

bear to hear the children of this world talking vainly and foolishly in the language of this world. But when I hear you justifying your wickedness in the words of grace, it's too horrible: it sounds like the devil making fun of religion. Ive tried to bring you up to learn the happiness of religion. Ive waited for you to find out that happiness is within ourselves and doesnt come from outward pleasures. Ive prayed oftener than you think that you might be enlightened. But if all my hopes and all my prayers are to come to this, that you mix up my very words and thoughts with the promptings of the devil, then I dont know what I shall do: I dont indeed: itll kill me.

MARGARET. You shouldnt have prayed for me to be enlightened if you didnt want me to be enlightened. If the truth were known, I suspect we all want our prayers to be answered only by halves: the agreeable halves. Your prayer didnt get answered by halves, mother. Youve got more than you bargained for in the way of enlightenment. I shall never be the same again. I shall never speak in the old way again. Ive been set free from this silly little hole of a house and all its pretences. I know now that I am stronger than you and Papa. I havnt found that happiness of yours that is within yourself; but Ive found strength. For good or evil I am set free; and none of the things that used to hold me can hold me now.

*Knox comes back, unable to bear his suspense.*

KNOX. How long more are you going to keep me waiting, Amelia? Do you think I'm made of iron? Whats the girl done? What are we going to do?

MRS KNOX. Shes beyond my control, Jo, and beyond yours. I cant even pray for her now; for I dont know rightly what to pray for.

KNOX. Dont talk nonsense, woman: is this a time for praying? Does anybody know? Thats what we have to consider now. If only we can keep it dark, I dont care for anything else.

MARGARET. Dont hope for that, father. Mind: I'll tell everybody. It ought to be told. It must be told.

KNOX. Hold your tongue, you young hussy; or go out of my house this instant.

MARGARET. I'm quite ready. [She takes her hat and turns to the door].

KNOX. [throwing himself in front of it] Here! where are you going?

MRS KNOX. [rising] You mustnt turn her out, Jo! I'll go with her if she goes.

KNOX. Who wants to turn her out? But is she going to ruin us? To let everybody know of her disgrace and shame? To tear me down from the position Ive made for myself and you by forty years hard struggling?

MARGARET. Yes: I'm going to tear it all down. It stands between us and everything. I'll tell everybody.

KNOX. Magsy, my child: dont bring down your father's hairs with sorrow to the grave. Theres only one thing I care about in the world: to keep this dark. I'm your father. I ask you here on my knees--in the dust, so to speak--not to let it out.

MARGARET. I'll tell everybody.

*\_Knox collapses in despair. Mrs Knox tries to pray and cannot. Margaret stands inflexible.\_*

\_Again in the Gilbeys' dining-room. Afternoon. The table is not laid: it is draped in its ordinary cloth, with pen and ink, an exercise-book, and school-books on it. Bobby Gilbey is in the arm-chair, crouching over the fire, reading an illustrated paper. He is a pretty youth, of very suburban gentility, strong and manly enough by nature, but untrained and unsatisfactory, his parents having imagined that domestic restriction is what they call "bringing up." He has learnt nothing from it except a habit of evading it by deceit.\_

\_He gets up to ring the bell; then resumes his crouch. Juggins answers the bell.\_

BOBBY. Juggins.

JUGGINS. Sir?

BOBBY. [morosely sarcastic] Sir be blowed!

JUGGINS. [cheerfully] Not at all, sir.

BOBBY. I'm a gaol-bird: youre a respectable man.

JUGGINS. That doesnt matter, sir. Your father pays me to call you sir; and as I take the money, I keep my part of the bargain.

BOBBY. Would you call me sir if you wernt paid to do it?

JUGGINS. No, sir.

BOBBY. Ive been talking to Dora about you.

JUGGINS. Indeed, sir?

BOBBY. Yes. Dora says your name cant be Juggins, and that you have the manners of a gentleman. I always thought you hadnt any manners. Anyhow, your manners are different from the manners of a gentleman in my set.

JUGGINS. They would be, sir.

BOBBY. You dont feel disposed to be communicative on the subject of Dora's notion, I suppose.

JUGGINS. No, sir.

BOBBY. [throwing his paper on the floor and lifting his knees over the arm of the chair so as to turn towards the footman] It was part of your bargain that you were to valet me a bit, wasnt it?

JUGGINS. Yes, sir.

BOBBY. Well, can you tell me the proper way to get out of an engagement to a girl without getting into a row for breach of promise or behaving like a regular cad?

JUGGINS. No, sir. You cant get out of an engagement without behaving like a cad if the lady wishes to hold you to it.

BOBBY. But it wouldnt be for her happiness to marry me when I dont really care for her.

JUGGINS. Women dont always marry for happiness, sir. They often marry because they wish to be married women and not old maids.

BOBBY. Then what am I to do?

JUGGINS. Marry her, sir, or behave like a cad.

BOBBY. [Jumping up] Well, I wont marry her: thats flat. What would you do if you were in my place?

JUGGINS. I should tell the young lady that I found I couldnt fulfil my engagement.

BOBBY. But youd have to make some excuse, you know. I want to give it a gentlemanly turn: to say I'm not worthy of her, or something like that.

JUGGINS. That is not a gentlemanly turn, sir. Quite the contrary.

BOBBY. I dont see that at all. Do you mean that it's not exactly true?

JUGGINS. Not at all, sir.

BOBBY. I can say that no other girl can ever be to me what shes been. That would be quite true, because our circumstances have been rather exceptional; and she'll imagine I mean I'm fonder of her than I can ever be of anyone else. You see, Juggins, a gentleman has to think of a girl's feelings.

JUGGINS. If you wish to spare her feelings, sir, you can marry her. If you hurt her feelings by refusing, you had better not try to get credit for considerateness at the same time by pretending to spare them. She wont like it. And it will start an argument, of which you will get the worse.

BOBBY. But, you know, I'm not really worthy of her.

JUGGINS. Probably she never supposed you were, sir.

BOBBY. Oh, I say, Juggins, you are a pessimist.

JUGGINS. [preparing to go] Anything else, sir?

BOBBY. [querulously] You havnt been much use. [He wanders disconsolately across the room]. You generally put me up to the correct way of doing things.

JUGGINS. I assure you, sir, theres no correct way of jilting. It's not correct in itself.

BOBBY. [hopefully] I'll tell you what. I'll say I cant hold her to an engagement with a man whos been in quod. Thatll do it. [He seats himself on the table, relieved and confident].

JUGGINS. Very dangerous, sir. No woman will deny herself the romantic luxury of self-sacrifice and forgiveness when they take the form of doing something agreeable. Shes almost sure to say that your misfortune will draw her closer to you.

BOBBY. What a nuisance! I dont know what to do. You know, Juggins, your cool simple-minded way of doing it wouldnt go down in Denmark Hill.

JUGGINS. I daresay not, sir. No doubt youd prefer to make it look like an act of self-sacrifice for her sake on

your part, or provoke her to break the engagement herself. Both plans have been tried repeatedly, but never with success, as far as my knowledge goes.

BOBBY. You have a devilish cool way of laying down the law. You know, in my class you have to wrap up things a bit. Denmark Hill isn't Camberwell, you know.

JUGGINS. I have noticed, sir, that Denmark Hill thinks that the higher you go in the social scale, the less sincerity is allowed; and that only tramps and riff-raff are quite sincere. Thats a mistake. Tramps are often shameless; but theyre never sincere. Swells--if I may use that convenient name for the upper classes--play much more with their cards on the table. If you tell the young lady that you want to jilt her, and she calls you a pig, the tone of the transaction may leave much to be desired; but itll be less Camberwellian than if you say youre not worthy.

BOBBY. Oh, I cant make you understand, Juggins. The girl isnt a scullery-maid. I want to do it delicately.

JUGGINS. A mistake, sir, believe me, if you are not a born artist in that line.--Beg pardon, sir, I think I heard the bell. [He goes out].

\_Bobby, much perplexed, shoves his hands into his pockets, and comes off the table, staring disconsolately straight before him; then goes reluctantly to his books, and sits down to write. Juggins returns.\_

JUGGINS. [announcing] Miss Knox.

*Margaret comes in. Juggins withdraws.*

MARGARET. Still grinding away for that Society of Arts examination, Bobby? Youll never pass.

BOBBY. [rising] No: I was just writing to you.

MARGARET. What about?

BOBBY. Oh, nothing. At least-- How are you?

MARGARET. [passing round the other end of the table and putting down on it a copy of Lloyd's Weekly and her purse-bag] Quite well, thank you. How did you enjoy Brighton?

BOBBY. Brighton! I wasnt at-- Oh yes, of course. Oh, pretty well. Is your aunt all right?

MARGARET. My aunt! I suppose so. I havent seen her for a month.

BOBBY. I thought you were down staying with her.

MARGARET. Oh! was that what they told you?

BOBBY. Yes. Why? Werent you really?

MARGARET. No. Ive something to tell you. Sit down and lets be comfortable.

\_She sits on the edge of the table. He sits beside her, and puts his arm wearily round her waist.\_

MARGARET. You neednt do that if you dont like, Bobby. Suppose we get off duty for the day, just to see what it's like.

BOBBY. Off duty? What do you mean?

MARGARET. You know very well what I mean. Bobby: did you ever care one little scrap for me in that sort of way? Dont funk answering: *I dont care a bit for you--that way.*

BOBBY. [removing his arm rather huffily] I beg your pardon, I'm sure. I thought you did.

MARGARET. Well, did you? Come! Dont be mean. Ive owned up. You can put it all on me if you like; but I dont believe you care any more than I do.

BOBBY. You mean weve been shoved into it rather by the pars and mars.

MARGARET. Yes.

BOBBY. Well, it's not that I dont care for you: in fact, no girl can ever be to me exactly what you are; but weve been brought up so much together that it feels more like brother and sister than--well, than the other thing, doesnt it?

MARGARET. Just so. How did you find out the difference?

BOBBY. [blushing] Oh, I say!

MARGARET. I found out from a Frenchman.

BOBBY. Oh, I say! [He comes off the table in his consternation].

MARGARET. Did you learn it from a Frenchwoman? You know you must have learnt it from somebody.

BOBBY. Not a Frenchwoman. Shes quite a nice woman. But shes been rather unfortunate. The daughter of a clergyman.

MARGARET. [startled] Oh, Bobby! That sort of woman!

BOBBY. What sort of woman?

MARGARET. You dont believe shes really a clergyman's daughter, do you, you silly boy? It's a stock joke.

BOBBY. Do you mean to say you dont believe me?

MARGARET. No: I mean to say I dont believe her.

BOBBY. [curious and interested, resuming his seat on the table beside her]. What do you know about her? What do you know about all this sort of thing?

MARGARET. What sort of thing, Bobby?

BOBBY. Well, about life.

MARGARET. Ive lived a lot since I saw you last. I wasnt at my aunt's. All that time that you were in Brighton, I mean.

BOBBY. I wasnt at Brighton, Meg. I'd better tell you: youre bound to find out sooner or later. [He begins his

confession humbly, avoiding her gaze]. Meg: it's rather awful: you'll think me no end of a beast. I've been in prison.

MARGARET. You!

BOBBY. Yes, me. For being drunk and assaulting the police.

MARGARET. Do you mean to say that you--oh! this is a let-down for me. [She comes off the table and drops, disconsolate, into a chair at the end of it furthest from the hearth].

BOBBY. Of course I couldn't hold you to our engagement after that. I was writing to you to break it off. [He also descends from the table and makes slowly for the hearth]. You must think me an utter rotter.

MARGARET. Oh, has everybody been in prison for being drunk and assaulting the police? How long were you in?

BOBBY. A fortnight.

MARGARET. That's what I was in for.

BOBBY. What are you talking about? In where?

MARGARET. In quod.

BOBBY. But I'm serious: I'm not rotting. Really and truly--

MARGARET. What did you do to the copper?

BOBBY. Nothing, absolutely nothing. He exaggerated grossly. I only laughed at him.

MARGARET. [jumping up, triumphant] I've beaten you hollow. I knocked out two of his teeth. I've got one of them. He sold it to me for ten shillings.

BOBBY. Now please do stop fooling, Meg. I tell you I'm not rotting. [He sits down in the armchair, rather sulkily].

MARGARET. [taking up the copy of Lloyd's Weekly and going to him] And I tell you I'm not either. Look! Here's a report of it. The daily papers are no good; but the Sunday papers are splendid. [She sits on the arm of the chair]. See! [Reading]: "Hardened at Eighteen. A quietly dressed, respectable-looking girl who refuses her name"--that's me.

BOBBY. [pausing a moment in his perusal] Do you mean to say that you went on the loose out of pure devilment?

MARGARET. I did no harm. I went to see a lovely dance. I picked up a nice man and went to have a dance myself. I can't imagine anything more innocent and more happy. All the bad part was done by other people: they did it out of pure devilment if you like. Anyhow, here we are, two gaolbirds, Bobby, disgraced forever. Isn't it a relief?

BOBBY. [rising stiffly] But you know, it's not the same for a girl. A man may do things a woman mayn't. [He stands on the hearthrug with his back to the fire].

MARGARET. Are you scandalized, Bobby?

BOBBY. Well, you cant expect me to approve of it, can you, Meg? I never thought you were that sort of girl.

MARGARET. [rising indignantly] I'm not. You mustnt pretend to think that I'm a clergyman's daughter, Bobby.

BOBBY. I wish you wouldnt chaff about that. Dont forget the row you got into for letting out that you admired Juggins [she turns her back on him quickly]--a footman! And what about the Frenchman?

MARGARET. [facing him again] I know nothing about the Frenchman except that hes a very nice fellow and can swing his leg round like the hand of a clock and knock a policeman down with it. He was in Wormwood Scrubbs with you. I was in Holloway.

BOBBY. It's all very well to make light of it, Meg; but this is a bit thick, you know.

MARGARET. Do you feel you couldnt marry a woman whos been in prison?

BOBBY. [hastily] No. I never said that. It might even give a woman a greater claim on a man. Any girl, if she were thoughtless and a bit on, perhaps, might get into a scrape. Anyone who really understood her character could see there was no harm in it. But youre not the larkly sort. At least you used to be.

MARGARET. I'm not; and I never will be. [She walks straight up to him]. I didnt do it for a lark, Bob: I did it out of the very depths of my nature. I did it because I'm that sort of person. I did it in one of my religious fits. I'm hardened at eighteen, as they say. So what about the match, now?

BOBBY. Well, I dont think you can fairly hold me to it, Meg. Of course it would be ridiculous for me to set up to be shocked, or anything of that sort. I cant afford to throw stones at anybody; and I dont pretend to. I can understand a lark; I can forgive a slip; as long as it is understood that it is only a lark or a slip. But to go on the loose on principle; to talk about religion in connection with it; to--to--well, Meg, I do find that a bit thick, I must say. I hope youre not in earnest when you talk that way.

MARGARET. Bobby: youre no good. No good to me, anyhow.

BOBBY. [huffed] I'm sorry, Miss Knox.

MARGARET. Goodbye, Mr Gilbey. [She turns on her heel and goes to the other end of the table]. I suppose you wont introduce me to the clergyman's daughter.

BOBBY. I dont think she'd like it. There are limits, after all. [He sits down at the table, as if to resume work at his books: a hint to her to go].

MARGARET. [on her way to the door] Ring the bell, Bobby; and tell Juggins to shew me out.

BOBBY. [reddening] I'm not a cad, Meg.

MARGARET. [coming to the table] Then do something nice to prevent us feeling mean about this afterwards. Youd better kiss me. You neednt ever do it again.

BOBBY. If I'm no good, I dont see what fun it would be for you.

MARGARET. Oh, it'd be no fun. If I wanted what you call fun, I should ask the Frenchman to kiss me--or

Juggins.

BOBBY. [rising and retreating to the hearth] Oh, dont be disgusting, Meg. Dont be low.

MARGARET. [determinedly, preparing to use force] Now, I'll make you kiss me, just to punish you. [She seizes his wrist; pulls him off his balance; and gets her arm round his neck].

BOBBY. No. Stop. Leave go, will you.

*Juggins appears at the door.*

JUGGINS. Miss Delaney, Sir. [Dora comes in. Juggins goes out. Margaret hastily releases Bobby, and goes to the other side of the room.]

DORA. [through the door, to the departing Juggins] Well, you are a Juggins to shew me up when theres company. [To Margaret and Bobby] It's all right, dear: all right, old man: I'll wait in Juggins's pantry til youre disengaged.

MARGARET. Dont you know me?

DORA. [coming to the middle of the room and looking at her very attentively] Why, it's never No. 406!

MARGARET. Yes it is.

DORA. Well, I should never have known you out of the uniform. How did you get out? You were doing a month, wernt you?

MARGARET. My bloke paid the fine the day he got out himself.

DORA. A real gentleman! [Pointing to Bobby, who is staring open-mouthed] Look at him. He cant take it in.

BOBBY. I suppose you made her acquaintance in prison, Meg. But when it comes to talking about blokes and all that--well!

MARGARET. Oh, Ive learnt the language; and I like it. It's another barrier broken down.

BOBBY. It's not so much the language, Meg. But I think [he looks at Dora and stops].

MARGARET. [suddenly dangerous] What do you think, Bobby?

DORA. He thinks you oughtnt to be so free with me, dearie. It does him credit: he always was a gentleman, you know.

MARGARET. Does him credit! To insult you like that! Bobby: say that that wasnt what you meant.

BOBBY. I didnt say it was.

MARGARET. Well, deny that it was.

BOBBY. No. I wouldnt have said it in front of Dora; but I do think it's not quite the same thing my knowing her and you knowing her.



DORA. Of course it isn't, old man. [To Margaret] I'll just trot off and come back in half an hour. You two can make it up together. I'm really not fit company for you, dearie: I couldn't live up to you. [She turns to go].

MARGARET. Stop. Do you believe he could live up to me?

DORA. Well, I'll never say anything to stand between a girl and a respectable marriage, or to stop a decent lad from settling himself. I have a conscience; though I mayn't be as particular as some.

MARGARET. You seem to me to be a very decent sort; and Bobby's behaving like a skunk.

BOBBY. [much ruffled] Nice language that!

DORA. Well, dearie, men have to do some awfully mean things to keep up their respectability. But you can't blame them for that, can you? I've met Bobby walking with his mother; and of course he cut me dead. I won't pretend I liked it; but what could he do, poor dear?

MARGARET. And now he wants me to cut you dead to keep him in countenance. Well, I shan't: not if my whole family were there. But I'll cut him dead if he doesn't treat you properly. [To Bobby, with a threatening move in his direction] I'll educate you, you young beast.

BOBBY. [furious, meeting her half way] Who are you calling a young beast?

MARGARET. You.

DORA. [peacemaking] Now, dearies!

BOBBY. If you don't take care, you'll get your fat head jolly well clouted.

MARGARET. If you don't take care, the policeman's tooth will only be the beginning of a collection.

DORA. Now, loveys, be good.

\_Bobby, lost to all sense of adult dignity, puts out his tongue at Margaret. Margaret, equally furious, catches his protended countenance a box on the cheek. He hurls himself her. They wrestle.\_

BOBBY. Cat! I'll teach you.

MARGARET. Pig! Beast! [She forces him backwards on the table]. Now where are you?

DORA. [calling] Juggins, Juggins. They'll murder one another.

JUGGINS. [throwing open the door, and announcing] Monsieur Duvallet.

\_Duvallet enters. Sudden cessation of hostilities, and dead silence. The combatants separate by the whole width of the room. Juggins withdraws.\_

DUVALLET. I fear I derange you.

MARGARET. Not at all. Bobby: you really are a beast: Monsieur Duvallet will think I'm always fighting.

DUVALLET. Practising jujitsu or the new Iceland wrestling. Admirable, Miss Knox. The athletic young Englishwoman is an example to all Europe. [Indicating Bobby] Your instructor, no doubt. Monsieur-- [he

bows].

BOBBY. [bowing awkwardly] How d'y' do?

MARGARET. [to Bobby] I'm so sorry, Bobby: I asked Monsieur Duvallet to call for me here; and I forgot to tell you. [Introducing] Monsieur Duvallet: Miss Four hundred and seven. Mr Bobby Gilbey. [Duvallet bows]. I really dont know how to explain our relationships. Bobby and I are like brother and sister.

DUVALLET. Perfectly. I noticed it.

MARGARET. Bobby and Miss--Miss-

DORA. Delaney, dear. [To Duvallet, bewitchingly] Darling Dora, to real friends.

MARGARET. Bobby and Dora are--are--well, not brother and sister.

DUVALLET. [with redoubled comprehension] Perfectly.

MARGARET. Bobby has spent the last fortnight in prison. You dont mind, do you?

DUVALLET. No, naturally. *I* have spent the last fortnight in prison.

*The conversation drops. Margaret renews it with an effort.*

MARGARET. Dora has spent the last fortnight in prison.

DUVALLET. Quite so. I felicitate Mademoiselle on her enlargement.

DORA. *Trop merci*, as they say in Boulogne. No call to be stiff with one another, have we?

*Juggins comes in.*

JUGGINS. Beg pardon, sir. Mr and Mrs Gilbey are coming up the street.

DORA. Let me absquatulate [making for the door].

JUGGINS. If you wish to leave without being seen, you had better step into my pantry and leave afterwards.

DORA. Right oh! [She bursts into song] Hide me in the meat safe til the cop goes by. Hum the dear old music as his step draws nigh. [She goes out on tiptoe].

MARGARET. I wont stay here if she has to hide. I'll keep her company in the pantry. [She follows Dora].

BOBBY. Lets all go. We cant have any fun with the Mar here. I say, Juggins: you can give us tea in the pantry, cant you?

JUGGINS. Certainly, sir.

BOBBY. Right. Say nothing to my mother. You dont mind, Mr. Doovalley, do you?

DUVALLET. I shall be charmed.

BOBBY. Right you are. Come along. [At the door] Oh, by the way, Juggins, fetch down that concertina from my room, will you?

JUGGINS. Yes, sir. [Bobby goes out. Duvallet follows him to the door]. You understand, sir, that Miss Knox is a lady absolutely *comme il faut*?

DUVALLET. Perfectly. But the other?

JUGGINS. The other, sir, may be both charitably and accurately described in your native idiom as a daughter of joy.

DUVALLET. It is what I thought. These English domestic interiors are very interesting. [He goes out, followed by Juggins].

\_Presently Mr and Mrs Gilbey come in. They take their accustomed places: he on the hearthrug, she at the colder end of the table.\_

MRS GILBEY. Did you smell scent in the hall, Rob?

GILBEY. No, I didnt. And I dont want to smell it. Dont you go looking for trouble, Maria.

MRS GILBEY. [snuffing up the perfumed atmosphere] Shes been here. [Gilbey rings the bell]. What are you ringing for? Are you going to ask?

GILBEY. No, I'm not going to ask. Juggins said this morning he wanted to speak to me. If he likes to tell me, let him; but I'm not going to ask; and dont you either. [Juggins appears at the door]. You said you wanted to say something to me.

JUGGINS. When it would be convenient to you, sir.

GILBEY. Well, what is it?

MRS GILBEY. Oh, Juggins, we're expecting Mr and Mrs Knox to tea.

GILBEY. He knows that. [He sits down. Then, to Juggins] What is it?

JUGGINS. [advancing to the middle of the table] Would it inconvenience you, sir, if I was to give you a month's notice?

GILBEY. [taken aback] What! Why? Aint you satisfied?

JUGGINS. Perfectly, sir. It is not that I want to better myself, I assure you.

GILBEY. Well, what do you want to leave for, then? Do you want to worse yourself?

JUGGINS. No, sir. Ive been well treated in your most comfortable establishment; and I should be greatly distressed if you or Mrs Gilbey were to interpret my notice as an expression of dissatisfaction.

GILBEY. [paternally] Now you listen to me, Juggins. I'm an older man than you. Dont you throw out dirty water til you get in fresh. Dont get too big for your boots. Youre like all servants nowadays: you think youve only to hold up your finger to get the pick of half a dozen jobs. But you wont be treated everywhere as youre treated here. In bed every night before eleven; hardly a ring at the door except on Mrs Gilbey's day once a

month; and no other manservant to interfere with you. It may be a bit quiet perhaps; but you're past the age of adventure. Take my advice: think over it. You suit me; and I'm prepared to make it suit you if you're dissatisfied--in reason, you know.

JUGGINS. I realize my advantages, sir; but I've private reasons--

GILBEY. [cutting him short angrily and retiring to the hearthrug in dudgeon] Oh, I know. Very well: go. The sooner the better.

MRS GILBEY. Oh, not until we're suited. He must stay his month.

GILBEY. [sarcastic] Do you want to lose him his character, Maria? Do you think I don't see what it is? We're prison folk now. We've been in the police court. [To Juggins] Well, I suppose you know your own business best. I take your notice: you can go when your month is up, or sooner, if you like.

JUGGINS. Believe me, sir--

GILBEY. That's enough: I don't want any excuses. I don't blame you. You can go downstairs now, if you've nothing else to trouble me about.

JUGGINS. I really can't leave it at that, sir. I assure you I've no objection to young Mr Gilbey's going to prison. You may do six months yourself, sir, and welcome, without a word of remonstrance from me. I'm leaving solely because my brother, who has suffered a bereavement, and feels lonely, begs me to spend a few months with him until he gets over it.

GILBEY. And is he to keep you all that time? or are you to spend your savings in comforting him? Have some sense, man: how can you afford such things?

JUGGINS. My brother can afford to keep me, sir. The truth is, he objects to my being in service.

GILBEY. Is that any reason why you should be dependent on him? Don't do it, Juggins: pay your own way like an honest lad; and don't eat your brother's bread while you're able to earn your own.

JUGGINS. There is sound sense in that, sir. But unfortunately it is a tradition in my family that the younger brothers should sponge to a considerable extent on the eldest.

GILBEY. Then the sooner that tradition is broken, the better, my man.

JUGGINS. A Radical sentiment, sir. But an excellent one.

GILBEY. Radical! What do you mean? Don't you begin to take liberties, Juggins, now that you know we're loth to part with you. Your brother isn't a duke, you know.

JUGGINS. Unfortunately, he is, sir.

GILBEY. | What! ||| *together* || MRS GILBEY. | Juggins! |

JUGGINS. Excuse me, sir: the bell. [He goes out].

GILBEY. [overwhelmed] Maria: did you understand him to say his brother was a duke?

MRS GILBEY. Fancy his condescending! Perhaps if you'd offer to raise his wages and treat him as one of the

family, he'd stay.

GILBEY. And have my own servant above me! Not me. Whats the world coming to? Heres Bobby and--

JUGGINS. [entering and announcing] Mr and Mrs Knox.

\_The Knoxes come in. Juggins takes two chairs from the wall and places them at the table, between the host and hostess. Then he withdraws.\_

MRS GILBEY. [to Mrs Knox] How are you, dear?

MRS KNOX. Nicely, thank you. Good evening, Mr Gilbey. [They shake hands; and she takes the chair nearest Mrs Gilbey. Mr Knox takes the other chair].

GILBEY. [sitting down] I was just saying, Knox, What is the world coming to?

KNOX. [appealing to his wife] What was I saying myself only this morning?

MRS KNOX. This is a strange time. I was never one to talk about the end of the world; but look at the things that have happened!

KNOX. Earthquakes!

GILBEY. San Francisco!

MRS GILBEY. Jamaica!

KNOX. Martinique!

GILBEY. Messina!

MRS GILBEY. The plague in China!

MRS KNOX. The floods in France!

GILBEY. My Bobby in Wormwood Scrubbs!

KNOX. Margaret in Holloway!

GILBEY. And now my footman tells me his brother's a duke!

KNOX. | No! | MRS KNOX. | Whats that?

GILBEY. Just before he let you in. A duke! Here has everything been respectable from the beginning of the world, as you may say, to the present day; and all of a sudden everything is turned upside down.

MRS KNOX. It's like in the book of Revelations. But I do say that unless people have happiness within themselves, all the earthquakes, all the floods, and all the prisons in the world cant make them really happy.

KNOX. It isnt alone the curious things that are happening, but the unnatural way people are taking them. Why, theres Margaret been in prison, and she hasnt time to go to all the invitations shes had from people that never asked her before.

GILBEY. I never knew we could live without being respectable.

MRS GILBEY. Oh, Rob, what a thing to say! Who says we're not respectable?

GILBEY. Well, it's not what I call respectable to have your children in and out of gaol.

KNOX. Oh come, Gilbey! we're not tramps because we've had, as it were, an accident.

GILBEY. It's no use, Knox: look it in the face. Did I ever tell you my father drank?

KNOX. No. But I knew it. Simmons told me.

GILBEY. Yes: he never could keep his mouth quiet: he told me your aunt was a kleptomaniac.

MRS KNOX. It wasn't true, Mr Gilbey. She used to pick up handkerchiefs if she saw them lying about; but you might trust her with untold silver.

GILBEY. My Uncle Phil was a teetotaler. My father used to say to me: Rob, he says, don't you ever have a weakness. If you find one getting a hold on you, make a merit of it, he says. Your Uncle Phil doesn't like spirits; and he makes a merit of it, and is chairman of the Blue Ribbon Committee. I do like spirits; and I make a merit of it, and I'm the King Cockatoo of the Convivial Cockatoos. Never put yourself in the wrong, he says. I used to boast about what a good boy Bobby was. Now I swank about what a dog he is; and it pleases people just as well. What a world it is!

KNOX. It turned my blood cold at first to hear Margaret telling people about Holloway; but it goes down better than her singing used to.

MRS KNOX. I never thought she sang right after all those lessons we paid for.

GILBEY. Lord, Knox, it was lucky you and me got let in together. I tell you straight, if it hadn't been for Bobby's disgrace, I'd have broke up the firm.

KNOX. I shouldn't have blamed you: I'd have done the same only for Margaret. Too much straightlacedness narrows a man's mind. Talking of that, what about those hygienic corset advertisements that Vines & Jackson want us to put in the window? I told Vines they weren't decent and we couldn't shew them in our shop. I was pretty high with him. But what am I to say to him now if he comes and throws this business in our teeth?

GILBEY. Oh, put 'em in. We may as well go it a bit now.

MRS GILBEY. You've been going it quite far enough, Rob. [To Mrs Knox] He won't get up in the mornings now: he that was always out of bed at seven to the tick!

MRS KNOX. You hear that, Jo? [To Mrs Gilbey] He's taken to whisky and soda. A pint a week! And the beer the same as before!

KNOX. Oh, don't preach, old girl.

MRS KNOX. [To Mrs Gilbey] That's a new name he's got for me. [to Knox] I tell you, Jo, this doesn't sit well on you. You may call it preaching if you like; but it's the truth for all that. I say that if you've happiness within yourself, you don't need to seek it outside, spending money on drink and theatres and bad company, and being miserable after all. You can sit at home and be happy; and you can work and be happy. If you have that in you, the spirit will set you free to do what you want and guide you to do right. But if you haven't got it, then

you'd best be respectable and stick to the ways that are marked out for you; for you've nothing else to keep you straight.

KNOX. [angrily] And is a man never to have a bit of fun? See what's come of it with your daughter! She was to be content with your happiness that you're always talking about; and how did the spirit guide her? To a month's hard for being drunk and assaulting the police. Did *I* ever assault the police?

MRS KNOX. You wouldn't have the courage. I don't blame the girl.

MRS GILBEY. | Oh, Maria! What are you saying? |

GILBEY. | What! And you so pious!

MRS KNOX. She went where the spirit guided her. And what harm there was in it she knew nothing about.

GILBEY. Oh, come, Mrs Knox! Girls are not so innocent as all that.

MRS KNOX. I don't say she was ignorant. But I do say that she didn't know what we know: I mean the way certain temptations get a sudden hold that no goodness nor self-control is any use against. She was saved from that, and had a rough lesson too; and I say it was no earthly protection that did that. But don't think, you two men, that you'll be protected if you make what she did an excuse to go and do as you'd like to do if it wasn't for fear of losing your characters. The spirit won't guide you, because it isn't in you; and it never had been: not in either of you.

GILBEY. [with ironic humility] I'm sure I'm obliged to you for your good opinion, Mrs Knox.

MRS KNOX. Well, I will say for you, Mr Gilbey, that you're better than my man here. He's a bitter hard heathen, is my Jo, God help me! [She begins to cry quietly].

KNOX. Now, don't take on like that, Amelia. You know I always give in to you that you were right about religion. But one of us had to think of other things, or we'd have starved, we and the child.

MRS KNOX. How do you know you'd have starved? All the other things might have been added unto you.

GILBEY. Come, Mrs Knox, don't tell me Knox is a sinner. I know better. I'm sure you'd be the first to be sorry if anything was to happen to him.

KNOX. [bitterly to his wife] You've always had some grudge against me; and nobody but yourself can understand what it is.

MRS KNOX. I wanted a man who had that happiness within himself. You made me think you had it; but it was nothing but being in love with me.

MRS GILBEY. And do you blame him for that?

MRS KNOX. I blame nobody. But let him not think he can walk by his own light. I tell him that if he gives up being respectable he'll go right down to the bottom of the hill. He has no powers inside himself to keep him steady; so let him cling to the powers outside him.

KNOX. [rising angrily] Who wants to give up being respectable? All this for a pint of whisky that lasted a week! How long would it have lasted Simmons, I wonder?

MRS KNOX. [gently] Oh, well, say no more, Jo. I wont plague you about it. [He sits down]. You never did understand; and you never will. Hardly anybody understands: even Margaret didnt til she went to prison. She does now; and I shall have a companion in the house after all these lonely years.

KNOX. [beginning to cry] I did all I could to make you happy. I never said a harsh word to you.

GILBEY. [rising indignantly] What right have you to treat a man like that? an honest respectable husband? as if he were dirt under your feet?

KNOX. Let her alone, Gilbey. [Gilbey sits down, but mutinously].

MRS KNOX. Well, you gave me all you could, Jo; and if it wasnt what I wanted, that wasnt your fault. But I'd rather have you as you were than since you took to whisky and soda.

KNOX. I dont want any whisky and soda. I'll take the pledge if you like.

MRS KNOX. No: you shall have your beer because you like it. The whisky was only brag. And if you and me are to remain friends, Mr Gilbey, youll get up to-morrow morning at seven.

GILBEY. [defiantly] Damme if I will! There!

MRS KNOX. [with gentle pity] How do you know, Mr Gilbey, what youll do to-morrow morning?

GILBEY. Why shouldnt I know? Are we children not to be let do what we like, and our own sons and daughters kicking their heels all over the place? [To Knox] I was never one to interfere between man and wife, Knox; but if Maria started ordering me about like that--

MRS GILBEY. Now dont be naughty, Rob. You know you mustnt set yourself up against religion?

GILBEY. Whos setting himself up against religion?

MRS KNOX. It doesnt matter whether you set yourself up against it or not, Mr. Gilbey. If it sets itself up against you, youll have to go the appointed way: it's no use quarrelling about it with me that am as great a sinner as yourself.

GILBEY. Oh, indeed! And who told you I was a sinner?

MRS GILBEY. Now, Rob, you know we are all sinners. What else is religion?

GILBEY. I say nothing against religion. I suppose were all sinners, in a manner of speaking; but I dont like to have it thrown at me as if I'd really done anything.

MRS GILBEY. Mrs Knox is speaking for your good, Rob.

GILBEY. Well, I dont like to be spoken to for my good. Would anybody like it?

MRS KNOX. Dont take offence where none is meant, Mr Gilbey. Talk about something else. No good ever comes of arguing about such things among the like of us.

KNOX. The like of us! Are you throwing it in our teeth that your people were in the wholesale and thought Knox and Gilbey wasnt good enough for you?



MRS KNOX. No, Jo: you know I'm not. What better were my people than yours, for all their pride? But I've noticed it all my life: we're ignorant. We don't really know what's right and what's wrong. We're all right as long as things go on the way they always did. We bring our children up just as we were brought up; and we go to church or chapel just as our parents did; and we say what everybody says; and it goes on all right until something out of the way happens: there's a family quarrel, or one of the children goes wrong, or a father takes to drink, or an aunt goes mad, or one of us finds ourselves doing something we never thought we'd want to do. And then you know what happens: complaints and quarrels and huff and offence and bad language and bad temper and regular bewilderment as if Satan possessed us all. We find out then that with all our respectability and piety, we've no real religion and no way of telling right from wrong. We've nothing but our habits; and when they're upset, where are we? Just like Peter in the storm trying to walk on the water and finding he couldn't.

MRS GILBEY. [piously] Aye! He found out, didn't he?

GILBEY. [reverently] I never denied that you've a great intellect, Mrs Knox--

MRS KNOX. Oh get along with you, Gilbey, if you begin talking about my intellect. Give us some tea, Maria. I've said my say; and I'm sure I beg the company's pardon for being so long about it, and so disagreeable.

MRS GILBEY. Ring, Rob. [Gilbey rings]. Stop. Juggins will think we're ringing for him.

GILBEY. [appalled] It's too late. I rang before I thought of it.

MRS GILBEY. Step down and apologize, Rob.

KNOX. Is it him that you said was brother to a--

\_Juggins comes in with the tea-tray. All rise. He takes the tray to Mrs. Gilbey.\_

GILBEY. I didn't mean to ask you to do this, Mr Juggins. I wasn't thinking when I rang.

MRS GILBEY. [trying to take the tray from him] Let me, Juggins.

JUGGINS. Please sit down, madam. Allow me to discharge my duties just as usual, sir. I assure you that is the correct thing. [They sit down, ill at ease, whilst he places the tray on the table. He then goes out for the curate].

KNOX. [lowering his voice] Is this all right, Gilbey? Anybody may be the son of a duke, you know. Is he legitimate?

GILBEY. Good lord! I never thought of that.

*Juggins returns with the cakes. They regard him with suspicion.*

GILBEY. [whispering to Knox] You ask him.

KNOX. [to Juggins] Just a word with you, my man. Was your mother married to your father?

JUGGINS. I believe so, sir. I can't say from personal knowledge. It was before my time.

GILBEY. Well, but look here you know--[he hesitates].

JUGGINS. Yes, sir?

KNOX. I know what'll clinch it, Gilbey. You leave it to me. [To Juggins] Was your mother the duchess?

JUGGINS. Yes, sir. Quite correct, sir, I assure you. [To Mrs Gilbey] That is the milk, madam. [She has mistaken the jugs]. This is the water.

*They stare at him in pitiable embarrassment.*

MRS KNOX. What did I tell you? Heres something out of the common happening with a servant; and we none of us know how to behave.

JUGGINS. It's quite simple, madam. I'm a footman, and should be treated as a footman. [He proceeds calmly with his duties, handing round cups of tea as Mrs Knox fills them].

*Shrieks of laughter from below stairs reach the ears of the company.*

MRS GILBEY. Whats that noise? Is Master Bobby at home? I heard his laugh.

MRS KNOX. I'm sure I heard Margaret's.

GILBEY. Not a bit of it. It was that woman.

JUGGINS. I can explain, sir. I must ask you to excuse the liberty; but I'm entertaining a small party to tea in my pantry.

MRS GILBEY. But youre not entertaining Master Bobby?

JUGGINS. Yes, madam.

GILBEY. Who's with him?

JUGGINS. Miss Knox, sir.

GILBEY. Miss Knox! Are you sure? Is there anyone else?

JUGGINS. Only a French marine officer, sir, and--er--Miss Delaney. [He places Gilbey's tea on the table before him]. The lady that called about Master Bobby, sir.

KNOX. Do you mean to say theyre having a party all to themselves downstairs, and we having a party up here and knowing nothing about it?

JUGGINS. Yes, sir. I have to do a good deal of entertaining in the pantry for Master Bobby, sir.

GILBEY. Well, this is a nice state of things!

KNOX. Whats the meaning of it? What do they do it for?

JUGGINS. To enjoy themselves, sir, I should think.

MRS GILBEY. Enjoy themselves! Did ever anybody hear of such a thing?

GILBEY. Knox's daughter shewn into my pantry!

KNOX. Margaret mixing with a Frenchman and a footman-- [Suddenly realizing that the footman is offering him cake.] She doesnt know about--about His Grace, you know.

MRS GILBEY. Perhaps she does. Does she, Mr Juggins?

JUGGINS. The other lady suspects me, madam. They call me Rudolph, or the Long Lost Heir.

MRS GILBEY. It's a much nicer name than Juggins. I think I'll call you by it, if you dont mind.

JUGGINS. Not at all, madam.

*Roars of merriment from below.*

GILBEY. Go and tell them to stop laughing. What right have they to make a noise like that?

JUGGINS. I asked them not to laugh so loudly, sir. But the French gentleman always sets them off again.

KNOX. Do you mean to tell me that my daughter laughs at a Frenchman's jokes?

GILBEY. We all know what French jokes are.

JUGGINS. Believe me: you do not, sir. The noise this afternoon has all been because the Frenchman said that the cat had whooping cough.

MRS GILBEY. [laughing heartily] Well, I never!

GILBEY. Dont be a fool, Maria. Look here, Knox: we cant let this go on. People cant be allowed to behave like this.

KNOX. Just what I say.

*A concertina adds its music to the revelry.*

MRS GILBEY. [excited] Thats the squiffer. Hes bought it for her.

GILBEY. Well, of all the scandalous-- [Redoubled laughter from below].

KNOX. I'll put a stop to this. [He goes out to the landing and shouts] Margaret! [Sudden dead silence]. Margaret, I say!

MARGARET'S VOICE. Yes, father. Shall we all come up? We're dying to.

KNOX. Come up and be ashamed of yourselves, behaving like wild Indians.

DORA'S VOICE [screaming] Oh! oh! oh! Dont Bobby. Now--oh! [In headlong flight she dashes into and right across the room, breathless, and slightly abashed by the company]. I beg your pardon, Mrs Gilbey, for coming in like that; but whenever I go upstairs in front of Bobby, he pretends it's a cat biting my ankles; and I just must scream.

\_Bobby and Margaret enter rather more shyly, but evidently in high spirits. Bobby places himself near his

father, on the hearthrug, and presently slips down into the arm-chair.\_

MARGARET. How do you do, Mrs. Gilbey? [She posts herself behind her mother].

*Duvallet comes in behaving himself perfectly. Knox follows.*

MARGARET. Oh--let me introduce. My friend Lieutenant Duvallet. Mrs Gilbey. Mr Gilbey. [Duvallet bows and sits down on Mr Knox's left, Juggins placing a chair for him].

DORA. Now, Bobby: introduce me: theres a dear.

BOBBY. [a little nervous about it; but trying to keep up his spirits] Miss Delaney: Mr and Mrs Knox. [Knox, as he resumes his seat, acknowledges the introduction suspiciously. Mrs Knox bows gravely, looking keenly at Dora and taking her measure without prejudice].

DORA. Pleased to meet you. [Juggins places the baby rocking-chair for her on Mrs Gilbey's right, opposite Mrs Knox]. Thank you. [She sits and turns to Mrs Gilbey] Bobby's given me the squiffer. [To the company generally] Do you know what theyve been doing downstairs? [She goes off into ecstasies of mirth]. Youd never guess. Theyve been trying to teach me table manners. The Lieutenant and Rudolph say I'm a regular pig. I'm sure I never knew there was anything wrong with me. But live and learn [to Gilbey] eh, old dear?

JUGGINS. Old dear is not correct, Miss Delaney. [He retires to the end of the sideboard nearest the door].

DORA. Oh get out! I must call a man something. He doesnt mind: do you, Charlie?

MRS GILBEY. His name isnt Charlie.

DORA. Excuse me. I call everybody Charlie.

JUGGINS. You mustnt.

DORA. Oh, if I were to mind you, I should have to hold my tongue altogether; and then how sorry youd be! Lord, how I do run on! Dont mind me, Mrs Gilbey.

KNOX. What I want to know is, whats to be the end of this? It's not for me to interfere between you and your son, Gilbey: he knows his own intentions best, no doubt, and perhaps has told them to you. But Ive my daughter to look after; and it's my duty as a parent to have a clear understanding about her. No good is ever done by beating about the bush. I ask Lieutenant--well, I dont speak French; and I cant pronounce the name--

MARGARET. Mr Duvallet, father.

KNOX. I ask Mr Doovalley what his intentions are.

MARGARET. Oh father: how can you?

DUVALLET. I'm afraid my knowledge of English is not enough to understand. Intentions? How?

MARGARET. He wants to know will you marry me.

MRS GILBEY. | What a thing to say! |

KNOX. | Silence, miss. |

DORA. | Well, thats straight, aint it?

DUVALLET. But I am married already. I have two daughters.

KNOX. [rising, virtuously indignant] You sit there after carrying on with my daughter, and tell me coolly youre married.

MARGARET. Papa: you really must not tell people that they sit there. [He sits down again sulkily].

DUVALLET. Pardon. Carrying on? What does that mean?

MARGARET. It means--

KNOX. [violently] Hold your tongue, you shameless young hussy. Dont you dare say what it means.

DUVALLET. [shrugging his shoulders] What does it mean, Rudolph?

MRS KNOX. If it's not proper for her to say, it's not proper for a man to say, either. Mr Doovalley: youre a married man with daughters. Would you let them go about with a stranger, as you are to us, without wanting to know whether he intended to behave honorably?

DUVALLET. Ah, madam, my daughters are French girls. That is very different. It would not be correct for a French girl to go about alone and speak to men as English and American girls do. That is why I so immensely admire the English people. You are so free--so unprejudiced--your women are so brave and frank--their minds are so--how do you say?--wholesome. I intend to have my daughters educated in England. Nowhere else in the world but in England could I have met at a Variety Theatre a charming young lady of perfect respectability, and enjoyed a dance with her at a public dancing saloon. And where else are women trained to box and knock out the teeth of policemen as a protest against injustice and violence? [Rising, with immense elan] Your daughter, madam, is superb. Your country is a model to the rest of Europe. If you were a Frenchman, stifled with prudery, hypocrisy and the tyranny of the family and the home, you would understand how an enlightened Frenchman admires and envies your freedom, your broadmindedness, and the fact that home life can hardly be said to exist in England. You have made an end of the despotism of the parent; the family council is unknown to you; everywhere in these islands one can enjoy the exhilarating, the soul-liberating spectacle of men quarrelling with their brothers, defying their fathers, refusing to speak to their mothers. In France we are not men: we are only sons--grown-up children. Here one is a human being--an end in himself. Oh, Mrs Knox, if only your military genius were equal to your moral genius--if that conquest of Europe by France which inaugurated the new age after the Revolution had only been an English conquest, how much more enlightened the world would have been now! We, alas, can only fight. France is unconquerable. We impose our narrow ideas, our prejudices, our obsolete institutions, our insufferable pedantry on the world by brute force--by that stupid quality of military heroism which shews how little we have evolved from the savage: nay, from the beast. We can charge like bulls; we can spring on our foes like gamecocks; when we are overpowered by reason, we can die fighting like rats. And we are foolish enough to be proud of it! Why should we be? Does the bull progress? Can you civilize the gamecock? Is there any future for the rat? We cant even fight intelligently: when we lose battles, it is because we have not sense enough to know when we are beaten. At Waterloo, had we known when we were beaten, we should have retreated; tried another plan; and won the battle. But no: we were too pigheaded to admit that there is anything impossible to a Frenchman: we were quite satisfied when our Marshals had six horses shot under them, and our stupid old grognards died fighting rather than surrender like reasonable beings. Think of your great Wellington: think of his inspiring words, when the lady asked him whether British soldiers ever ran away. "All soldiers run away, madam," he said; "but if there are supports for them to fall back on it does not matter." Think of your illustrious Nelson, always beaten on land, always victorious at sea, where his men could not run away. You are not dazzled and misled by false ideals of patriotic enthusiasm: your honest and sensible statesmen demand

for England a two-power standard, even a three-power standard, frankly admitting that it is wise to fight three to one: whilst we, fools and braggarts as we are, declare that every Frenchman is a host in himself, and that when one Frenchman attacks three Englishmen he is guilty of an act of cowardice comparable to that of the man who strikes a woman. It is folly: it is nonsense: a Frenchman is not really stronger than a German, than an Italian, even than an Englishman. Sir: if all Frenchwomen were like your daughter--if all Frenchmen had the good sense, the power of seeing things as they really are, the calm judgment, the open mind, the philosophic grasp, the foresight and true courage, which are so natural to you as an Englishman that you are hardly conscious of possessing them, France would become the greatest nation in the world.

MARGARET. Three cheers for old England! [She shakes hands with him warmly].

BOBBY. Hurra-a-ay! And so say all of us.

\_Duvallet, having responded to Margaret's handshake with enthusiasm, kisses Juggins on both cheeks, and sinks into his chair, wiping his perspiring brow.\_

GILBEY. Well, this sort of talk is above me. Can you make anything out of it, Knox?

KNOX. The long and short of it seems to be that he cant lawfully marry my daughter, as he ought after going to prison with her.

DORA. I'm ready to marry Bobby, if that will be any satisfaction.

GILBEY. No you dont. Not if I know it.

MRS KNOX. He ought to, Mr Gilbey.

GILBEY. Well, if thats your religion, Amelia Knox, I want no more of it. Would you invite them to your house if he married her?

MRS KNOX. He ought to marry her whether or no.

BOBBY. I feel I ought to, Mrs Knox.

GILBEY. Hold your tongue. Mind your own business.

BOBBY. [wildly] If I'm not let marry her, I'll do something downright disgraceful. I'll enlist as a soldier.

JUGGINS. That is not a disgrace, sir.

BOBBY. Not for you, perhaps. But youre only a footman. I'm a gentleman.

MRS GILBEY. Dont dare to speak disrespectfully to Mr Rudolph, Bobby. For shame!

JUGGINS. [coming forward to the middle of the table] It is not gentlemanly to regard the service of your country as disgraceful. It is gentlemanly to marry the lady you make love to.

GILBEY. [aghast] My boy is to marry this woman and be a social outcast!

JUGGINS. Your boy and Miss Delaney will be inexorably condemned by respectable society to spend the rest of their days in precisely the sort of company they seem to like best and be most at home in.

KNOX. And my daughter? Whos to marry my daughter?

JUGGINS. Your daughter, sir, will probably marry whoever she makes up her mind to marry. She is a lady of very determined character.

KNOX. Yes: if he'd have her with her character gone. But who would? Youre the brother of a duke. Would--

BOBBY. | Whats that? | MARGARET. | Juggins a duke? | DUVALLET. | *Comment!* | DORA. | What did I tell you?

KNOX. Yes: the brother of a duke: thats what he is. [To Juggins] Well, would you marry her?

JUGGINS. I was about to propose that solution of your problem, Mr Knox.

MRS GILBEY. | Well I never! | KNOX. | D'ye mean it? | MRS KNOX. | Marry Margaret!

JUGGINS. [continuing] As an idle younger son, unable to support myself, or even to remain in the Guards in competition with the grandsons of American millionaires, I could not have aspired to Miss Knox's hand. But as a sober, honest, and industrious domestic servant, who has, I trust, given satisfaction to his employer [he bows to Mr Gilbey] I feel I am a man with a character. It is for Miss Knox to decide.

MARGARET. I got into a frightful row once for admiring you, Rudolph.

JUGGINS. I should have got into an equally frightful row myself, Miss, had I betrayed my admiration for you. I looked forward to those weekly dinners.

MRS KNOX. But why did a gentleman like you stoop to be a footman?

DORA. He stooped to conquer.

MARGARET. Shut up, Dora: I want to hear.

JUGGINS. I will explain; but only Mrs Knox will understand. I once insulted a servant--rashly; for he was a sincere Christian. He rebuked me for trifling with a girl of his own class. I told him to remember what he was, and to whom he was speaking. He said God would remember. I discharged him on the spot.

GILBEY. Very properly.

KNOX. What right had he to mention such a thing to you?

MRS GILBEY. What are servants coming to?

MRS KNOX. Did it come true, what he said?

JUGGINS. It stuck like a poisoned arrow. It rankled for months. Then I gave in. I apprenticed myself to an old butler of ours who kept a hotel. He taught me my present business, and got me a place as footman with Mr Gilbey. If ever I meet that man again I shall be able to look him in the face.

MRS KNOX. Margaret: it's not on account of the duke: dukes are vanities. But take my advice and take him.

MARGARET. [slipping her arm through his] I have loved Juggins since the first day I beheld him. I felt instinctively he had been in the Guards. May he walk out with me, Mr Gilbey?

KNOX. Dont be vulgar, girl. Remember your new position. [To Juggins] I suppose youre serious about this, Mr--Mr Rudolph?

JUGGINS. I propose, with your permission, to begin keeping company this afternoon, if Mrs Gilbey can spare me.

GILBEY. [in a gust of envy, to Bobby] Itll be long enough before youll marry the sister of a duke, you young good-for-nothing.

DORA. Dont fret, old dear. Rudolph will teach me high-class manners. I call it quite a happy ending: dont you, lieutenant?

DUVALLET. In France it would be impossible. But here--ah! [kissing his hand] la belle Angleterre!

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## EPILOGUE

\_Before the curtain. The Count, dazed and agitated, hurries to the 4 critics, as they rise, bored and weary, from their seats.\_

THE COUNT. Gentlemen: do not speak to me. I implore you to withhold your opinion. I am not strong enough to bear it. I could never have believed it. Is this a play? Is this in any sense of the word, Art? Is it agreeable? Can it conceivably do good to any human being? Is it delicate? Do such people really exist? Excuse me, gentlemen: I speak from a wounded heart. There are private reasons for my discomposure. This play implies obscure, unjust, unkind reproaches and menaces to all of us who are parents.

TROTTER. Pooh! you take it too seriously. After all, the thing has amusing passages. Dismiss the rest as impertinence.

THE COUNT. Mr Trotter: it is easy for you to play the pococurantist. [Trotter, amazed, repeats the first three syllables in his throat, making a noise like a pheasant]. You see hundreds of plays every year. But to me, who have never seen anything of this kind before, the effect of this play is terribly disquieting. Sir: if it had been what people call an immoral play, I shouldnt have minded a bit. [Vaughan is shocked]. Love beautifies every romance and justifies every audacity. [Bannal assents gravely]. But there are reticences which everybody should respect. There are decencies too subtle to be put into words, without which human society would be unbearable. People could not talk to one another as those people talk. No child could speak to its parent--no girl could speak to a youth--no human creature could tear down the veils-- [Appealing to Vaughan, who is on his left flank, with Gunn between them] Could they, sir?

VAUGHAN. Well, I dont see that.

THE COUNT. You dont see it! dont feel it! [To Gunn] Sir: I appeal to you.

GUNN. [with studied weariness] It seems to me the most ordinary sort of old-fashioned Ibsenite drivel.

THE COUNT [turning to Trotter, who is on his right, between him and Bannal] Mr Trotter: will you tell me that you are not amazed, outraged, revolted, wounded in your deepest and holiest feelings by every word of this play, every tone, every implication; that you did not sit there shrinking in every fibre at the thought of what might come next?

TROTTER. Not a bit. Any clever modern girl could turn out that kind of thing by the yard.



THE COUNT. Then, sir, tomorrow I start for Venice, never to return. I must believe what you tell me. I perceive that you are not agitated, not surprised, not concerned; that my own horror (yes, gentlemen, horror--horror of the very soul) appears unaccountable to you, ludicrous, absurd, even to you, Mr Trotter, who are little younger than myself. Sir: if young people spoke to me like that, I should die of shame: I could not face it. I must go back. The world has passed me by and left me. Accept the apologies of an elderly and no doubt ridiculous admirer of the art of a bygone day, when there was still some beauty in the world and some delicate grace in family life. But I promised my daughter your opinion; and I must keep my word. Gentlemen: you are the choice and master spirits of this age: you walk through it without bewilderment and face its strange products without dismay. Pray deliver your verdict. Mr Bannal: you know that it is the custom at a Court Martial for the youngest officer present to deliver his judgment first; so that he may not be influenced by the authority of his elders. You are the youngest. What is your opinion of the play?

BANNAL. Well, whos it by?

THE COUNT. That is a secret for the present.

BANNAL. You dont expect me to know what to say about a play when I dont know who the author is, do you?

THE COUNT. Why not?

BANNAL. Why not! Why not!! Suppose you had to write about a play by Pinero and one by Jones! Would you say exactly the same thing about them?

THE COUNT. I presume not.

BANNAL. Then how could you write about them until you knew which was Pinero and which was Jones? Besides, what sort of play is this? thats what I want to know. Is it a comedy or a tragedy? Is it a farce or a melodrama? Is it repertory theatre tosh, or really straight paying stuff?

GUNN. Cant you tell from seeing it?

BANNAL. I can see it all right enough; but how am I to know how to take it? Is it serious, or is it spoof? If the author knows what his play is, let him tell us what it is. If he doesnt, he cant complain if I dont know either. *I'm not the author.*

THE COUNT. But is it a good play, Mr Bannal? Thats a simple question.

BANNAL. Simple enough when you know. If it's by a good author, it's a good play, naturally. That stands to reason. Who is the author? Tell me that; and I'll place the play for you to a hair's breadth.

THE COUNT. I'm sorry I'm not at liberty to divulge the author's name. The author desires that the play should be judged on its merits.

BANNAL. But what merits can it have except the author's merits? Who would you say it's by, Gunn?

GUNN. Well, who do you think? Here you have a rotten old-fashioned domestic melodrama acted by the usual stage puppets. The hero's a naval lieutenant. All melodramatic heroes are naval lieutenants. The heroine gets into trouble by defying the law (if she didnt get into trouble, thered be no drama) and plays for sympathy all the time as hard as she can. Her good old pious mother turns on her cruel father when hes going to put her out of the house, and says she'll go too. Then theres the comic relief: the comic shopkeeper, the comic shopkeeper's wife, the comic footman who turns out to be a duke in disguise, and the young scapegrace who

gives the author his excuse for dragging in a fast young woman. All as old and stale as a fried fish shop on a winter morning.

THE COUNT. But--

GUNN [interrupting him] I know what you're going to say, Count. You're going to say that the whole thing seems to you to be quite new and unusual and original. The naval lieutenant is a Frenchman who cracks up the English and runs down the French: the hackneyed old Shaw touch. The characters are second-rate middle class, instead of being dukes and millionaires. The heroine gets kicked through the mud: real mud. There's no plot. All the old stage conventions and puppets without the old ingenuity and the old enjoyment. And a feeble air of intellectual pretentiousness kept up all through to persuade you that if the author hasn't written a good play it's because he's too clever to stoop to anything so commonplace. And you three experienced men have sat through all this, and can't tell me who wrote it! Why, the play bears the author's signature in every line.

BANNAL. Who?

GUNN. Granville Barker, of course. Why, old Gilbey is straight out of *The Madras House*.

BANNAL. Poor old Barker!

VAUGHAN. Utter nonsense! Can't you see the difference in style?

BANNAL. No.

VAUGHAN. [contemptuously] Do you know what style is?

BANNAL. Well, I suppose you'd call Trotter's uniform style. But it's not my style--since you ask me.

VAUGHAN. To me it's perfectly plain who wrote that play. To begin with, it's intensely disagreeable. Therefore it's not by Barrie, in spite of the footman, who's cribbed from *The Admirable Crichton*. He was an earl, you may remember. You notice, too, the author's offensive habit of saying silly things that have no real sense in them when you come to examine them, just to set all the fools in the house giggling. Then what does it all come to? An attempt to expose the supposed hypocrisy of the Puritan middle class in England: people just as good as the author, anyhow. With, of course, the inevitable improper female: the Mrs Tanqueray, Iris, and so forth. Well, if you can't recognize the author of that, you've mistaken your professions: that's all I have to say.

BANNAL. Why are you so down on Pinero? And what about that touch that Gunn spotted? the Frenchman's long speech. I believe it's Shaw.

GUNN. Rubbish!

VAUGHAN. Rot! You may put that idea out of your head, Bannal. Poor as this play is, there's the note of passion in it. You feel somehow that beneath all the assumed levity of that poor waif and stray, she really loves Bobby and will be a good wife to him. Now I've repeatedly proved that Shaw is physiologically incapable of the note of passion.

BANNAL. Yes, I know. Intellect without emotion. That's right. I always say that myself. A giant brain, if you ask me; but no heart.

GUNN. Oh, shut up, Bannal. This crude medieval psychology of heart and brain--Shakespeare would have called it liver and wits--is really schoolboyish. Surely we've had enough of second-hand Schopenhauer. Even

such a played-out old back number as Ibsen would have been ashamed of it. Heart and brain, indeed!

VAUGHAN. You have neither one nor the other, Gunn. You're decadent.

GUNN. Decadent! How I love that early Victorian word!

VAUGHAN. Well, at all events, you can't deny that the characters in this play were quite distinguishable from one another. That proves it's not by Shaw, because all Shaw's characters are himself: mere puppets stuck up to spout Shaw. It's only the actors that make them seem different.

BANNAL. There can be no doubt of that: everybody knows it. But Shaw doesn't write his plays as plays. All he wants to do is to insult everybody all round and set us talking about him.

TROTTER. [wearily] And naturally, here we are all talking about him. For heaven's sake, let us change the subject

VAUGHAN. Still, my articles about Shaw--

GUNN. Oh, stow it, Vaughan. Drop it. What I've always told you about Shaw is--

BANNAL. There you go, Shaw, Shaw, Shaw! Do chuck it. If you want to know my opinion about Shaw--

TROTTER. | No, please, we don't. | | VAUGHAN. | Shut your head, Bannal. | [yelling] | | GUNN. | Oh, do drop it. |

\_The deafened Count puts his fingers in his ears and flies from the centre of the group to its outskirts, behind Vaughan.\_

BANNAL. [sulkily] Oh, very well. Sorry I spoke, I'm sure.

TROTTER. | Shaw-- | | [beginning again VAUGHAN. | Shaw-- | simultaneously] | | GUNN. | Shaw-- |

\_They are cut short by the entry of Fanny through the curtains. She is almost in tears.\_

FANNY. [coming between Trotter and Gunn] I'm so sorry, gentlemen. And it was such a success when I read it to the Cambridge Fabian Society!

TROTTER. Miss O'Dowda: I was about to tell these gentlemen what I guessed before the curtain rose: that you are the author of the play. [General amazement and consternation].

FANNY. And you all think it beastly. You hate it. You think I'm a conceited idiot, and that I shall never be able to write anything decent.

*She is almost weeping. A wave of sympathy carries away the critics.*

VAUGHAN. No, no. Why, I was just saying that it must have been written by Pinero. Didn't I, Gunn?

FANNY. [enormously flattered] Really?

TROTTER. I thought Pinero was much too popular for the Cambridge Fabian Society.

FANNY. Oh yes, of course; but still--Oh, did you really say that, Mr Vaughan?

GUNN. I owe you an apology, Miss O'Dowda. I said it was by Barker.

FANNY. [radiant] Granville Barker! Oh, you couldnt really have thought it so fine as that.

BANNAL. *I said Bernard Shaw.*

FANNY. Oh, of course it would be a little like Bernard Shaw. The Fabian touch, you know.

BANNAL. [coming to her encouragingly] A jolly good little play, Miss O'Dowda. Mind: I dont say it's like one of Shakespear's--Hamlet or The Lady of Lyons, you know--but still, a firstrate little bit of work. [He shakes her hand].

GUNN. [following Bannal's example] I also, Miss O'Dowda. Capital. Charming. [He shakes hands].

VAUGHAN [with maudlin solemnity] Only be true to yourself, Miss O'Dowda. Keep serious. Give up making silly jokes. Sustain the note of passion. And youll do great things.

FANNY. You think I have a future?

TROTTER. You have a past, Miss O'Dowda.

FANNY. [looking apprehensively at her father] Sh-sh-sh!

THE COUNT. A past! What do you mean, Mr Trotter?

TROTTER. [to Fanny] You cant deceive me. That bit about the police was real. Youre a Suffraget, Miss O'Dowda. You were on that Deputation.

THE COUNT. Fanny: is this true?

FANNY. It is. I did a month with Lady Constance Lytton; and I'm prouder of it than I ever was of anything or ever shall be again.

TROTTER. Is that any reason why you should stuff naughty plays down my throat?

FANNY. Yes: itll teach you what it feels like to be forcibly fed.

THE COUNT. She will never return to Venice. I feel now as I felt when the Campanile fell.

*Savoyard comes in through the curtains.*

SAVOYARD. [to the Count] Would you mind coming to say a word of congratulation to the company? Theyre rather upset at having had no curtain call.

THE COUNT. Certainly, certainly. I'm afraid Ive been rather remiss. Let us go on the stage, gentlemen.

*\_The curtains are drawn, revealing the last scene of the play and the actors on the stage. The Count, Savoyard, the critics, and Fanny join them, shaking hands and congratulating.\_*

THE COUNT. Whatever we may think of the play, gentlemen, I'm sure you will agree with me that there can be only one opinion about the acting.

THE CRITICS. Hear, hear! [They start the applause].

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AYOT ST. LAWRENCE, March 1911.

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