my innocence!

PORTAL (*very embarrassed*). Really — I wasn't there! (*Exeunt QUEEN and LADY GLOIRE. PALSAM follows them.*)

PALSAM (*pushes them off*). Go away, you hussies!
(*They exeunt quarrelling.*)

LORD BURNHAM (*turns to CYNTHIA*). Are those our model girls?

CYNTHIA. Yes.

LORD BURNHAM. I trust we haven't reformed the others. Come, Dick.

(*Exit. CYNTHIA has offered hand to DICK.*)

DICK. I'll say "Good night" on my way back from the station (*dropping his voice to a low aside to her*), if it must be said. (*Looks at her meaningly. She just glances at him and comes down to seat.*)

(*Exit DICK.*)

(*Pause. Lights in window left. PORTAL goes towards CYNTHIA. FIGG and JAWLE have been watching. JAWLE suddenly emits his gurgling, melancholy chuckle.*)

CYNTHIA (*rather sharply*). What's the matter, Mr. Jawle?

JAWLE (*elated in his melancholy way*). I cannot refrain from a smile when human nature illustrates my theories.

PORTAL (*rather embarrassed, to CYNTHIA*). I'm sure you will see that a residential neighbourhood like Wimbledon is scarcely the place for rose-farmers.

CYNTHIA. But where can I take them?

PORTAL. I should say there are remote country parishes where they would be quite—quite a welcome addition to the population. I'll call for your decision next Wednesday, before the meeting. In the meantime, good evening! (*Exit at back.*)

(JAWLE *emits another melancholy chuckle.*)

FIGG (*coming to CYNTHIA*). Oh, by the way, I've persuaded Jawle to accept that other two hundred pounds to publish the last volume of his philosophy—I was careful not to hurt his feelings.

CYNTHIA. I'm glad of that!

(JAWLE *chuckles again.*)

CYNTHIA (*shows annoyance*). You seem pleased that the rose-farm is discredited.

JAWLE (*solemnly*). My dear lady, if people will act in direct contravention of those great principles laid down in my philosophy, what can they expect but discomfiture and failure?

WORRELL *enters door at back with FIGG's and JAWLE's hats and overcoats; comes down and puts them on during following scene.*

CYNTHIA. But what can be done with these poor girls?

JAWLE (*rises and majestically waddles towards her*). Nothing can be done! Charity is merely a form of refined selfishness. You see distress; you are pained; to relieve your pain you scatter benefits broadcast,

which corrupt both the giver and the receiver. (*Looks round, fidgets.*) This night air is noxious, and my vital processes are so slow! (*A little shiver; beckons WORRELL.*)

(*WORRELL hats and coats JAWLE.*)

FIGG (*to CYNTHIA*). You must let me bring my new poet to you. I call him *my* poet, because I discovered him.

CYNTHIA. Oh, did you?

FIGG. Yes; quite by accident, in a little street off the Harrow Road. He's a superb genius! His name's Radbone.

CYNTHIA. Radbone?

FIGG. Yes; he's the sternest pessimist—sterner even than Jawle. Nobody has seized the inner core of the Harrow Road and Paddington like Radbone.

CYNTHIA. Oh! I don't know him.

FIGG. No; the herd—I do not use the word in an offensive sense—the herd do not know Radbone. But they shall. I am organising a Radbone Society. You'll expect us here to breakfast?

(*Exit WORRELL, having finished with JAWLE.*)

CYNTHIA. Oh, yes, yes!

JAWLE. To breakfast?

CYNTHIA. Yes.

JAWLE (*mysteriously, as if pondering*). Um—(*a long grunt*). To breakfast?

CYNTHIA. You'll come, of course!

JAWLE (*mysteriously*). Possibly, possibly! (*Waddles off slowly right, jealously looking at FIGG.*) Rad-bone!
(*FIGG goes after him.*)

CYNTHIA (*following them up*). Surely he does not intend—

FIGG (*hurriedly*). I trust not! I think not! If I should observe anything, I'll let you know. Good night!
(*Exit hurriedly after JAWLE right.*)

CYNTHIA (*watches them off*). How could I have been so foolish as to ask them here!

Enter WORRELL at back. UNA appears at door.

WORRELL. Miss Dell!

CYNTHIA. I'll come! (*Seeing UNA.*) No; I'll see Miss Dell here.

(*UNA comes down stage.*)

CYNTHIA (*gives hand, which UNA takes after a slight hesitation*). You received my letter, then?

UNA. Yes. What do you want with me?

CYNTHIA. Where is Mr. Ingarfield?

UNA. His address is secret.

CYNTHIA. From me?

UNA. From everybody, till he knows whether the Government will give him up.

CYNTHIA. But I wish to help him.

UNA. Aren't you rather late?

CYNTHIA (*turns away, ashamed*). Late?

UNA. The moment he reached England he wrote

to you he was coming to you. He has called at your house in London each evening, and the only answer has been, "Mrs. Greenslade is away from home, but all letters will be forwarded."

CYNTHIA (*comes down a few steps, hangs her head, speaks in a low, ashamed voice*). What does he think of me?

UNA. He thinks you are a model of constancy and devotion.

CYNTHIA (*very angrily, coming towards her*). Don't jeer at me!

UNA. I'm not jeering! You asked me what he thought of you. I've told you.

CYNTHIA. He does not know — or suspect —

UNA. Suspect you? He thinks you are away travelling — abroad, perhaps — and every time you are denied to him, he says, "How she will grieve when she knows!"

CYNTHIA. Poor fellow! You have not told him —

UNA. Why should I tell him? He'll learn soon enough that — (*Stops.*)

CYNTHIA. That what?

UNA. That fifteen months is long for a woman's devotion to last!

CYNTHIA. Why do you taunt me? I'm doing all I can for his safety. Only to-night I have offered Lord Burnham everything — all the Greenslade bequest — if the Government will not give him up.

UNA. What does Lord Burnham say?

CYNTHIA. He wishes to see Mr. Ingarfield at once. Here is a letter. (*Producing letter.*) Will you give it to Mr. Ingarfield?

UNA (*taking letter*). Yes.

CYNTHIA. To-night?

UNA. Yes.

CYNTHIA. He is in London?

UNA. No, not in London; but I'll take it to him. Good night! (*Going up stage.*)

CYNTHIA. Good night! (*Suddenly.*) Stay!

UNA (*coming down*). What is it?

CYNTHIA (*pacing backwards and forwards, undecided*). No—I cannot—and yet he must know. Will you take a message to him from me?

UNA (*comes down to CYNTHIA*). Go on!

CYNTHIA (*kindly*). You are his friend, his sister. He told me so.

UNA (*in the calmest, most indifferent tone*). Yes; he was my father's friend, and I saw a great deal of him some years ago; and we love the same strange truths that nobody else believes in.

CYNTHIA. How is he? He's not ill?

UNA. No—not ill; worn and exhausted after all he has gone through, but strong with hope and courage, and (*very softly*) love for you!

CYNTHIA (*cries out*). Oh, how will he bear to know that—that I have changed! (*Sits on seat; buries her face in her hands.*)

UNA (*approaches her, puts the question very*

quietly, but with intense interest). Changed? Have you changed so that you can never love him again?

CYNTHIA. I cannot help it! I did love him truly and faithfully—at least, I thought I did; but month after month I've found myself caring less and less for him! I would love him if could, but my heart will not be driven—tell him so. Oh, I've begun to write to him dozens of times, but I've been too cowardly; and when I heard last week he had come back to England, I ran away because I was afraid to meet him and tell him my love was dead!

UNA (*same outwardly calm, indifferent tone*). And you wish me to break the news to him?

CYNTHIA. I wish to save him pain. The blow will be kinder from a friend's hand than mine.

UNA. Very well! I'm his friend. I'll send the dagger into his heart.

CYNTHIA (*rising angrily, crosses to centre*). Don't speak to me like that! Don't you see how wretched I am? Send him to me! I'll wait here for him, and tell him the truth myself! (*Walking angrily backwards and forwards.*)

UNA. No. You are right. It will be softer to come from me.

CYNTHIA. You'll be very gentle with him?

UNA. Oh yes; I'll kill him kindly.

CYNTHIA. Why can't you spare me? You make me feel as if I were murdering him! I would love

him if I could. Tell him so, and tell him that all I have in the world is freely his.

UNA. All you have in the world is freely his.

CYNTHIA. Except my heart.

UNA. Except your heart.

CYNTHIA. Come to-morrow, and let me know how he bears it.

UNA. I will. Which is the nearest way to the station?

CYNTHIA. I'll send one of the servants. (*Going towards cottage, centre.*)

UNA. No. Nobody will harm me. The nearest way?

CYNTHIA (*pointing off left*). That way takes you into the footpath.

UNA (*going off down stage left, curtly*). Thank you. Good night!

CYNTHIA (*comes down to her very tenderly and kindly*). Oh, don't let him think me heartless and unkind — indeed I'm not — (*Suddenly*). Kiss me!

UNA. Kiss you? Do you think I want to teach my lips the trick of breaking faith?

CYNTHIA (*furious*). How dare you? how dare you?

UNA (*laughs*). Dare? I'm going to break his heart with your message. Dare? (*Laughs. Is going.*)

(*CYNTHIA, maddened, takes her by the shoulder. UNA turns, faces CYNTHIA.*)

CYNTHIA. You love him!

UNA (*close to CYNTHIA, looking straight at her*).
Yes, I love him! (*Exit down stage, left.*)

(CYNTHIA, *maddened, walks up and down the stage, and then throws herself into a seat.*)
(*The moon is rising.*)

DICK *enters behind her at the rose-arch; comes up to her.*

DICK. Cynthia!

CYNTHIA. Leave me! I hate you!

DICK (*following her*). Hate me?

CYNTHIA (*pacing backwards and forwards*). Yes; you've made me break my word and despise myself.

DICK. I'd break my word a thousand times for you.

CYNTHIA (*still pacing. Contemptuously*). Would you?

DICK. I'd sell myself body and soul for you!

CYNTHIA (*contemptuously*). Would you?

DICK. Upon my honour I would!

CYNTHIA (*stops. Same contemptuous tone*). Would you sell your honour too?

DICK (*comes down to her; tries to put his arms round her*). Yes, my honour too!

CYNTHIA (*contemptuous laugh; gets away from him*). Your honour? Would you?

DICK (*coming to her*). Don't trifle with me any longer, Cynthia. See what a fool you make of me! I don't care how long I dance after you — if you only love me at last.

CYNTHIA. Then let it be at last! I don't think I've yet sunk low enough. Good night! (*Getting away from him up stage.*)

DICK (*goes round the other way and intercepts her. Passionately*). I can't say it! If I leave you to-night, I shall only come back to-morrow loving you more madly than ever. I won't leave you till you say "Yes." (CYNTHIA *is going into cottage. DICK intercepts her, and gets her a little way down the stage.*)

Cynthia, we were made for one another.

CYNTHIA. Yes, I think we were. We're just on each other's level.

DICK. What do you mean?

CYNTHIA. I'm weak and vain and frivolous—I can't be faithful for five minutes. There's no truth in me. Do you love me?

DICK. Yes.

CYNTHIA. I hate and despise myself, and I hate and despise you! Do you love me?

DICK. Yes.

CYNTHIA. I don't love you—I don't admire you—I don't respect you! Do you love me? (*Comes down stage.*)

DICK (*coming to her*). Yes, with all my heart.

CYNTHIA (*with a loud, contemptuous laugh*). Oh, you were right! We were made for one another. (*Coming down in front.*)

DICK (*following her, clasping her*). To-night?

CYNTHIA (*looks at him suddenly*). Hush! I heard something! (*Listens.*) Yes, some one's coming. Go!

DICK. Not till you say "Yes."

CYNTHIA (*listening*). There's some one coming!

DICK. Say "Yes." (*Whispers.*) You may as well say it now; you'll say it some time. Give me that rose. (*CYNTHIA breaks away from DICK, looks at him desperately, then dashes the rose at his feet.*)

DICK (*picks it up*). At your window — soon?

(*CYNTHIA watches him off.*)

PHILOS *enters at rose-arch, slowly, cautiously, looking round. He is worn and rather aged since last act, with traces of hardship and suffering.* CYNTHIA, *looking off after DICK, turns and sees PHILOS. She stands still. He watches her with intense devotion, coming towards her. She comes down in front of seat.*

PHILOS (*coming towards her, utters a cry of satisfaction*). Ah! my dearest! (*Looks at her full of devotion; tumbles at her feet.*) Oh! how I have longed for this moment! (*Presses the folds of her dress to his lips.*) (*A long pause.*)

CYNTHIA. You've not met Una Dell?

PHILOS. No. I've been watching for her to come back with your message. What does it matter? She could but have brought you to me — I have found the way to you alone.

CYNTHIA (*aside*). He does not know.

PHILOS. Oh, I'm starved and parched for lack of you! I'm sick with hunger for the sight of you! Speak to me, Cynthia! speak to me!

CYNTHIA. What can I say?

PHILOS (*rises from ground*). Tell me what I know, that you have counted the moments of my absence; that every moment has been a year! Oh, I cannot say what I would! I'm in a dream! (*Rising; she turns away from him.*) Let me look at you! It is you! It is the one dear form that has been with me all the year through. You have never left me! You made that place bright and sacred to me! Oh, my heart has been breaking a hundred times, but you gave me courage, you gave me life — I shall never die while you love me!

(*The girls' voices singing the rose-song heard in the distance.*)

CYNTHIA (*aside*). I cannot tell him.

PHILOS. Ah! Hark! The rose-song! All the old times come back! It's the past year that's a dream. My fear, my sufferings, my despair, are all gone! It's you, it's this moment, that are real! You are with me, my bride! Give me that kiss you promised me!

CYNTHIA (*suddenly*). Hark! I have visitors here! You have taken me by surprise — don't think me cruel or unkind — I can't yet realise that you are here. I have begged Lord Burnham not to send you back to that dreadful country.

PHILOS. You have interceded for me? Don't fear! They will not dare to touch me. The country is with me.

CYNTHIA. Una Dell has a letter for you. You are to meet Lord Burnham here at eleven to-morrow morning.

PHILOS. At eleven to-morrow!

CYNTHIA. Don't stay! I want to think. You must give me time to think — I don't know what I'm saying — you mustn't stay now — good night! (*Pointing him off.*) You'll do as I wish?

PHILOS. Your least word is enough. Good night! (*Raises her hand to his lips.*) To-morrow!

CYNTHIA. Yes, to-morrow.

PHILOS (*comes to her beseechingly*). It is a hundred years.

CYNTHIA (*with a forced smile*). It will be soon enough! (*Aside, sadly, as he turns away.*) It will be soon enough! (*Exit PHILOS left.*)

CYNTHIA (*alone*). What have I done? what have I done? (*Exit into cottage door at back.*)

(*Rather long pause. Light seen in balcony window right.*)

(*Clock in distance strikes eleven. Pause.*)

Re-enter PHILOS down stage left; creeps to seat, looking at balcony window.

PHILOS (*standing in front of seat*). She is there! (*Looking up at balcony window.*) Her room! her

light! Oh, I cannot leave you! And you were with me just now! Here you stood and breathed this air! Oh, if time would stand still, and make one moment of our meeting eternal! To-morrow! to-morrow!

Re-enter DICK from archway, cautiously.

(PHILOS crouches in arm of seat, watching.)

DICK. All safe and quiet! I've played a waiting game, and I've won. *(Going up the steps.)* I deserve my luck!

PHILOS *(watches)*. That man!

DICK *(taps at balcony)*. Cynthia!

PHILOS *(aside)*. Cynthia!

DICK *(tapping louder)*. Cynthia! Cynthia!

CYNTHIA *(opens the window a little)*. Leave me! Go! *(Trying to shut the window.)*

DICK *(trying to force his way in)*. But you promised —

CYNTHIA. Not now! not now! Do you hear? Not now!

DICK. Why not?

CYNTHIA. Mr. Ingarfield has been here —

DICK. Ingarfield! He's nothing to you —

CYNTHIA. He loves me!

DICK. Poor fool!

CYNTHIA. Yes, poor fool! I want to be alone, to think. Do you hear? Good night! Go! *(Shuts window in his face.)*

DICK (*trying at window*). Cynthia! (*Trying window.*) Fastened! Cynthia!

Re-enter PALSAM at archway. Goes to cottage door left, unobserved.

DICK (*desperately*). Do you hear? Let me in! (*Tapping, trying window; PALSAM and PHILOS watching, unseen by each other.*) You promised! (*Forces window open, and enters.*) I will come in!

PHILOS. Oh!

PALSAM (*whispers*). Who was it? Mrs. Blake! Mrs. Blake! (*Taps door very gently.*)

(PHILOS rises, goes on balcony steps, with a gesture of despair turns away, comes down left.)

(PALSAM goes to door of MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE'S cottage, taps, sees INGARFIELD coming from balcony.)

PHILOS (*looks up to balcony*). Poor fool!

(*Exit down stage left.*)

(PALSAM comes down stage, looking after INGARFIELD, and in a surprised tone exclaims:)

PALSAM. Mr. Ingarfield!

(*Exit after INGARFIELD.*)

DICK (*re-enters upon balcony*). Damn that fellow Ingarfield!

(CYNTHIA appears at door of cottage at back, looks round cautiously to see that all is safe, then flies over to MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE'S door, batters at it with all her might for some seconds.)

CYNTHIA (*hysterically*). Let me in! let me in! I'm frightened! I—oh! let me in! Quick! quick! Ah! (*The door opens; CYNTHIA, fainting, hysteric, tumbles in; the door closes.*)

CURTAIN.

(*One night passes between Acts II. and III.*)

ACT III

SCENE—MORNING ROOM IN THE ROSE COTTAGE.

Enter MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *from door at back.*

MRS. CAM. (*speaking as she enters*). Hush, sir !
hush !

PALSAM *enters.*

You don't wish all the servants to hear, I suppose ?

PALSAM (*stern, self-important, very business-like, goes to seat and sits down ; Mrs. CAMPION-BLAKE follows him down*). Why not ? It's the truth !

MRS. CAM. It's not the truth !

PALSAM. Mr. Ingarfield did not deny it. Mrs. Greenslade does not deny it.

MRS. CAM. She's too indignant !

PALSAM (*shakes his head, smiles malignantly*). I know the signs of guilt ! I've had too much experience !

DICK *enters*.

DICK. What's the matter?

PALSAM. Sir, a very terrible scandal has occurred, which I shall be compelled to make public.

DICK. You don't say so?

PALSAM. Yes. Last night, after endeavouring for nearly an hour to get at the truth from Miss Pattison about the rose-farmers, I was obliged to leave; and happening to cross the lawn outside —

DICK (*rather alarmed*). You came by here?

PALSAM. I did.

(MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *is pacing backwards and forwards in a distressed way.*)

DICK (*half puzzled, half alarmed*). What did you see?

PALSAM. Enough to convince me that the man who has placed himself at our head for the reformation of London is a character of the worst possible type.

DICK (*astonished*). My father?

PALSAM. No; I do not accuse your father at present. I mean Mr. Ingarfield.

DICK (*puzzled*). Ingarfield!

PALSAM. A hypocrite and a scoundrel! I saw him entering a window of this house last night at an hour when everybody ought to have been asleep.

DICK. You surprise me; but — (*puzzled*). The rascal! the villain!

PALSAM. I shall expose him! I shall expose the lady too!

MRS. CAM. Indeed you shall not! Mrs. Greenslade was not —

DICK (*at the mention of MRS. GREENSLADE'S name, quickly*). Mrs. Greenslade's name must not be mentioned in this affair.

PALSAM. Oh yes, it must!

DICK (*standing over PALSAM, in a low, firm tone*). There will be a horse-whipping for the man who does mention it!

PALSAM (*in a quiet, determined voice*). I shall not be deterred by a horse-whipping. I have set myself the inexpressibly painful task of rooting out vice from English life, and it's my duty to make an example of every one whom I detect.

DICK (*indignantly*). But good Heavens, sir! (*Seizes him.*) You shall not leave this room till you have promised me —

MRS. CAM. (*coming between them*). Hush! Leave him alone! Do you hear? (*Separates them.*) You won't stop his mouth that way.

PALSAM. No, nor any other way. Having warned Mrs. Greenslade, I now consider myself at liberty to make the matter public. Good morning!

MRS. CAM. (*stopping him*). Listen, Mr. Palsam. If I could prove you are mistaken —

PALSAM. How?

MRS. CAM. Will you promise not to mention this for an hour?

PALSAM (*takes out his watch*). It is now half-past ten. I will not mention it till half-past eleven.

MRS. CAM. I'm sure, when I've made enquiries, I can bring you the clearest proof of that lady's innocence.

PALSAM (*smiling*). Of course I should be only too pleased to find her innocent, if I could find one or more persons equally guilty. But I'm not at all hopeful. I have now another painful duty to perform.

MRS. CAM. What's that?

PALSAM. To obtain the whole truth from Miss Pattison about the rose-farmers. (*Authoritatively, didactically.*) Mind you, this all comes from not leaving matters in my hands. If I were allowed to do as I please, I could reform London in six months. (*Firmly.*) At half-past eleven! (*Exit.*)

(DICK and MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE watch him off, then look at each other.)

MRS. CAM. (*angrily*). You see what you've done?

DICK (*pretending innocence*). What I've done?

MRS. CAM. Don't pretend innocence! Mrs. Green-slade has told me all!

DICK. But Palsam saw Ingarfield!

MRS. CAM. Nonsense! Palsam is short-sighted, and has somehow mistaken you for him. Oh, I knew there would be some scandal! And — (*Suddenly stops, cries out horror stricken.*)

DICK. What's the matter now?

MRS. CAM. 'The Duchess gives a garden party next

Friday, to meet the committee of the London Reformation League? And everybody is to be there!
(*Transfixed with horror.*)

DICK (*quietly*). By Jove! Everybody *will* be there!

MRS. CAM. (*enraged*). Something must be done!
Do you hear?

DICK. Well, I'll horsewhip Palsam! It's my duty as a man of honour, and I'll do it!

MRS. CAM. That's no use! It would only spread the scandal far and wide. (*Pacing desperately.*)
Think! think! What can we do?

DICK. Why not tell the truth?

MRS. CAM. The truth? That you were seen outside her balcony last night!

DICK. No, not me! Ingarfield!

MRS. CAM. You or Ingarfield! That doesn't matter! It's Mrs. Greenslade's reputation I must and will save at all costs. So far as Ingarfield is concerned, the story would do very well. (*Suddenly.*)
It would rid us of him. Very well; Mr. Palsam saw Mr. Ingarfield — but it was outside Mrs. Greenslade's balcony — how do you account for that?

DICK. I can't. It looks suspicious!

MRS. CAM. (*enraged*). Suspicious! Will you once for all realise the fearful mess we're in? Won't you do something to repair the mischief you've caused?

DICK. That I've caused! Let me tell you, Mrs. Blake, I've been used very badly in this matter. If Mrs. Greenslade had placed her reputation in my

keeping, everything would have been right. Still, I'll do all I can ; and if you'll say what story you're going to tell, I'll stick to it. Only let's be careful about details.

MRS. CAM. But what story can we tell?

DICK. Well, I'm not a good hand at inventing ; but you may rely on me for any amount of backing up.

MRS. CAM. How can we clear Mrs. Greenslade?

DICK. But she's really innocent !

MRS. CAM. I know.

DICK. Why not prove it?

MRS. CAM. How can I? Palsam will say one thing, I shall say another, and between us Mrs. Greenslade's reputation will be torn to rags. Oh ! why don't you suggest something? Think ! think ! think !

Enter VICTORINE.

VICTORINE. Pardon, madame ! Madame will know if Mr. Palsam is still here?

MRS. CAM. No, he has gone ; but he will come back at half-past eleven. How is Mrs. Greenslade, Victorine?

VICTORINE. Madame is not well. She has had some frightens — bad messages. I do not like that Mr. Palsam. Every time he sees me he make his eyes stop still at me — he not say nothing, but he think much — he think, “Oh, you are a wicked French devil !”
(Pause.)

MRS. CAM. (*looks at VICTORINE. Suddenly her face brightens and shows she sees a way out of her difficulty. She goes very sweetly to VICTORINE, and says in a quiet, persuasive tone*). Victorine, I want to speak to you for a few minutes quite alone.

VICTORINE. Certainly, madame.

MRS. CAM. (*same gentle, sweet, persuasive manner*). Now keep somewhere close here, and I'll come to you directly.

VICTORINE. Yes, madame.

(*Exit. Leaves door open.*)

MRS. CAM. (*to DICK*). You stay somewhere about the lawn. Be ready to come in and confirm my story, if necessary.

DICK. Hadn't we better arrange the details?

MRS. CAM. (*looks off at open door*). Here's Mrs. Greenslade! Leave all to me!

(*Exit DICK.*)

CYNTHIA *enters*.

CYNTHIA. Has Mr. Palsam gone?

MRS. CAM. Yes; but he's coming back. He's determined to expose you.

CYNTHIA. What can I do?

MRS. CAM. Will you trust everything to me; I believe I can save you.

CYNTHIA. Am I worth saving?

MRS. CAM. Do you realise the awful position you're in?

CYNTHIA. Yes. Mr. Palsam means to spread a horrible tale about me. Of course, I don't wish to be spattered with mud. I don't want people to think badly of me, and yet if they knew the exact truth —

MRS. CAM. There's no such thing as the exact truth. What we've got to do is to stop that man's tongue. I think you ought to be very grateful to me, when I'm ready to go anywhere, do anything, say anything, and all for your sake.

CYNTHIA. Oh, don't think me ungrateful! Only since last night I've felt myself such a hypocrite!

MRS. CAM. Hypocrite?

CYNTHIA. Yes; and I hate hypocrites!

MRS. CAM. So do I. No one hates hypocrisy more than I do. But how are you a hypocrite?

CYNTHIA. I keep on saying one thing and practising another.

MRS. CAM. That isn't hypocrisy. Everybody does that. Hypocrisy is when you know you're thoroughly bad at heart, and cloak it over by pretending to be very religious—like Chadband or Stiggins. There's really very little hypocrisy in England to-day, except in the small dissenting sects. But come! we've only half an hour. Will you leave everything to me?

CYNTHIA. Shall you have to say anything that's not the truth?

MRS. CAM. I shall only deviate very slightly. And surely, to save such a reputation as yours, it's worth sacrificing something!

CYNTHIA. Then the better the reputation, the more falsehoods it's worth while to tell to save it?

MRS. CAM. Really, Cynthia, you are the most exasperating woman — when I'm doing all I can!

CYNTHIA (*running to her quickly*). No, no! I don't mean to be unkind. (*Kisses her.*) There! I'll leave it all in your hands.

MRS. CAM. Very well! I may have to spend a few hundreds —

CYNTHIA. Whatever is necessary.

MRS. CAM. Now go and lie down, and have a headache all day; and be very indignant at Mr. Palsam's accusation.

CYNTHIA. Oh, that's my part, is it? What a farce it is!

MRS. CAM. What's a farce?

CYNTHIA. Life!

MRS. CAM. A farce?

CYNTHIA. Yes; just to keep the husk of reputation, and know there's no grain there! And that man Ingarfield last night was not afraid of prison, or hunger, or death! And I'm afraid of the truth! I'm afraid of what people will say of me! Oh, I am small! I am contemptible!

MRS. CAM. (*goes to her*). Cynthia!

CYNTHIA. Very well! Do as you please! I'll say nothing!
(*Exit.*)

MRS. CAM. Was there ever such an unselfish, devoted friend as I am?
(*Exit.*)

DICK *and* LORD BURNHAM *enter at window left.*

LORD BURNHAM. You here! You've not kept your promise!

DICK. Well, the fact is, there's some scandal here —

LORD BURNHAM (*quickly*). Scandal! Not about you?

DICK. Oh, no! It's about this fellow Ingarfield. I don't quite know the details; but there's going to be a devil of a row!

LORD BURNHAM. Is there? He was to meet me here at eleven. (*Sits, takes out his watch.*) The papers this morning are full of these confounded mass meetings!

DICK. What's the latest about Costa Rica?

LORD BURNHAM. We shall have to pay for the revolution. We're in to the tune of four millions; only as it was all part of this confounded London Reformation scheme of Ingarfield's, it's only fair that Greenslade's million and a half should go towards it.

DICK. And the other two millions and a half?

LORD BURNHAM (*pulling a long face*). Twopence on the income tax.

DICK. And the "ne'er-do-wells"?

LORD BURNHAM. Bring them back to London.

DICK. And the Government?

LORD BURNHAM. Out we go! The ungrateful rascals! Take them threepence off the income tax,

they don't say "Thank you." Put a penny on, and they kick you out.

MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *enters right, evidently in very good spirits.*

MRS. CAM. Ah! Good morning, Lord Burnham! (*Shaking hands.*) Who would have supposed this about Mr. Ingarfield? (*DICK listens carefully.*)

LORD BURNHAM. What?

MRS. CAM. It seems he's quite a Lothario, a Don Juan!

LORD BURNHAM. Nonsense!

MRS. CAM. Fact! And who do you think is one of his latest victims? (*Looks round at DICK; exchanges a glance of intelligence.*) Mrs. Greenslade's French maid, Victorine!

LORD BURNHAM (*very much astonished*). You don't say so?

MRS. CAM. Yes; the girl doesn't deny it; in fact, she's just made a full confession to me.

(*LORD BURNHAM looks from one to the other incredulously.*)

DICK. Oh, there's no doubt about it—unfortunately!

LORD BURNHAM. But we're all on his committee for reforming London—and I'm the President! (*Begins to laugh, sees the joke of it more and more, looks from one to the other.*)

MRS. CAM. It's no laughing matter, Lord Burnham! Unfortunately, Mr. Palsam has discovered everything.

LORD BURNHAM. Palsam has discovered — (*Roars with laughter.*) Palsam has discovered — (*Another roar.*) By Jove! there will be a devil of a row!

DICK (*venturing, looking to MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE for approval as he goes along*). Yes. Palsam happened to be passing outside at the very moment, and saw Romeo Ingarfield scaling Juliet Victorine's balcony.

LORD BURNHAM (*exploding with laughter*). Romeo Ingarfield — Juliet Victorine — (*Another roar of laughter; recovers himself, pulls himself together very solemnly, then moralises in a severe vein.*) Now, all this arises from the folly and nonsense of trying to reform London.

DICK (*cordially*). That's just what I said all along. London don't want any reforming. (*Suddenly starts up, very excited, very elated; rises, and comes to LORD BURNHAM.*) By Jove!

LORD BURNHAM. What is it?

DICK. The indignation meetings against the Government! Ingarfield's political friends! They'll cut him dead! It doesn't matter how many revolutions he causes, they'll stick to him like leeches; but they'll drop him like a hot potato if he's been within fifty miles of a French maid!

LORD BURNHAM. To be sure! Very lucky for us! Well, there's some good, after all, in Palsam's system of

suspecting everybody, for he's discovered a thorough-going hypocrite at last ! Bravo, Palsam !

(Exit at window.)

FIGG *enters breathlessly at back.*

FIGG. Mrs. Blake, has Jawle been in to breakfast ?

MRS. CAM. No ; why ?

FIGG. Then the great deed is done ! Jawle has set the seal on his philosophy in the large pond at the end of the grounds !

DICK. He can't have been such a fool !

FIGG. Fool ! It was the only solution of the life-problem that continually pressed upon him.

MRS. CAM. Do you really mean that he has drowned himself ?

FIGG *(coming funereally down)*. I have traced his footsteps to the pond. The extraordinary size and shape of his boots render their indentations in the mud quite unmistakable. If we could fathom the depths under the trees, I have no doubt we should there discover what, only a few hours ago, was Jawle ! *(Sits sad and dejected on sofa, looks unutterably sad.)*

MRS. CAM. *(going to FIGG very angrily)*. If anything has really happened, you are quite as guilty as he is !

FIGG. There is no question of guilt ! Jawle's great tragic contempt of human life must not be confounded

with a paltry, every-day, newspaper suicide. (*With a smile of benevolent pity.*)

(MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *makes a movement.*
FIGG *silences her with a gesture.*)

FIGG. Jawle has quitted this despicable sphere in a manner worthy of himself. There is a natural fitness about it! A kind of a — celebration.

MRS. CAM. (*pacing up and down*). Nonsense! nonsense! There's no natural fitness in celebrating your coroner's inquest in a friend's house, where you are only on the merest visiting terms.

FIGG. Pardon me — you quite mistake the situation! (MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *makes an angry, impatient gesture, goes and throws herself in a chair, sits there showing signs of impatience at FIGG's harangue.*)

FIGG (*rising*). Our feelings of personal sorrow must be stifled in the contemplation of a great national event. In fact, I shall insist on making it a great national event. I shall myself pronounce the funeral oration. The ordinary method of interment would be distasteful to Jawle.

JAWLE *enters at window. Waddles down to sofa behind FIGG.*

I shall cremate him! (*Catches sight of JAWLE. His features drop their expression of smug, complacent, affected solemnity, and he endeavours to express surprised pleasure, but can hardly conceal his disap-*

pointment. Stands nonplussed for some moments, then ejaculates a feeble "Oh!" Pauses, stares at JAWLE in a sickly, embarrassed way.) I was really afraid that you had decided — to — a — a — a —

JAWLE (*majestically*). No ; not at present ! (*Goes to arm-chair and sits.*)

FIGG. I'm so glad — so very glad !

JAWLE. No. I happened to fall in with that hitherto terribly misguided young man, Mr. Ingarfield —

MRS. CAM. Mr. Ingarfield !

JAWLE. Yes ; to my surprise, he has embraced my doctrine of the absolute folly and depravity of the human herd. And my satisfaction in securing such a disciple has induced me to postpone my intention of drawing the curtain over this scene of misery and littleness. (*Places his hands on his stomach, and goes into a profound reverie.*)

MRS. CAM. (*coming to FIGG*). Mr. Figg, Mrs. Green-slade is so dreadfully ill this morning, will you kindly excuse her entertaining you any longer? Under the circumstances, you won't mind — (*Shaking hands with FIGG.*)

FIGG. Not at all! So sorry she is ill! We'll renew our visit on the first occasion.

MRS. CAM. Delighted — so sweet of you to come back — but you'll please get Mr. Jawle to set the seal on his philosophy in somebody else's pond, not in ours. (*Very winningly.*) So pleased to have seen you — so very pleased ! (*Shaking hands.*) Good-bye ! (*Goes to JAWLE.*) Good-bye, Mr. Jawle !

(JAWLE *is completely absorbed; takes no notice, his large, blank face blandly gazing into nothingness. Suddenly he gives vent to his peculiar melancholy chuckle.*)

MRS. CAM. (*in a louder tone*). Good-bye! (*Goes and rings bell.*) Good-bye! good-bye!

(JAWLE *takes no notice. FIGG looks at JAWLE with great admiration.*)

FIGG (*admiringly, pointing to JAWLE*). That curious habit of burying himself. (*To DICK.*)

DICK. Make haste and cremate him! That'll cure him!

MRS. CAM. (*having rung bell, returns to JAWLE, stands over him; very emphatically*). Good-bye, Mr. Jawle!

JAWLE (*comes to himself with an effort, looks round, rouses himself, rises, places his fat paw in MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE'S hand*). Ah! (*Stands absorbed.*)

WORRELL *enters at door at back.*

MRS. CAM. I trust there is no immediate danger of — of — your —

JAWLE. No; (*rises*) I shall school myself to endure the vast spectacle of human imbecility, selfishness, and emptiness for some short time longer. The word "emptiness" reminds me I have had no breakfast.

MRS. CAM. (*takes his hand, and gradually gets him up stage. To WORRELL*). Some breakfast for Mr. Figg and Mr. Jawle. (*Getting JAWLE and FIGG up towards the door.*)

JAWLE (*turning round plaintively*). That cold veal pie I had for breakfast yesterday morning was singularly ill adapted to one whose digestive and other vital processes are as slow as mine.

MRS. CAM. (*getting JAWLE and FIGG a little nearer door*). Some fish, Worrell!

JAWLE (*meditatively*). Yes; and would you think me rude if I suggested a little of that really excellent Chambertin? I have noticed it disposes me to form a slightly more favourable estimate of mundane conditions.

MRS. CAM. (*getting them a little nearer door*). Some of the best Burgundy, Worrell!

(WORRELL *stands at back, waiting for JAWLE, holding the door open.*)

JAWLE (*placing his fat hand in MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE'S*). Pray, thank Mrs. Greenslade for her kind hospitality. I trust I have amply repaid it by showing her the pernicious folly of her scheme for reforming London, and I— (*Goes into a profound reverie.* MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *looks despairingly at FIGG, motions him to take JAWLE off.*)

FIGG (*prompting JAWLE*). Breakfast!

JAWLE (*rousing himself*). Ah! (*Smiles scraphically. Goes off at back, uttering his peculiar melancholy chuckle. FIGG follows him. MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE gives a sigh of relief.*)

DICK. Your version seems to be getting on splendidly. Can't you let me have a few more details?

MRS. CAM. Victorine has consented to get us out of our difficulty.

DICK. And Ingarfield?

MRS. CAM. Ingarfield must help us too! He surely can't refuse to join us in clearing Mrs. Greenslade's reputation!

Enter WORRELL at back announcing.

WORRELL. Mr. Ingarfield!

Enter PHILOS at back, worn, calm, pale, broken, contemptuous, indifferent.

(Exit WORRELL at back).

MRS. CAM. *(hurriedly to PHILOS)*. One moment, Mr. Ingarfield! *(Draws him down stage.)* You were here last night; you have compromised a lady — Mr. Palsam is determined to ruin her reputation. Victorine has promised to take the whole matter upon herself. To save that lady, will you aid in this deception?

PHILOS *(looks at her; turns and looks at DICK, who turns round. A pause)*. Yes!

MRS. CAM. *(shows satisfaction)*. You'll say nothing till I've cleared Mrs. Greenslade?

PHILOS. Nothing! *(Exit MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE.)*

Enter LORD BURNHAM. Comes down.

PHILOS. You sent for me. I'm here. What do you want?

LORD BURNHAM. I wish to tell you that we have arranged with the Costa Rica Government to compound their claims, and they agree to release you from the consequences of your folly.

PHILOS. My folly! Their oppression drove the men mad! Go on!

LORD BURNHAM. That arrangement was concluded by cable last night, I am sorry to say.

PHILOS (*indifferently*). Sorry!

LORD BURNHAM. If this scandal about you had leaked out first, we could have snapped our fingers at your political friends, and sent you back to Costa Rica to stand your trial.

PHILOS. Send me back. (*Calmly.*) I did not escape for my own sake, but only that the truth might be known, and the innocent saved from suffering with the guilty. Send me back! Anything further?

LORD BURNHAM. You agree to place yourself entirely in our hands?

PHILOS (*indifferently*). In yours — or anybody's.

LORD BURNHAM. I have now to get Mrs. Green-slade's consent. And I trust this will be a lesson to you not to meddle again with the working arrangements of this very excellent planet.

PHILOS (*looks at him steadily, pauses; then in the same calm, indifferent tone*). No; as the devil seems to manage it very well, I'll leave it in his hands for the future.

(LORD BURNHAM *shrugs his shoulders, and exit.*)

PALSAM *enters at window.*

PALSAM. Mr. Ingarfield, I have prepared a written statement of last night's unfortunate affair.

PHILOS (*calm, conversational tone*). Are there plenty of lies in it?

PALSAM. Lies?

PHILOS. When one lives in a world of *lies*, *lies* are the only truth; and the man who tells the truth is simply a fish who has been fool enough to jump out of water. (*Goes up back, stands with back to audience during the following scene.*)

MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *re-enters with a rather large envelope.*

(PALSAM *comes down stage.*)

MRS. CAM. (*going towards PALSAM cordially*). Ah! I told you I should be able to get at the truth!

PALSAM (*suspiciously*). The truth?

MRS. CAM. Read that! (*Gives him the envelope, watches him closely*).

PALSAM (*pulling out paper from envelope*). I warn you I am not to be imposed upon by any trumped-up tale! (*Looks suspiciously at her, then at DICK, then at INGARFIELD. Opens the paper with apparent suspicion, begins to read it very carefully and suspiciously. Suddenly drops his suspicious manner.*) Ah! I read that French maid's character the moment I set eyes on her!

MRS. CAM. (*sympathisingly sighs*). Ah! I'm afraid you were right!

PALSAM. Yes; I have quite a remarkable gift of judging people's character. Of all the thousands of people whom I've suspected, I've never found myself at fault! There's always been something in it!

MRS. CAM. (*sighs*). Ah! (*Sympathisingly.*) I shouldn't wonder!

PALSAM (*having considered letter*). I should like to put a few plain questions to this young person.

MRS. CAM. (*quickly*). She is perfectly ready to sign that confession in your presence; but she refuses to be questioned further.

PALSAM. Ah! They can none of them bear to be cross-questioned. (*Returns to letter carefully.*)

MRS. CAM. (*watching him closely*). Of course you will apologise to the lady whom you have wronged with your unjust suspicions?

PALSAM (*cordially*). Oh, yes; I'll apologise most heartily! I must say it gives me unspeakable pleasure to find that we may ascribe the whole of this painful affair to the low standard of morality prevailing among the French. What is to become of this young person?

MRS. CAM. She leaves for France to-night.

PALSAM. Wouldn't it be advisable to keep her here, and thoroughly reform her first, and *then* send her back to reclaim her countrymen? What a glorious thing it would be if we could be the instruments of reforming the French nation! We must think that

over! (*Turns half round to INGARFIELD.*) Mr. Ingarfield, what have you to say to this confession?

PHILOS (*back to audience; does not turn round*). Nothing!

PALSAM. Of course, you will have no further association with us?

PHILOS (*same attitude*). God forbid!

PALSAM. This young person will sign this in my presence.

MRS. CAM. (*rising, going towards door*). Yes — this way. (*Opens door. Aside.*) It's wonderful how little I've had to deviate from the truth! (*Exit.*)

PALSAM. I'm so glad that we can still pride ourselves upon preserving our superior tone of national morality! (*Exit.*)

DICK (*to PHILOS*). My friend, you take the advice of a man of the world: Don't you try any more of this mending and tinkering society. You see where it lands you! It's no good trying to live up to it — you can't — and then you only find out what a fool you've been to pretend to be better and wiser than other people. (*PHILOS looks straight at him.*) Now, you take a leaf out of my book. I enjoy life! I take the world as I find it, and a damned good sort of a world it is! And if it's good enough for me, why isn't it good enough for you, eh?

PHILOS. A hen-roost is good enough for fleas, and a dead dog for blow-flies; but this world is not good enough for me, because it holds men like you!

DICK. What the devil do you mean?

PHILOS (*comes quickly down from window and stands face to face with DICK*). I've saved her — my character's gone! I'm the laughing-stock of the country — that's nothing! Now about the future!

DICK. Future? Whose future?

PHILOS. Her future; and (*comes close to him*), damn you, your future, if it has to do with hers!

DICK (*pauses, looks at PHILOS, speaks in a calm voice*). What do you know?

PHILOS. I saw you enter her window last night!

DICK. You saw me!

PHILOS. And heard you and her speak of a poor fool who loved her! Well, you see what this poor fool is ready to do for her!

DICK. Yes.

PHILOS. Now — either you love her or you do not. Her reputation is safe. If you don't love her well enough to brave all fortunes with her, so that she may be secure whatever happens, take your oath to leave her this hour, and never see her again — and if you break that oath, by God! I'll kill you! If you *do* love her, and she loves you, do for her a hundredth part of what I'd do, make your love your religion, put all these lies behind your back, own her openly before all the world, and let them rave their tongues out! You've dared to do wrong; dare not to lie about it! Which is it to be?

DICK (*after a long pause, very calmly, in ordinary*

tone). Mr. Ingarfield, perhaps you won't believe me. Frankly, I should tell you this if it were not true ; so take your choice : Mrs. Greenslade is innocent.

PHILOS. Innocent ?

DICK. She saw you, spoke to you last night ! That saved her ! Do you believe me ?

PHILOS (*looks at him very searchingly for a few seconds*). Yes. (*Turns very imperatively.*) Then you'll leave her ?

DICK. Yes ; this morning. And you'll allow me to put Mr. Palsam right about —

PHILOS. It's too late for that. He believes this tale ; if you change it, you'll rouse his suspicions, and perhaps she will be sacrificed.

DICK. But your character ?

PHILOS. My life is ended. I care no more for life or reputation than if I were dead.

DICK. But it's monstrous — as a man of honour, I really cannot —

PHILOS (*interrupting him on the word honour*). As a man of honour — let me be !

(*DICK goes to table at back, gets his hat, comes down, and is about to speak to PHILOS, but is overcome ; walks to window.*)

DICK (*ashamed*). I've behaved like a blackguard !
(*Exit.*)

PHILOS (*seated on sofa alone*). All's over ! What am I waiting for ? Still hungering for her footfall or her least whisper !

Enter WORRELL at back, showing in UNA, who brings a spray of blighted roses, and walks down stage to PHILOS.

WORRELL. Mrs. Greenslade is engaged, but I'll tell her you're here. *(Exit at back.)*

UNA *(seeing PHILOS ; looking at him)*. You know ! She has told you ! Ah ! I knew I should find you here !

PHILOS. I'm waiting to see Lord Burnham — That's a lie ! I'm waiting because I can't drag myself away from her.

UNA *(coming to him)*. Where have you been through the night ?

PHILOS. I don't know — anywhere ! Oh, Una ! *(Looking up to her for sympathy.)*

UNA *(softly)*. What is it ? *(PHILOS bursts into tears.)* What is it ? Tell me ! Come, tell me all !

PHILOS *(between his sobs)*. This thing — this dream — this sweetness — this *woman* that I loved — oh, but I love her still ! — she's the spring of every pulse of me that beats — she plays with my heart as the moon plays with the tides, and rolls me round the earth at her will — oh, I loved her ! I loved her ! And I love her still ! I'm hers ! I'm hers ! No ! no ! I will not be such a slave ! I will forget her — I'll — I'll — *(Buries his face in his hands, sobbing.)*

UNA *(standing over him, stretching out her arms*

towards him, aside). Won't my love do for you! (*Conquers herself; speaks to him again, like a mother to a child.*) There! there! Cry away! Shall I cry with you? Listen! I've been longing for the moon for years, and breaking my heart because I can't get it; and the moon takes no notice of me! Do you hear? Am I not a baby, to long for the moon? There! there! there! Cry, child, cry, and ease your heart!

PHILOS (*partially recovering, looking at her through his tears*). Oh, I'm weak, I'm cowardly!

UNA. Ah, but you'll be strong by and bye! You'll be master of yourself as you have never been before, and you'll set your face like flint to your work! And then you won't mind losing your parsley garland!

PHILOS. My parsley garland!

UNA. Yes; we're all of us racing for parsley garlands on this silly earth. What does it matter whether we win or lose? It's only a few parsley leaves. The prize is nothing! The race is all! Ah! (*Laughing at him.*) You're better! A heartache isn't much more than a toothache, is it? Will you come and race for another parsley garland? Will you make London fit to live in? (*Showing him the roses.*) Look!

PHILOS. Blighted!

UNA. Yes; the head gardener says it's no use trying to grow roses here. The London smoke kills them.

PHILOS. That's what I've been trying to do. I've been trying to grow roses in the London smoke.

(UNA goes up stage.)

LORD BURNHAM enters.

LORD BURNHAM (*coming towards sofa*). Mr. Ingarfield, Mrs. Greenslade consents that the Greenslade bequest be applied to the claims of the Costa Rica Government.

PHILOS. Very well.

LORD BURNHAM. So the net result of our reforming London is a revolution in South America, and twopence on the income tax.

Enter MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE and PALSAM.

MRS. CAM. Now you're quite satisfied?

PALSAM (*amiably*). Oh, quite! Send for Mrs. Greenslade, and let me make an ample apology!

WORRELL enters at back with large parcel.

WORRELL (*coming down to* MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *with the parcel*). A parcel for you, madam, by special messenger.

MRS. CAM. The new programme! Let the messenger wait. (*Opening parcel.*) And tell Mrs. Greenslade that Mr. Palsam wishes to see her here.

(Exit WORRELL.)

MRS. CAM. (*opens the parcel, and brings out the*

new programme, a gorgeous blue satin affair, with gold letters. Displaying it). Isn't it perfectly exquisite?

LORD BURNHAM. Very pretty pattern!

UNA. What's it for?

MRS. CAM. It's the new programme for reforming London.

UNA. Oh, I see; you're going to cover London with blue satin, so that Londoners may get an idea of what the sky is like! *(Exit at window.)*

CYNTHIA *enters very slowly.*

(PHILOS turns round; their eyes meet; she shows great shame; her eyes drop.)

CYNTHIA. You asked to see me, Mr. Palsam.

PALSAM. I'm very proud to acknowledge that I was entirely mistaken. I have discovered the real offender. Mr. Ingarfield *(DICK enters at window)*, you will acknowledge your hypocrisy in the fullest terms?

CYNTHIA. What! *(Looks enquiringly at MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE.)* *(PHILOS looks at DICK.)*

PALSAM. I shall exact from you, sir, a public confession in the same terms as this. *(Showing letter.)*

CYNTHIA. Confession? Give that to me! *(Looks at MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE enquiringly. To MRS. BLAKE.)* What have you done?

(PHILOS and DICK look at each other. CYNTHIA reads the letter, shows great indignation.)

MRS. CAM. My dear — of course — you had no idea — it's surprised you !

CYNTHIA (*having read letter with the deepest shame and indignation*). Oh ! (*Tears it up in great anger.*)

MRS. CAM. Take care ! What are you doing ? You've ruined yourself !

CYNTHIA. No ; I think I've saved myself !

PALSAM. Why did you tear that confession ?

CYNTHIA. Because it's false !

PALSAM. False ! Then what am I to believe ?

CYNTHIA. Believe what you please !

PALSAM. If I thought you were guilty —

CYNTHIA. If you thought I were guilty, you would blacken me ! Spy ! spy ! spy ! Blacken me, then ! Lord Burnham, I am innocent ! Defend me against this man ! (*Looks up, meets PHILOS's eyes, covers her face with her hands, bows her head, utters a cry of the greatest shame, rushes off in an agony of shame.*)

(*Pause. PHILOS goes to door after her ; stands there watching.*)

LORD BURNHAM. You hear, sir ! You're evidently mistaken ; and if this tale is made public, all that is certain to be proved is that you have tried to ruin a lady's reputation. You'll gain nothing by making a scandal. You'll be best to hold your tongue.

PALSAM (*after a pause*). I'll keep silence on one condition.

LORD BURNHAM. Well ?

PALSAM. My lord, you are addicted to horse-racing. I'll never mention this painful affair if you'll promise to sell your horses, and promise never —

LORD BURNHAM (*with a contemptuous laugh, turns away*). No ; I'm damned if I do !

PALSAM. Then I'm very sorry I shall be compelled to make it public.

DICK. Make what public ?

PALSAM. What I saw last night.

DICK. What did you see ?

PALSAM. I saw Mr. Ingarfield at that balcony.

DICK (*aside to PHILOS*). Why don't you speak ?

PHILOS (*looks at DICK and PALSAM*). I've nothing to say. (*Goes to back.*)

DICK. It's false ! Mr. Palsam, you saw me !

PALSAM. You ?

LORD BURNHAM. Dick !

DICK. My honour, sir, Mrs. Greenslade is innocent — save her, sir ! (*Very appealingly to LORD BURNHAM.*)

(*Pause. LORD BURNHAM, perplexed, walks up towards MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE, who has been listening to foregoing scene.*)

MRS. CAM. (*to him*). She'd much better have kept to the truth as I had arranged it !

LORD BURNHAM (*to PALSAM*). You'll hold your tongue if I sell my stud and give up racing ?

PALSAM. Yes.

LORD BURNHAM. Very well ; I'll do it ! (*Coming a step or two towards DICK. DICK takes LORD BURN-*

HAM'S *hand, wrings it heartily, exchanges a look with PHILOS, and goes off at window.*) And if I ever hear one word against this lady —

PALSAM. Oh, you won't! I've given you my word, and I always speak the truth.

LORD BURNHAM. And let me tell you, sir, you've acted the part of a busy-body, mischief-maker, and scandal-monger, and the sooner you leave this house the better. (*Drives the words home into PALSAM, and then goes calmly and sits on sofa.*)

(*Pause. PALSAM stands imperturbable in the middle of the stage.*)

PALSAM. My lord, there's one thing more before we part.

LORD BURNHAM (*angrily*). Well?

PALSAM. You have never shown any real interest in the reformation of London. (LORD BURNHAM *shows great impatience.*) There is to be a great temperance fête at the Crystal Palace next month. Now, you have a cellar of very expensive wines. It would be a noble and graceful action on your part if you would consent to preside at the Crystal Palace, and publicly pour away all your expensive wines into the gutter —

(LORD BURNHAM *rises enraged; goes up to PALSAM with a threatening gesture. PALSAM remains quite calm. LORD BURNHAM makes an effort to speak, looks at PALSAM, finally comes away and drops on to sofa.*)

LORD BURNHAM (*helplessly, in a low voice*). Will somebody take it away!

PALSAM. I'm going, my lord. (*Leans over back of sofa, and speaks in LORD BURNHAM'S face.*) I'll call to-morrow at your town house for your decision about the Crystal Palace. Good-morning!

(*Exit at window.*)

MRS. CAM. Lord Burnham! (*LORD BURNHAM looks up.*) I don't blame you; but I never knew anything so mismanaged as this reformation of London! I've been connected with bazaars and charities of all sorts, and I've always made them most successful! And I'm quite sure I could have made this reformation of London a gigantic success!

LORD BURNHAM. Then take it, my dear lady, take it, and make it a gigantic success! I don't want to reform London!

MRS. CAM. (*growing more indignant; rings bell*). And it's sure to get into the papers — and after all I've done! However, I wash my hands of the whole affair!

LORD BURNHAM. So do I! so do I!

MRS. CAM. I never was so annoyed in my life —

WORRELL *enters at door right.*

(*With great dignity.*) Tell Mrs. Greenslade I leave for town by the next train. (*Going up stage, turns.*) Tell Mrs. Greenslade that the Duchess of Launceston and Mrs. Champion-Blake resign their places on the committee!

(*WORRELL exits.*)

(*Pause.* MRS. CAMPION-BLAKE *stalks up to door at back, opens it, turns, stalks back to table, takes up the blue satin programme, goes back same style. Exit with great offended dignity, carrying the blue satin programme.*)

LORD BURNHAM (*regretfully*). And I was fond of a bit of racing!

UNA *enters window.* PHILOS *comes down.*

(*Rising.*) Heigho! I'm afraid, Miss Dell, there is no way of mending society.

UNA. If everybody mended himself, Lord Burnham, society wouldn't want any mending.

LORD BURNHAM. Ah! but who's going to begin? (*Meeting PHILOS, who is coming down.*) Mr. Ingarfield, I did you an injustice. (*Offering hand, PHILOS takes it.*) You must come with me to town, and we'll get this Costa Rica affair settled.

CYNTHIA *enters.*

(*Seeing CYNTHIA, hurrying to window.*) I'll see if my carriage is ready. (*Goes up to back, into window.*)

CYNTHIA (*walking towards PHILOS with the deepest shame*). I can't say anything! Can you forgive me? (*PHILOS bows.*) You'll forget me?

(*PHILOS looks at her and shakes his head. He goes from her, and throws himself on sofa.*)

CYNTHIA (*going to UNA*). I have broken his heart ! Help me to heal it ! Help me to give him courage !

UNA (*comes down to PHILOS, tries to assume a bright, cheerful tone*). Come, comrade ! though we women are false, the world must wag, and we must help it ! Come ! your work ! (*Laying her hand on his shoulder.*)

PHILOS (*rising, bewildered, dreamy*). My work ! What work ?

UNA. To make London beautiful ! London healthy ! London clean ! From north to south, from east to west, in every street, in every home !

LORD BURNHAM. What madness !

UNA. Oh, yes ; it's madness ! Century after century the same mad chase, the same mad dream ! We hunt for what we shall never find, we dream what will never come true. We know it ; but still we pursue, and still we dream ! Our Dulcinea is always false, but we always think her true ; we give our strength for a parsley garland ; we drain Europe of its flower of manhood to buy a little sacred spot in Jerusalem ; we ride shameless through Coventry ; we spill our blood like water for the Stuarts ; we send Paris, red with butchery, dancing after liberty, equality, fraternity ; we tilt at every windmill, we dash ourselves on every pike ! Oh, you are right ! We are mad enough ! But our madness keeps the world alive ! Your sanity

stagnates! Our madness breeds your ideals; and you're dead, you're dead, you're dead without ideals!

(Exit LORD BURNHAM at window.)

(To PHILOS.) Come along! Let the past alone! Begin afresh to-day! Come!

PHILOS *(rises, with face full of resolve)*. I will; and I'll never look behind till my work is done! *(To CYNTHIA.)* Good-bye!

CYNTHIA. Good-bye!

PHILOS *(turns back, beseechingly)*. Give me that kiss you promised me! *(She kisses his forehead.)* Can't you love me?

CYNTHIA. You saved me! Do with me as you please! *(She drops at his feet.)*

(UNA looks at them, then goes off hopelessly at door at back.)

CURTAIN.

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