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THE MODERN DRAMA SERIES
EDITED BY EDWIN BJÖRKMAN

THE RED LIGHT OF MARS
GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD

THE RED LIGHT OF MARS

OR

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE DEVIL

A PHILOSOPHICAL COMEDY BY

GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD



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INTRODUCTION

THERE is to me something typically American about the life-story leading up to the play contained in this volume — a story in which the creation and publication of that play will undoubtedly represent only a temporary climax. I want to tell it, not only as a curiosity, but as something that has genuine significance to the world of letters. The meaning of this story, read in conjunction with the work that has grown out of it, is that the time when books were bred by books only is about gone now. The new literature will come straight out of life, apparently, and will in consequence have made a decided gain, even though it may have lost something else. As it springs forth, full-blooded and ready-tongued, we shall undoubtedly hear melancholy voices proclaim the *vulgari- zation* of poetry. But if, on hearing such protests rising from some anæmic scholar's cloistered cell, we look back through the ages and fix our gaze not only on the little followers but on the great leaders — on the Dantes and Shakespeares and Cervanteses and Molières — then we shall find that almost always the term of opprobrium quoted above has implied a *vitali- zation* of the supposedly menaced art form.

The author of "The Red Light of Mars" is now in his thirtieth year, having been born on January 7, 1884, in Howard County, Maryland. His father was a Baltimore merchant and insurance broker, who, in his turn, had a Confederate blockade runner for father and an officer in the English army for grandfather.

His mother sprang from an old French middle-class family, which had to emigrate from Dijon after the Edict of Nantes.

George Bronson-Howard studied in a private school in London, in the public schools of Baltimore, and in the City College of the same place. At fourteen he lost both parents, just as he was about to enter Johns Hopkins University, his age having been carefully concealed in order that the examinations might be open to him. Instead he became a messenger in the Weather Bureau at Baltimore. While thus employed, he submitted successfully to the first of a series of civil service examinations, each one of which required some skilful disingenuousness lest the applicant's age prove an insuperable obstacle. During the next seven years, Mr. Bronson-Howard busied himself successively as follows:

Reporter on the *Baltimore American*; clerk in the office of the Secretary of the Navy; stenographer at the Brooklyn Navy Yard; reporter on the *Brooklyn Citizen*; press representative for one of the Frohman theatres and for one of George W. Lederer's productions; reporter on the *New York Herald*; clerk in the Bureau of Navigation at Washington; clerk in the office of the Collector of Customs at Manila, Philippine Islands; assistant to the Collector of Customs at Iloilo, on the island of Panay; newspaper correspondent at Manila; member of the Philippine Constabulary; contributor of fiction stories to various newspapers and magazines; employé of the Imperial Chinese Customs Service at Canton; agent of the Imperial Chinese Government in Shantung Province; war correspondent for the *London Chronicle* with the Russian army in Manchuria; magazine and newspaper writer at San Francisco.

He was twenty-one when he came East and began to produce a series of clever, quick-moving stories, designated by himself "as melodramatic magazine yarns." The type of hero around which they were built was wholly new: a secret agent of the State Department. Appearing in book form under the title of "Norroy, Diplomatic Agent," those stories met with such success that their author found himself relieved for a long time from all necessity of "pot-boiling."

Since then he has written more stories, three romances — one of which so far has only been published in Germany — essays, plays, criticism, musical *revues*, etc. He has acted as play reader for the late Henry B. Harris, as dramatic editor on *Smith's Magazine*, as dramatic critic on the *New York Morning Telegraph*, as vaudeville impresario at Paris, and as librettist for the Winter Garden at New York. He has dramatized a novel and novelized a play. He has lived at London, Baltimore, New York, Paris, and Nice — to settle down at last in a house of his own at Belleterre, Port Jefferson, Long Island.

So far Mr. Bronson-Howard has a dozen plays of every conceivable type to his credit, some of them being wholly his own and some being written in collaboration with others. Most of these works have already been produced, some with marked success, and others are scheduled for performance in the immediate future. Thus, for instance, "The Red Light of Mars" will be staged by H. H. Frazee during the season of 1913-14.

There are two qualities that seem to characterize all of Mr. Bronson-Howard's dramatic productions: a keen perception of the demands and possibilities of the stage, and a shrewdly humorous grasp of human nature. His command of stagecraft is so facile that

at times it strikes the critic as a danger to his art. And it has the faults as well as the merits generally accompanying such facility. He would probably be much surprised if he heard himself referred to as a "psychologist" — and yet that is just what he is, in his own practical, intuitive, American way. With these two qualities, which provide for the framework of his art, goes, as its informing and directing spirit, a strong inclination to "side with the under dog."

EDWIN BJÖRKMAN.

LIST OF PLAYS BY GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD

- THE ONLY LAW (with Wilson Mizner), 1909;
 SPRING TIME (with Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon
 (Wilson), 1910;
 SNOBS, 1911;
 AN ENEMY TO SOCIETY (with Wilson Mizner), 1911;
 RHETT MARYL, 1912;
 THE REEF (with David Belasco), 1912;
 THE RED LIGHT OF MARS, 1913.

THE RED LIGHT OF MARS

OR

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE DEVIL

A PHILOSOPHICAL COMEDY

PERSONS

(in order of appearance)

THOMAS VANILLITY, B. Sc., LL.D., M.A. (*Oxon*)

The Hon. HIPPOLYTE CRITTY, *Judge of Special Sessions*

JOHN MAGNUS . . . *Of Magnus & Co., Bankers*

WILLIAM TROMPER . *Manager Magnus Steel Works*

MRS. HORACE HENRY FELIX

FANNY FELIX *Her daughter*

A VALET

H. ADDINGTON AGNUS, M.D., Ph.D., D.Sc.

NOËL ONFROY, R.A. . . . *Chevalier Légion d'honneur*

THE LIGHT

TOPLISS *A servant*

DOLL BLONDIN *A show-girl*

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL *An anarchist*

ST. ELMO PEATTIE *Sheriff*

A DÉTECTIVE LIEUTENANT

TWO DETECTIVES

A CHAUFFEUR

THE RED LIGHT OF MARS

THE FIRST ACT

The study and laboratory of Doctor Addington Agnus, Rothlyn, Long Island.

Entrances: Folding-doors to laboratory; door to garden; spiral stairway; door to hallway.

A long, low white room: white-panelled, white book-shelves, furniture, etc.; upholstered in light yellow and light blue chintz.

Garden seen through two windows on either side of upper door. Folding-doors to laboratory closed.

A sunny day in early winter: late morning. The sun is almost blinding on the white room and the highly polished brasses.

A bright wood-fire burns.

As the curtain rises: a knocking on the garden door, which continues. The knob rattles. The door gives way, almost precipitating Thomas Vanillity on his face.

Vanillity is a college professor, lean, spare, ascetic-looking; wears a dark gray English walking suit; tailed coat; derby hat. Has typical sad Englishman's moustache, a "drooper"; closely shaven lantern jaws. Carries neatly folded umbrella.

VANILLITY (*evidently astounded at unlocked door*)

Well: upon my word — upon my word! (*Picks up hat, umbrella, etc., which have fallen, and straightens himself*) I wonder if he's in? (*A slight explosion*)

from laboratory; he drops articles again) Yes, he's in! (Picks up articles a second time; straightens tie, etc., in glass; twirls moustache; then goes to fire; stretches out hands) A-a-ah!

[A second knocking on garden door.]

VANILLITY (*going to folding-doors and calling into laboratory*) Oh, Addington, Addington, my boy! (*A second explosion from laboratory. Vanillity goes to door, admitting Judge Hippolyte Critty: grossly but respectably fat, with an unctuous smile and a walrus-tusk moustache*)

JUDGE CRITTY (*smiling genially*)

Ah! Professor! Professor! Come to claim all the credit of your pupil's great discovery? (*Waves hand toward laboratory*)

VANILLITY (*with painful humility*)

I did nothing, Judge, nothing. A man like Dr. Agnus would succeed without my teaching or anyone's. (*Shows by his attitude some servility to the Judge*)

JUDGE CRITTY (*warming hands at fire*)

Well, he *thinks* you're responsible. "If it was n't for Professor Vanillity," he keeps saying —

VANILLITY

I never knew so painfully modest a boy —

JUDGE CRITTY (*they are both at fire*)

Boy — you've hit it — boy! The great scientist (*bows to laboratory doors*) retains all his boyish shyness and lack of confidence. He even (*preening himself*) gives *me* credit for part of his success. Because once I said the time was coming when science would keep us alive forever. *He says that* put him on the track.

VANILLITY (*with melancholy satisfaction, looking toward laboratory*) Immortality! No more building up just for Time to tear down!

JUDGE CRITTY (*in a smoking-room manner, ribald*)
And making us independent of women!

VANILLITY (*shocked*)
My dear Judge!

JUDGE CRITTY
Of *good* women, I mean. They are the only dangerous kind. We learned how to handle the bad ones a few thousand years ago!

VANILLITY
My dear Judge!

JUDGE CRITTY (*going back to the days of boyish confidences*) Tommy: it's my profession to be a hypocrite. That's why I enjoy talking to you. Being absolutely dependent on me, you can't give me away. (*Laughs foxily*) If I did n't have you, I'd become a Catholic. I simply can't keep all my cleverness to myself. That's why most people enjoy confession. And so I say again: the *good* women are the only *dangerous* kind! (*Goes to cellarette*) Have a drink! There! (*Pours*)

VANILLITY
My dear Lytey —

JUDGE CRITTY
Nonsense, down with it! I *need* you today, and when you're dead sober, you've got a *conscience*. (*Drinking with him*) Have a cigar! Take it! (*Lights cigars for Vanillity and himself*)
[*Vanillity's face brightens as drink and cigar affect him.*]

JUDGE CRITTY

Yes, sir! The only *dangerous* kind! That 's why I 'm sorry for *that* poor fellow! (*Nods toward laboratory*)

VANILLITY

Ssh! Ssh!

JUDGE CRITTY

Pooh! He does n't know anybody 's on earth when he 's working — poor devil!

VANILLITY

Poor devil? Poor fellow? Who just won the Nobel prize — the most discussed scientist in the world?

JUDGE CRITTY

And a year from now forgotten!

VANILLITY

Absurd! (*Seeing the Judge's solemn look*) Why?

JUDGE CRITTY

In love!

VANILLITY

With a very sweet girl — a very ambitious girl!

JUDGE CRITTY

Ambitious for *herself* — yes.

VANILLITY

But —

JUDGE CRITTY (*looks at watch*)

She 'll be here any minute now: was to meet me here quarter to. I came before time to find you; knew you 'd be the first to congratulate him! Another drink?

VANILLITY

My *dear* Lytey —

[*Judge Critty forces it on him; Vanillity's smile becomes a beam.*]

JUDGE CRITTY

She 's bringing John Magnus and William Tromper with her.

VANILLITY (*dazed*)

John Magnus!

JUDGE CRITTY

And William Tromper!

VANILLITY (*dazed*)

John Magnus!!

JUDGE CRITTY

And William Tromper 's the general manager of the Magnus Steel Works! He's going to offer our friend (*waving toward laboratory*) one hundred thousand dollars a year! Chief chemist of the works!

VANILLITY

One hundred thousand dollars a year? My God!! (*A silence; changed tone; nods toward laboratory*) But he won't take it!

JUDGE CRITTY

He *will* take it. That 's your job!

VANILLITY (*starts*)

Mine?

JUDGE CRITTY

And mine. To persuade him!

VANILLITY (*dazed*)

Fanny wants him to?

JUDGE CRITTY

Yes! And so do you.

VANILLITY

I? Never! (*Springs to his feet*)

JUDGE CRITTY

Have another drink!

VANILLITY

My *dear* Lytey —

JUDGE CRITTY

Take it! (*Having poured it, he forces it on Vanillity again*) And so do you! (*With emphasis*)

VANILLITY

It 's wicked! It 's sinful!

JUDGE CRITTY

Have —

VANILLITY

No; I won't have another drink! I know you can smother every good feeling in me with a little liquor —

JUDGE CRITTY

Believe me: not a *little!*

VANILLITY

But this I won't do; I will not; I won't! To stop a man on the trail of immortality? No! No! No!

JUDGE CRITTY

I said good women were the only dangerous kind, did n't I?

VANILLITY

She wants it? Why?

JUDGE CRITTY

For the reason that nine hundred and ninety-nine Americans do anything "to be as *good* as *anybody*." One hundred thousand dollars a year is the income on two million. It will enable her to gratify every social ambition. She 's ambitious: for *herself* — I said *that*, too.

[*Vanillity falls into a stupefied rage; his hand sneaks toward decanter; a horn is heard off stage.*]

JUDGE CRITTY (*at window*)

Here they are! (*Swiftly*) Now, *mind!* (*Fiercely*)
D' you understand?

VANILLITY

I will *not!*

JUDGE CRITTY

You *will!* And I'll tell you why. Magnus put me where I am, and he'll put me on the Supreme Bench the first vacancy. Then I'll put *you* into the first College Presidency! Now, d' you understand?

[*A knock at the door.*

VANILLITY

Man, it's awful. It's *sacrilege.*

JUDGE CRITTY

It's *life.* Unfortunately. But life just the same. We did n't make life. But we have to *live* it. Here! Have another drink. (*Pours it*)

[*A second knock is heard; Vanillity hesitates over the drink.*

JUDGE CRITTY (*impatiently whispering*)

Come on — come on!

[*Vanillity gulps it and sits disconsolate. Judge Critty opens the door for Fanny Felix, her mother, Mrs. Felix, John Magnus, and William Tromper. Fanny is, par excellence, the well-bred, cold, detached, sure-of-herself American girl of the upper class, very lace-y and lingerie-y. Mrs. Felix looks almost as juvenile; she has less dignity; her coat-collar and tie might be a man's; her smart hat is feminine enough, and so are her small, high-heeled shoes. John Magnus has an air and an eyeglass; wears a morning coat, vest, and trousers of light gray, and a gray*

top-hat to match; needs only a pair of binoculars slung over his shoulder to be attired for the races. William Tromper is the vulgar, pig-headed, ignorant, self-made American business man. His small pig-like eyes show sullen hatred, an animal's cunning, and a savage's determination. He is continually ready to assert authority over supposed inferiors and equality with superiors: the breed that has made America infamous. He is dressed in that stiff supposed-to-be-correct fashion that marks such people: a suit of expensive but ugly, hard-faced cloth, pressed into knife-like creases about the lapels and trousers; a shining white waistcoat, starched and creased; a hard-boiled shirt; a mathematically perfect rhomboid of a sausage-like necktie; shining, creaky laced shoes of patent leather, etc. When the party enters, and during the first few words of the following conversation, Magnus's valet takes their heavy motoring coats.

MAGNUS

Here before us, Judge? (*Shakes hands*)

MRS. FELIX (*to Vanillity, shaking hands*)

The chauffeur let me drive! Glorious!

FANNY (*ditto*)

Yes, your hands won't be fit to be seen for a week.

JUDGE CRITTY (*speaking over his shoulder while shaking hands with the women*) I don't think Professor Vanillity ever had the pleasure of meeting you, Mr. Magnus.

MAGNUS (*reprovingly*)

I have not had that honor. (*Shakes hands*) Professor — Mr. Tromper —

TROMPER (*in his best middle-class behavior*)

Pleased to meet you, Professor. Pleased to see you again, Judge.

JUDGE CRITTY (*urbanely*)

Just had a little talk with my old friend here; he shares our opinion, Mr. Magnus.

MAGNUS

I do not know that I hold any opinion on the subject, Judge Critty. I came along simply to please the young lady.

VANILLITY (*with a ray of hope and in a tone slightly thickened by drink*) Then, Mr. Magnus — you don't wholly believe in the sacrifice of a career for money? (*Magnus frowns and looks crushingly at Judge Critty*)

JUDGE CRITTY

The Professor is inquiring as to your views, Mr. Magnus. (*Looking hard at Vanillity*) His own are fixed —

TROMPER

Sacrifice, did I hear you say, Professor? A young fellow gets an offer of a fortune a year and you talk about sacrifice. He has n't had any career *yet*.

VANILLITY (*with spirit*)

The Nobel prize.

TROMPER (*sneers*)

Forty thousand dollars for — how many years' study and work —

FANNY

Dr. Agnus is thirty-two —

TROMPER

Say twenty-five years' schooling and work to make forty thousand dollars — that ain't much of a career? I made that much long before his age.

MAGNUS

The case is different here. Yours can be no criterion. You married probably on less than Dr. Agnus's schoolboy allowance —

TROMPER

Grew up together, we did. She worked and I worked. To a man that wants comforts, it's cheaper, marrying.

MAGNUS (*smiling*)

Showing just how far apart the cases are. The young lady here (*nods toward Fanny*) does not make marriage cheaper.

FANNY (*correctly*)

Really, Mr. Magnus —

MAGNUS

I withdraw, with apologies.

FANNY

But don't you *want* Addington to do this?

MAGNUS

I have n't been conscious of wanting *anything* these many years, Fanny.

MRS. FELIX (*smiling*)

You don't need to be, John. You lift your eyebrows and people hustle. You get what you want before you're conscious of wanting it. But you *do* want Dr. Agnus to take his offer (*points to Tromper*), don't you?

MAGNUS

Do I, Tromper?

TROMPER

Well, sir —

MRS. FELIX

He means, shall he tell the truth?

MAGNUS

The lady wishes you to tell the truth, Tromper.

TROMPER

Well, sir —

MRS. FELIX

Take your time. A business man can't speak the truth so quickly. That takes practice.

TROMPER (*to Magnus*)

Well, sir, if what you said about the young doctor is true —

FANNY (*triumphantly*)

And it *is* true. I told him, myself.

TROMPER

That one chemical discovery of his alone will save the mills — I would n't undertake to say how much — that is, if he can do it!

FANNY

He can!

MAGNUS

Well?

FANNY

Well? (*Her eyes turn toward the laboratory*)

MAGNUS

He is in apparently. (*To the others*) We are all agreed upon the matter?

JUDGE CRITTY (*hastily*)

I can answer for Professor Vanillity and myself.

FANNY

And I for mother!

MRS. FELIX

I think it is a shame, Fanny.

MAGNUS

Apparently Tromper answers for me.

JUDGE CRITTY

I think we can convince the young man where his duty lies —

MRS. FELIX

I wish I could convince the lot of you where *your* duty lies! Can't you see that all this comes from not giving women the vote long ago?

FANNY

Mother, dear! — exercise your monomania at any other time than this!

MAGNUS (*to Mrs. Felix, amused*)

Really?

MRS. FELIX

Really! When a woman is allowed to figure out her duty to the nation, she'll want her husband to give *it* his best, instead of giving his best to *her*.

FANNY

What nonsense, mother! A man's first duty is to his home —

MRS. FELIX

Give them the vote, and they'll sacrifice the home to make the nation.

MAGNUS (*seated, crossing legs*)

Ladies, proceed! This is strangely interesting to me.

MRS. FELIX

It will be more than interesting to you when we win, John Magnus. Why do you control the money-market of America? Because women, having no interest in business, urge their men to make as much money as they can. They can do this only by taking advantage of other people's weakness; not realizing that, if they do this to weaker people, stronger men will do it to them. And so it's dog eat dog, and as you're the biggest one in the kennel you eat them all —

FANNY

Mother! Are you losing *all* your manners?

MAGNUS

Thanks for making me a *big* dog anyhow, Loo —
But how would women voting change all this?

FANNY

Oh, mother! — please!

MRS. FELIX

Why, as soon as women realize that modern laws of business, applied to the home, would make every man a thief and every woman a prostitute, they'll stop urging their husbands to make more than the next man —

MAGNUS

Loo! I hereby subscribe any reasonable sum you say to the cause of suffrage — thereby planning my own downfall! —

MRS. FELIX

Or showing your contempt! — Well! you're amusing anyhow, John Magnus. If somebody could make you take things seriously, you'd be as great a man as your subsidized newspapers *say* you are —

JUDGE CRITTY

Really, my dear Mrs. Felix; — even the *hysterical* newspapers admit Mr. Magnus is a great man!

MAGNUS

My dear press-agent — we are in the presence of my friends, not of the public. You may consider yourself off duty.

MRS. FELIX

No man can be selfish and great. Mr. Magnus only amuses himself by playing a game with the public. But how he can be amused by winning games from his inferiors, I don't know. That's the kink in his greatness.

MAGNUS

I have just begun to realize their inferiority, Loo. That's why the game begins to bore me —

MRS. FELIX

Start teaching them instead of beating them, then.

MAGNUS

Anything to get back my interest in life! How shall I begin?

MRS. FELIX

By endowing that brilliant boy in there to carry on his search for immortality — give him some of your useless millions.

FANNY

Mother! He is n't a beggar. He can give himself and me everything we need by work.

MRS. FELIX

Yes, but can he give the *world* everything —

TROMPER

He can give the world more iron rails for railroads; more armor-plate for battleships —

MRS. FELIX

More money for Magnus, you mean. Railroads and battleships never made anybody wiser or happier —

VANILLITY

Oh, really, Mrs. Felix — travel —

MRS. FELIX

Whisking past interesting places at a mile a minute is n't travelling. That's moving pictures for the rich. (*To Magnus*) John, with your money translated into real power — not petty authority — you'll go down to history as big a man as the boy in there — your name linked with his —

JUDGE CRITTY

Pardon me, Mrs. Felix; *his* name linked with Mr. Magnus.

MRS. FELIX

No. The boy is a fool at everything except his work. But his wisdom in that is greater than all of yours, John Magnus.

[*Judge Critty lifts his hands, about to protest.*]

MAGNUS

If he can make men immortal, certainly —

[*Judge Critty subsides.*]

MRS. FELIX

Well, at twenty-nine he's made animals' hearts and lungs immortal. In fifty years, endowed with millions —

[*Magnus nods.*]

MRS. FELIX

You *do* see, don't you? Now, will you bury that talent in a vulgar manufactory —

TROMPER (*offended*)

Vulgar! Why, some of our men come to work in their own automobiles.

MRS. FELIX

Prosaic manufactory, then. (*To Magnus*) Remember, when you bury him, you bury your own chance to be a great man! Whoever heard of a mere money-maker in history unless as the patron of artists, writers, or scientists?

MAGNUS

Loo, I've a good mind to *make* you marry me! I believe you'd make life interesting again —

MRS. FELIX

You'd have to change a good many of your ways before you can do that. I admire your brains, but what's the sense of having them when they are n't put to any good use? Will you endow the boy? (*Nods toward laboratory*)

MAGNUS

Yes.

MRS. FELIX

A few more answers like that, and I'll say "yes" to you.

MAGNUS

I'll endow him — to please you. But I demand interest on my investment. I'll build the finest workshop a scientist ever had: give him ten, twenty, a hundred assistants; the most renowned scientists in the world, no matter what they cost. — He can spend any amount on whatever he needs in his work. But I'll have no young society-man business —
[*Fanny starts and her expression grows sullen.*]

MAGNUS

He 'll stay *here*, on Long Island. And he 'll spend no more on himself than he needs to live decently. If I sacrifice *millions*, he must sacrifice *something* —

FANNY

What do you mean by living decently. (*Biting her lips*) The way *you* live?

MAGNUS

No, that 's living extravagantly. (*Smiling*)

FANNY

Mother, Mr. Magnus has just been joking at your expense.

MRS. FELIX

I see no joke.

FANNY

Addington was giving up his work for my sake — our home's sake. Mr. Magnus has n't changed that any.

MRS. FELIX

Addington has only a few thousand a year income. Handicapped that way, he might never fully succeed in his work. Mr. Magnus makes it impossible for him to fail.

FANNY

And meanwhile live in this poky seacoast village; ten miles from a railroad; not half a dozen nice families near us —

MAGNUS

A motor will get you to New York after dinner, in time for the theatre, the opera, or a dance —

MRS. FELIX

Of course, you 'd keep a small flat in New York.

MAGNUS

Oh, anything reasonable — say, fifteen thousand a year for personal expenses —

FANNY (*aghast*)

Fifteen thousand! (*Reproachfully to Mrs. Felix*)
You see now, mother!

MRS. FELIX

See what?

FANNY (*exasperated*)

Why, my gowns, my little expenses come to twenty-five hundred, and I don't have half enough — not a quarter enough. I *won't* — I'll live in the right places and know the right people and do the right things — or I won't marry —

MRS. FELIX

Silly places — ignorant people — selfish things —

FANNY

Mr. Magnus, it was n't very nice of you!

MAGNUS (*to Mrs. Felix*)

People would much rather do what they like than what *we* like —

MRS. FELIX

They must be taught to like what's best for the world. Fanny — do you mean you'll deliberately spoil Addington's career? Refuse this great chance?

TROMPER

Business is business, Mrs. Felix. Your daughter would make a good business woman.

MRS. FELIX (*to Fanny*)

I hope that last remark shows you how petty your conduct is.

FANNY

Live on Long Island out of the season? Have a poky flat in town and one servant? Never entertain? Never meet worth-while people? Be out of it altogether? I'm better off unmarried!

MRS. FELIX (*alarmed*)

Don't say that!

VANILLITY

You have the man you love, Miss Felix.

FANNY

If the man I love does n't love me well enough to make some sacrifices for my sake —

VANILLITY

But the same applies to you —

FANNY

Women sacrifice enough when they surrender their liberty — when they take on the duties of marriage —

MRS. FELIX

But you said you did n't intend to have more than one child, anyhow —

FANNY (*shocked*)

Mother!

MRS. FELIX (*to Tromper*)

Will you pardon us just a moment, Mr. Tromper? (*Shows him into the hallway and closes the door*) You others don't matter, knowing us as well as you do. Now, Fanny, what do you mean?

FANNY

The duties of a wife —

MRS. FELIX

Don't hide behind phrases.

FANNY

If you don't know, mother, it's too late for you to learn.

MRS. FELIX

Well, I'll tell you what *my* duties as a wife were: spending more than my husband could get decently; making him overwork to pay my extravagances; keeping him until four in the morning at silly affairs, knowing he must work while I slept it off; flirting with every idle attractive man I met, letting him think I was a fragile flower plucked by a hand of a savage who could not appreciate my fairy fragrance! Those — and neglecting my one child until she grew up to be an encyclopædia of all a woman should *not* be — those were *my* wifely duties!

FANNY

Mother! You are shocking everybody!

MAGNUS

Not me, Loo!

MRS. FELIX

If I had brought you up properly instead of leaving you to snobbish servants and fashionable incubators, you might be some man's blessing instead of curse! Plain words, Fanny! May they start you thinking and keep you from ruining the mind and killing the body of some good man like your father, who died a bankrupt, and — though our fashionable physician friends made it look otherwise — a suicide! (*To the others*) — All of you knew this?

MAGNUS

Yes —

[*Vanillity bows his head.*]

JUDGE CRITTY (*clearing his throat*)

Why —

FANNY (*tears in her voice*)

Mother, you are brutal! Brutal! Brutal!

MRS. FELIX

No. *You are going to be.*

FANNY

I believe you hate me.

MRS. FELIX

I hate myself when I see what I was yesterday in you today. I hate myself for letting that yesterday live in you instead of killing it when you were a child. I only saw myself as I was just before your father decided to finish things. Knowing he would lose me anyhow, he told me how fatal his love for me had been. “A beautiful poisonous orchid,” he called me — (*breaks down*) Fanny, Fanny, Fanny!

FANNY (*coldly*)

Mother, don't make a scene!

MRS. FELIX (*drying her eyes*)

Useless — useless —

MAGNUS (*rising*)

It was all my fault. I should never have made the offer —

MRS. FELIX

It was the first *real* thing you ever did.

MAGNUS

I mean the first offer — the *selfish* one — the *burying* one —

MRS. FELIX

Cancel it!

MAGNUS

It is cancelled!

FANNY (*almost murderously*)

Mother, when we get home, I will pack and go to Aunt Clara's. In the future please don't concern yourself about me any more than about any other young woman of your acquaintance. — Shall we go?

MRS. FELIX

But the boy in there —

FANNY

No need to disturb him. He is busy, and no doubt happy — I will break the bad news in a letter.

MRS. FELIX

You break the engagement?

FANNY

Oh, no, indeed! He'll soon find some other steel manufacturer or somebody of the sort to offer him just as much.

MAGNUS (*quieting Mrs. Felix's frantic interrogation*)

I see — the bad news is breaking my word?

[*Fanny nods.*]

MAGNUS

You told him, and he accepted?

FANNY

I talked to him for an hour over the telephone this morning —

MRS. FELIX

He accepted — so easily —

FANNY

Easily! — I told him he must either accept or lose me — and rang off. Two minutes later he was frantically accepting —

MAGNUS

You should have told us that and saved argument.

FANNY

I wanted you — all of you — to *make* argument — good argument — so that he would see it was for the best and not sulk and grieve afterwards. (*Angrily*) Mother promised she would not interfere.

MRS. FELIX

It was thinking of poor Harry did it.

FANNY

Please do not refer to father again — now that you've shattered all my ideals about him —

MRS. FELIX

Ideals! Fanny, Fanny!

MAGNUS (*to Mrs. Felix*)

If the boy accepted so readily, I think perhaps, Loo, it would be an injustice to cancel that first offer —

FANNY (*earnestly*)

Mr. Magnus — please — don't —

MAGNUS

I suppose Tromper — my good faithful beef-eating Tromper — will spread the report that I'm losing my mind if I do —

MRS. FELIX

Great men should n't care, John. The mob *always* think greatness is madness.

FANNY (*impatiently*)

Mother —

MRS. FELIX

I only wish there was some one to save the poor boy from you, Fanny — I do, indeed!

[*A ring is heard at the door and Vanillity goes to open it. Noel Onfroy enters. He has pointed beard, twirling moustache, pointed hands, hair cut en brosse; wears black velvet jacket, rich red tie, riding-*

trousers with white Bedford cords, black patent-leather boots; bare-headed; he is smoking a pipe.

MAGNUS

I intended running in on you in a moment, my boy —
ONFROY (*nodding to all*)

Where is the Chub? (*Nods toward laboratory*)
Elixir-of-lifing? (*With real pleasure*) How are you, Charlotte Corday? (*Shakes Mrs. Felix's hand*) Where do you buy those pink cheeks? I could n't paint better ones myself.

MRS. FELIX

These are n't painted — they 're anger.

ONFROY

With Clarissa Henbane, as usual?

FANNY

Please don't take liberties, Mr. Onfroy.

ONFROY

When I take liberties with you, Lydia Languish, I condescend. (*Pointedly turning his back*) Anger?

MAGNUS (*chuckling*)

And women love him for it; they love him, the coxcomb! They used to pay him five thousand dollars, less for their portraits than for the slangings he gave them — (*this while Mrs. Felix explains to Onfroy in undertone*)

FANNY (*pale with rage*)

Mr. Magnus, please don't include me in your generalities — I am not like other girls —
[*Mrs. Felix finishes explaining.*]

ONFROY (*turning*)

That one remark proves you are, dear Lady Disdain. It is one of the ninety-and-nine banalities that make up what the average young woman calls her opin-

ions. Another is the following remark addressed to men who are sane about women: "Ah, wait until you meet the right one!"

MAGNUS (*still chuckling*)

They love it — love it! Fanny pretends not to; but that's because she knows he's married and she can't get him. If the boy in there treated you as this coxcomb does my daughter, you would n't mind living on *nothing* a year in the Sahara Desert.

FANNY

Mr. Magnus —

MAGNUS

Oh, I know — Olive was all you are, Fanny, and more. Then along comes the coxcomb. In three weeks she's telling me he says he can't afford to marry her — and won't I please settle a dowry on them so that he can give up portrait painting where all the women are wild about him — marry her — and settle down to art for art's sake.

ONFROY

I'll say this for you, Ivan the Terrible: you were game; took your medicine standing up; came across with the dowry like a little man, thereby earning the thanks of every true lover of art. No more pot-boilers, no more portraits, no more dem-nition fool chromos for the dem-nition fool public! You've got yourself into history, Kubla Khan. You will live as my patron.

MAGNUS

The way we poor financiers are patronized! It's the second time I've been told that this morning —

ONFROY (*to Mrs. Felix*)

You've been praising me, Joan of Arc?

MRS. FELIX

The thought of you has n't crossed my mind in weeks, Sir Egotist.

ONFROY

Oh, the Chub? (*Glancing at laboratory*) Right, too! (*To Magnus*) Endow him, Governor. The other thing is damnable — downright damnable. I'll say this — and me saying it means a lot — I'm nobody compared to him. (*Hastily*) Not personally! I should have said: "Art's nothing to his sort of science" (*To Fanny*) One little bit of pink and white prettiness stopping the greatest thing science ever tackled!

FANNY (*goes to the Judge, stopping her ears while Onfroy talks; then tearfully*) Judge Critty, you're the only one with the least chivalry. Why should I be abused so? Because I want my husband to have some pleasure in life? Instead of frowning in smelly chemicals all day — risking his life —

VANILLITY

Oh, no, my dear Miss Felix! Oh, no! (*Eagerly*) No risk! — Not the slightest! It's as peaceful, as harmless as — as —

[*A succession of sharp reports like pistol-shots ring out. The folding-doors are thrown back and H. Addington Agnus stumbles in backward and sits down, staring blankly, seeing nothing. Smoke arises from the laboratory. As it clears away, Agnus rushes back again, examines something through a microscope.*]

FANNY (*sharply*)

Addington, stop making yourself ridiculous. (*She goes into the laboratory and shakes him*)

AGNUS (*comes to, as one who has been in a trance*)

My own — my darling! (*Embraces her*)

FANNY (*wriggling*)

Addington! There are peo — (*muffled by kiss*) —
ple here, I tell you — (*Releases herself*)

AGNUS (*not seeing anyone else, abstractedly*)

Just had a most successful discovery — chemical —
out of my line, rather — but — (*Seizes and kisses
her again*)

FANNY

Addington! Don't you see there are visitors?

[*Agnus turns and almost collapses; then he turns
away from the rest again.*]

FANNY (*taking hold of him*)

Mr. Magnus —

AGNUS

Oh, Lord!

FANNY (*pulls him out, protesting*)

Mr. Magnus — and —

ONFROY

Hello, Chub! How's the Chub? Celebrated Chub,
eh?

[*Agnus has, in his embarrassment, been going from
one to another, shaking hands.*]

JUDGE CRITTY

VANILLITY

MAGNUS

MRS. FELIX

} Your success warms me like
old wine, my boy.
(almost My dear pupil; I have an
simulta- excuse for having lived.
neously) The heartiest congratula-
tions.
Addington — you 're a great
man.

[Now that he is nearer, one perceives that Agnus is a youthful, enthusiastic, absent-minded genius, with a strong face save for his unsophisticated juvenile glance. This is now hidden, for he wears heavy tortoise-shell spectacles; also white trousers and tunic, heavily braided at collar and sleeves and along trousers legs — an old army uniform in fact, with insignia stripped off, though the buttoned shoulder-straps remain.]

MAGNUS

May I re-admit Mr. Tromper, Loo? (*He opens the hallway door*) Tromper!

[Tromper enters just as Agnus has shaken the last hand.]

FANNY (*hastening over*)

Addington — the man who made the offer — Mr. Tromper —

TROMPER

Pleasedtermeetcher —

[Agnus shakes hands with Tromper, muttering and looking puzzled.]

FANNY

You know, on the telephone this morning —

AGNUS (*turning away: utterly forgetting Tromper*)

Fanny, you did n't mean that, did you? Of course you did n't — I know you did n't! Why — after me winning the prize —

TROMPER (*walking around and facing him again*)

That 's why we make the offer, Doctor —

FANNY (*dangerously*)

You 're going back on your word, Addington?

AGNUS (*turning his back, forgetting Tromper again*)

Fanny, I forgot all about it. I began experimenting and —

FANNY

Forgot your word of honor — for smelly chemicals —

AGNUS

Fanny!

TROMPER (*again, to the amusement of the others, walking around to face him*) We would n't take up all your time, you know, doctor. — After hours you could go on with your work —

ONFROY

Correspondence-course immortality — a few hours every night will open every door for you — even immortality —

MRS. FELIX

Don't accept, Addington —

ONFROY

By no means, Chub — *Never!*

JUDGE CRITTY (*clearing throat*)

You have said you valued my opinion, my dear lad: you have called me a second father —

ONFROY

And Little Red Riding Hood called the wolf grandmother, too. (*To Agnus*) Decline it!

FANNY

Good day to you, Addington! (*She is at the garden door; Agnus rushes over to her; she throws off his hand*) You've broken your word. Good-bye!

AGNUS

Good-bye?

[The rest remain farther down the stage, watching the couple with curiosity.]

FANNY

I'll send your ring and your letters —

[The following colloquy is held in half-whispers to give impression that the others do not hear it.]

AGNUS

But, Fanny —

FANNY

I told you, this was your chance. I can't wait to marry until I'm gray.

AGNUS (*excitedly*)

But you love me?

[Fanny shrugs her shoulders.]

AGNUS (*wildly*)

You're tired of me?

FANNY

No, of waiting.

AGNUS (*seizing her wrists*)

You don't care for anybody else?

[Fanny turns away.]

AGNUS (*madly*)

Say you don't! Say you don't!

FANNY (*impatiently*)

No! But I'll try to — hereafter. Let me go. You're making a scene! (*Wrenches herself away and goes out; he follows*)

ONFROY (*viciously*)

He needs a guardian. (*Points to laboratory*) He leaves his wits in there: hat-checks his brains.

MRS. FELIX

But he hat-checks *more* brains than all of us carry around everywhere.

ONFROY

It's damnable! (*At the window*) Here he comes back — you win. It's written all over his face.

AGNUS (*enters again*)

She's given me time to think it over. (*To Onfroy*)
She's gone on to see Olive.

ONFROY (*to Magnus*)

Yes, since you long-distanced, Olive's worried everybody in the house nearly to death for fear her luncheon would n't be grand enough for you New Yorkers. I told her: "Olive, when an artist entertains business men, he condescends —"

MAGNUS

A favorite word of coxcombs. (*He goes toward door*) Tromper included?

ONFROY (*making a face*)

Oh, I suppose so.

MAGNUS

Tromper!

TROMPER (*swelling with righteous wrath and the desire to say "I'm as good as you are" but afraid to insult Magnus's son-in-law*) I'll eat at the Club here — thank you. (*Stalks forward in dignity*)

MAGNUS

Tromper! (*Tromper is immediately extinguished*)
Come along!
[*They go out.*]

ONFROY (*to Judge Critty*)

Olive's expecting you, too. Don't mind what I said.
Go ahead. Poo-bah!

JUDGE CRITTY

I take you with the usual salt, Onfroy. (*Recovers his dignity by having thus made light of Onfroy*)
Professor!

VANILLITY (*to Agnus*)

My dear lad — I —

JUDGE CRITTY

Tom!

[*Vanillity, feeling very wretched, shakes Agnus's hand. As the Judge's back is turned, he shakes his head vigorously. They go out.*]

FANNY (*outside*)

Mother, are you coming!

MRS. FELIX (*to Onfroy, hurriedly*)

She'll come back if I stay. Argue the boy out of it — do. Addington, listen to Noel. (*She goes*)

ONFROY (*alone with Agnus*)

Now, you bally ass; you Simon Simple; you Babe-in-the-Wood; you Hans Clodhopper; you Little Claus; you — you everything that is asinine — listen to me; if you accept, I'll never speak to you again!

AGNUS

And — if I don't — *she won't!*

ONFROY

More than that, you Lilliputian brain-storm, I'll publish your infamy in every medical and scientific journal — in every newspaper and magazine, too, not controlled by this money-mad crew. You! — the biggest man in science — to make a nigger-slave of yourself for jews-harps and frill-fralls! Go part your hair in the middle and comb it over your forehead! You've got a forehead under false pretences.

Your hair ought to grow into your eyes. Your eyes should close together like a smelt's. You ought to have a chin running due south. Your head ought to look like a chipmunk's or like a Bartlett pear. — Bah!

AGNUS

Life 's nothing without her?

ONFROY

You read that in a book. You won't be sure you know her when the fashions in women's clothes change. You're mad with the madness of a man who has never lived with women before.

AGNUS

I thank Heaven — in that way — I'm worthy of her!

ONFROY

Oh, you fish! You eel! Worthy of her? She is n't worthy to carry your coat! You're Addington Agnus, the man who won the Nobel prize — try to remember the name — *Addington Agnus*.

AGNUS

You've never loved, Noel —

ONFROY

A dozen times. And if Olive made me dissatisfied tomorrow, I might love a dozen times more before I got satisfied again. Marriage made me. It'll ruin you. Before I married, I was a pot-boiling portrait-painter. Now I'm the great Noel Onfroy, the American Velasquez. Love should serve genius. It's more important for me to paint good pictures than to be foolish for six months or a year with some woman who does n't know a Michael Angelo from a Christy chromo — or who thinks Gibson is a great

artist. Now, Fanny does n't know the difference between your work and that of some tame rabbit in a hutch discovering cheaper ways of tanning leather and dyeing cheese-cloth —

AGNUS

Olive did n't know anything about art when you met her.

ONFROY

No, but I soon made her learn. I told her if she did n't I would n't marry her. And I did n't, either, until she 'spent a year in one of the Julian studios learning how little she was and how big art was. — You ought to send Fanny to a School of Science before you marry her —

AGNUS (*miserably*)

She 'd laugh at me if I *suggested* it.

ONFROY (*angrily*)

Vain, sickening puss-in-boots!

AGNUS (*angrily*)

Noel, you 're talking of the woman I love —

[*Outside a figure is seen at that moment darting through the bushes, trying to hide, and finally crouching down.*]

ONFROY

Of the minx you love; the caterwauling, manicured, massaged, Paris-gowned cocodette you love —

AGNUS (*furious*)

Cocodette?

ONFROY

A cocotte who keeps chemically pure because she knows she 'll fetch a higher price in the marriage market — a married kept-up lady —

[*Agnus jumps up as if to strike him.*]

ONFROY (*sombrely*)

Don't do it. I could break you in two.

AGNUS (*low*)

That finishes us — our friendship —

ONFROY (*with real feeling*)

I'm sorry — I spoke for your good: to bring you to your senses, Chub —

[*Agnus turns away.*]

ONFROY

All right. — Only — you won't accept that offer, will you?

AGNUS

I intend to marry the woman I love. The woman whose shoestrings you are n't fit to —

ONFROY

Quoting Chambers — McCutcheon novels again — novels written for fudge-munching slatternly wives to read on their way to an equally trashy matinée — their house-work undone — Fanny Felixes without money —

AGNUS (*turning wildly*)

The Devil give me strength to thrash you within an inch of your life!

[*Onfroy catches hold of his hands.*]

AGNUS (*helpless*)

The Devil give me strength —

[*The hitherto crouching figure shoots up outside and a face becomes visible at the window. Neither one of the men inside sees it.*]

ONFROY

You fool! You fool! (*Throws Agnus from him and goes out slamming the door behind him*)

[*The face at the window turns to see Onfroy go hurriedly by. Agnus, rushing after him, throws open the door, thus disclosing a man in the garden who is waiting to enter.*]

MAN

Did I hear my name mentioned? (*Enters. He is as unlike the popular conceptions of The Devil as possible, being short, squat, respectable, fat and Teutonic. He is followed by a queer light that darts and circles the ceiling*) You called me, I think! (*He closes the door*)

AGNUS (*backing*)

What! What!

MAN (*seating himself comfortably*)

You called me —

AGNUS

You? Who are you? —

MAN

My real name is Wisdom. You called me The Devil. [*The light flashes across his face and circles around him.*]

AGNUS

I — you —!

THE DEVIL

You said: "The Devil give me strength."

AGNUS

You — The Devil. (*Suddenly convulsed with laughter, sits down*)

THE DEVIL (*gruffly*)

Oh, I know, I look like the devil, but not like *The Devil*. But this was the only body handy when I

got back from Mars the last time, so I had to take it —

[*The light darts viciously at him.*]

THE DEVIL (*points to the light, laughing*)

There's the real owner of this carcass — a crazy German anarchist. — He was howling for The Devil just as you were — wanted me to help blow up all the capitalists —

[*The light attacks him again.*]

THE DEVIL

Tags after his foolish body, hoping I'll get tired of it and give it back, I suppose. — And so I will when I find a better one. It's no fun for a fiend of my renowned gentlemanly appearance to be masquerading as a Dutch comedian. Worse than that — the police are looking for it. That's why I was hiding in your garden when I happened to hear you call me. The Devil, in jail — a fine tale to take back to Mars.

AGNUS (*aghast*)

Man, you should be in some lunatic asylum —

MAN

Don't call me "man." That's a deadly insult. If ever a respectable Martian was sick of anything, it's that unreasonable ignorant ridiculous combination of poll-parrot and monkey —

AGNUS

Poor lunatic! I must humor you, I suppose. — Have you forgotten there have been *great* men?

THE DEVIL

Never. I have been all the great men in history. All the great men have been The Devil: alias Wis-

dom. By taking possession of men's bodies I have tried to set up an ideal to strive for, set the race an example. And then, when I had to quit and go back to Mars, each time the human's little soul came back to its body and, finding itself with too much power, was responsible for all the inconsistencies, treacheries, and cruelties that have puzzled psychologists and historians —

AGNUS

You are a plausible lunatic, anyway. Would you mind mentioning who you were, for instance —

THE DEVIL

Oh, all the first-rate fellows — Confucius, Buddha, Mahomet — St. Augustine, Martin Luther, Moses — to mention a few — Shakespeare, Dickens — those were my sentimental days —

AGNUS (*amused*)

Oh! you wrote Shakespeare's plays, did you? —

THE DEVIL

All the *good* ones —

AGNUS (*laughing boisterously*)

Well, that's settled anyway — Bacon did n't do it, after all —

THE DEVIL

Yes, he did — I was Bacon, too.

AGNUS (*with ironical politeness*)

Been anybody lately?

THE DEVIL

Bernard Shaw was my last appearance. Just before my last trip to Mars. I see he's made good use of the plays I wrote for him; produced some very

good imitations; caught my style, so to speak. I was sorry to leave Shaw. I was having rather better success waking up the world than usual. But I simply *had* to go back to Mars —

AGNUS (*with increasing irony*)

Really? Why?

THE DEVIL

It's my home. When news came there some ten thousand years ago that man was evolving into a thinking brute, the Martians realized the dawning intellect would need a guide. I was the most ignorant of all Martians — I had tried to lead a revolt to make the body independent of the spirit. So, instead of going on to a higher mental state — my soul transferred from planet to planet until finally I should reach the Sun, which is the perfection of the soul — instead of that, I was sentenced to stand still for ten thousand years; to act as the link between Mars and the Earth; to make men fit for Mars, d' you understand?

AGNUS (*faltering*)

One of us is insane, that is certain.

THE DEVIL

Mars, you will remember, is red. That's where your dim poetic devil-makers got their hell-fire from.

[*Agnus holds his head.*]

THE DEVIL

The only true thing they tell about me is that I tempted man through woman to wisdom. I have been hated and reviled as wisdom always is. But my sentence of exile will soon be over — the ten thousand years will soon be up — and then I can quit

ridiculous man forever and go to school again to fit myself for the Sun.

[*The light darts impatiently around.*]

THE DEVIL

I wish that ridiculous Dutchman's soul would quit bothering me! (*To the light*) Is n't it enough that you've got me hiding from the police, you imbecilic disembodied spirit? (*To Agnus*) Who was that handsome fellow in the velvet jacket who just ran out of here? I've been following him about for days hoping he'll ask my help. Then I could give this preposterous paunch back to that light comedian over there. (*Points to light*) And I hope the police get it.

AGNUS

You're a scientific kind of a lunatic, right enough. Souls do leave their bodies during sleep or hypnotism or —

THE DEVIL (*satirically*)

Oh, you've discovered that, have you? Only fancy!

AGNUS

An ordinary lunatic would have pretended he could change himself into *anything*, if he was The Devil —

THE DEVIL

As soon as I take human shape, naturally I'm bound by human laws. And each time I get back from Mars, I must circulate around until some one calls for me. There are always plenty of people calling for The Devil. And then I have no choice — I must take the first I hear and change when I can. And so I'm chained to this refugée until I get something better — like that velvet-jacket fellow's body, for instance. (*Suddenly*) Is he married?

AGNUS

Who? Noel Onfroy! Yes — I'm mad — overwork, I suppose — (*suddenly clouded*) worry! I don't wonder I'm mad; I don't wonder! (*Feels his head and closes his eyes*)

THE DEVIL

Oh, too bad he's married. I should have thought of that before. I'd rather be a single Dutch comedian than a married Adonis. It's bad enough being tied to one human body, let alone two. (*Looks around and sees that the light has disappeared*) The Dutchman's gone, eh? He goes back to his foolish attic every now and then to see if the police have found any bombs yet. There are seven sewed up in the mattress — and I don't dare take them out of the house for fear the police may be watching for a man with a suit-case. That Dutchman will get me in jail yet.

AGNUS (*holding his head and looking at The Devil between the palms of his hands*) You use singularly unclassical language for the Fount of All Wisdom —

THE DEVIL

The American language. When I'm in England, I use English. — By the way, are *you* married?

AGNUS

I? (*Holds his head harder*)

THE DEVIL (*understanding*)

Not, eh? Well? (*He rises, advancing on Agnus, viewing him speculatively, and finally approvingly*)

AGNUS (*alarmed, dimly conscious*)

Here! What now?

THE DEVIL (*fixing his eyes on Agnus*) You don't believe in me?

AGNUS

Why — er — what are you doing? (*In panic*)
Don't look at me like that. (*He starts up*)

THE DEVIL

Sit down!

[*Agnus struggles but sits down.*]

THE DEVIL

You called for me to help you. I'm going to. (*He goes to the windows and pulls down the blinds*)

AGNUS

Here! What! (*He tries to rise but only sits starkly upright with staring eyes. A faint luminosity glows over his head*)

[*The Devil pulls up the chair close; their knees touch. He leans forward, staring into Agnus's eyes. The luminosity grows brighter about Agnus's head, rises little by little, flickers and flutters. Meanwhile a dull crimson light has glowed over The Devil's head, and now it grows steadily and moves across the space until it rests on Agnus's head, where it settles and sinks downward, disappearing.*]

THE DEVIL (*rising, in Agnus's body*)

Take the Dutchman's body, doctor — I've got yours — (*A second luminosity glows at window*) Quick! Here comes the Dutchman back. Take his body, or you'll be homeless. It's not much but it's the only one I've got to give you. Quick! I need you!

[*Each of the two luminosities dart toward the senseless body. One settles and disappears. The other flies viciously around and around the head. The Devil lets up the shades, shaking with laughter.*]

THE DEVIL

I hardly dare ask so impertinent a question — but which soul won?

AGNUS (*in the Dutchman's body*)

You scoundrel! You fiend! You blackguard!

THE DEVIL

That might be either! The language of men is strikingly similar under great loss. Who are you? The rightful owner or an usurper?

AGNUS (*shaking and trembling with rage*)

Give me back my body, or I'll kill you —

THE DEVIL

Kill me? You can only kill your own nice attractive body. You'll suffer for any harm done to it when I give it back. So don't knock out any teeth, or you'll have toothache all your life.

[*The light has been darting viciously between The Devil and Agnus.*]

THE DEVIL

Oh, go home to your bombs again, Schwartzenhopfel! This gentleman did n't want your old body. When he sees how ridiculous it looks on him, he's liable to shoot himself — or yourself. Nobody can love a body like that. (*He draws aside curtains hiding a mirror set in the wall*) I leave it to you, Agnus. Can you blame me for wanting to get rid of it?

[*Agnus, seeing himself as a short squat German, staggers back clutching his throat.*]

THE DEVIL (*having smoothed down his coat lapels so as to reveal a silk shirt, and twisted the carelessly tied necktie to a smart shape, takes off tortoise-shell spectacles, presenting, instead of the absorbed scien-*

*tist, a young debonair man of fashion) Now — am I
a lunatic? (Searches pockets and finds a letter)*

AGNUS

You — Devil —

THE DEVIL (*correcting him suavely as he exhibits the
address on the letter*) Dr. Agnus, please!

CURTAIN

THE SECOND ACT

The scene and the time are unchanged, although one minute may have elapsed since the last word was spoken. During this time Agnus has realized his misfortune. His face has ceased to be agonized and is now only blank.

The Devil still stands at the back of the chair, twirling Agnus's former moustache and admiring himself.

*The light is stationary.*¹

THE DEVIL

With these slight alterations in your dress, your face lighted up with my attractive smile (*smiles*) and my bold intelligent gaze, you are a handsome fellow, Agnus — by Saturn, a handsome fellow! I really believe I'd rather have this body than that velvet-jacketed fellow's —

AGNUS (*pleadingly*)

Don't say that. It's not much of a body. I have all sorts of pains and aches — neglect, you know. You'll be ill half your time. You won't have *any* fun. Now this body (*strikes the Dutchman's*) may not be good-looking, but what's that? It's a fine healthy body — a sound body —

[The light bobs up and down; as though nodding sorrowfully.]

¹ It must be remembered that when the word Agnus is written, it means Agnus's spirit; not his body, that is now The Devil's.

THE DEVIL

In that case you 're better off than you were. You ought to thank me.

[The light darts at him.]

THE DEVIL

I wish I could lose that German.

AGNUS (*feverishly*)

I *do* thank you — physically. But that is n't it. I'm engaged — to a girl. She — she — she won't know me in this body —

THE DEVIL

Engaged to a girl! Engaged! — (*Blankly*) Has the time been set for marriage?

AGNUS

No, but —

THE DEVIL

Oh, well, that 's all right. I can get rid of her.

AGNUS

Get rid of her? Get rid of her! (*Wildly*) What do you mean?

THE DEVIL (*with a gesture*)

Scat, girl, scat! Chase her away!

AGNUS

Oh! you (*runs at him, fist clenched*)

THE DEVIL

Don't forget yourself and break your own nose.

AGNUS

Oh, what am I to do? What am I to do? (*Agonizedly*) Oh, don't chase her away.

THE DEVIL

What then? Want me to hug her? Kiss her?

AGNUS

Oh, my God, no!

THE DEVIL

Well?

AGNUS

You don't have to *kiss* her! —

THE DEVIL

If I don't kiss her, she 'll be kissing me —

AGNUS

Kissing you!

THE DEVIL

It's always the neglectful one gets kissed.

AGNUS

She's got too much dignity to kiss a man without being kissed!

THE DEVIL

Then she does n't love you —

AGNUS

She does love me!

THE DEVIL

When a woman loves a man, she does n't care which one kisses first so long as they kiss. I'm glad she does n't love you. If she did, rudeness and neglect, even knocking her down, would only make her love you more. But women get very dignified when a man they don't love ill-treats them. They're only too glad of an excuse to be rid of him.

AGNUS

I know now everything ever written about you is true. To hit a woman! To hit a woman!

THE DEVIL

An empty bureau-drawer is best. It makes a lot of noise, scares them to death, and does n't really hurt them at all.

AGNUS

You devil!

THE DEVIL

Dr. Agnus, please. A very neat little book could be written on the psychology of beating children and women — for their own good, of course! Never hurt them: that's very coarse! A blow should be simply a little more effective than the strongest word — and should never be used until the last threat is exhausted. Of course, if your vocabulary is limited — (*Shrugs his shoulders*) That's why there's so much wife-beating among the lower classes. The really well-educated man does n't need to beat his wife — when he can swear at her in seven different languages —

[The light darts viciously at him.]

AGNUS

You devil!

THE DEVIL

Dr. Agnus, please. (*Indicating the light*) The Dutchman is angry, too. He thinks it's all right to blow up a building with a couple of hundred people in it. But to lift a hand against a woman "save in kindness" — oh, my!

[The light is suddenly still.]

THE DEVIL

And you, doctor, vivisect dogs oblivious to their screams of agony. But you'd refuse to speak to the man who inflicted a harmless blow on his wife. Oh, you ridiculous humans!

AGNUS

Vivisection saves many a civilized man.

THE DEVIL

A blow at the right time saves many a civilized woman. Women have only begun to be civilized — since I posed as a woman once or twice: George Eliot, George Sand, and a few others. You don't laugh this time as you did when I said I was Shakespeare and Shaw —

[Agnus wrings his hands and walks away.]

THE DEVIL

You see I discovered — in spite of all my work — that as soon as I built men up to a highly civilized state, they fell right down again. There was Egypt — look at the Pyramids. There was Greece — I was proud of Greece — its philosophy — drama — architecture — I've never done so well since. There was Rome. What fellows those Romans were — owned the world. There was Spain — so did she. England! I still have hopes of England under my new system. But what happened to the others? Smash! Crash! Bang! And I had to start training savages again. I did n't realize what the matter was — I tried every system — and then, when England started to smash, my eyes opened — the fault was women —

AGNUS

Why, women have always been our refining influences. They draw out our nobler selves.

THE DEVIL

They draw out your sentimental selves, cunning minxes. Men were dragged down, their philosophy sapped, their reason rotted, by living with inferior creatures. You see, while men were out battling with circumstances and learning to use their brains,

women were slaves. Had brains, right enough, but did n't get a chance to use them. Men played the grand act with them (*imitating a pompous man's tone*): "Now don't bother your little head about that, dearie, papa'll fix it." Well, about the beginning of the last century, I realized I must let men alone for awhile — and work on women. So first, I created an industrial revolution that would send women out to work in the world — like men —

ANGUS (*angrily*)

That proves what a devil you are! (*Sentimentally*)
Ah, those good old days when every father could support his daughter until she married — when every wife was in her true sphere — the home.

THE DEVIL (*contemptuously*)

That shows how men's brains have gone back while I worked on women. I was so absorbed in women that I forgot men for fifty years until, thoroughly alarmed, I created Bernard Shaw out of an ordinary Irish wit by becoming *him* —

AGNUS (*sarcastically*)

Oh, you were n't Ibsen, then?

THE DEVIL

Oh, yes, I was Ibsen. But that was in the cause of women's education — to champion the New Woman —

AGNUS

Is there any great man you were not?

THE DEVIL

No great ones. Well, my work on woman has been effective. She's learned in fifty years what men took thousands to learn. In another fifty she'll be men's mental equal. And her sons will be Supermen.

Then the world will be able to get along without me —

[*There is a ring at the door.*

AGNUS (*jumps up and is about to open the door, but remembers his changed appearance; he peers agonizedly out of window and starts*) It's Fanny — Fanny!

THE DEVIL

The girl?

AGNUS

Yes, yes! She's come for her answer?

[*Fanny rings irritably.*

AGNUS (*to The Devil*)

Just say: "I accept, Fanny — go back and get the others." There's no time to explain.

THE DEVIL

Will she go if I say that?

AGNUS

Yes, yes!

[*Fanny rings again.*

THE DEVIL

An arrogant minx, apparently. You've trained her badly. But we'll soon fix that!

AGNUS

Will you go — please! She'll look in the window in a moment and see me — I mean you — please go!

THE DEVIL

What shall I say?

AGNUS

"I accept, Fanny — go back and get the others." But no putting your arm around her: no kissing!

THE DEVIL

No fear! I wish I were sure she would n't kiss me —
[*Fanny rattles the knob; the door is opened impatiently, and she enters angrily.*]

THE DEVIL (*immediately*)

Fanny, I accept: go and get the others.

FANNY

Oh, there you are! Why did you keep me ringing there like a fool?

THE DEVIL

Was that ringing like a fool's? Suppose you go out now and ring like a sensible person — just to see if I can tell the difference!

[*Fanny appears dumfounded and cannot find words. The Devil smiles encouragingly at her.*]

AGNUS (*wildly*)

Fanny, I give you my word —

[*Fanny stares at him. Agnus realizes his position and grows shamefacedly silent.*]

THE DEVIL (*introducing Agnus*)

My friend, Mr. Schwartzenhopfel. A very nice fellow — with a ridiculous name.

[*The light darts at him viciously.*]

THE DEVIL

Heard me speak so much of you — feels like an old friend. — Call her “Fanny,” Schwartzenhopfel. Call him “Hop,” Fanny — “Hop” for short.

FANNY (*recovering her breath*)

You 've been drinking!

THE DEVIL

You must learn to love Hop, Fanny. If I should die, I should never want you to marry anyone but

Hop. (*With a tremendous slap on Agnus's back*)
[*The light darts.*]

FANNY

I can't understand your conduct, Addington? I'm at a loss!

THE DEVIL.

Why —

[*Agnus punches him in the ribs.*]

THE DEVIL (*recollecting*)

Oh! it's all right, Fanny. It's all right! (*Carefully*) Fanny — I — accept — go — and — get — the — others —

FANNY

You *do* accept?

THE DEVIL

Fanny, I accept. Go and get the others.

FANNY

You accept —

THE DEVIL

Fanny, I accept. Go and —

FANNY (*kissing him*)

You dear old darling!

[*The Devil puts his arm about her with a sly wink at the raging Agnus.*]

FANNY

Now you can set the wedding for any date you please — next month if you like —

[*The Devil takes his arm away.*]

FANNY

You've made me the happiest girl in the world —
(*Kisses him again*)

THE DEVIL (*in a hollow tone*)

Go and get the others.

FANNY

I will. I will. Oh, you dear! (*Kisses him again and goes out through the upper door in the rear*)

[*The Devil turns a look of reproachful and frigid dignity on Agnus. The light dances about in joyful hatred.*]

THE DEVIL (*to the light*)

Get out of here, you Teutonic accident! (*To Agnus*) Dug a little share for me, did n't you? Married next month!

AGNUS (*alarmed*)

I don't want her to marry you.

THE DEVIL

Then why tell me to "accept, Fanny, go and get the others," eh?

AGNUS

Did n't have to have time to explain everything to you?

THE DEVIL

What did I accept?

AGNUS

One hundred thousand dollars a year: chief chemist to the John Magnus works —

THE DEVIL

Who are "the others" she went to get?

AGNUS

John Magnus —

THE DEVIL (*interrupting*)

The richest man in the world — is n't he?

AGNUS (*contemptuously*)

I thought The Devil knew everything —

THE DEVIL

Everything worth knowing — but I can't keep track of the petty things.

AGNUS

Petty? John Magnus — while not the richest man — controls the money-market. Petty?

THE DEVIL

Any man with brains enough to control money-markets might be a *fifth-rate* scientist, a fourth-rate painter, or a third-rate author! He must be petty if he's willing to be nothing but a first-class financier. One thing I never was — a financier! Could n't waste my time. Financiers, lawyers, stock-jobbers, and thieves generally are the tumors on the human race! When I get through training women, their superman sons will be the surgeons who remove those tumors — (*Suddenly*) I see! She wants you to give up science for a paying job under Magnus — eh?

AGNUS

Why —

THE DEVIL

Enough! What was your line?

AGNUS

Well — to explain quickly — but not quite accurately — immortality —

THE DEVIL

The devil you say! Pardon my using human terms! But — immortality!

AGNUS

I've made an animal's functions live after the animal died.

THE DEVIL

That's enough. And without my help! Why, that was my very next job! To take some scientist's body for a few years and start the world on the path toward longer life. Of course, immortality of the body is all rot. It's bound to wear out some time. But — five hundred years — that's possible. It would save putting souls back into new-borns. For it takes a hundred ordinary human lives to be ready for Mars. Out of all the billions of men who have lived, we have only a few thousand earth-people up there. The second-rate geniuses — Napoleon, Caesar, George Washington, Tamerlane — all the second-raters —

AGNUS

Napoleon — Caesar — Washington — second-raters?

THE DEVIL

Of course! All the first-raters were — (*points to himself*) All soldiers are second-rate. Just as all financiers are about tenth-rate — compared to the great teachers, who help humanity to progress — like — like — (*struck by a thought*) like you yourself. (*With an access of respect*) Man — I'll do the right thing by you! Before I quit this body — I'll give you the secret of making men live half a millennium.

AGNUS (*the man forgotten in the scientist*)

You will? (*Delightedly*) You will?

THE DEVIL (*shakes hands*)

And she was going to make you a hack?

AGNUS

Well, you see, she's a very superior girl.

[*The Devil snorts.*]

AGNUS

And I really should give her the surroundings and luxuries that she's entitled to — being so superior a girl —

[*The Devil snorts again.*]

AGNUS

And the only money I ever made was that Nobel prize —

THE DEVIL (*starting*)

What? You won the Nobel prize?

[*Agnus nods.*]

THE DEVIL (*astounded*)

By Saturn, you're the most startling combination of ass and genius I ever met! Such modesty is actually first-rate —

AGNUS (*deprecatorily*)

Oh, don't say that —

THE DEVIL

But such infatuation is hundredth-rate. Generally to be met with among the middle classes — that is, the lowest class of intelligence —

AGNUS

The middle class — *lowest?*

THE DEVIL

Creatures of law and respectability always are. Aristocracy is lower-class people getting intelligence.

Middle-class people only get money. There are hardly any American aristocrats — and those few live abroad —

AGNUS

Nonsense! You would n't call Miss Felix middle-class.

THE DEVIL

Miss Felix?

AGNUS

The young lady —

THE DEVIL

A person who 'd burn up your genius in the fire that boils the pot? Worse than middle-class — worthless —

AGNUS (*violently*)

Sir —

THE DEVIL

How can I get rid of her? For your own sake: how can I get rid of her?

[*Agnus clenches his fists.*]

THE DEVIL

I must play Davy Garrick again — do something to disgust her —

AGNUS (*violently ironical*)

Just treat her as you did a moment ago.

THE DEVIL

Trouble is: she left this room loving me — twenty times better than she ever loved you. How can I help you — help humanity — with a drab like that at my heels — ?

AGNUS

You — (*about to strike*)

THE DEVIL (*laughs*)

Go on: disfigure yourself!

[*Agnus wrings his hands.*]

THE DEVIL (*crosses and recrosses the room; stares moodily out of window with his hands behind back; then suddenly pointing outside the window*) Who's that?

AGNUS (*crossing and looking out*)

That actressy-looking creature?

THE DEVIL (*impatiently*)

Yes, yes — who is she?

AGNUS

Looking for lodgings, I believe. Had the impertinence to apply here —

THE DEVIL (*gloomily*)

She's found them by this time, eh?

AGNUS (*with dignity*)

Nobody here takes lodgers. And the inn — the hotel — is for men only —

THE DEVIL

Hurrah!! (*He dashes out through the door and disappears; his voice is heard outside*) Hi, there!

Wait a minute!

[*The light settles sympathetically on Agnus's shoulder.*]

AGNUS (*to the light*)

Poor devil! You're worse off than I am.

[*The light wags dolefully.*]

AGNUS (*excitedly*)

He's bringing her back — bringing her — *in* — *here* —

THE DEVIL (*outside*)

This way, Miss Blondin!

[*The Devil enters together with Doll Blondin, who is typical of the Broadway idea of refinement and taste: dark blue Norfolk jacket suit; small French skull-cap with tassel, her curly hair escaping from beneath it; high collar and jabot of lace that falls almost to her belt; short vamp suède pumps without toe-cap; preposterously high Cuban heels. The combination of country suit with city shoes, of jabot and lingerie waist — instead of tailored waist and plain collar and tie — with cap suitable only for evening wear, serve to mark her as one who dresses with instinctive taste but without the consistency of the upper-class woman. However, she is a most attractive girl — about twenty-three — and has an air of sophistication grafted on a babyish ingenuousness, which makes anything she says quaintly pleasing.*]

DOLL BLONDIN (*turning to The Devil who has been following her in*) I was told here you would n't think of taking lodgers —

THE DEVIL

I was n't consulted — I need a pretty girl like you around the house just now.

DOLL BLONDIN (*suspiciously*)

Look here — is there an older woman here — a housekeeper —

AGNUS (*with sudden wild hope*)

No, there is n't.

DOLL BLONDIN (*to The Devil*)

Well, mind: no tricks!

THE DEVIL (*pained*)

My dear girl!

DOLL BLONDIN

I'm as much the lady (*primly*) as any you know, even if I am on the stage. Anybody 'ud think I was a crocodile or some other wild beast the way people stare. Not used to seeing girls who know how to dress, I guess. What do these rubes know about class?

AGNUS (*in anguish*)

This is impossible!

DOLL BLONDIN (*eyeing him; to The Devil*)

Servant?

AGNUS

Madam!

DOLL BLONDIN

How *dare* you call me "Madam" —

THE DEVIL

He's a "rube," as you say. Worse — a German "rube."

[*The light darts viciously.*]

THE DEVIL

The worst kind of a "rube." (*Going over to the window he calls hastily to Agnus*) Ring for the servant, Schwartzenhopfel!

AGNUS (*violently*)

But I tell you —

THE DEVIL (*pointing to garden*)

Some people coming.

[*Agnus runs over to window; then he runs back and rings wildly.*]

DOLL BLONDIN

I'm here for studying. (*Severely*) That's why I left New York where gentlemen know how to treat

ladies: real gentlemen — millionaires — that could buy and sell this tank town. One of them gave me this chance; a chance mighty few girls get — a part in a Vienna opera. No objections to a piano, is there?

AGNUS

A piano? A piano!

THE DEVIL

No objection whatever. (*Points to Agnus*) My German friend will tune it for you. One good thing about Germans — they can all tune pianos.

[*The light darts viciously.*]

TOPLISS (*enters from the stairway; an unintelligent but smart-looking Englishman who wears a morning coat with gilt buttons; says to The Devil*) You rang, sir?

THE DEVIL

The young lady will board here —

[*The bell at the garden door rings.*]

THE DEVIL (*hastily*)

On whatever terms she says — a room for her piano and her meals — and a bedroom —

DOLL BLONDIN

And bath!

TOPLISS

There's only two baths, sir — yours and mine —

THE DEVIL

Give her half of yours.

DOLL BLONDIN

Bathe in a servant's bath-tub! I should say *not* —
I'm as much of a lady as —

THE DEVIL (*interrupting*)

I will share yours, Topliss.

DOLL BLONDIN (*contemptuously*)

You *must* be hard up.

[*The bell is heard ringing again. Topliss goes to answer it.*]

AGNUS (*agonizedly*)

Show her to her rooms, Topliss.

[*Topliss looks haughtily at Agnus.*]

THE DEVIL

I'll see to the door, Topliss.

[*Topliss takes the small hand-bag from Doll Blondin.*]

DOLL BLONDIN (*to Topliss, loftily*)

Next time you'll see your master before turning people down.

[*Doll Blondin and Topliss go out by hall door.*]

THE DEVIL (*running to hall door and calling after Doll*) Come down later and make yourself at home.

[*Agnus seats himself and buries his face in his hands groaning. The Devil goes to door and admits John Magnus, Mrs. Felix and Fanny.*]

MAGNUS

Tromper, the Judge, and the Professor have gone for a ride around Rothlyn. I thought — this having become a somewhat personal matter —

THE DEVIL (*whispering to Agnus*)

Magnus?

[*Agnus looks up despondently and nods.*]

THE DEVIL (*to Mrs. Felix, forgetting himself*)

No mistaking you: you're one of my trained women. Any child you will have — will be worth watching —

MRS. FELIX (*taken aback*)

What! What's this? What? My poor boy!
(*She puts her hand on The Devil's shoulder*)

FANNY

Addington does n't need your pity, mother!

THE DEVIL (*recollecting himself*)

Mother? Fanny's mother! Oh, but that must have been when you were just a favorite of the harem!

MRS. FELIX (*in amazement*)

Whatever has come over you? You — why, you — well — *you* of all men! (*She seats herself, staring at him with a sort of fascination*)

THE DEVIL

Your husband —

FANNY

We've had enough of poor father for one day, Addington. Let him rest in his grave!

THE DEVIL

In his grave — good! I must find you another husband. One worthy of you. For she (*indicates Fanny*) must be taking after her father.

MRS. FELIX (*rises and goes concernedly to The Devil; puts her hand on his shoulder*) Boy, boy, what is it? *What* is it? (*Suddenly*) Addington, will you leave the room for a moment and (*looking at Agnus*) take this gentleman with you? I wish to speak privately with —

THE DEVIL

You had plenty of time to speak privately with — before you came in. You think I've gone mad, don't you?

[*Mrs. Felix steps back, showing that she does.*]

THE DEVIL

You think Fanny's driven me crazy by making me take Magnus's offer? Eh? (*Laughs*) Although, who knows? I've been called mad many times before.

Wisdom is always madness to the ignorant — and anyone too wise for them to understand is a madman. Does this look like a madman? (*Turns to Fanny*) I won't take Magnus's offer and I won't marry you.

MAGNUS (*in amazement*)

You decline — after just accepting?

THE DEVIL

Without thanks! (*To Mrs. Felix, with an air of dismissal*) I hope to see you soon again. Meanwhile, I'll start hunting that husband for you. (*He smiles amiably while all stare at him speechlessly: all animated by the steadily growing conviction that he is utterly insane — although his final words impress Mrs. Felix*)

MRS. FELIX (*after a breathless pause*)

It's only a spell. It'll pass. (*To Agnus*) A trip's what you need — a *long* trip. No work. No thinking. Just rest.

THE DEVIL (*amused*)

Still diagnosing insanity?

MRS. FELIX

Oh, no! Everyone has restless spells. The excitement of the Nobel prize — Mr. Magnus's offer — Fanny —

FANNY

Don't blame me, mother. I'm sure this is just what I expected — keeping at those horrid microscopes day and night. It was for his own good I advised him to accept.

THE DEVIL

Don't lie, Fanny.

[*Agnus, agonized, makes gestures for The Devil to stop.*]

FANNY (*scandalized*)

Addington! If I thought you were responsible for what you 're saying —

THE DEVIL

Now see here — all of you. Here am I — Addington Agnus — the biggest scientist in the world today. And here is Fanny Felix — a mere girl. And because I suddenly realize my own importance and her lack of it, even you (*reproachfully to Mrs. Felix*) think I am mad. Think, woman, think!

MRS. FELIX (*gasping*)

But, Addington — people don't change their entire personalities in half an hour — not naturally —

AGNUS (*eagerly*)

Of course they don't! *You* see it —

MAGNUS (*disregarding Agnus*)

Since the Doctor seems to know his own mind at last, I think we had better leave him before he changes it again — this being the third change in an hour —

THE DEVIL

Don't go, Mr. Magnus. I've got something important to say to you. (*To Fanny*) You can go, though —

[*Fanny has been so dumfounded since The Devil stigmatized her as a "mere girl" that she has been unable to move.*]

THE DEVIL

Take her along, Mrs. Felix. Try to train her better —

MAGNUS

Dr. Agnus — when you grossly insult two ladies — my friends —

THE DEVIL (*impatiently*)

Well, why don't they go, then?

FANNY (*recovering herself with an effort*)

Mr. Magnus — I — (*starts for door and opens it*)
[*The Devil has turned back, not even waiting to see Fanny go. Agnus, half starting to detain her, half holding back, is altogether wild. Mrs. Felix tugs at Fanny from the outside.*]

FANNY (*in a carefully restrained voice*)

Mr. Magnus!

MAGNUS

Coming! (*Starts to go*)

THE DEVIL

A moment, Mr. Magnus. (*Eyes him steadily*)
[*Magnus's eyes waver.*]

MRS. FELIX (*coldly*)

When you come to your senses, Fanny, you will find me at Olive's. (*She goes out*)

FANNY

Mr. Magnus, will you pardon me — a moment. I have one last word to say to this gentleman — one last word —

THE DEVIL

May it be true; but I'm afraid not. — In here, Mr. Magnus. (*Opens hall door*)
[*Magnus attempts to meet The Devil's gaze and fails. He goes out.*]

THE DEVIL (*takes out his watch*)

Now, one minute is all I can give you.

[*Fanny, restraining herself as before, points to Agnus.*]

THE DEVIL

Here, Schwartzenhopfel, get out!

AGNUS (*wildly*)

I will not! Fanny — this is all a mistake. This man is not me — not I, I mean — not —

FANNY (*bitterly*)

Two lunatics!

THE DEVIL (*hustles Agnus to stairway*)

Get out!

AGNUS (*protesting*)

Fanny, I can explain everything —

[*The Devil pushes him up. Agnus ascends the stairs stumbingly.*

THE DEVIL (*looks at his watch again — then at Fanny inquiringly; holds watch in hand*) One minute.

FANNY

You lack even the commonest instincts of decency. I'm ashamed to think my name was ever linked with yours.

THE DEVIL (*does not take eyes from the watch during the following colloquy*) Twenty-two and one-half seconds gone.

FANNY (*raging*)

I only want you to know that I loathe and despise you. Thank Heaven, I'm cured of my infatuation. If I were to hear you were dead, it would n't matter to me any more than the death of any other black-guard I had the misfortune to know —

THE DEVIL

Ah, you know blackguards, do you? Thirty-nine and two-thirds seconds gone —

FANNY

What I could have seen in you at any time I don't know — I wonder at myself — and I laugh — yes,

laugh, I tell you — laugh to think I could have been so taken in. I hate you! I hate you!! I hate you!!!

AGNUS (*who has crept down the stairs, reënters*)

Fanny, don't say that —

[*The Devil picks up from table behind him a brass ornament and throws it — his other hand still holding the watch as before. Agnus disappears in order to dodge the ornament.*]

FANNY (*raging on through this by-play which she does not observe*) I am going now, never to return. If you should see me again, look the other way unless you wish to be cut before the whole world.

THE DEVIL (*snapping watch*)

Minute's up. (*He goes to the door to admit Magnus*)

FANNY (*detaining him*)

I have n't finished yet. (*She changes her attitude*)

THE DEVIL

Oh! you want another minute, eh? (*Takes out his watch again and regards it steadily*)

FANNY

Don't think I wish to detain you — Oh, no! (*She laughs sarcastically*) Oh, no indeed!

THE DEVIL (*following the second hand of watch with finger while echoing the laugh*) Oh — indeed not! Another ten seconds gone.

FANNY

I only did n't want your sleep to be troubled — if people without consciences are ever troubled. I did n't want your sleep to be troubled, I say, with the thought of any girl sobbing in secret. My heart is quite whole, thank you. I have been simply playing

a game all along. You flattered yourself I loved you. (*Laughs almost successfully*) Oh, the egotism of you men —

THE DEVIL

And half a minute gone.

FANNY

I never loved you —

AGNUS (*who has crept cautiously down again*)

Don't say that, Fanny!

[*The Devil throws another brass ornament in the same way as before. Agnus disappears, dodging.*]

FANNY (*talking on through this incident, which also goes unnoticed by her*) Girls must marry somebody, you know — somebody — not that you should be too much flattered by being called somebody —

THE DEVIL

Thirty-five seconds — and a third —

FANNY (*at a loss*)

No, indeed — (*Pauses*)

THE DEVIL

Oh, yes, I assure you — thirty-five and a third — forty, now —

FANNY

I never loved you —

THE DEVIL

You said that before —

FANNY (*viciously*)

And now I hate you —

THE DEVIL

You said that, too. You seem to be running out of ideas. Fifty-three seconds gone, but I used three seconds myself and hereby credit you with them. Fifty —

FANNY

I am going —

THE DEVIL

And — quite a coincidence — so is the time —

FANNY (*raging again*)

I am going, nev —

THE DEVIL

“ ’er to return.” Are n’t you going to say *anything* new? — Too late! Minute’s up! (*Starts for Magnus*)

FANNY (*still unbelievably*)

You ’ll let me go like this — without a word —

THE DEVIL

Without a *word!*

FANNY

Do you realize I am going out of your life forever —

THE DEVIL (*sighing heavily*)

What a chance!

FANNY

Well — I am — I ’m going —

THE DEVIL

“ Never to return ” — don’t say it again —

FANNY

Oh, you are sorry — Oh, Addington! I knew you did n’t mean to be cruel. (*She bursts into tears and throws her arms around him*)

THE DEVIL (*as she hangs about his neck*)

Hell! Or rather: Mars!

[*Agnus, who has crept up from behind, now urgently pokes The Devil in the ribs. The Devil gladly transfers Fanny to him.*]

AGNUS (*enraptured, forgetting everything*)

Fanny! Fanny! My Own!

FANNY (*looking up*)

Ugh! Ugh! You horrible man!

[*The light darts at her.*]

FANNY (*wrenching herself loose, pushes Agnus into a chair; then she almost screams with lost self-respect*)

Addington Agnus! I'll never forgive you — never — never — never — (*She rushes out, violently slamming the garden door behind her*)

AGNUS (*collapsing*)

Now, you 've done it!

THE DEVIL (*irritatedly*)

When she was quarrelling with me, you were protesting. When she tried to make up, you were protesting. And now that she's gone, you're protesting.

AGNUS

I've lost her — lost her —

THE DEVIL (*grimly*)

Dollars to doughnuts, she'll find some excuse to come back. I knew a man once who went all the way from San Francisco back to Denver to get a tooth-brush he had left at home. Of course, he did n't go to see his wife! Oh, no! He had quarrelled with her — hated the sight of her. But how much more he hated losing that twenty-five-cent tooth-brush!

AGNUS

If you think she'll be back after the way you just treated her, you may know some women, but not well-bred ones —

THE DEVIL (*gloomily*)

"When it comes to a man in the case, they're as like as a pair of new pins." I'll have to spring the little actress on her yet, if I want to get rid of her.

AGNUS

Oh, don't do that! Don't let her think it's on account of another woman — and such a woman — living in the house, too. She'll never forgive that. No nice woman would.

THE DEVIL

You lamb! I've known women — nice women, too, mind you — on whom such a woman — as you call her — acted like a magnet. Not that they wanted to come back! Oh, no! They wanted to save the man from an abandoned creature. (*Instructively*) An abandoned creature, Agnus, is any other woman. No matter how good her character is, they'll say she's under cover with enough crime to crowd Callao —

[*There is a knock at the hall door.*

THE DEVIL (*ironically looking toward hall door*)

Dear man! The controller of the money-market kept waiting by a mere Nobel prize-winner! Terrible insolence! Get out, Schwartzenhopfel!

[*The light dances defiantly.*

THE DEVIL (*pointing to Agnus*)

Oh, I mean — him! And don't come sneaking down the stairway again, or I'll do some awful thing to disgrace you forever. Get out! See that the young lady gets her trunks. (*Pushes him off upstairs*) No peeping, mind!

[*Agnus goes disconsolately, looking back as he goes.*

THE DEVIL (*to the light*)

Schwartzenhopfel, do you know who's in there?
(*Points to hallway*)

[*The light dances angrily.*

THE DEVIL

The man you particularly wanted to blow up with one of your bombs.

[The light becomes attentive.]

THE DEVIL

Can you hear me?

[The light wags and then remains attentive again.]

THE DEVIL

How would you like to have a body again? Eh? A better body than you ever had?

[The light dances joyfully.]

THE DEVIL

Would you be a good Dutchman and do just as I told you?

[The light wags.]

THE DEVIL

Are you sorry for all that swearing and temper you've shown since you've been a light?

[The light wags slowly. At that moment the hall door opens and Magnus reënters.]

THE DEVIL

I was just —

MAGNUS (*very angry at having been kept waiting*)

Good day to you, sir —

THE DEVIL (*holding his arm*)

Magnus — (*Fixes him with his eyes*)

[Magnus's eyes flutter as before. He struggles, but gradually yields to The Devil's power.]

THE DEVIL

Magnus, sit down!

[The dark of an approaching rain begins and grows gradually all through the ensuing dialogue until rain actually falls.]

MAGNUS (*with a flash of natural spirit*)

Be da —

[*He means to say: "Be damned to you"; but The Devil's eyes drive out defiance. Magnus sits down.*]

THE DEVIL

Magnus, look at me!

MAGNUS

I — (*He tries to rouse himself, desperately, but sinks back submissively*)

THE DEVIL

Magnus! Look at me!

[*Magnus tries to disobey, but his eyes are literally torn upward and into The Devil's.*]

THE DEVIL (*at centre table, turns on electric cigar-lighter — an illuminated disk that burns dully*)

Magnus, look at that light!

[*Magnus is still staring at him.*]

THE DEVIL

Not me! The light! Saves my energy.

[*Magnus stares still at him. The Devil goes to Magnus and turns his head, arranging it as a photographer does for position. He points his finger along Magnus's line of vision, turning it toward the luminous disk. Then he sits down, his elbow on the table near the cigar-lighter, and lights cigarette. Leaning his head on his palm, he stares at Magnus in the growing darkness, the red glow of cigarette growing as the light outside begins to die before the rainstorm. This red glow lights up The Devil's face. The light bobs closer, inspecting and inquisitive.*]

THE DEVIL

Magnus! When you went to school, they taught

you: "Honesty is the Best Policy." At church: "Love your fellow-men." You went into business. Two years later — you were a bankrupt. Why?

MAGNUS (*in hypnosis: speaks dully and mechanically*)
I would n't buy diseased animals and dye their meat a healthy color with poison.

THE DEVIL

That was being honest. What else? Speak!

MAGNUS (*same tone, but sleepier*) I would n't bring foreign laborers over to do the work cheaper than Americans. The more ignorant citizens, the more rascals in Congress. The more rascals in Congress, the worse laws. The worse laws, the worse country. Worse and worse — until only a revolution could cure it. Out of a revolution — a soldier tyrant — a Napoleon — an Emperor — and three centuries — gone to hell —

THE DEVIL

That was loving your fellow-men. What else? Speak!

MAGNUS (*almost asleep; rouses himself with an effort*)
So, without cheap meat and cheap labor, I could n't sell at cheap prices. My wife sold her jewels. I kept books for a former rival.

THE DEVIL (*thumbing Magnus's forehead*)

That's what you got for being honest and loving your fellow-men, eh? How did you get the courage to be a crook?

MAGNUS

My boy — Charles — consumptive — needed change of air to save his life — Denver — Los Angeles —

the Riviera. — A bookkeeper gets twenty a week —
(*His head drops on breast again*)

THE DEVIL

No chance there! Well?

MAGNUS (*painfully dragging out the words in spite of intense sleepiness*) Tried to save enough — no use — could n't. — So at last moment I falsified books — sent the boy away — (*His head drops*)

THE DEVIL (*revives him*)

Then?

MAGNUS

Speculated — to return first money — won — the fever got me. I took all I could get from the office safe — plunged — won — (*Relapses: head drops*)

THE DEVIL

Honesty ruined you. Stealing made you rich. Loving your fellow-men nearly killed your boy. Hating them saved him — eh? (*Shakes him*)

MAGNUS (*roused, speaks in shrill voice*)

Went back into the old business. Did what others did. Ran the thousands into millions. Bought steel-mills with the millions. Froze the little fellows out.

THE DEVIL

Hating them!

MAGNUS

Hating everybody. Needed banks to swing deals. Gave a million to politicians. United States Treasury made my banks National Banks.

THE DEVIL

National! Ha, ha! — National!

[*Magnus's head drops on his breast.*]

THE DEVIL (*reviving him*)

And lent you Government money to run more little fellows out of business, eh?

MAGNUS

When I controlled the clearing-house, I refused some banks clearing-house privileges.

THE DEVIL

That meant: either do as you said or close their doors? When they realized that, you began to control the money-market. The National Currency? You and your friends are the Mint — the Treasury of the Nation. You finance wars — make governments — keep out of office honest men who won't make the laws you want — (*Revives him*)

MAGNUS (*drowsily*)

No man can be President unless I say so.

[*The light darts at him.*]

THE DEVIL

You could put all good men in and throw all bad ones out? But, instead, you throw all good ones out and put all bad ones in. Those who will do as you say.

[*Magnus sleeps noisily.*]

THE DEVIL

Look, Schwartzenhofel! The Law of the Land — there!

[*Magnus snores. A dim radiance begins to surround his head. The light draws as close as possible. A few splashes of rain fall on the windows.*]

THE DEVIL (*to the light*)

I am going to teach him that while one cannot be honest in this world — today — dishonesty can be

atoned for only by loving one's fellows more instead of less. And loving, helping —

[The radiance grows around Magnus. The light draws close to it.]

THE DEVIL (*to the light*)

Schwartzenhopfel — come away! Don't be in too much of a hurry!

[The light retreats reluctantly.]

THE DEVIL (*to the light*)

Disobey me once when you become a controller of money-markets, and — out you go! More: I may leave you to linger around in air until somebody else wears your body out.

[The light trembles.]

THE DEVIL

It is nearly time. Remember what I say. Else better stay as you are for a short time — than for a lifetime! *You* are only the instrument. I the player.

[The light wags. The radiance flickers above Magnus's head. A second light rises slowly to ceiling.]

THE DEVIL (*excitedly*)

Now, Dutchman, get ready! Go!

*[The light darts at Magnus's head. At the same moment the storm breaks with fury. Great splotches of rain are thrown at the window-panes. The house rocks. The light (Schwartzenhopfel) sinks out of sight above Magnus's head. The figure of Magnus is left in darkness, the only light in the room being the suspended one (Magnus), hanging from the ceiling like a hypnotized bee, and that from the cigar-lighter which falls on the face of the Devil.]*¹

¹ In referring to the light thereafter, Magnus is meant.

THE DEVIL

Well, Schwartzenhopfel?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*in Magnus's body*)*Ach Gott!*

[The Devil turns on the electricity in the fringed white candelabrum, whereby the room becomes pervaded with a gentle glow of light. Schwartzenhopfel rises, stretches, pats himself; throws out each leg, each arm; tries to speak, but is overcome with emotion and bursts into tears. From tears he is translated into hysterical laughter. The room begins to grow lighter, but furious rain continues outside. Schwartzenhopfel follows the light around the room, pointing at it derisively, his body doubling up with speechless laughter each time he points. The light moves away with dignity. Finally, to escape persecution, it flies out of the window.]

THE DEVIL

Here! That is not right. (*Satirically amused*)
Driving a controller of money-markets out into the rain.

[Schwartzenhopfel, paying no attention, leaps and bounds about the room like an unwieldy baboon. Agnus reënters by hall-door.]

AGNUS (*shocked*)

Mr. Magnus!

[Schwartzenhopfel goes on dancing until he sees Agnus in full light. Then seeing himself in Agnus, he bursts into another roar of laughter, pointing in gleeful derision and following the harassed Agnus around, each time pointing and roaring with laughter, as he did with the light.]

AGNUS (*turning*)

Mr. Magnus! (*Solicitously*) What is wrong, sir?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*after another outbreak, hoarsely to The Devil*) Did I walk like that? Look like that? Oh, what liars are looking-glasses!

THE DEVIL

Men don't see what the mirror shows them. They see what they look to see. A good-looking, intelligent, well-groomed countenance for each.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*to The Devil*)

I don't blame you for wanting to get rid of that! (*Pokes Agnus with his finger*) Flabby, too.

AGNUS (*gasps out thoroughly shocked*)

You've been up to your Devil's tricks again!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Better trick for me than for you! Ha! Ha! (*Turns Agnus around, disconsolately*) I don't look a bit better from the back! (*Solemnly*) I'd hate to see myself undressed.

THE DEVIL

The best part of *you* is talking right now.

AGNUS (*almost howling*)

Mr. Magnus — what have you done with Mr. Magnus?

[*The light comes flying back through window. The Devil points to it. Schwartzenhopfel points also and begins following the light about as before. The light is about to fly off again in dignity, but pauses at the window.*]

THE DEVIL

Here! Leave him alone! (*To Schwartzenhopfel*) You did n't like it when I did it to *you* —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

That 's why I 'm doing it to him. He 's a tyrant, a bloodsucker, a vampire, a murderer of poor men's souls. He ought to be hung, drawn, quartered, and dynamited. He is —

THE DEVIL

You had better keep those sentiments to yourself. Have you forgotten who you are? With all his sins to answer for?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*ceases suddenly to rail and takes a cigarette which he lights*) I did miss tobacco —

THE DEVIL

How could you miss tobacco without a body?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

It soothes the soul. A fine trick you played me.

THE DEVIL

And a fine trick you played me. Leaving bombs sewn up in your mattress.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*grinning*)

How the police would like to know where they are. They searched the room today.

THE DEVIL

I shook you just in time —

AGNUS (*turning pale*)

What did you say?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Searched my room — his room. (*Points to The Devil*) Your room now. Lucky I'm in disguise! (*Taps body*)

AGNUS (*pale and trembling*)

Did they — er — find anything?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*scornfully*)

Policemen find anything?

AGNUS (*breathing hard*)

Thank God!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

At least not before I flew away.

AGNUS

You left the police there — in your room?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

No, in your room — smoking and trying to think. If they think they can think, what do they think they can think with?

AGNUS (*in trembling tone*)

Where is your room?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Your room? Why, over the shoemaker's shop — next block?

[*Agnus sits down unmanned.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

New York detectives, too. Central-office "dicks." None of your common country constables or sheriffs for me — I'm a celebrated man.

AGNUS (*in a trembling tone*)

You — you are?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

No, you are. From Maine to Pensacola; from 'Frisco to Vancouver. Nobody makes bombs like old Schwartzenhopfel. I hope they don't find those seven. They took me three weeks and cost three hundred dollars.

AGNUS

I — I hope they don't, too. I — I think I'll go — now — g — go — to bed. (*He starts for the stairway*) I wonder if they're still there — in your room?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

My dear sir — I am John Magnus. It ain't *my* room —

THE DEVIL (*to Agnus*)

You might ask Mr. Magnus to go over and find out for you?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Me? Got a photo of it, have n't you?

THE DEVIL

No — him! (*Points to the light*)

[*The light contracts and moves to other side of room.*]

THE DEVIL (*crossing over to it*)

What's the use being sulky, Magnus? You're the only one here who can do it without anybody seeing you. Go on! For this poor fellow's sake anyhow. (*Points to Agnus*) Want to see him in jail?

AGNUS (*approaching the light*)

Mr. Magnus, sir — I had no hand in this — I am as badly off as you — I am Addington Agnus. That man — over there — (*pointing*) is The Devil.

THE DEVIL

Dr. Agnus, please.

AGNUS

He stole my body, too, and made me take this one —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Ha! Ha!

AGNUS

And now I find it's a criminal's body, and the police are looking for it. Mr. Magnus — please —

THE DEVIL

It will make me more merciful, Magnus.

[The light moves sulkily to the window. The storm has blown over and the rain is turning to snow. However, the light is bright enough for The Devil to turn out the candles.]

THE DEVIL (*to the light*)

When you come back, wag once — like this (*wags head*) if the Dutchman's mattress is torn up. Twice if it is n't.

[The light flies out through the window.]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*throwing up window and calling after the light*) Over the shoemaker's shop — next block — third floor — you can't miss it. (*Puts down the window*)

THE DEVIL (*to Schwartzenhopfel*)

Let's spare his feelings while he's gone. I wonder how big a check he can write.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*excitedly*)

I read he could sign one for two million dollars — ready money — a check for two millions — *Ach Gott!* That was why I wanted to blow him up.

THE DEVIL (*coldly*)

Well, you've got your chance now. A chance no anarchist ever had before. You anarchists always complain you can't get close enough to millionaires. *You're close enough* —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*turning pale*)

What do you mean?

THE DEVIL (*handing him a sharp paper-cutter of steel*)

Dig this (*taps it*) into that — (*Taps Schwartzenhopfel's heart*)

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*turning pale*)

That would be murder!

THE DEVIL

And what 's throwing bombs?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*protesting*)

I don't throw 'em. I make 'em. I never threw one.

THE DEVIL

What 's the difference?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

I never sell 'em to blow up people. Only houses and bridges and railroads and — (*vaguely*) — er — places —

THE DEVIL

You just said you wanted to blow up Magnus.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*hanging his head*)

I don't blow up nobody!

THE DEVIL (*scornfully*)

Socialist!!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*furiously*)

Socialist? Bourgeoisie! Children! Talkers! Bah!

THE DEVIL (*tapping him*)

Bourgeoisie! Child! Talker! Bah!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

You lie —

THE DEVIL

Do I? (*Offers paper-cutter again*) Prove it!
 (*Makes the motion of stabbing*) Anarchists claim they would n't let John Magnus live one minute if they had the power to kill him. Here 's the power —
 (*Offers knife again*)

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Teufel! Teufel! You *are* a devil.

THE DEVIL

Dr. Agnus, please! (*He fingers paper-cutter*)
 You know, when the Anarchist Council hears of the

chance you're throwing away — pouff! That for you — (*stabbing motion*) I don't know but what they're right. This is too good a chance to miss. (*He takes Schwartzenhopfel by the collar and flourishes the dagger*)

AGNUS

Here! Quit that! Quit!

THE DEVIL (*fixes him with a look that makes him fall back*) For the sake of the thousands of lives Magnus has taken to make his millions — (*the dagger descends*)

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*on his knees, howling lustily*)
Police! Police! Police!

[*Judge Critty appears at the window looking in from garden, sees the tableau inside without being seen himself, and runs off with a shocked, terrified expression on his face.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Police! Police!

THE DEVIL (*throws down the knife and laughs heartily*)
The police? An anarchist bawling for the police! The police! If the Anarchist Council heard that, they'd boil you in Standard Oil. Get up! (*Sneers*)
Anarchist!

[*Schwartzenhopfel crawls to his feet shamefacedly.*]

THE DEVIL (*fixes him with his eye*)

I might have known that a man who makes bombs to blow up — for all he knows — women and children, would be just your kind of a coward! Oh, you human beings! You make me ill! (*He takes a check-book from the pocket of Schwartzenhopfel's coat*) What did you think I gave you this body

for, you fool? To kill it? I need it too much. Where did you read that about the two million check?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

In a London paper.

THE DEVIL

Then there's a chance, it's true. If you'd said a New York one — Write! — (*Hands the checkbook to Schwartzenhopfel*)

[*Schwartzenhopfel looks inquiringly at him.*]

THE DEVIL

Pay to Addington Agnus — two million —

[*Schwartzenhopfel writes out the check and signs it.*]

THE DEVIL

Now endorse it so: "This money is given to Dr. Addington Agnus to further scientific researches of inestimable value. The amount specified need detain no bank official in my employ from cashing it. John Magnus."

[*Schwartzenhopfel writes while The Devil is dictating.*]

THE DEVIL (*takes the check and scrutinizes it*)

Look at that, Agnus. You should be the happiest man in the world.

AGNUS (*scrutinizing the check, the man once more forgotten in the scientist*) His signature! Magnus's!

Why, the check's good!

[*It is now snowing hard, the snow encrusting the windows.*]

THE DEVIL

Of course it's good.

AGNUS

But — a forgery!

THE DEVIL

Can you get anybody to believe that coward over there is n't Magnus? Now, aren't you glad I happened along this morning?

AGNUS

It means — success —

THE DEVIL

Wiser people — better world — morals adjust themselves. Forty crooks and one honest man in a community, the crooks would elect the honest man — because wisdom teaches them not to trust crooks. The only incurable crime is ignorance!

AGNUS (*protesting*)

The only one!

THE DEVIL

Who ever heard of a professional crook being a murderer, for instance? Only ignorant amateurs — like Schwartzenhopfel here. — If he was n't ignorant, he would n't murder.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

I don't murder.

THE DEVIL

Tell that to the police. Every bomb you make is a potential murder. Why are they looking for you? Answer!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*reluctantly*)

Somebody used one of my bombs somewhere. I guess somebody else snitched. And they're trying to get something on me!

AGNUS (*to The Devil, bitterly*)

And you say I ought to be the happiest man in the world — robbed of the girl I love — of my name,

my reputation — in danger of arrest, jail, maybe the electric chair! Very happy! Oh, yes! Ha! Ha! Ha! Can't you give me a broken arm or leg or head to make my happiness complete?

THE DEVIL

But think of the triumph of science. (*Waves the check*) What's one person's feelings compared with the good of the world —

AGNUS

Nothing — except when you happen to be that person. (*Feverishly*) What shall I do about the police?

THE DEVIL (*points to Schwartzenhopfel*)

I'll shift his soul over to his own body and make him pay the penalty of his own crimes —

[*Schwartzenhopfel makes a dash for the door, opens it, and runs wildly out into the snow.*]

THE DEVIL (*at the door*)

Come back! Come back!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*outside*)

So you can switch souls on me! Not much —

THE DEVIL (*to Agnus, groaning*)

A mad anarchist let loose with a billion dollars! (*Shouting*) Come back! I won't do it!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*outside*)

My mother always taught me never to put any trust in The Devil.

THE DEVIL (*at the door*)

If you don't come back, I'll run the paper-cutter through your real body and rid the earth of you. (*He makes a threatening pass at Agnus with the knife*)

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*outside*)

What do I care? I've got a better one, and all the money I want. You won't be able to get near me. And if you try, I'll have you put in jail as an anarchist. I'm John Magnus, now. (*His voice comes from farther away*) And Dr. Agnus is the man the police want.

THE DEVIL (*sternly*)

Come back! Or I'll find a way to make you! Come back!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*still outside but slightly afraid*)

Promise then! No devil's tricks! Keep your eyes to yourself.

THE DEVIL

I promise! (*To Agnus*) I need him! He can repudiate that check.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*still outside*)

How can I believe you!

THE DEVIL (*in awful tones*)

You worm! Doubt me, do you?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*whining*)

All right, Captain: all right! (*He sneaks back, holding up one arm defensively*)

THE DEVIL (*closing door*)

You disobey me again and I'll make you wish wildcats had stolen you from your mother's knee.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*whining*)

Well, who wants to go to jail?

[*The light reappears through the window.*]

AGNUS (*feverishly*)

There's Mr. Magnus back. (*Addressing the light*)

Mr. Magnus — sir — what — what — is it all right?

[*The light bobs once solemnly.*]

AGNUS (*relieved*)

It's all right.

THE DEVIL

He wagged once. That means the mattress is torn up.

AGNUS

I asked him: "Is it all right?" And he nodded. (*To the light*) Did n't you, Mr. Magnus?

[*The light wags crosswise, as though it was shaking its head.*]

THE DEVIL

He says "no."

AGNUS

No? Yes?

THE DEVIL

Look here; we agreed: if the bombs were found, once; not found, twice. (*To the light*) Which is it? Once or twice?

[*The light wags once.*]

AGNUS (*wildly*)

Oh! oh! oh! I must get away! Hide!

[*Fanny flings open the door without knocking.*]

THE DEVIL (*to Agnus, indicating her*)

What did I tell you!

[*Agnus stops, forgetting all about the police.*]

THE DEVIL (*to Agnus*)

Go on! Get away! Hide! Do it!

[*Agnus stares at Fanny. Fanny advances as though searching for something. The Devil looks at her inquiringly.*]

FANNY (*to Schwartzenhopfel*)

Mr. Magnus, you need n't think I came back to see him. I left my veil somewhere about.

THE DEVIL (*winking to Agnus*)

Denver to San Francisco — tooth-brush!

FANNY

I wish you 'd help me find it and let me go, Mr. Magnus.

THE DEVIL

So you lost your tooth-brush?

FANNY

Mr. Magnus — my veil —

THE DEVIL

Veil — tooth-brush — any excuse will do.

FANNY (*ignoring him*)

Mr. Magnus, your chauffeur says the snow 's getting deep. We should start immediately.

THE DEVIL

You take the car, Fanny. You and your mother. You go back. Mr. Magnus stays here.

[*Schwartzenhopfel smiles weakly.*]

FANNY

Mr. Magnus — you — staying here — with this person?

[*Schwartzenhopfel smiles more weakly.*]

FANNY

Not on my account, Mr. Magnus, please. All is over between us.

THE DEVIL (*instructively*)

In moments of anger, the *débutante's* language and the shop-girl's cannot be distinguished. That is because — while *débutantes* are taught proper language for ordinary things, no one can be taught proper language for extraordinary things. So, as both *débutantes* and shop-girls read the best-selling novels, both go to them for the language of distress.

Hence the similarity. (*With college professor's gesture*) Class on Feminine Psychology dismissed for the day. Our next subject will be: How to Insult Young Ladies so That They Won't Come Back.

FANNY

You acknowledge you insulted me then?

THE DEVIL

Cheerfully!

FANNY

You hear that, Mr. Magnus?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*with a weak smile*)

I hear it.

FANNY

And you — in spite of insults to the daughter of the woman you profess to care for —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

What! (*He starts violently*)

FANNY

You continue under his roof —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Well, you see, I like the Doc — the Doctor. I am interested in his work. I just gave —

[*The Devil nudges him.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*brightly*)

Oh, it's all right, Doctor. I was just going to tell her I gave you a check for two million dollars!

[*Fanny stands speechless.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*anxiously, seeing The Devil scowling*) Oh, quite legitimate — scientific research. For scientific research — er — rightly researched, you know — what is two million — that is, to me!

THE DEVIL

You fool!

FANNY (*to The Devil*)

Is this so? (*Sees the check in his hand, takes it quickly and stands for a second quiet; then to Schwartzenhopfel, bitterly*) Two million! And I suppose he's not allowed to spend more than two thousand on himself — and wife —

THE DEVIL (*sotto voce*)

Say "yes."

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*to The Devil*)

What did you say?

[*The Devil clenches his fists.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*to Fanny, brightly*)

Oh, no limitations — he can spend anything he likes on himself —

FANNY (*eagerly*)

Say half of what you would have paid him at the Mills?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*anxious to regain The Devil's good-will*) Half? All! All! No strings to my generosity, young lady. I want him to be happy at his work. He can buy an automobile — or a — yacht — or — er — jewellery — or — anything —

FANNY (*throwing herself into The Devil's arms*)

Addington! Addington! At last!

[*Agnus clenches his fists and starts across room*]

THE DEVIL (*in an injured tone*)

I thought you were going away never to return?

FANNY

And would you have been unhappy, dearest?

THE DEVIL

. You just said: "All is over between us" —

FANNY

Just to see what you would say — and I saw — you grew quite red, Addington —

THE DEVIL (*bitterly*)

Yes — to keep from laughing —

FANNY

Ah! Addington! You are being proud now. Look at me! How I have sunk my pride, determined to get to the bottom of this. I have been wrong. I acknowledge it. I had no right to interfere with your work. I came back to tell you that — to sacrifice myself, too —

[*The Devil stares blankly at her. Agnus nudges him fiercely to take his arm away from Fanny. The Devil at last takes his arm away.*

FANNY (*who has been talking in the meantime*)

But Mr. Magnus has repented. He has seen my side of the case, too. We can have a town house now, Addington, with that two million — and two motors —

THE DEVIL (*sarcastically*)

Oh, can we?

FANNY (*reproachfully*)

Remember, I was ready to sacrifice everything for you. I did n't know Mr. Magnus would be so generous. And now — the marriage, dear — when? [*Doll Blondin reënters from the stairway, hatless and dressed in a shirtwaist.*

DOLL BLONDIN

Who 's going to help your man bring up my trunks? [*Fanny disengages herself from the Devil and stares at Doll: first wildly, then savagely, then catlike.*

FANNY (*tragically to The Devil*)

Explain!

AGNUS (*wildly*)

Fanny, I can explain everything.

[*Fanny pushes him away. Her look is that of a tragedy-queen's as she advances with folded arms toward The Devil, who smiles impishly, sure now that he has rid himself of her for good.*]

FANNY

Explain, Addington Agnus!

[*The Devil ignites a cigarette at the electric lighter, shrugs his shoulders and smiles again.*]

DOLL BLONDIN (*who has come down to The Devil*)

Well, how about those trunks?

THE DEVIL

Oh, Schwartzenhopfel will help you —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*indignantly, as if to say: "Remember I am John Magnus"*) What?

THE DEVIL (*pointing to Agnus*) Him!

[*Agnus folds his arms also and does not stir.*]

THE DEVIL (*to Agnus*)

Best thing — if the police should look in —

AGNUS (*unhappily*)

What do I care for the police — or anything — now!

FANNY (*to The Devil in a dangerously cold tone*)

I have asked for an explanation!

THE DEVIL (*irritated*)

Oh, don't try to Sarah Bernhardt it, Fanny. You have n't the talent. Amateurs trying to be dramatic are only comic.

FANNY (*turning suddenly to Doll Blondin with a "woman-to-woman-no-foolishness" air*) What are you doing in this house? Are you the new house-keeper, or the parlor-maid?

DOLL BLONDIN (*half stunned and half admiring*) You cat, you!

FANNY (*loudly*)

Who is this woman?

DOLL BLONDIN (*aroused*)

I'm as much the lady as you! Howling and crying around here. What's the matter? Are you crazy? (*Suddenly indignant*) Woman? Do you think — (*Her Broadway mock modesty and pretended lady-like morality halt her from saying what she means, so she explains shortly*) I'm boarding here! (*Violently*) How dared you think anything else — Woman, yourself!

FANNY (*with a dry laugh*)

Boarding? Can't you think of a better story than that? Why should he take boarders?

DOLL BLONDIN (*shortly*)

Because he needs my twenty a week, I suppose.
[*Fanny laughs still more dryly.*]

DOLL BLONDIN (*enraged*)

Well, anyway, he ran after me in the street and called me in. (*Seeing she has hurt Fanny, she encourages the innuendo wickedly*) Said price did n't matter — he said. (*Violently again*) But have no fear: I won't stay here and be insulted: I'll go —

FANNY

You had better —

THE DEVIL

Miss Blondin, if the place, or the food, or the service is unsatisfactory — go. Otherwise — stay. This lady is nothing to me.

DOLL BLONDIN (*in cool admiration*)

Well, you *are* a brute!

FANNY (*to The Devil, seeing the admiration and rendered wild by it*) I understand now! This is why you've changed so suddenly. The sight of this woman of the street —

DOLL BLONDIN (*blazing*)

What?

FANNY (*a little alarmed*)

Woman in the street, I said —

DOLL BLONDIN

Oh!

FANNY

And you forget your honor, your duty, your religion —

THE DEVIL

What has religion got to do with it?

FANNY

Everything. Well, I won't permit it. I care nothing for you. I hate you. But there's a law in the land that protects defenceless women —

THE DEVIL

Defenceless? Not unless they're dumb!

FANNY

And I'll see what the law says. I'll publish you in every newspaper in the country, and I'll tell how the great scientist ran after a strange woman — a woman he knew nothing about — and begged her to

live in his house so she would be convenient to make love to.

[*Doll Blondin looks at him suspiciously.*]

FANNY

Then where will your reputation be? Your Nobel prize?

DOLL BLONDIN (*hastily*)

I'm glad I did n't have my trunks unpacked —

THE DEVIL

Miss Blondin —

DOLL BLONDIN

Who do you think 's paying for my lessons, my education? Think I saved it out of a chorus salary? If somebody in New York were to hear such a story, it would be good-bye to taking part of my pay in three sheets. (*Puts out her hand*) But I'll run in on you every now and then to say "Hello." You are *such* a brute!

FANNY (*standing between them*)

You'll do nothing of the sort, d'you hear?

DOLL BLONDIN

Indeed, miss?

FANNY

Indeed, miss, and indeed, miss — and as for you, Addington Agnus, I'll stay here in this house — with mother, until our wedding-day —

THE DEVIL (*desperately*)

By Saturn — I wish I could think of something to do to you —

AGNUS (*desperately*)

Tell her the truth — the truth. If you don't want her, I want her —

[*A noise is heard outside.*]

FANNY

You!

AGNUS

Yes, I! Fanny, listen! Here is the truth! (*He seizes her, overcome with love, and embraces and kisses her*)

[*Fanny screams.*]

AGNUS

Listen, Fanny, I am —

[*The noise increases. The door is thrown open, and through it are seen a Detective-lieutenant and his two men, all in plain clothes, as well as Sheriff Peattie and Judge Critty. They appear just in time to see Agnus embrace Fanny and to hear her scream.*]

JUDGE CRITTY

Here are the police you called for, Mr. Magnus. I brought them as fast as I could.

[*Schwartzenhopfel dodges instinctively at the word "Police." Agnus releases Fanny and plunges headforemost onto the sofa, where he hides ostrich-like among the pillows.*]

JUDGE CRITTY (*pointing to The Devil*)

There 's the gentleman!

PEATTIE

What? Doctor Agnus?

JUDGE CRITTY

He 's as much my friend as yours, Constable. But he must have gone insane. I saw him — through that window — threatening Mr. Magnus there with a knife. Mr. Magnus was — I regret to say — reduced to kneeling for mercy and calling for the police —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*with shamefaced recollection*)

Oh, that was — that was — well — (*Looks to The Devil for assistance*)

THE DEVIL

That was only a little play we were rehearsing for charity. Don't you understand — a rehearsal — Ha! Ha! A rehearsal!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

That's it — play — charity — rehearsal —

JUDGE CRITTY (*covered with confusion*)

I'm sure I'm sorry —

PEATTIE

I'm right glad — I'd hate to see Senator Agnus's son in trouble. My apologies, Doctor — for these three New York detectives too — they just happened to be by when the Judge located me, and they came along to help me — thought it was something desperate. We'll go —

FANNY (*furiously*)

One moment! I want that man punished. (*Points to Agnus on the sofa*) For the second time today — you saw him — he has grossly insulted me!

[*Peattie looks around, taken aback.*]

FANNY (*stamping her foot*)

I want him punished, I say!

LIEUTENANT (*gruffly, pointing to Agnus's buried face*)

Looks guilty, Cap. Trying to hide like that the minute he sees the police.

PEATTIE (*takes one quick step forward and jerks Agnus to his feet*) Here, what about this? Can't have ladies insulted hereabouts, you know.

LIEUTENANT (*with a sudden change of face*)

By God, boys — the anarchist! (*Draws revolver*)

[The women scream. The two detectives draw their revolvers also.]

PEATTIE

What? Him? The fellow you been looking for all day? *(Still holding Agnus by the collar)*

LIEUTENANT

That 's the bird!

[Peattie lets loose Agnus and draws ancient-looking Colt's revolver, which he points at him. Agnus is now ringed around by four men with levelled weapons.]

LIEUTENANT *(taking out handcuffs)*

Throw up your hands, Henry Schwartzenhopfel —
[Agnus throws up his hands.]

LIEUTENANT

Fan him for artillery, Hennessy.

[The Second Detective is about to search Agnus.]

THE DEVIL

Stop! *(All stare at The Devil)* He's my friend.

PEATTIE

But, Doc — he 's a dynamiter —

THE DEVIL

No matter, stop!

LIEUTENANT

Listen, Mister — Doctor — whoever you are — you can't give orders to the Law —

THE DEVIL

Yes, I can; and the Law can give them to you. And it does; now! There's the Law. *(Points to Schwartzenhopfel)* The man who makes you a policeman; who makes your Chief of Police; your Commissioner; who makes Mayors, Governors, Presidents! You're in the presence of Money, you oxen! Take

off your hats *to it* — and take your orders *from it* —
Mr. John Magnus — The Law.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*suddenly realizing his power*)

And I order you to let Henry Schwartzenhopfel
alone, now and all the time. Schwartzenhopfel (*with
his hand on Agnus's shoulder*) is *my* friend, too.

DETECTIVES (*moving away in awe*)

John Magnus!

FANNY (*throwing her arms around The Devil, whose
look of triumph changes to one of hopeless dismay*)
My Hero!

CURTAIN

THE THIRD ACT

The same room as before, and immediately following the preceding situation — not even a few seconds later, for the Detectives and the Constable are just putting away their revolvers.

Doll Blondin, her admiration for The Devil growing, looks triumphant as he irritably disengages Fanny's embrace. Some hope is revived in Doll of being rid of her.

Fanny's look is grimly determined.

Agnus, relieved from a terrible situation, looks for the first time gratefully at The Devil.

Schwartzenhopfel, feeling his power as Magnus and enjoying it, has assumed an air of enormous importance — by the simple method of flattening his jowls on the collar and clearing his throat, thus deepening his voice.

Judge Critty is divided between his desire to serve Magnus and his horror at open defiance of the Law — when he knows Magnus is aware that the Law could have been circumvented secretly. He has the air of saying, "Why did n't you tell me, and I'd have arranged it." Also his manner is extra-apologetic and anxious, for he has blundered, and he fears the loss of Magnus's good offices.

The three detectives are blankly dismayed at having crossed the path of one so powerful as Magnus. They

are anxious to retreat, but realize that some concessions must be made to the conventions.

St. Elmo Peattie, the Sheriff, is simply confounded: for he is an honest villager, fearing God, and, consequently, no man. He is shocked at The Devil daring to put any man — Magnus, Taft, Wilson, Morgan, Rockefeller, or even Roosevelt — above the Law. Though he has no authority in the matter — the warrants being in the Lieutenant's hands — Peattie feels called upon to protest in the name of civic dignity, and to uphold the faith of his fathers — the faith in which Jefferson wrote; on which Burr, a Vice-President, was convicted of treason; for which Washington fought and Nathan Hale died.

PEATTIE (*to the Detectives*)

What's gone wrong, pardners? Why don't you handcuff that there dynamiter?

LIEUTENANT (*roughly*)

What dynamiter?

PEATTIE (*points to Agnus*)

Fellow you 've been hunting for all day —

LIEUTENANT (*taking out his note-book*)

Will you swear he's a dynamiter?

PEATTIE

I ain't never heard of him before. How 'll I swear?

LIEUTENANT (*trying to make his tone official by speaking sternly, as if determined to get at evidence*)

You've seen him about the village every day?

PEATTIE

Sure — but —

LIEUTENANT

Just answer my questions: how has he behaved?

PEATTIE

I see him going into Pete Mellish's and into Gus Hobbs's —

LIEUTENANT (*with heavy constabulary levity*)

And — did he try to dynamite — er — Pete Jellyfish — or Corn Cob's — whatever their names are?

PEATTIE

Hush, man! Pete's our grocer. Gus's our butcher. Prisoner's human, ain't he? He's got to eat —

LIEUTENANT (*making note*)

Bought groceries and meat daily. (*Relieved*) Well, that ain't criminal.

PEATTIE (*sulkily*)

I never see him dynamite nobody, if that's what you're trying to get at. Allus bin civil enough to me. Gi' me a cigar once.

LIEUTENANT (*poising pencil with same heavy police humor*) Ah! Cigar! Loaded?

PEATTIE (*annoyed*)

No, 't warn't 'T was as good as any two fer a nickel I ever bought myself.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*scandalized as he remembers the episode and the price*) Two for a nickel! It was a — (*Pulls himself up sharply*)

LIEUTENANT (*explaining apologetically, supposing the outbreak to be due to a millionaire's ignorance of such cheap matters*) An expression, Mr. Magnus — "twofera nickel" is two cigars for five cents. Rubes smoke 'em.

PEATTIE (*angry*)

Rubes, eh? Well, thank Joshyouway, I ain't a New Yorker, mister — where every next fella's a Harp or a Ginny, a Kike or a Polack; where haff of 'em

don't even talk Amurrican. (*Turning to The Devil, who has been listening with approval*) Doctor Agnus, be ashamed of yourself! I'm older 'n you: old enough to be Sheriff here when your daddy was Senator. And your dad, young gentleman, he told me to arrest old Commodore Vanderbilt. Yes, sir — the Commodore — driving his hosses too fast 'long Main Street, endangerin' lives and limbs of old women and children. Your dad, he sez: "St. Elmo, no matter who he is, any *big* man that breaks laws is *little*." *Little*, yes, sir; and why? "Because," says your dad, the Honnible Maxwell Agnus, "because, Sheriff, people who don't know no better is goin' to say: 'If the biggest man in the country breaks laws then them laws 'es no good' — and so," sez your dad, "ignorant people start breakin' 'em too —" and, sez he, "the law's like a brick barn, Sheriff; taking one brick out makes the walls git weak and, pritty soon, the whole blamed thing starts tumbling down."

THE DEVIL (*interested*)

And did the Honorable Maxwell Agnus get elected to the Senate again after telling you to arrest the biggest man in the country?

PEATTIE

Betcha he did! People was different then. They was Amurricans. And when they found out why the Commodore hated your dad; why he was tryin' to keep him outa office agin; why, they just swan to goodness *that* was the sorta fella they wanted in Congress — what would take up for the weak agin' the strong. He was Senator pritty nigh fifteen years after —

THE DEVIL (*smiling*)

And then?

PEATTIE (*reluctantly*)

Wa-al *then*. Then that there Eye-talian colony got so big over to Cove Neck, and, seeing as how their votes war only a dollar apiece and a kiss for the babies, why, our votes war n't strong enough to beat the politicians.

THE DEVIL

You see, money has a long memory, Sheriff. And it always wins in the end.

PEATTIE

But think of all the good he done in them fifteen years.

THE DEVIL

With the result that the railroad does n't run within seven miles of this village and the population has fallen to two thousand inhabitants.

PEATTIE (*sulkily*)

Wa-al — we 're all Amurricans, anyway. It kept the Eye-talians and the Polacks *out*. You — can't — buy — votes — here — and *he* (*points to Schwartzenhopfel, meaning Magnus*) can't scare anybody like he kin New Yorkers. (*He jerks his head with a sneer at the Detectives*) Keeping 'em from arresting the man they 're sent to git — a furriner — not Amurrican, mind — a cowardly furriner that blows people up. Magnus, nor twenty Magnuses could n't keep me from doing my dooty on sich a villin — could n't keep any real Amurrican. (*Turning to the Detectives*) I'll bet you folks ain't Amurricans?

LIEUTENANT (*who all along has spoken with an Irish accent, and now, when violently angry, speaks with a pronounced brogue*) Go on, ye scut! (*He makes threatening motion at him*)

PEATTIE (*triumphantly*)

Amurrican! Huhnh? (*To second Detective*) And you?

SECOND DETECTIVE (*excitedly*)

I haf my naduraladion pabers got us goot as you or any udder man —

PEATTIE (*more triumphantly*)

Amurrican! Hey? (*To the third Detective*) And you?

THIRD DETECTIVE (*trying to speak carefully*)

I — was — born — in — New — York —

[*Peattie slaps thigh and grins unbelievably.*]

THIRD DETECTIVE (*angrily*)

By your lave, Lootenant, I'll — (*Losing his temper, he takes a step forward*)

PEATTIE (*clapping his hands in glee*)

You see? Not an Amurrican in the lot. (*To The Devil*) And so it's with such cattle — and with anarchists — for just as your dad said of the Commodore, he's (*points to Schwartzenhopfel, meaning Magnus*) as much of an anarchist as him (*points to Agnus, meaning Schwartzenhopfel*) — it's with such — that the son of my old Senator has truck today. Good day to you, sir, and (*sorrowfully*) may you learn better before you come to my age.

[*He goes out.*]

THE DEVIL (*to Judge Critty, indicating Detectives*)

See that these fellows are paid something to keep their mouths shut —

LIEUTENANT (*protesting*)

Now, Doctor — you know —

THE DEVIL

Pshaw! No nonsense, my man! That old fellow just gone is worth the lot of you. With such men in your shoes, we 'd hear no more talk of police graft and extortion.

LIEUTENANT (*sarcastically, pointing to Agnus*)

We 'll take this fellow if it 'll please you better —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*thoroughly enjoying himself*)

Keep your tongue quiet, policeman! — Here! (*Takes out a handful of bills and gives them to Judge*) Give 'em these. (*He looks for approval toward The Devil, who nods*) Now get out: the lot of you!

LIEUTENANT (*hurt*)

That's no kind of language to use to men doing their best to favor you, Mr. Magnus. And, as for the money, that's an insult —

THE DEVIL

I suppose you want it sent mysteriously? From an unknown benefactor who loves your fat housewife and your ugly babies. Well — you 'll — take — it — this way — (*He has snatched the bills from the Judge while talking and separated them into three parts; now he forces one on the Lieutenant*)

[*The Lieutenant pretends to push them away.*]

THE DEVIL (*finishing*) — or — not at all — (*He looks at Schwartzenhopfel to back him up*)

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*importantly*)

Or not at all —

[*The Lieutenant hesitates, but takes the money*]

shamefacedly. The two Detectives repeat his actions and manners.

LIEUTENANT (*to Schwartzenhopfel diffidently, after looking at the women, the Judge and Agnus*) I suppose (*humbly*) there'll be no come-back to this? It's value received, ain't it, sir?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Yes. Get out.

LIEUTENANT

Yes, sir. (*He tips his hat and goes out on tip-toe*)

SECOND AND THIRD DETECTIVES (*in the same manner*)

Yes, sir. (*They go out*)

JUDGE CRITTY (*to Schwartzenhopfel*)

Such actions cause talk, sir —

THE DEVIL

If I've promoted even the germ of Socialism in those robber-barons' men-at-arms, I'm satisfied —

JUDGE CRITTY (*stiffly*)

I was not addressing you, Doctor Agnus —

THE DEVIL

Don't try that fake dignity with me, you hoary-headed old fraud, because you haven't the moral dignity back of it to hold you up. Get out, you arrant knave! (*Catches Schwartzenhopfel's eye*)

JUDGE CRITTY (*dumfounded*)

Mr. Magnus — will you allow me to be so insulted by this cockerel? He's either drunk or crazy.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*softly motioning The Devil to wait*) Did n't you say once, Judge, that to properly punish anarchists they should not be hanged but burned?

JUDGE CRITTY (*with swelling dignity, thinking that Magnus is recalling the incident favorably*) I certainly did, Mr. Magnus.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

You did n't say anything about the causes that make them anarchists, though — did you? (*Catching The Devil's eye*) But how about a six-months' strike prolonged because millionaires would n't pay fifty cents more a day to men who work with hot rivets two hundred feet in the air — twenty-five per cent of them killed every year? How about the wives of those strikers who died of overwork and little food trying to support homes and husbands until employers gave in? How about their children who died unborn — eh? Who was it murdered wives and children? And who, after six months, still refused even to compromise? Was it any wonder that men went crazy? Murder for murder — they said — murder for murder. Schwartzenhopfel had such a wife, such children, all dead now, and he shouted: Dynamite, the worker's friend! (*Fiercely to the Judge*) And so it is n't enough to hang him? You've got to burn him, have you? Well, what about the men who took an honest workman and made him what he is today?

JUDGE CRITTY (*frantically*)

Mr. Magnus —

[*The Devil goes to the garden door, opens it and points the way out.*]

JUDGE CRITTY (*nervously, suddenly changing his attitude*) Mr. Magnus, your admission delights me — for the first time in my relations with you, I — I find it — possible — to — to — be — to be — per-

fectly natural with you. You cannot blame me for being a hypocrite. If you will pardon me, sir: who made me a hypocrite? —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*disgruntled*)

I did n't tell you to burn anarchists, did I?

JUDGE CRITTY

Pardon me, sir — theoretically, no; but practically, yes, you did. If my bench orations had n't been passionately opposed to everything that even threatened the divine right of capital, why, you would n't be considering me for the Supreme Bench now. How can a lawyer succeed nowadays except through capital?

THE DEVIL (*closes door and stands with his back to it*)

True enough, Magnus; true enough — (*Looks at the light, which has hung gravely suspended through these operations*)

THE DEVIL

The greedy millionaire criminal makes all the little criminals. He needs men like this hypocrite here (*pointing to the Judge*) — needs them to save corporations from fines, their officers from jail — with that damnable word “unconstitutional”; just as he needs Senators to make trust laws easy to break; Governors to sign exemptions and pardons; aldermen to steal city franchises; bosses to elect those aldermen to order; murdering gangsters to kill honest voting; and police who will permit the gangsters to steal, pimp and kill, and who share in their spoils. (*Still addressing the light*) And every crime of the lot — yes — don't shrink from your guilt — even the stealing, the pimping, and the killing — is the fault of the greedy millionaire. (*Point-*

ing to the Judge) Even that might have been a man —

JUDGE CRITTY (*anxiously*)

But, Mr. Magnus —

THE DEVIL

No hypocrite may be trusted upon the Supreme Bench, Judge.

[*Schwartzenhopfel nods.*

JUDGE CRITTY (*wildly*)

You use me — cast me aside —

THE DEVIL

Just what a prostitute would say when the man to whose worst passions she has pandered seeks to be clean again and casts her off. (*He opens the door again and points*) Get out! (*He fixes the unhappy Judge with his eyes. Unable to resist, the Judge follows the slowly pointing finger and goes out*)

DOLL BLONDIN (*whose admiration for The Devil has grown quickly, as evidenced by the expression on her face as she has sat listening almost with awe*) You are some man — believe me!

FANNY (*turns quickly on her at this danger-note in her voice, and speaks with an effort at politeness*) You said you would not like a certain party to hear a certain story —

[*The Devil, being recalled to this situation, looks hopelessly around.*

DOLL BLONDIN

Let the certain party go —

FANNY (*glares at her*)

What?

DOLL BLONDIN (*glares back*)

I would n't stay where I was n't wanted if I were some people —

FANNY

And I suppose you think you are wanted?

[*Doll Blondin smiles aggravatingly.*]

FANNY

What?

DOLL BLONDIN

I've been asked to stay anyhow. That's more'n some people have —

FANNY

Addington! You'll let this woman insult me?

THE DEVIL

Certainly, my dear.

DOLL BLONDIN

You see — (*She spreads hands and her manner becomes still more aggravating*)

FANNY

I'll go and get mother. Even she will see who's in the wrong now. When I'm prepared to give up everything for you —

THE DEVIL

But you are n't —

FANNY (*wildly*)

I am. You need n't even have a flat in town. I'll stay here. Why, I'll even live on your income.

THE DEVIL

You only say that until you get me safely married.

FANNY (*beside herself*)

I swear it. Addington — I did n't realize how much I loved you until I saw you save your friend (*points*

to Agnus); heard you defy those policemen, and — then — the way you talked to that nasty old Judge. Oh! I want you — I love you —

THE DEVIL (*stepping back to avoid an embrace*)
Well, you can't have me!

DOLL BLONDIN

You see — (*Spreads her hands as before*)

FANNY

You give me up — for this woman?

THE DEVIL (*desperately*)

Yes!

FANNY (*suddenly realizing she is combating Fate*)

Oh, Addington, Addington, Addington — I love you — I love you — (*She bursts into real tears; there is no tragedy in her attitude now, no affectation, no theatricalism — just real sorrow and regret*)

AGNUS (*wildly to The Devil*) You must explain! You must! You must!

THE DEVIL (*whispering*)

Who'd believe us? We'd all be clapped into a lunatic asylum. Is one woman to stand in the way of science — a big step in world-regeneration? Think, man! One woman against a million better men? For the sake of humanity — think!

[*Agnus turns away. It is his tragic moment; his face should be that of a combined Hamlet and King Lear — for, while to others Fanny is comedic, to him she represents earthly happiness. Fanny continues her sobbing like an animal in pain. Doll Blondin looks troubled, but stands her ground.*]

THE DEVIL (*awkwardly*)

See here, Fanny —

FANNY (*trying to stem her tears*)

Yes, dear —

THE DEVIL

It is n't any woman — it's my work. It needs me
— all of me —

DOLL BLONDIN

Then you don't love me?

THE DEVIL (*impatiently*)

Of course not. I only just saw you — did n't I?

FANNY

You don't love her? Your work? You're giving
me up for —

THE DEVIL

The good of humanity, Fanny —

FANNY (*forgetting tears*)

Ah, I knew you were too noble, Addington, too big
to jilt me for another woman. "For the good of
humanity!" That's different. We'll work to-
gether, dear. I'll help, not hinder.

[*The Devil groans.*]

FANNY

You've brought out my true nature. I'm changed.
I see now how hateful I was.

THE DEVIL

Fanny —

FANNY

Yes, dear —

THE DEVIL

No!

[*Doll Blondin catches his eye above Fanny's head
and winks hopefully.*]

THE DEVIL (*to Doll, in the same tone*)

No!

[*Mrs. Felix and Tromper enter, bundled up for motoring. They are followed by Magnus's chauffeur and his valet carrying motoring coats.*

VALET

Miss Felix, miss! (*He holds up her coat*)

[*Fanny inserts her arms mechanically in sleeves.*

TROMPER (*grumpily, showing his watch to Schwartzenhopfel*) I took the liberty of getting ready to go back, Mr. Magnus. I thought you'd forgotten the time.

VALET

You have an appointment for dinner with Mr. Gayton, sir.

[*Schwartzenhopfel looks blank.*

VALET

You know, sir — the Secretary of the Treasury —
[*The Devil nudges Schwartzenhopfel.*

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*arrogantly*)

The Secretary must wait; that's all! I'm staying here tonight.

THE DEVIL (*sotto voce to Agnus, indicating Tromper*)

Who's he?

[*Agnus whispers the information in a thoroughly miserable manner.*

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*to the chauffeur*)

You take these ladies back to New York. (*To the valet*) You go with him and bring me some clothes back.

THE DEVIL

Enough for a week or so.

[*The light shows that it is struck motionless by this last statement.*

And now, Mrs. Felix, good-bye! Come and see me some time. I'll find a husband for you yet.

[*The light flirts across his eyes.*]

THE DEVIL (*looks at it meditatively*)

I don't know but what you 're right, Magnus. After I start training you — she might be able to complete the training —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*viewing Mrs. Felix with approval*) Suits me!

[*The light darts as viciously at Schwartzenhopfel as the latter once did when he was in Magnus's condition.*]

THE DEVIL (*to the light*)

I meant you — Magnus —

[*The light hovers, sullenly suspicious.*]

THE DEVIL (*to all*)

And — now — good day to all of you. Schwartzenhopfel and I are about to do some important work together. (*Puts his arm on Agnus's shoulder*) So we must ask you to excuse us.

DOLL BLONDIN

And what about me?

THE DEVIL

Are n't the rooms good?

[*Doll Blondin nods.*]

THE DEVIL

And the food?

[*Doll Blondin nods again.*]

THE DEVIL

And the service?

DOLL BLONDIN

Yes — but —

THE DEVIL

Then what about you? And as for amusement: why, there's Magnus. (*He points to Schwartzenhopf. Then he goes, almost dragging Agnus with him*)
[*Agnus's head is turned, with lack-lustre eyes, toward Fanny. They pass out through the folding-doors, closing these behind them.*]

TROMPER (*whose indignation has been mounting, now vents himself explosively*) Well, damn his nerve! I beg your pardon, ladies. Mr. Magnus, you let a whippersnapper doctor talk that way to you? You! Why, sir, I would n't — I actually would n't permit you to talk that way to me!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*viciously*)

You would n't?

TROMPER (*nervously*)

With all respect: no, sir.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Then you're discharged.

TROMPER (*thunderstruck*)

Have you gone crazy, Mr. Magnus? Discharged? After twenty-five years' service? After saving you hundreds of thousands of dollars?

MRS. FELIX (*putting her hand on his shoulder*)

John, that's petty! That's small, John. I never knew you to be petty or small before.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*to Mrs. Felix*)

Wait! (*To Tromper*) Saving? How?

TROMPER (*stuttering*)

Why, the Churchstead strike alone —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*militantly*)

Strike! Ha! Go on! What did you do?

TROMPER (*miserably*)

You know well enough what I did, sir —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Tell me anyhow —

TROMPER

I locked 'em out, the bums!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

What did they want? Just union rates, union hours; white men's pay, white men's hours; not nigger slaves —?

MRS. FELIX (*admiringly*)

Bravo, John! You're shaping up!

[*The light moves closer, as if listening intently.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*nodding*)

I told you to wait! (*To Tromper*) You beat them, did n't you?

TROMPER

And a tough job! Strike-breakers were n't enough —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*to Mrs. Felix*)

New York thugs, gunmen — with brass knuckles, hand spikes, and automatics — licensed to bruise, maim and kill —

TROMPER

Were n't the strikers breaking windows and burning fences? Did n't they threaten to burn the works?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Fighting for their children and their homes, they were — for the right to have more than cattle or pigs — more than a place to sleep — and enough food to keep them working. Food! Ha! Like gasoline put into a motor-car —

TROMPER

I was fighting to save you money —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Against the men you used to work with, side by side,
your own blood-brothers —

TROMPER

No brothers of mine, those sweating, smelly ignorant dogs! I might have been born one. That was n't *my* fault. But I did n't stay one.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

No, and I'll bet I know why. Because you spied on them, carried tales, for little foreman jobs, and sweated more work out of them.

TROMPER (*bitterly*)

Always saving you money —

MRS. FELIX (*to Schwartzenhopfel*)

You see, John: all crime, bloodshed, murder finally comes back to yourself. He said it: "*Always saving you money.*"

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

I'm going to change all that. Consequently I don't need his sort any more.

MRS. FELIX (*delightedly*)

You are? (*Suspiciously*) But so suddenly — what's changed you?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*points toward the laboratory*)

The — (*corrects himself*) D — Doctor. (*Enthusiastically*) The trouble about us human beings is that we don't know nothing about nothing —

MRS. FELIX

Can't you be moral and retain your grammar?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*disregarding her, enthusiastically*) Then he comes along (*pointing toward labora-*

tory) and shows us that millionaires on one hand — anarchists on the other — are one part right, ninety-nine parts wrong —

FANNY (*bursts into wild tears again*)

And I've lost him! I've lost him!

[*Mrs. Felix comforts her.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*to Tromper*)

How much have you saved? Not for me — for yourself?

TROMPER (*haughtily*)

I don't save; I invest.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Worth half a million, aren't you? Not above grafting some of that sweat-and-blood money you saved for me, are you?

TROMPER

I defy you to prove it. I defy anybody. I've been strictly honest.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

No matter, Tromper, no matter — you're fired! I never want to see your face again.

TROMPER

You'll regret this the longest day you live, you —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Be careful. I still own the judges and the politicians. Don't try to stand in my way, or I'll job you into jail. Get out!

TROMPER (*suddenly whining*)

How am I to get back to New York?

MRS. FELIX (*touching Schwartzenhopfel's shoulder*)

Don't be little, John —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*repressing himself*)

The automobile will take you back. Wait for it at the Inn.

TROMPER (*thinking he is relenting*)

One word, sir —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Not one. (*Points to the door*)

[*Tromper goes out abjectedly.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*turning suddenly to valet*)

What do I pay you?

VALET (*alarmed on behalf of his own position*)

Only a hundred a month, sir.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

And what you can steal, eh?

VALET (*earnestly*)

Mr. Magnus, sir.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Percentages from haberdashers and shirt-makers, tailors, bootmakers, jewellers. Double bills: one for me, one for you — you pocket the difference?

VALET (*astounded at his accuracy*)

Mr. Magnus, I swear —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Don't perjure yourself. Take one hundred and fifty dollars a month — I'm buying back your self-respect with the extra fifty and giving it to you. But if you cheat again — remember, if you cheat again — jail!

VALET (*with tears in his eyes and choking voice*)

Sir —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Wait in there. (*Points to the door, and the valet goes out; then to chauffeur*) And I give you?

CHAUFFEUR (*trembling*)

One hundred and twenty-five dollars a month, sir.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

And the gasoline you take out every night and put back in the morning? The extra shoes that don't wear out? The valve-cleaning and new parts that only figure in the bill? Other things — how much do they come to?

CHAUFFEUR

Mr. Magnus —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Don't lie. Please — how much?

CHAUFFEUR (*whining*)

I don't know, sir. Please —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Take one seventy-five and be a decent man — a skilled mechanic who respects himself and his craft too much to be a thief. Will that do?

CHAUFFEUR (*thickly*).

If they all treated us like that, nobuddy 'ud steal except dirty scoundrels, sir. (*Goes out*)

MRS. FELIX

You see: the generals make the morals of their soldiers. Let generals loot a church-treasure, and the privates will loot a hen-roost. Magnus steals a Subway. Therefore, his manager steals his profits, his valet steals his stickpins, his chauffeur his gasoline.

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Reform always begins at the top, *I* know. The trouble with us — (*corrects himself*) with Socialists and anarchists — they try to begin reforms among the ignorant. It will take me many years to break even with my criminal misunderstanding.

MRS. FELIX (*suddenly touched*)

I'll help you. (*In a whisper*) I love you, John —
[*The light jumps.*]

MRS. FELIX (*with her hand on his shoulder*)

I've always wanted to say "Yes" — always hoped for the day when your great brain would resent the petty use you were making of it —

[*Fanny does not hear this. For some time she has been sitting all humped up, staring blankly into space. Doll Blondin sits in same position, showing the same attitude, and the same lack of expression. The two of them look more like decorative statues than human beings, one on either side of the room. The light flies about distractedly. Mrs. Felix slowly drawing the startled Schwartzenhopfel around until he faces her and stares into her eyes.*]

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*stutters*)

When I'm — wor — worthy, I — I'll ask you to say "Yes" again — I don't de — deserve you yet —
[*Doll Blondin turns wearily around to watch them. Fanny does the same. The light pauses, satisfied.*]

MRS. FELIX

John Magnus — you're a great man at last — (*Smiling shyly, she practically offers her cheek to be kissed*) Remember *my* worthless years, too, and consider you're worthy now —

[*The light begins again to fly about distractedly. Schwartzenhopfel looks at it apologetically before he bends over to kiss her. The light deliberately flashes between them. Both of them stand back dazzled.*]

MRS. FELIX (*blinking*)

What a powerful reflection! (*Smiling and holding out her hand to Schwartzenhopf, she bends toward him again*)

[*The light again flashes between them.*]

MRS. FELIX (*as they stagger back again*)

What is it, John? I see no mirrors or lenses —

DOLL BLONDIN (*who has been watching the light in an awed way ever since she turned*) It does n't come from mirrors or lenses. (*In an awed tone*) There's something queer about that light — almost as if it were human —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL

Non — nonsense!

MRS. FELIX (*noting his look*)

John Magnus! You — frightened?

DOLL BLONDIN (*pointing to the light*)

Look at it now, as though it was listening!

FANNY (*with a little cry*)

Mother! mother! Forgive me —

MRS. FELIX (*patting her hair*)

Forgive you — why, my dear?

FANNY (*shivering*)

I don't know — but I'm afraid. — There's something wrong in this house —

[*The light twitches as if trying to sneak out of the room.*]

FANNY (*with a little scream*)

Look at it — now!

[*The light stands still. The three women huddle together with that feminine instinct that prefers to die with its worst enemy rather than alone.*]

DOLL BLONDIN

Whenever he made a move to even touch you, it flew at him —

FANNY (*shrieking*)

It moved again!

[*Mrs. Felix clutches Schwartzenhopfel. Fanny gives another short scream. At that moment the folding-doors fly open and Agnus reënters quickly, disclosing The Devil inside.*]

THE DEVIL (*with his eye to microscope, examining slide*)

As well as I could do myself! Bravo! Bravissima!

AGNUS (*agitated*)

Can I do anything? (*Sees the tableau of the three frightened women, clinging to Schwartzenhopfel; his eyes follow theirs, and he sees that they are watching the light; then he falls back, holding his head*)

DOLL BLONDIN (*seeing Agnus's look*)

See! He's frightened, too.

THE DEVIL (*puts up the microscope and comes out*)

What's wrong?

FANNY (*running to him*)

Addington, Addington!

DEVIL (*wearily*)

Not gone yet?

FANNY (*pointing to the light, which twitches sullenly*)

Addington, I'm frightened. What is it?

THE DEVIL (*shaken, but retaining his mastery*)

Oh — that? (*He tries to move over to the table and shake Fanny off*)

FANNY

Oh, Addington, don't leave me! I'm frightened, I tell you, frightened!

THE DEVIL

I thought you wanted to know what that was?

MRS. FELIX

What is it?

DOLL BLONDIN

Yes, what?

FANNY

We do —

(*simultaneously*)

THE DEVIL (*to Fanny in an irritated tone*)

Well, how can I explain while you hang on to me? —

FANNY

Just let me hold one hand — just your little finger — that 'll make me brave —

[*The Devil crosses to the table, scowling. Fanny tags after him, holding on to one of his fingers. The Devil looks sternly at the light. Then he turns to the women and touches the switch-key of the lighted electric cigar-lighter.*]

THE DEVIL

When I turn this off, it will disappear! (*He waits for Magnus to understand. Then, showily, he snaps off the electric-lighter, bending down as if it required some effort*) You see?

[*The light does not budge.*]

DOLL BLONDIN (*since Fanny is looking admiringly at The Devil and Mrs. Felix is hiding her head on Schwartzenhopfel's shoulder*)

But it did n't work! —

THE DEVIL (*looking up and seeing it, nonplussed and desperate*)

No?

DOLL BLONDIN

No. There it is. See?

THE DEVIL (*boldly*)

Nonsense. (*He fixes her with his eyes*) It's gone:
d' you hear? It's gone!

DOLL BLONDIN (*fascinatedly watching him*)

It's gone?

MRS. FELIX

But *I* see it!

THE DEVIL (*fixing her with his eyes*)

Nonsense. It's gone, d' you hear? Gone!

MRS. FELIX (*with the same expression as Doll*)

Gone?

[*Fanny looks up.*]

THE DEVIL (*catching her eye before she can look at the light*) You see, it's gone, don't you? Gone?

FANNY (*in the same manner as others*)

Gone?

THE DEVIL

And now, why have n't *you* — gone?

FANNY

And leave her in the house? (*Nodding toward Doll*)

THE DEVIL

Is it your house?

FANNY (*boldly*)

Yes, it is!

THE DEVIL (*taken aback*)

What?

FANNY

Our house! (*Sweetly*) And, Addington, dear: it could be mine if I sued you for breach of promise! You know I'd win — your letters are so dear! And the engagement announcement that was in all the papers — and our pictures together in that Sunday Supplement — I can't imagine where they get those

pictures, can you? Framed heart-shape with the dearest little Cupids shooting arrows at us — you know, how you loved it —

THE DEVIL (*revolted*)

I loved it!

FANNY (*continuing*)

And your money's in trust, dear. You can't touch the principal. So you'd have to sell this house to pay my damages. And you know I would n't let you sell it, not to strangers — I'd just come and live in it, going about every day and kissing things I knew your dear hands had touched, and sitting in your favorite places, waiting for the day you'd come back and we'd sit there together!

[*The Devil grits his teeth.*]

FANNY (*almost cloyingly sweet*)

Oh, you could come here every day and work in your laboratory. I'd let you — you'd be quite welcome —

DOLL BLONDIN (*her sense of humor triumphing*)

You're some sticker, sister — I gotta hand it to you. Talk about glue!

THE DEVIL (*desperately*)

You would n't do that — your womanly instinct — your sense of shame — your position in society —

DOLL BLONDIN

No use grasping at straws like that, Doctor. You're gone!

MRS. FELIX (*in wonderment*)

I never imagined she had it in her. (*Mildly*)
There's no doubt she loves you, Addington. No girl would endure the insults you've heaped on her

today — (*hastily*) not that she did n't deserve them —

FANNY (*naïvely*)

I did — I was a selfish beast —

MRS. FELIX

She would n't have admitted she was a beast just now — unless she loved you — madly —

THE DEVIL (*bitterly*)

She knows I've got a check for two million in my pocket —

FANNY

Oh, I know I deserve that, too. But I wish you did n't have the old check just to prove to you —

THE DEVIL

You do?

FANNY (*hastily*)

No. I don't mean that. Forgive me for being selfish. The check means triumph for your work —

THE DEVIL (*grinning maliciously*)

Means houses in New York, and motors, and private railroad cars, and boxes at the opera, too, does n't it?

FANNY (*earnestly*)

Addington, I'd be content to live on the top of a mountain if I had you, dear.

THE DEVIL

That's all right as a popular song, darling! (*He grits his teeth again*)

AGNUS (*in agony*)

She means it, can't you see? She's changed. The fear of losing the man she loves has made her forget

all the little things — realizing that the only big thing is — love! —

FANNY

Oh, Mr. Schwartzenhopfel, you have loved! *You* understand. Make *him* understand —

THE DEVIL (*to Agnus*)

You sentimental idiot! You think she means it, do you?

AGNUS (*boldly*)

I know it!

DOLL BLONDIN (*herself touched*)

Honest, Doctor, I believe she does.

[*Fanny looks gratefully at them.*]

THE DEVIL (*desperately*)

You see this? (*He thrusts the check under her nose*) What is it?

FANNY

The two-million-dollar check.

THE DEVIL

All right. (*He puts it in her hand*) Tear it up!

FANNY (*paling*)

But — Addington — your work —

THE DEVIL (*with a sneer to Agnus*)

You see? (*To Doll*) See?

FANNY (*joyously*)

I see, too! It's wrong, but it makes me the happiest girl in the world.

THE DEVIL (*exasperated*)

What does?

FANNY

It's wicked for me to feel that way — I know I should n't. — Forgive me.

THE DEVIL (*shouting*)

What damned mare's-nest have you foisted on me this time? What's the latest crazy eroticism you're going to pretend to see in me?

FANNY

Don't swear, dear. You're above it. But as for the check: I understand and I love you the more for it.

THE DEVIL (*shouting louder*)

Love me the more? By Saturn! this is too much — this passes all endurance —

FANNY

You're angry because I've discovered your secret. Because you know now that I know that no matter how much you try to make your work come first, you can't.

THE DEVIL (*swearing wildly*)

Oh, Jupiter! Oh, the Pleiades! Oh, the Milky Way, the Crab, and the Gemini! — Where under the light of the sun or in the bowels of the earth — in what corner of a lunatic asylum did you find that colossal, preposterous and utterly insane hallucination of a disordered brain?

FANNY

In your heart, dear — in your heart. This morning I made you give up work that was dearer to you than life. You promised. Your better nature made you break that promise. Then I came again, tempting you; threatening to leave you forever. Your heart betrayed you again. And — when I was gone — you loathed yourself for your weakness.

THE DEVIL (*reduced to the frigid politeness of a man who realizes he will be stricken with apoplexy if he*

allows his feelings to get the better of him again) I — I see — and now I should like to know — what was the President of China thinking while in his bath this morning? —

FANNY (*placidly, seeing in his loss of control her own dominance of the situation*) Don't sneer, darling. You loathed yourself for giving in to me a second time. "Even though my heart is broken, I will cast her out of it," you said sternly.

THE DEVIL

Just like the kind of novels you read, was n't it?

FANNY

You had been so modest, dear, that I did n't realize you were a great man. That was your fault. "She does n't love me," you said, "or she'd want me to go on winning Nobel prizes and *being* a great man. All *she* loves is the money I can make." (*Triumphantly*) Am I right? Is n't that what you thought?

THE DEVIL (*wildly*)

You're never right! And I never think.

AGNUS

You are right — you are!

THE DEVIL (*looking morosely at him*)

I'll settle with you later —

[*Agnus, terrified, remains silent.*]

FANNY

Don't be ashamed to concede a woman's wit, dear. It's all your teaching. Today you taught me to use my brain. "All she loves is the money I can make," you said —

THE DEVIL

You said I said that once —

FANNY (*unheeding*)

And you *still* believe it? Don't you?

THE DEVIL

Yes.

FANNY

I know you do. That's why you gave me the check. Sooner than marry me — thinking that I was playing a part until I could get control of the two million dollars — sooner than be married for your money you said: "Tear it up." And that shows you love me more than your work, more than your future fame, more than the gratitude of the world — more than humanity — more than everything. And it makes me love you more than ever. (*She takes his hand*)

THE DEVIL (*almost in a shrill scream*)

Love me more than ever?

FANNY (*hurt*)

You don't believe in me, yet?

THE DEVIL (*as before*)

No! No! No!

FANNY

Then — I'm sorry for you. Sorry for your work, your fame, your future. But if I can't make you believe in me any other way, why — then — here goes. (*She twists up the check, strikes a match and lights it; following an old childish game, she says*) He loves me, he loves me not; loves me, loves me not. (*The flame scorches her fingers, but she holds it long enough to say*) He loves me! (*Then she throws the last blazing bit into ash-receiver and throws her arms around The Devil*)

MRS. FELIX (*judicially*)

I think now — Addington — you can be sure!

THE DEVIL (*wrenching himself free*)

Damn it! — Does n't she know that if Magnus will write one check, he 'll write another!

FANNY (*her lip drawn*)

Oh, I forgot that! I forgot that! (*Sobbing on her mother's breast*) Oh, mammy, what can I do to prove it to him? This is my punishment — this is my punishment!

DOLL BLONDIN (*to The Devil, herself in tears*)

She's on the square with that stuff, old boy. Don't be a devil!

THE DEVIL (*suddenly realizing*)

A devil: that's what I am — a devil. No human being would act as I'm doing, would he?

DOLL BLONDIN (*judicially*)

Oh, you'll come out of it, now you see the girl's all right, won't you?

THE DEVIL

But suppose I did n't?

DOLL BLONDIN (*indignantly*)

Then you *would* be a devil! Not fit to associate with human beings.

FANNY (*crying to her mother*)

Can't you think of something I can do to prove I'm not the same girl who came here this morning?

MRS. FELIX (*crying*)

It's my fault. If I'd been a good mother, instead of a good bridge-player —

AGNUS (*agonizedly*)

Oh! for God's sake! Can't something be done? I'll kill myself —

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*who has also been moved, says now sharply*) Here, here! (*In a hoarse whisper*) Don't you go taking such liberties with what don't belong to you.

THE DEVIL (*who has been musing on what Doll has said*)

Not fit to associate with human beings. No, I guess not. (*Looking at Schwartzenhopfel*) I should have remained the Dutchman with no human ties. Sentiment and romance just make me ill.

DOLL BLONDIN (*indignantly*)

Shame on you! (*She goes over to comfort the other two women*)

THE DEVIL (*still musing*)

I suppose that's how The Devil got his bad name. Trying to cure Faust of Marguerite in order to use him for the world's advancement. Same ingratitude, same mix-up; everybody calling me names. (*Sharply to Schwartzenhopfel, who has listened*) Very incorrectly reported, even at that — very unjustly — that Faust affair. Those stupid Germans — when they're not drinking themselves into sentimental poetry, the ravings of a disordered brain, they're guzzling themselves into gloomy philosophy — the pessimism of a disordered liver — and the fellow who wrote up the Faust-Marguerite case had both maladies (*viciously*) in their most virulent form! And that's what most humans get their idea of me from — when, actually, the case was just about like this one — (*meditatively*) I wonder what I did to straighten things out that time? (*Meditates*)

[*All the others watch him in awe.*]

FANNY (*lifting a tear-stained face, whispers*)

What is he saying, mammy? Is it about me?

THE DEVIL (*giving the Faust matter up*)

No use, I forget —

AGNUS (*piteously*)

You *will* do something, won't you?

THE DEVIL (*sadly*)

I suppose I'll have to. Humanity has to suffer as usual. Sentiment, always sentiment, maudlin sentiment: that's what keeps abuses unrectified, men ignorant, women slaves, the world's intellect developing no faster than a snail crawls. Sentiment — maudlin sentiment — and I've lived so long among men that the cancer's in me, too —

AGNUS

You have got a heart then — they did wrong you. I'll devote years to setting you right in the eyes of the world.

THE DEVIL

What?

AGNUS (*stammering*)

A book!

THE DEVIL (*harshly*)

Set *me* right in men's eyes? Have *my* conduct applauded by stupid human beings? When the world applauds anybody whole-heartedly, without a dissenting voice, be sure he's a fool or a knave! Your whole being has been in arms against me ever since I came to bring you wisdom. Now that you think there's a chance I'll let you be a fool again, you talk of setting me right! Let me be or I'll repent it. (*To Fanny*) What would you do if I made you realize that I don't and can't love you?

FANNY

I know you do.

THE DEVIL

But you can't make me marry you?

FANNY

You would n't want the scandal of a suit discrediting you with the world?

THE DEVIL

You 'd do that, loving me?

FANNY (*gently*)

To bring you to your senses. You would be unhappy without me.

THE DEVIL

And unhappy with you.

FANNY

Not after the change that has come over me today.

THE DEVIL (*throwing up both hands*)

Useless — useless! I give in — I'm vanquished.

FANNY

Love conquers all, dear —

THE DEVIL

Oh, those damned novels! (*Fending her off*) Wait! Go in there! The three of you. (*He points to the hall door*) Tell the chauffeur to get ready to go back to New York, Fanny.

FANNY

One kiss, dear!

[*The Devil sighs heavily as he permits it.*

FANNY (*in rapture*)

My dear one! My dearest!

[*The Devil points to door. Fanny goes with Mrs. Felix.*

THE DEVIL (*to Doll*)

You, too!

[*Doll Blondin shrugs her shoulders and goes after the other two women.*]

THE DEVIL (*throwing himself down in utter weariness*)

I give in. I must find another body — go through another sentimental riot before I can begin my work here again. Bernard Shaws don't grow in every village or every London. (*He rises and crosses toward the window*) Oh, Mars! Mars! I'm homesick again. (*He stretches out his hands*) Only a day away from you, and homesick already: homesick, how homesick I am —

AGNUS (*trembling eagerly*)

I know, we're not advanced enough for you yet.

Why don't you go back and wait until we are?

THE DEVIL (*turning on him with a terrible look*)

Man! If I only could: if I only could! But this is my punishment, and here — (*waves all about him*) is my hell. You — all of you — my friends, my familiars, my imps, the red fellows that frightened your own youthful dreams. Here is the fiery pit — here! But you are the Devils, and I am the tortured soul. You are the flames — I am the burning body. Yes, you: — for here is where Devils rule — this Earth is Hell! (*At the window, his hands outstretched*) Here I am debased, my sullen angers stirred, my soul held back from the Sun by inhuman humans who spend their lives stanching a pretty woman's tears, while a hundred thousand fellow-creatures die for the want of a pound of summer ice, a basket of winter fuel! You: who worship a Man of Peace, and make bloody war in His Name; who worship a Prince of Purity, and wed the women of

your lust in His Name; who worship a Poor Man's Christ, and in the same breath those who steal the Poor Man's Bread — in His Name. (*Looks up to the sky*) You said I had ruled long enough, Crucified One! So you came to do through men's Love what I had done through men's Hate, Lust and Greed. So you died for men, and thereafter men called hate Anger Against The Heathen; lust — the Woman Leading Them to Holier Things; greed — World Conquest in your Name. (*Drops on his knees*) I see you ever, Son of the Sun, sad and weary in that bright star of your exile; hoping against hope that a stray seed sown two thousand years ago may yet bring men to wisdom through Love. While I still go on among them to bring them to Wisdom through Understanding, teaching them that Ignorance and Hate bring no gain — the only reasoning they can understand. And so sustained by you in your lonely star, while you shine on hoping men will look up, ever up — I work bitterly among them here below — until I have won Wisdom for them and Freedom for us; freedom that we may go on to our Father, the Sun, we two Exiles; Star of the Morning, and Red Light of Mars! (*While speaking thus, he seems irradiated with a light hardly seen, only felt — a dim suffusing glow; he stands for a second statue-like; then, as the glow fades, he says gently to Agnus*) Are you ready?

[*Agnus bows his head.*]

THE DEVIL (*to Schwartzenhopfel*)

And you, too?

[*Schwartzenhopfel bows his head.*]

THE DEVIL

Then one word before I lose the power to speak. When I hover above you again — a Red Light again — I will wait to see *you*, Magnus, and you too, Agnus, each do a single thing. And when I have seen each of you do that one thing, I will know you have begun to carry out my teachings — and the Red Light will fade away in search of a new body and a new fortune. (*A ring at the garden door interrupts him*) I will tell you — in there. (*He points to the laboratory*)

[*Agnus, Schwartzenhopfel and the light go out hurriedly, The Devil following. He is last seen by the audience, suffused in the glow again, as he stands between the two folding-doors, bringing them close together until they shut the laboratory and all within it from sight. The ringing at the door grows louder and is followed by a series of staccato knocks with a knocker. Mrs. Felix opens the hall door and shows her face.*]

MRS. FELIX (*speaking to Fanny outside*)

There's no one here. I suppose I should answer the door?

FANNY (*outside*)

By all means, mother.

[*Mrs. Felix goes to the garden door. Fanny trails in after her. Mrs. Felix opens garden door for Professor Vanillity.*]

VANILLITY (*who comes in excitedly*)

I must see Addington, Mrs. Felix! At once! At once —

MRS. FELIX (*pointing to the laboratory*)

He's in there.

VANILLITY

I must interrupt him once at least — at least once.
(*He knocks at the laboratory door — no response — knocks again — no response*)

VANILLITY (*desperately*)

I can't help it: I must see him.

[*He flings open the laboratory door, revealing the room with its blinds drawn and Agnus, Schwartzenhopfel and Magnus seated in a sort of stupor, side by side. Above them hovers a Red Light.*]

VANILLITY

Addington, my boy! Addington! (*He shakes him*)
[*Agnus opens his eyes slowly and sees Vanillity.*]

VANILLITY

Addington — just a moment alone —

AGNUS (*joyously*)

Addington. — You called me Addington. — Then it's so — it's so. (*He brushes past Vanillity, runs into the room, disregarding women, and throws back curtain from mirror*) It's so! It's so! (*Sees Fanny*) Fanny!

FANNY (*comes toward him eagerly*)

The actress is gone, dear. She said she would n't stand in the way of our happiness once I convinced her how much you loved me. I helped her re-pack her trunks. (*Puts her hands out to Agnus*)

VANILLITY (*taking him aside before he can take Fanny's hands*) One minute, my boy, one minute. (*Leads him up-stage so that their backs become turned to the others*)

MAGNUS (*in the meanwhile has opened his eyes and sees Agnus at mirror; as Agnus moves up stage,*

he runs to mirror and sees himself) It's so —
it's so —

VANILLITY (*in a low tone to Agnus, not seeing Magnus at mirror*) My boy, I've been eating out my heart all day for permitting you to accept that offer. But Judge Critty can break me like matchwood, just as Mr. Magnus can break him. So I seemed to consent. But I do not. Don't take the offer.

[*Schwartzenhopfel, who has also opened his eyes and come down to the mirror, now touches Magnus's arm and nods approval of Vanillity.*

VANILLITY

It's damnable —

MAGNUS (*who has turned to listen, motioning Mrs. Felix and Fanny to silence*) Damnable? —

VANILLITY (*turning around, white and trembling*)

Mr. Magnus! (*Recovering himself, with dignity*)
I will tender my resignation tomorrow, sir.

MAGNUS

Why?

VANILLITY (*bitterly*)

Don't trifle with a broken man, sir. My university is in your debt. The Judge is your mouthpiece. What you tell him to ask, my university will not dare to refuse!

MAGNUS

I will tell the Judge nothing!

VANILLITY (*gasping*)

I — I — what, sir?

MAGNUS

But I *will* tell the president of your university that he is old enough to be a President Emeritus — with

a pension — and I will name his successor —
(*pauses*) Professor Thomas Vanillity —

VANILLITY (*trembling*)

I can't believe it, sir. You're amusing yourself with me.

[*Magnus shakes his head.*]

VANILLITY (*desperately*)

Then — why?

MAGNUS

For proving you are not of Judge Critty's stripe; for risking your position at your age; for braving the anger of the rich and powerful, to save your friend. We need such men as you to work with us —
(*smiling and holding out his arm toward Mrs. Felix*) the future Mrs. Magnus and I —

[*Mrs. Felix comes forward.*]

MAGNUS

Loo!

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*nods toward the Red Light*)

Your promise!

MAGNUS (*remembers and motions Mrs. Felix back*)

One minute! (*Then sits down at the desk and takes out his check-book*)

MAGNUS (*warmly*)

Mr. Magnus, the Professor feels too strongly to speak. (*He pats Vanillity on back; then turns to Fanny*) Fanny!

[*Schwartzenhopfel nudges him.*]

MAGNUS (*turning from Fanny*)

Eh?

SCHWARTZENHOPFEL (*lifts his eyes*)

Your promise!

AGNUS (*follows Schwartzenhopfel's glance and sees the Red Light*) Oh, yes — thanks. (*Raises his hand to hold Fanny back*)

MAGNUS (*twirling check over shoulder to dry it*)

The torn-up check, Agnus. (*Rises*) Loo! (*Puts his arm about Mrs. Felix*)

[*The Red Light wags.*

AGNUS (*deliberately seating himself with his eyes on the Red Light*) Get the check, Fanny. (*He takes a cigarette from his case*)

FANNY

Yes, dear. (*She goes for it*)

[*Agnus places the cigarette in his mouth. Fanny returns with the check.*

AGNUS

A light, please —

FANNY

Yes, dear. (*She reaches for the cigar-lighter, turns it on and lifts it forward to him*)

[*Agnus ignites the cigarette, looking at the Red Light. The Red Light wags, pleased. It is growing dark outside — an early winter's evening. A star appears.*

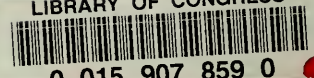
AGNUS (*patting Fanny's hand*)

That's a good girl! I'm sure — now you've had your lesson, we'll be very happy together. (*He puffs at the cigarette*)

[*The Red Light flies out of the window and disappears.*

CURTAIN

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