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*Too Much Money*

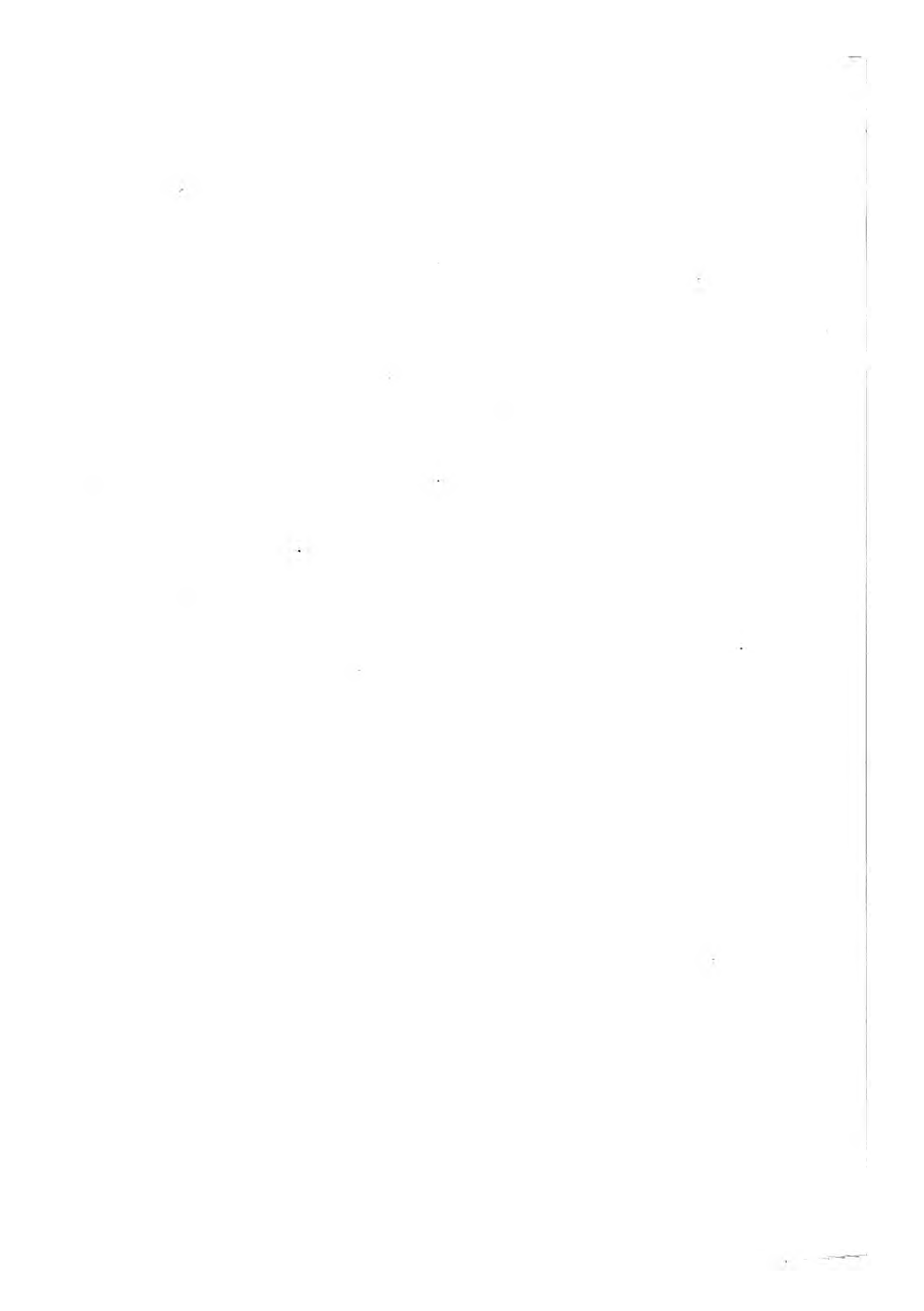
*Israel Zangwill*



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TOO MUCH MONEY

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# TOO MUCH MONEY

A FARCICAL COMEDY IN  
THREE ACTS

BY

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

AUTHOR OF "THE MELTING POT," "MERELY MARY ANN," ETC



LONDON  
WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD





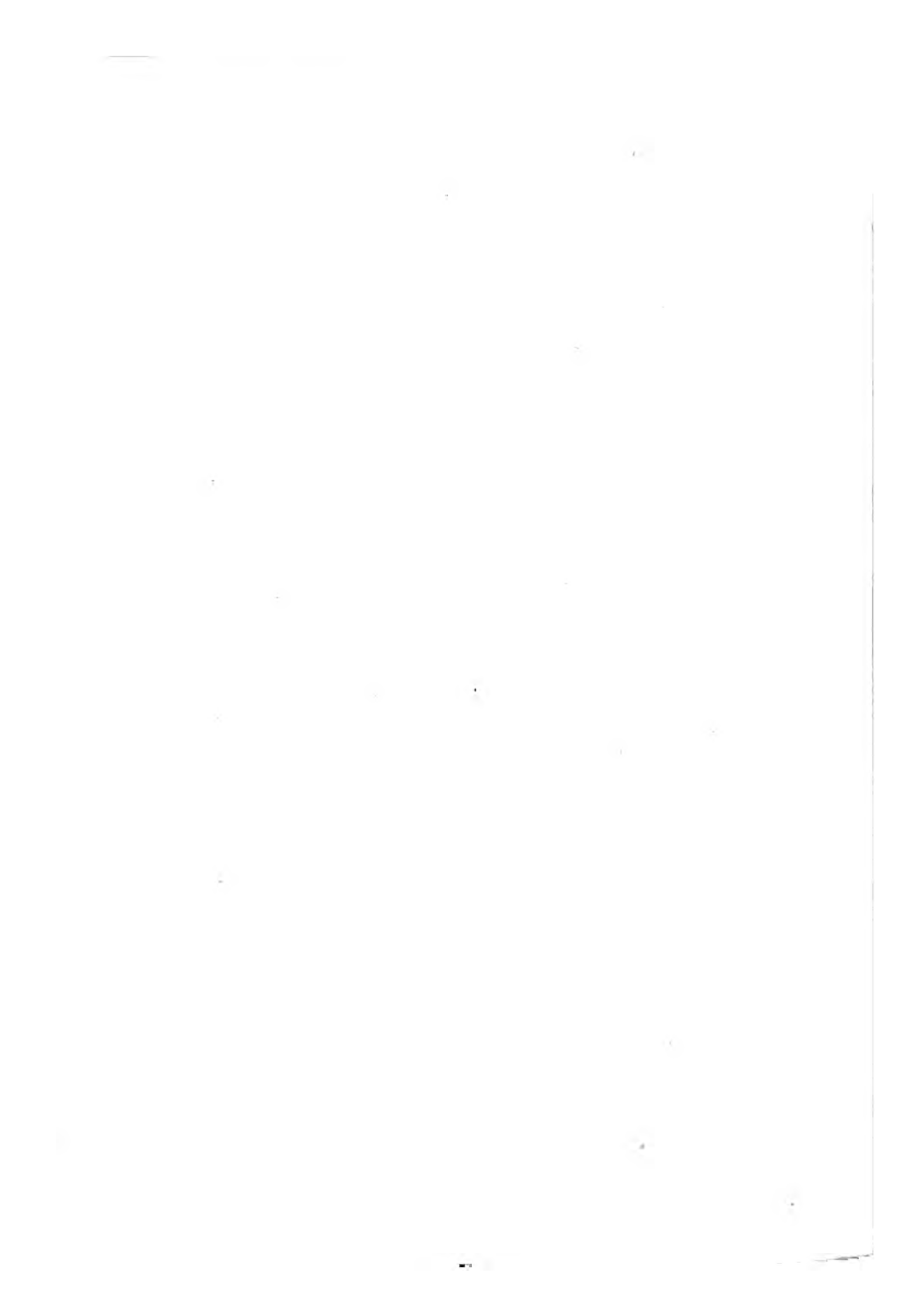
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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

WHEN Lord Byron heard that his mother was dead, he is said to have sought relief in boxing: during the tragic tension of the Great War, I sought similar relief in writing a farce. The war took its revenge, for when after a triumphant tour in Scotland (where there is evidently a strong sense of humour) the play was brought to the Ambassadors' Theatre in London, the defeat of the Fifth Army that Spring killed off almost everything on the London stage, and, in spite of Miss Lillah McCarthy's brilliant performance, it did not get much beyond its fiftieth performance there. Since then, apart from some little provincial tours, in one of which Miss Viola Tree took over the leading rôle, its credit has been redeemed by successful presentations at Prague in Czech, and at Budapest in Hungarian, with other translations pending. The late H. W. Massingham in his generous criticism said that it came very near great comic portraiture, and ought to have been a comedy of manners; but I have left what William Archer called its "irresistible horse-play" unchanged, believing with Molière that farce need not exclude a background of contemporary satire and portraiture. In deference, however, to the modern conception, the piece is now styled a "a farcical comedy."

*September, 1924.*



## THE CAST

(As produced at the Ambassadors Theatre, London,  
April 9, 1918.)

### MALES

THOMAS BROADLEY, a born mil- lionaire .. .. .	Marsh Allen.
SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL, BART., a self-made millionaire ..	M. R. Morand.
GRANDISON TIPTREE, a Futurist painter .. .. .	Ernest Hendrie.
SERGEANT QUIZZET, a limb of the law .. .. .	Henry Millar.
BEWLISON, a butler with soul ..	Stephen Wentworth.

### FEMALES

ANNABEL BROADLEY, a daughter of the gods .. .. .	Lillah McCarthy.
THISBE LEACH, a struggle-for- lifer .. .. .	Lettice Fairfax.
LILIAN ROSELEAF, a scientific housekeeper .. .. .	Hilda Bruce Potter.
MRS. CROW, a Poplar landlady	Mary Brough.

### CREATURES

FOOTMEN, VANMEN, SHOPMEN, CONSTABLE TROTTER,  
and the lady lap-dog, ISOLDE.

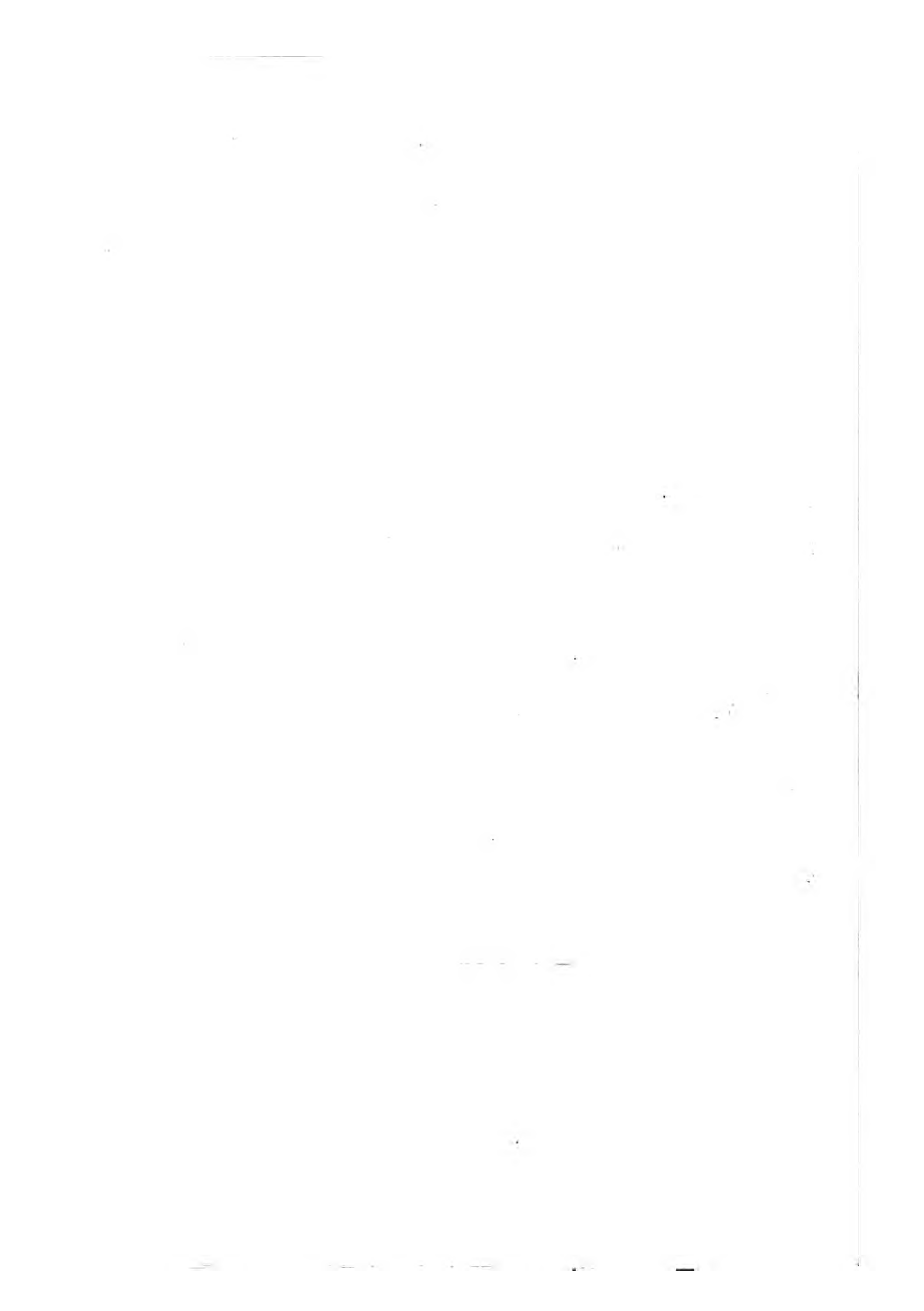
The play produced by Mr. E. Holman Clark.

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ACT I.—MRS. BROADLEY'S drawing-room in Mayfair.  
An April before the Great War.

ACT II.—MRS. CROW'S garret in Poplar. Nearly a  
fortnight later.

ACT III.—MRS. BROADLEY'S drawing-room in Mayfair.  
In the following April.



# TOO MUCH MONEY

## ACT I

*The curtain rises on ANNABEL BROADLEY'S drawing-room in Mayfair in an April before the Great War. It is a spacious, fantastic apartment, with central folding doors in the back wall leading to a corridor, and a side door in the right wall leading to an ante-room and ANNABEL'S boudoir. The walls are frescoed with a flamboyant futuristic pattern; a brilliant lamp hanging from the ceiling makes a colour-harmony with a gaily cushioned divan on the floor to the right, and a screen of strange hues and symbols at the back. The furniture is precious but minute, and dotted about in space-harmonies. It includes a writing-desk by the left wall, a central tea-table and an uncomfortable settee towards the left centre. There is a window with freakish curtains in this wall. Opposite is a gleam of fire in a low artistic grate, with a quaint coal-scuttle. The artistic impression of the whole is, however, shattered by a capacious Club armchair squatting pugnaciously in the foreground at the right centre. On an easel at the left centre is a large plain-framed, highly coloured chaos. Two immaculate FOOTMEN are seen coming in from the corridor bearing a similar riot of cubes and rainbows, which they substitute for the first, while two young ladies at the door seem to supervise this change of pictures. The one in outdoor toilette, MISS THISBE LEACH, is a tall, handsome, tailor-made sort of girl with a vigorous personality radiating from the tip of her dashing hat-feather to the patent-leather point of*

*her toe. The other, whose neatly parted brown hair seems haloed with old-world innocence, is MISS LILIAN ROSELEAF, an exquisitely pretty and petite Puritan figure, the apparent quintessence of early Victorian girlishness, but in reality a supremely efficient modern scientific housekeeper and a celebrated suffragist speaker.*

MISS ROSELEAF (*in a gentle musical voice*). In the Blue Room, with the others.

FIRST FOOTMAN. Yes, Miss Roseleaf.

(*The FOOTMEN stolidly bear out the picture.*)

MISS ROSELEAF (*going to the left*). Won't you sit down, Miss Leach? Mrs. Broadley knows you've brought the picture of the week.

THISBE. Thank you. (*Sits on the settee and stares in exaggerated ecstasy at the picture.*) Isn't it life-enhancing?

MISS ROSELEAF. I'm afraid I don't understand Mr. Tiptree's masterpieces.

THISBE (*shocked*). And you a Futurist in politics! Ah, Miss Roseleaf, if only the politicians would make politics as Mr. Tiptree makes pictures!

MISS ROSELEAF (*drily, as she looks at the chaos of cubes*). They do! That's why we women must come in. But I forgot—you believe in muddles for men.

THISBE. Not since your lecture on the woman-made world.

MISS ROSELEAF (*surprised and incredulous*). Really? You were at the Poplar Town Hall?

THISBE. It was life-enhancing. Ah, what a pity Mrs. Broadley is still in darkness. Why don't you convert her?

MISS ROSELEAF. I was engaged as housekeeper, not as missionary. My lectures are open to her.

THISBE. She's too grand and too lazy to go to Poplar. But what can one expect of a woman with so much money?

MISS ROSELEAF (*bitingly*). Some people seem to expect the money. [*Exit by central doors.*]

THISBE (*her expression changing to angry contempt*). Silly suffragette!

(*The door from the ante-room opens, revealing ANNABEL BROADLEY, a daughter of the gods, divinely tall and most divinely fair, but also sublimely sad, a tragedy-queen moving with a stately rustle of rich exotic gown. THISBE rushes into her arms.*)

My gracious Annabel!

ANNABEL. My life-enhancing Thisbe! (*Holds her in a long silent embrace.*) And to think that before we met at the Babylonian ballet my soul had never found a friend! Can it be only ten weeks ago?

THISBE. Poor Annabel! Were you always so lonely?

ANNABEL. Always! I had eleven sisters, and you know what a wilderness that is to an imaginative child.

THISBE. Eleven sisters? Your father, I suppose, was always wrapped up in his sermons.

ANNABEL (*astonished*). I never told you my father was a clergyman. How exquisitely intuitive you are! Yes, my father was an archdeacon, and my mother was Lady Jane Porter, and then—to add to my loneliness—there came a husband. . . . (*With sudden ecstasy as she perceives the riot of cubes and rainbows.*) Ha! My new Monday picture!

THISBE. By the first of the Paulo-Post-Futurists.

ANNABEL. Another Tiptree! How kind of you! However do you get hold of them?

THISBE. Just knowing the dealers. Only two hundred guineas.

ANNABEL. That swirl of leaves—stupendous!

THISBE (*embarrassed*). It isn't exactly leaves—it's lives.

ANNABEL. Yes, the whirligig of life.

THISBE. Or, more precisely, death.



ANNABEL. Yes, the Dance of Death! Macaberesque! Corybantic!

THISBE. And only two hundred guineas.

ANNABEL. And that stupendous change of key in the bravura passage——

THISBE. And all for two hundred guineas!

ANNABEL. The man is a Blake of the brush! (*Rapt in it again.*)

THISBE. Shall I get your cheque-book, dear?

ANNABEL (*negatively*). It's in my boudoir, darling. And Isolde is asleep.

THISBE. I won't wake the precious.

*(Tiptoes out to ante-room. The petulant barking of a lap-dog breaks out, but does not reach ANNABEL'S consciousness, still rapt in the picture, before which she is almost kneeling. THISBE returns, carrying the be-ribboned toy dog squatting on the cheque-book.)*

Isolde had woke up, so I thought you would like her.

ANNABEL (*taking her effusively with long-drawn osculatory salutations*). My sweeting! And did she have a bad night? Look what her mummy has bought her! (*Holds her up before the picture. ISOLDE howls.*) You see how she understands! Dogs always howl at the sight of Death.

THISBE. Shall I write the cheque for you?

ANNABEL. That would be kind. (*THISBE goes to the desk.*) Oh, how shall I bear to change this next Monday!

THISBE (*writing cheque with the big fantastic quill*). Now, now, no backsliding. Only one piece of art in a room, and change that every week!

ANNABEL. Yes, I know the Japanese are right. But what's the use of building a harmony round my husband, when all he wants is to be "comfy"! Ugh (*punching the armchair viciously*), I hate the word!

THISBE. Yes, but think of the price he paid you for permission to plant his armchair here. If it does spoil

your space-harmonies, remember that that chair was the foundation of the Home for Lost Arts. Thirty thousand pounds he gave you, wasn't it ?

ANNABEL. Thirty or forty. (*Lies languidly on the settee, toying with a gorgeous cardboard paroquet.*) But he spent a hundred thousand on his Poplar consumption hospital, and I can't see why arts aren't as important as Cockney coughs. Besides, why does he want to sit here at all ? My guests only bore him ; my pictures are caviare. He'd simply laugh at my paying three hundred pounds for this—you did say three hundred ?

THISBE (*after a slight hesitation of conscientious cowardice*). Guineas.

ANNABEL. Yes, of course, three hundred *guineas*.

THISBE. Oh, how thoughtless of me ! Do you mind my destroying this cheque ? I've signed my own name.

ANNABEL. I've put you out by talking. I'm so sorry. Do write another. And while you are about it, you might write one for my bankers. They say I've overdrawn my account. Four hundred something——

THISBE. But you can't send your bankers your own cheque !

ANNABEL. Can't I ?

THISBE. You must get a cheque from your husband first. Oh, and be quite sure you do, otherwise even this—— Ask him to make it eight hundred, so as to——

ANNABEL. Oh, I can't do that !

THISBE (*alarmed*). Why not ?

ANNABEL. He never likes giving me less than four figures.

THISBE. Four figures !

ANNABEL. Four or five.

THISBE. I had no idea you were as rich as all that.

ANNABEL. My dear, we are abominably, unbearably rich. We have six country houses.

THISBE. Six country houses !

ANNABEL. Six or seven. And the wastefulness of that Miss Roseleaf! Do you know, I penetrated one night to the lower regions to get the leg of a blackbeetle for my microscope, and found twenty at supper!

THISBE. Blackbeetles?

ANNABEL. No—servants.

THISBE. Twenty servants!

ANNABEL. Twenty or thirty. And when all I want is the simple life—a maid and a cook, and a man to open the door, and one or two others to wait at table, and a few housemaids and kitchenmaids, and a chauffeur without even a groom. It's positively wicked. And the waste of food—when all I ask is a few calories.

THISBE. Cabbages?

ANNABEL. Darling, calories. You should study science, dear. Considering in one breakfast roll there are two hundred and twenty-two calories, why should I want ten dishes on the sideboard?

THISBE. Ten breakfast dishes?

ANNABEL. Ten or eleven.

THISBE. But where does all the money come from?

ANNABEL. From the Bank, of course.

THISBE. Yes—yes; but how does your husband get it?

ANNABEL. He just writes cheques.

THISBE (*rising, with a sigh of desperation*). Well, sign mine anyhow.

(*Tenders quill. ANNABEL takes it. BEWLISON, the butler, opens the door from corridor.*)

BEWLISON. Sir Robert McCorbel for Mr. Broadley. Mr. Broadley's out. Shall I show Sir Robert in here?

ANNABEL. Certainly not. (*To THISBE.*) A mere money-spinner! Formerly a fishmonger. Methinks he hath an ancient and a fish-like smell. (*To BEWLISON.*) You should have sent him away.

BEWLISON. Miss Roseleaf's instructions are to send nobody away—except the impecunious.

ANNABEL. The only interesting ones. In future,

kindly remember I'm *never* in to tradesmen, whatever bell they ring at . . . Except, of course, when I'm "at home."

BEWLISON. "At home" in inverted commas—I understand. [Exit.

ANNABEL (*dropping her quill*). Inverted commas! Thisbe! That man has soul!

THISBE (*picking up quill*). You haven't signed yet.

ANNABEL. That man has soul!

THISBE (*thrusting quill firmly into her hand*). Nobody with soul would wear livery.

ANNABEL (*breaking down in sudden sobs*). Oh! Oh! Oh! How could you be so cruel to me? (*Drops quill. Rises.*)

THISBE (*bewildered*). My precious!

ANNABEL. Don't I wear livery? (*Moves towards right centre.*)

THISBE. You?

ANNABEL. These gowns and gawds—aren't they the badge of serfdom as much as Bewlison's shirtfront? Haven't we both to receive my husband's guests? Oh! Oh! Oh! (*Drops into the Club armchair, but jumps up as suddenly as though she had sat on a red-hot coal.*) His chair! His flabby, floppy, Philistine chair!

THISBE (*still holding the cheque hopefully and moving towards ANNABEL*). Calm yourself, dear. Concession is nine points of the law. After all, no woman ever had a more negligible husband.

ANNABEL (*bitterly*). Negligible? As negligible as that chair.

THISBE. And as easily sat on. Husbands are fading out. The best in this sort are but shadows—if I may quote Shakespeare.

ANNABEL. Oh, do! Blank verse reconciles me to anything. (*Wipes her eyes and moves towards the desk.*)

THISBE. And your husband isn't even *your* shadow. (*ANNABEL sits at desk and picks up quill.*) He knows he cannot follow you into your higher life-planes. (*Press-*

*ing quill pertinaciously into her hand. ANNABEL is about to sign.)*

BROADLEY (*outside, angrily*). You sent Sir Robert away ?

ANNABEL (*dropping quill*). The shadow !

(*Enter by central doors THOMAS BROADLEY, a born British millionaire, with a rosy air of benevolence, business, sport, and good tailoring, a jolly John Bull of affairs, capable of fun, and not incapable of chivalry ; at the moment, however, his brow is clouded.*)

BROADLEY. Annabel, did you tell Bewli— ? (*Perceives MISS LEACH.*) Oh, how do you do ?

THISBE (*concealing her cheque and her chagrin at its being still unsigned*). Very well, thank you. (*Condescendingly.*) Glorious weather for golf, isn't it ?

BROADLEY. Tophole. Annabel, did you send Sir Robert away ? I particularly—

ANNABEL. Hush ! Isolde had such a bad night.

THISBE (*tactfully*). Shall I put her to bed again ?

ANNABEL. It would be kind. Darling ! (*Kisses dog.*) [*Exit THISBE to the boudoir with ISOLDE.*]

BROADLEY. I particularly wanted to see him. Sir Robert is indispensable to my affairs.

ANNABEL. But not to my drawing-room.

BROADLEY. Blackbeetles were welcome to your drawing-room during your scientific craze.

ANNABEL. But not fish-barrows.

BROADLEY. Sir Robert is a financier now, not a fishmonger.

ANNABEL. He still keeps up his Billingsgate business.

BROADLEY. But he's a Warden of the Fishmongers' Company.

ANNABEL. Flaunts it, you see ! I hate these self-made men, always singing the praises of their maker.

BROADLEY. And I hate these women on the make—

always praising their picture-puzzles! I'll 'phone to Sir Robert's—

*[Exit angrily to corridor as THISBE returns from boudoir.]*

ANNABEL (*outraged, surveying picture*). Picture-puzzle!

THISBE (*picking up quill*). Your pen, dear.

ANNABEL. Picture-puzzle!

THISBE. You haven't signed.

ANNABEL (*taking quill*). Oh, haven't I? (*Is about to do so for the fourth time.*)

BEWLISON (*announcing*). Mr. Grandison Tiptree.

(ANNABEL *throws down her pen*. THISBE *swears under her breath*. Enter TIPTREE, *a child of nature, with unkempt mane and beard and fierce eyes and flaming tie, the untamed lion of the Bohemian jungle.*)

ANNABEL. The Master! How miraculous! I was just admiring your stupendous picture. So delighted to know you in the flesh. And how does the Master do?

TIPTREE. Bit liverish, thank 'ee.

ANNABEL. Ah! like Carlyle. You know Miss Leach, of course? (*He goes eagerly towards THISBE, who petrifies him with a frigid bow.*) I'll ring for tea. (ANNABEL *goes towards fireplace.*)

TIPTREE (*advancing amorously afresh*). My darling!

THISBE. Sh! How dared you come here? (*Aloud.*) Mr. Tiptree doesn't remember poor little me!

TIPTREE. Why, Thisbe—?

THISBE (*glaring fiercely*). Sh! (TIPTREE *controls himself, his face working wildly*. ANNABEL *comes towards door*. Enter BEWLISON.)

ANNABEL. Tea, please.

BEWLISON. Yes, ma'am. (*Anxiously indicating TIPTREE, whose face is still working wildly under THISBE'S whispered monitions and information.*) That's not a business man?

ANNABEL. No, no, quite right this time.

[Exit BEWLISON.]

TIPTREE (*bursting out in uncontrollable honesty*). Three hundred guineas! I don't get prices like that!

THISBE (*hastily*). I can't ask more from a friend. (*Proffers quill and cheque again.*)

ANNABEL (*surprised*). I thought I just signed it. (*Is for the fifth time about to sign. A yelping is heard from the ante-room.*) Poor Isolde! Awake again! (*Hurries out to her pet, mechanically carrying off cheque and quill.*)

THISBE. D——n Isolde! And what demon brought you here?

TIPTREE. I followed you. (*Tries to take her hand.*)

THISBE (*snatching it away*). She mustn't know we're engaged to be married. You'll ruin my sales of your——

TIPTREE (*suddenly catching sight of his picture*). What the blazes is this, Thisbe? It's upside down!

THISBE. There's no up or down to a swirl.

TIPTREE (*disgusted*). Swirl! (*Turns it.*) That's the Bank of England!

THISBE. Is it? Why didn't you tell me? But what's that?

TIPTREE. That's motor-buses.

THISBE. Well, *they* swirl. (*Reversing picture.*) Anyhow, it's too late now.

TIPTREE (*in horror*). Thisbe! (*Seizes it.*)

THISBE (*seizing it likewise*). You'll ruin all our marriage prospects.

(*A tug of war, each trying to turn it the opposite way. Re-enter ANNABEL suddenly with an envelope. THISBE lets go. TIPTREE reels.*)

ANNABEL. Miss Roseleaf is hushing her off again. There! Signed at last! (*Hands THISBE the envelope.*) With three hundred thanks. (*To TIPTREE who, despite THISBE's pantomimic protest, reverses the picture.*) Why have you turned it, Master?

THISBE (*glibly*). To show the space-harmonies. Just look at it from the fireplace. (ANNABEL *obediently moves out of earshot. In a fierce whisper to TIPTREE.*) Sh! If you say another word, I'll break off our engagement.

TIPTREE (*his face working wildly in the effort not to speak*). Oom—oom—oom!

ANNABEL (*from the fireplace*). Even upside down it's life-enhancing. But I think I like it better the other way.

THISBE. Naturally. (*Turns it again.*)

TIPTREE. But—

THISBE. Sh!

TIPTREE (*almost bursting as he collapses on the settee*). Oom—oom—oom!

ANNABEL (*coming back to them*). Ah, what a stupendous improvement! (*Perceives TIPTREE'S labouring mouth.*) But I am interrupting the Master.

THISBE. No, no. Great Art is always dumb.

*Re-enter BROADLEY from corridor.*

BROADLEY. I couldn't get Sir Robert, but— (*Catches sight of TIPTREE'S wildly working face.*) Oh, lord!

ANNABEL. Thomas, this is the Master.

BROADLEY (*with a profound ironic bow*). And this is his humble servant. (*TIPTREE bows silently, evidently still accepting the embargo on speech.*)

ANNABEL. Mr. Bradley doesn't appreciate Art.

TIPTREE (*with irrepressible bitterness*). Ah, a critic! (*Then afraid from THISBE'S eye that he has slipped into speech.*) Oom—oom!

BROADLEY. Frankly, Mr. Tiptree, I don't appreciate *this* Art. You people seem to go out of your way to see things upside down.

TIPTREE (*almost exploding, despite THISBE'S menacing eye*). Oom—oom—oom!



THISBE (*touching his head every time he seems about to bob up explosively*). The artist *must* see things from his own point of view.

BROADLEY. Then I should have thought this was painted by an aviator.

THISBE and ANNABEL (*simultaneously*). An aviator!

BROADLEY. Looping the loop.

TIPTREE (*driven frantic*). Oom—oom—oom—oom!

BROADLEY. Aren't you well?

TIPTREE. Oom—oom!

BROADLEY. Let me get you some brandy. (TIPTREE'S tortured face relaxes into an assenting smile. BROADLEY rings.)

ANNABEL. I've just ordered tea.

BROADLEY. I beg your pardon—you don't like the tantalus here.

ANNABEL. Oh, it isn't so much the tantalus——!

BROADLEY. Sit down, sir. Take my arm! There! (*Puts him into Club armchair.*) You'll be comfy in that. It's a chair I endowed for husbandry. (*Enter BEWLISON.*) Brandy! [*Exit BEWLISON.*]

ANNABEL. The Master's inner agony, Thomas, demands not alcohol, but appreciation. (*Turns his head to the picture.*) Try to admire his Dance of Death.

(*At this TIPTREE, unseen behind them, jumps up with clenched fists of protest, and dances in dumb agony till THISBE'S eye quells him, and he subsides speechlessly.*)

BROADLEY (*peering blandly*). Oh, a dance, is it? Well, now I look at it, I do seem to see legs.

ANNABEL and THISBE (*simultaneously*). Legs!

TIPTREE (*bursting simultaneously*). Oom!

BROADLEY. You can't have a dance without legs.

ANNABEL. Not in your musical plays, perhaps. But, in literature, even the sea dances.

BROADLEY (*murmuring irrepressibly*). There are sea-legs.

ANNABEL. Oh, Thomas! How can you look unmoved at that wistful whirl of souls, each swirling with its own restless rhythm, yet all part of the vast symphonic sweep of our poor pitiful humanity towards the great silence of the grave!

BROADLEY (*cheerfully*). Ah, here comes the brandy!

(BEWLISON and two FOOTMEN bring in the *tantalus*, a siphon and glasses, and the tea-tray, with the cake-stand, etc. *Exeunt*. BROADLEY pours brandy for TIPTREE.)

Say when! (*He pours and pours, THISBE glares and glares, but TIPTREE is speechless.*)

THISBE (*alarmed, to BROADLEY*). That must be too much. (*Crosses over to right.*) Allow me to mix it. And get me a cup of tea, please.

BROADLEY. Certainly. (*Goes to ANNABEL'S tea-table at centre.*)

THISBE (*pouring back the bulk of the brandy. Sotto voce*). I'm ashamed of you!

TIPTREE. You forbade me to speak.

THISBE. Only about your picture, stupid. (BROADLEY approaches with tea.) Thank you.

ANNABEL. Milk and sugar, Thomas?

BROADLEY. Oh, Annabel, don't you know yet?

BEWLISON (*announcing*). Sir Robert McCorbel. (*A small rugged Scotchman enters dourly. He carries a grey flat-crowned hat.*)

BROADLEY. Ah! I'm so glad you've come back.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*in a broad accent and darting a venomous glance at ANNABEL*). I always coom back. I'm an obstinate beggar to bully.

ANNABEL (*frigidly*). How do you do?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Dinna fash yersel' about me!

BROADLEY (*briskly covering it up*). Just in time for tea!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*doubtfully, his eye on TIPTREE and the tantalus*). Tea?

BROADLEY. Well, Scotch. (*Pours out whiskey.* SIR ROBERT *drinks and converses, isolated with his host.*)

TIPTREE (*bucked up by the brandy*). Looping the loop, indeed! Art is what *I* feel, not what *you* see.

BROADLEY (*genially*). And you're feeling better.

THISBE. Annabel's beautiful description of his picture was medicine to him.

ANNABEL. I'm so glad.

TIPTREE. Yes, but we don't want so much money; (*THISBE glares at him.*) We just want our bread and butter and the joy of our job.

ANNABEL (*catching fire*). Like those grand old cathedral builders, those great-souled mediæval craftsmen content to work anonymously!

TIPTREE. Five bob a day and their beer. (*Drinks.*)

THISBE (*jumping up to silence him*). Well, good-bye, Annabel.

ANNABEL. Oh, not yet, dear!

THISBE. I must. (*Produces cheque.*) By the way, I've just noticed you signed this "Isolde."

ANNABEL (*taking cheque*). Oh, how stupid! The darling distracted me. (*Kisses the signature.*) I'll write another. (*She goes to her cheque-book.*)

BROADLEY (*cheerily commandeering THISBE's hand*). Must you go? Good-bye. (*Steers her to the door.*)

THISBE (*calling helplessly, and with a helpless eye on her cheque*). Good-bye, Mr. Tiptree. Don't forget me again.

TIPTREE (*springing up*). But, my dear——! (*Collapses under her glare.*) Oom—oom!

THISBE. The Master says he must go too.

ANNABEL. Oh, Master—but you must come again. I'll post you that cheque, Thisbe.

THISBE. Don't forget it, dear. (*Kisses ANNABEL. Suddenly perceives TIPTREE turning his picture right side up, and darts abruptly and turns it back.*) Good-bye, Mr. Tiptree. (*Glares terribly.*)

TIPTREE. Oom—oom—oom!

[*Exit, carefully convoyed by THISBE. ANNABEL goes haughtily towards her boudoir.*]

BROADLEY. You're not leaving us, dear?

ANNABEL. I am not indispensable to your affairs.

BROADLEY. But we can spare a few moments for pleasure.

ANNABEL. I'm sorry; Isolde has a headache. (*Majestically sweeps out.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*who has moved near the fire*). Saints alive O! She puts you second to a measly lap-dog.

BROADLEY (*uneasily*). Nonsense! She doesn't like the smell of spirits. (*Sits in his armchair.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. She doesna like the smell o' *me*. She canna disremember that as a laddie I cried "All alive O," though I've warked day and night to twist my tongue into "Saints alive O" instead. There's naething I canna conquer—except your mistress's prejudice. Turned away like a coster!

BROADLEY. I'm so sorry. It was my fault.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ay, indeed. Ye're the laughing-stock o' London.

BROADLEY (*angrily*). Me? What for?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ye ken.

BROADLEY. I don't ken. (*Springs up.*) What the dickens do they hyena about?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. It's no the sort o' thing to say to a man's face.

BROADLEY (*wheels round violently*). Well, here's my back.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Dinna be an ass. I never meddle 'twixt man and wife.

BROADLEY (*wheeling back violently*). It concerns Annabel too!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*offering papers*). Now as to that Tobacco Trust——

BROADLEY (*scattering papers with his hand*). What is it they cackle ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Losh, mon (*picks up papers*), they only say that your marriage was platonic (*BROADLEY looks guilty*)—that ye treat your wife like a sister.

BROADLEY. The scandal-mongers ! What business is it of theirs ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. It *is* the world's business. These new-fangled females who have lap-dogs in place of bairns. And these male traitors who cosset and feed 'em up.

BROADLEY. Meaning me ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Meaning all the clamjambery ! Gie a woman her head, and she loses it.

BROADLEY. I don't give her her head. I chaff her off it.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. That's only to save your self-respect. *You* may strop your razor on *her*, but *she* wipes her shoon on *you*.

BROADLEY. Look here, Sir Robert. I don't want to touch old sores; but by all accounts your own marriage was not such a howling success.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Never you mind *my* wife—she's in heaven, puir body—we shallna meet again. But Maggie cooked my dinner. *Your* fine leddy winna even order hers.

BROADLEY. But you were mighty pleased to eat it at her table.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. When did I say she wasna grand-looking ?

BROADLEY. Well, take it that I've secured a wonderful work of art. Aren't there men who do nothing but collect statues ? Suppose I had the Venus of Milo ! She wouldn't housekeep for me, or even embrace me. Now don't say she hasn't got any arms !

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Has she no ? But your

wife has got grand airms, and if she's a statue she ought never to have married you.

BROADLEY. I ought never to have worried her to—or rather her parents. She didn't know what marriage means.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Then teach the lass. A woman wants a man and a master. You behave like a mousie.

BROADLEY (*smiling*). Oh! if I were a mouse, she'd soon be reduced. Being, however, merely a——

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Mollusc——

BROADLEY. That's enough! If you'd been my own size, you'd have got your head punched.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I kenned 'twas nae use talking to a henpecked athlete. If ye had punched your wife's head, ye'd be more of a man—and she more of a woman.

BROADLEY. Lucky Miss Roseleaf can't hear you. She's a feminist.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I'm no afeared of Miss Roseleaf. Pity *she* hasna a husband to knock sense into her.

BROADLEY. Heaven forbid! I don't want to lose the best housekeeper and secretary man ever had.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. But ye dinna mind losing your best business friend.

BROADLEY. Don't be an ass.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Oh, vera weel! Vera weel. (*Takes his hat.*) Wark that Tobacco Trust yersel'. I withdraw my million.

BROADLEY. You called *me* an ass—and a mouse and a mollusc into the bargain.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I take back the smaller creatures. . . . And I'm a bigger cuddy.

BROADLEY. I never said that.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Dinna contradict! (*Moves to door.*) Ony man wha tells anither the truth is an ass; ony man wha tries to save his sex from masterful

minxes—— (ANNABEL *appears at the ante-room with a book of old engravings.*)

BROADLEY (*angrily*). Sir Robert!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*at door of corridor*). Is an aged — long-eared — obstinate — pachydermatous — domesticated — quadruped! [*Exit, banging door.*]

ANNABEL. Oh, Thomas! What was he calling you?

BROADLEY. Not me—he was soliloquizing.

ANNABEL. Drinking. A drunken door-banger!

BROADLEY. No, only a little explosive. He always goes off with a bang.

ANNABEL. I wish they'd all go off with a bang. (*Drops wearily on the divan—the firelight plays on her magnificent bare arms and voluptuous bust.*)

BROADLEY. Who?

ANNABEL. All these business friends of yours, whose elaborate gorgings and guzzlings I have to preside over, and who paw about all that is holy with their filthy financial fingers.

BROADLEY (*bending insinuatingly near*). And then would you make it up with me?

ANNABEL (*turning over her engravings languidly*). I've never quarrelled with you.

BROADLEY. No, confound it! But can't we kiss and be friends all the same?

ANNABEL. Don't begin that again, Thomas. On a *Parsifal* day, too!

BROADLEY (*frozen, retreating wearily*). You're not going to *Parsifal* again!

ANNABEL. How else shall I find strength to live and endure?

BROADLEY (*sits in armchair*). Endure? When you're Empress of all you survey!

ANNABEL (*sitting bowed on her divan*). Empresses are tragic figures—lonely and unhappy.

BROADLEY (*amazed*). You're not happy?

ANNABEL. Happy! Happy! With this horrible aching emptiness?

BROADLEY. You've just had tea.

ANNABEL. I who used to run barefoot in the summer brooks!

BROADLEY. You can kick off your shoes here if you like.

ANNABEL. Oh! I knew you would never understand me.

BROADLEY. Well, explain yourself. What do you want? A seat in Parliament?

ANNABEL. Heaven forbid! To step down into your dirty politics.

BROADLEY. Well, what else is it?

ANNABEL. How can I put it into words?

BROADLEY. Then it is you who don't understand yourself.

ANNABEL. I only know I feel asphyxiated in this atmosphere.

BROADLEY (*sniffs*). What's wrong with the atmosphere?

ANNABEL (*rising*). Can't you feel it—the taint that rises from our heavy foods, that exhales from our costly carpets? It hangs over our mansions like a miasma; our motor-cars reek with it!

BROADLEY. Petrol, do you mean?

ANNABEL. Money! Too much money! That's what I mean.

BROADLEY (*dazed*). Too much money?

ANNABEL. Don't you hear it jingling in the air? L.S.D.! L.S.D.!

BROADLEY. That's all right. Literature, Science, and the Drama.

ANNABEL. Yes, indeed. They are all prostituted to it. The social system must be transformed.

BROADLEY. By Liberalism, Socialism, or Democracy?

ANNABEL. By all three.

BROADLEY. Ha! Ha! Ha! Can't get away from L.S.D., you see.



ANNABEL (*stamping her foot*). Oh!

BROADLEY. Anyhow, *I* can't get away. I was born a billionaire, as other men are born bilious.

ANNABEL. I do try to find that excuse for you. I know that fate showered too much money on your baby skull, stunning soul and brain——

BROADLEY (*interjecting*). Thank you.

ANNABEL. And that you no less than I are caught tragically in the great cosmic dance so beautifully pictured here! (*Looks at picture. Enter MISS ROSELEAF from the corridor.*)

MISS ROSELEAF. Excuse me, Mrs. Broadley. They are ringing up to know if you will give up your box for *Parsifal* to-night. Royalty would like it.

ANNABEL. Give up my box? Deprive Wagner of my worship? Utterly impossible! Let them take Lady Bamberger's box. She's deaf.

MISS ROSELEAF (*imperturbably*). Then I am to refuse?

ANNABEL (*still heated*). You know I'm taking a party and they're all coming here to dine. (*MISS ROSELEAF turns to go.*)

BROADLEY (*rising*). Stop a moment.

ANNABEL. Why are you stopping her? (*Their eyes meet in defiance.*)

BROADLEY. It would be an opportunity for us to spend an evening together.

ANNABEL. Together? Where?

BROADLEY. Where am I this evening, Miss Roseleaf—if it's not an indiscreet question?

MISS ROSELEAF (*consults her book*). You have a stall for the *Slap-Up Girls*.

BROADLEY. I'm glad it's no worse.

ANNABEL (*outraged*). And do you expect *me* to go to the *Slap-Up Girls*?

BROADLEY. Well, I'll go to *Parsifal*.

MISS ROSELEAF. Impossible, Mr. Broadley, if you give up the box! The house is sold out.

BROADLEY. We can always go to the gallery.  
(ANNABEL *withers him with a tragedy-queen glance.*)  
Well, anyhow, let's have supper together.

ANNABEL. One cannot eat after *Parsifal*.

BROADLEY. No, Wagner does take away the appetite.  
(*With an awful look, ANNABEL rustles majestically into her boudoir, and bangs the door behind her.*) Sir Robert was right. . . . (MISS ROSELEAF *goes imperturbably towards the other exit.*) Here, don't you go, too!

MISS ROSELEAF. I *must* tell them they can't have the box.

BROADLEY. Bewlison can do that. (*He rings.*)

MISS ROSELEAF (*looking at her book*). And you won't forget that dinner is at 6.30?

BROADLEY. 6.30! Good lord! Why?

MISS ROSELEAF. Wagner.

BROADLEY. D——n Wagner! (*Explosively as BEWLISON enters.*) Bewlison!

BEWLISON. Yes, sir.

BROADLEY. Tell 'em at the 'phone that Mrs. Broadley has much pleasure in giving up her box.

BEWLISON. Yes, sir. [*Exit BEWLISON.*]

MISS ROSELEAF (*her stylo poised imperturbably*). Then dinner *not* at 6.30?

BROADLEY. No, at 8.30.

MISS ROSELEAF (*calmly altering it in book*). I 'phone everybody it's at 8.30?

BROADLEY. You 'phone everybody it's all off.

MISS ROSELEAF (*altering, unruffled*). Yes, Mr. Broadley. You will be just yourselves.

BROADLEY. Precisely.

MISS ROSELEAF (*writing imperturbably*). Dinner for two.

BROADLEY. Confound you! Why don't you look surprised?

MISS ROSELEAF. I am not paid to express emotions, but to execute orders.

BROADLEY. Gad, I wish I had your cold-bloodedness. . . . Makes everything seem so simple.

MISS ROSELEAF. Can I go now ?

BROADLEY. Yes—wait a moment ! Mrs. Broadley seems to think we spend too much money.

MISS ROSELEAF. Oh no, Mr. Broadley ! Everything is organized most scientifically. I have effected considerable economies in every department.

BROADLEY. The deuce you have ! No wonder we've too much money ! Can't you effect a few extravagances ?

MISS ROSELEAF. That is Mrs. Broadley's department.

BROADLEY. Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! Those framed fireworks—what ? How many have we of 'em ?

MISS ROSELEAF. Futurist pictures, do you mean ?

BROADLEY. Futurist fiddlesticks ! The only pictures the future won't look at. The art that will never have a past.

MISS ROSELEAF. There are nine like that—one came every Monday.

BROADLEY. So I've remarked. A nice new Japanese swindle. Where are they all ?

MISS ROSELEAF. Stowed in the Blue Room.

BROADLEY. Well, go to that Chamber of Horrors, and have 'em all carted away instanter.

MISS ROSELEAF. Where, Mr. Broadley ?

BROADLEY. Where ? To the lunatic asylum they came from.

MISS ROSELEAF. There's a furniture store nearer, I'll send for their van.

BROADLEY. Do ! Then they *will* be in the van of Art. Ha ! Ha ! That's a joke.

MISS ROSELEAF. Don't mention it. I know you can't resist a pun. (*Going.*)

BROADLEY. That reminds me. Would you like to use my stall for the *Slap-Up Girls* ?

MISS ROSELEAF. Thank you, but I have to speak at a meeting.

BROADLEY (*wearily*). Ah, yes!

MISS ROSELEAF. My husband might be glad of it.

BROADLEY (*almost jumping*). Your *what*?

MISS ROSELEAF. My husband—he likes the theatre.

BROADLEY. But you're *Miss* Roseleaf.

MISS ROSELEAF. My professional name! Why should actresses monopolize the privilege? Besides, *his* name is Biggs.

BROADLEY. Ha! (*Takes her hand.*) But you've no wedding ring.

MISS ROSELEAF. My husband wears that. It protects our sex against him.

BROADLEY. I see. But does he approve of your speaking on the platform?

MISS ROSELEAF. Approve? I support him.

BROADLEY. On the platform?

MISS ROSELEAF. You know what I mean. He can't earn anything.

BROADLEY. Nothing at all?

MISS ROSELEAF. No. You see from youth upwards he has been a dramatist.

BROADLEY. Poor fellow. Is he quite incurable?

MISS ROSELEAF. Quite. And so are the managers. If you really want to effect extravagances you might produce his plays.

BROADLEY (*with comic horror*). No, no. I'm not so rich as all that. (*Seriously.*) But you ought to have told me about him when I engaged you.

MISS ROSELEAF. Why ever should I?

BROADLEY. Well, you see, I might have preferred somebody who—who wasn't liable to leave us in the lurch for a month or two.

MISS ROSELEAF. Oh, Mr. Broadley, that's so old-fashioned!

BROADLEY. Old-fashioned! . . . (*Collapses into his Club chair as if stricken.*) Old-fashioned!

BEWLISON (*announcing*). Sir Robert McCorbel.

[*Exit* BEWLISON.]

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I've coom tae apologize. I was wrong.

BROADLEY. You were right. Even Miss Roseleaf won't have children.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I should hope not. Why, whatever have ye——?

BROADLEY. You don't understand. She's married—under another name.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. The brazen hussy! Anither of these comfortable cats without kittens.

BROADLEY. But Miss Roseleaf keeps her husband, whereas my fine lady—as you called her—lapped in every luxury, indulged in every fantasy, complains I've too much money.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. The pampered body! *I'd gie her too much money!*

BROADLEY. That's what I do do. But never again. Already I've cut off her Wagner.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*venomously rejoiced*). Scots wha hae! (*Shakes both his hands. Enter BEWLISON. Their hands drop.*)

BEWLISON (*taking tea-tray*). Beg pardon, sir, but Mrs. Broadley has dismissed me.

BROADLEY. Dismissed you?

BEWLISON. For 'phoning away her opera-box. (*Enter FOOTMAN, goes to table R.*)

BROADLEY (*embarrassed*). Oh, ah!—I forgot to mention it to her. That'll be all right. . . . Leave the brandy. [*Exit FOOTMAN.*]

BEWLISON. Thank you, sir, I don't want to be out of place.

BROADLEY. *You'd* never be out of place, Bewlison, with your appearance.

BEWLISON. Ah, sir, there's many a slip 'twixt the hand and the tip. [*Exit gloomily with tray.*]

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ha! Ha! Ha! (*Slaps knee in convulsions.*) Ha! Ha! Ha!

BROADLEY. Bewlison's professional proverb *is* funny, but not so funny as all that.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. You humbug! It's *you* I'm laughing at. Forgot to mention it! Brags of cutting off Wagner before he's faced the music!

BROADLEY. And who's afraid to face the music? Why, I've sent for a van to cart away her pictures.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*struck serious*). Scots wha hae! (*Shakes both hands again. A rumbling without.*) Ah! Ay, there it is!

BROADLEY (*rushing to window*). Already? Impossible! . . . (*Vastly relieved.*) That's the laundry van.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Why, ye're trembling like a jelly-fish.

BROADLEY. Rubbish! . . . Have another drink. (*Pours brandy.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Nae, thanks—I'm a widow man.

BROADLEY. Yes. (*Drinks.*) And you've forgotten what it means to bullyrag a refined woman.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. To hell with her refinement! There's too much luxury and moonshine nowadays. The world needs a good shaking. My mither brocht up a dozen bairns on parritch, and thankful we were to get it. You stuff your statue with salmon and pineapples, and she only grumbles she's fed up. Fed up! Starve her for a week—she'll talk less of her soul and mair of her stomach.

BROADLEY. What's the use of these wild suggestions?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*screaming*). Wild? Didna I starve as a laddie? Eh, but she's got you fine under her manicured thumb.

BROADLEY. Because I won't starve her? Absurd!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ye needna exactly starve her. Gie her a month of cheap lodgings, ye'll hear nae mair of too much money.

BROADLEY. But how can I get her into cheap lodgings? She wouldn't even go to the gallery for *Parsifal*. I can't force her—unless I turn her out of the house. And that would mean good-bye to all my hopes.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. That depends on *hoo* ye turn her oot o' the hoose.

BROADLEY. What do you mean?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Nae matter. I never meddle 'twixt man and wife.

BROADLEY. But how could I turn her out?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. By losing your bawbees!

BROADLEY. Losing my money, d'you mean?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Ay; too much money, indeed! Tell her ye're ruined.

BROADLEY (*starting up from his chair*). By George! That's an idea.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. An idea! It's an inspiration. Ye didna think Bob McCOrbel rose frae a barrow tae a baronetcy withoot brains. Tak' your fine leddy to a boarding-hoose by the British Museum, where the steaks are tough and the slaveys slattern——

BROADLEY. And what about me?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Aweel, you've got to suffer too.

BROADLEY. Well, that's fair, anyhow. But she'll never believe it.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Believe it! A woman who believes in that! (*Pointing to picture*.) Man, ye can stuff her wi' onything! She kens nae mair aboot beeziness than I aboot Wagner. Hooever, if ye're so parteeular aboot realism, I'm quite ready to mak' ye bankrupt.

BROADLEY. A friend in need is a friend indeed!

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. I'm in airnest.

BROADLEY. You really think it would cure her?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. I tell ye, man, the day she gets back here out of those shabby lodgings, she'll fall

on your neck and slobber ower you like a lost dog that's got hame again.

BROADLEY (*pleased at the prospect*). Ha! (*Drinks more brandy.*) What sort of places are these Bloomsbury boarding-houses—can one really live in them?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Aweel, there's a smell of boiled cabbages and perambulators, but students and professors are as thick as herrings in Loch Fyne.

BROADLEY. Then I won't take Annabel there! She'll fall in love with some Egyptian professor with a parchment face and ebony eyes and ears like scarabs.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Aweel, Bloomsbury isna the only uncomfortable place. There's an auld pensioner of mine tak's in lodgers in Highbury—Mistress Pennywhistle—

BROADLEY. But that's in Birmingham.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Man, ye're awful ignorant. Highbury is in London—Islington way—not far frae the Angel.

BROADLEY. Not far from the Angel? That sounds nicely sequestered.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. It is. Ye winna meet a soul from your warld. I'll send Mistress Pennywhistle a wire. (*Going towards folding doors.*)

BROADLEY. I say! Not so fast! This wants thinking over.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Funking ower, you mean.

BROADLEY. Not at all. Only—

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Dinna apologize. It's no *my* fish-kettle. I never meddle 'twixt man and wife. There's her card. (*Throws it to him.*)

BROADLEY (*reading it*). Mrs. Pennywhistle, 22—is she only 22? No, that's her number—my brain's wandering. Bah! (*Tears card and throws it away.*) Your suggestion is lunacy.

*Enter MISS ROSELEAF from the ante-room.*

MISS ROSELEAF. Mrs. Broadley has dismissed me.



BROADLEY (*bowled over*). Eh? What for?

MISS ROSELEAF. For 'phoning to her friends not to come to dinner. She demanded an explanation.

BROADLEY (*with forced ease*). Well, that was simple enough. No Wagner, no dinner. No song, no supper.

MISS ROSELEAF. That *was* my explanation, but Mrs. Broadley did not find it satisfactory. She is coming to ask yours—as soon as you are alone. (SIR ROBERT *snatches at his hat.*)

BROADLEY (*frantically*). No, no, don't go! . . . That'll be all right, Miss Roseleaf.

MISS ROSELEAF. Yes, Mr. Broadley, but I have a husband to keep.

BROADLEY. That'll be all right. . . . I—I could always produce his plays.

MISS ROSELEAF. But would that keep *me*?

BROADLEY (*embarrassed*). Well, well . . . don't let me keep you now.

MISS ROSELEAF. But about the van, Mr. Broadley—it's on its way. I just caught the man.

BROADLEY (*nervously snapping his fingers*). Yes—yes—what about the van?

MISS ROSELEAF. The pictures.

BROADLEY. Oh, hang the pictures!

MISS ROSELEAF (*stolidly noting down*). Hang the pictures . . . then they're not to go?

(BROADLEY *hesitates*. SIR ROBERT, *with a demoniac grin starts reciting* "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled.")

BROADLEY. Of course they're to go. . . . And you too! (*Waves her back into ante-room.*)

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. And what explanation are ye going to gie her?

BROADLEY. The true one, of course! . . . Why should I be driven into a morass of mendacity—not to mention cheap lodgings?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Brawly spoken! (*Dashes his hat down and shakes both BROADLEY'S hands for the*

*third time.*) Muckle better to put your foot doon openly.

BROADLEY. Muckle better. . . . Much better. . . . I don't know, though, that it would be tactful to put my foot down on her pictures . . . to-day, I mean. You see, I've already put one foot on her dinner-party, and another on her box. . . . To put down more feet—isn't that rather . . . quadrupedal?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*disgusted*). Ye havena got feet. Ye're a mollusc.

BROADLEY. I thought you withdrew the mollusc.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I put back even the mousie.

BROADLEY. It's *not* timidity, I tell you, it's tact. I lost my temper. . . . One shouldn't turn into a monster too violently. . . . She'd only hate me irredeemably. . . . No, I think—I think I'd best countermand the van. . . . (*Goes towards door.*) Unless . . . (*His eyes seek the floor.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. What are ye looking for?

BROADLEY. Nothing. . . . Of course, if it was bankruptcy that *compelled* me, that would explain everything . . . peaceably . . . even the opera-box. She'd just—

MISS ROSELEAF *reappears at door of ante-room.*

MISS ROSELEAF. Mrs. Broadley says, will you please go to her at once. She's too prostrate to come to you.

BROADLEY. Yes—yes. (*MISS ROSELEAF disappears.*) I say, old chap, for heaven's sake go and send that wire! 'Phone it from the hall.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*bewildered*). What wire?

BROADLEY (*frantically*). To the Angel—boiled perambulators—22 Pennywhistles, you know.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*in pompous parody*). Why should I be dreeven intae a morass of mendacity—not tae mention cheap lodgings?

BROADLEY. Go to the devil!

[*Exit SIR ROBERT, cackling diabolically.*]

BROADLEY (*pouncing on fragments of card*). Ah!

MISS ROSELEAF *re-enters*.

MISS ROSELEAF. I forgot to mention that Mrs. Broadley keeps to the dinner at 6.30.

BROADLEY (*spurred up again*). Oh, indeed! And I forgot to mention that it will consist exclusively of bread and cheese.

MISS ROSELEAF (*flashing forth her notebook*). Stilton or Gorgonzola?

BROADLEY. Not your business any longer. The fact is, I'm ruined.

MISS ROSELEAF (*not moving a muscle*). Yes, Mr. Broadley.

BROADLEY. I said "ruined"!

MISS ROSELEAF (*still more imperturbably*). Yes.

BROADLEY. Yes, that's the real explanation why I cancelled the box and the dinner, and am selling off the pictures. I'm bankrupt.

MISS ROSELEAF. I see.

BROADLEY. In consequence your salary will be doubled.

MISS ROSELEAF. Retrospectively from the first of January, I presume.

BROADLEY. Eh? Oh, of course! Everybody else—all the servants, I mean—you pack off to one of our country houses—the remoter, the better.

MISS ROSELEAF (*writing with her imperturbable stylo*). Essex Manor. And what about this house?

BROADLEY. Anything. Burn it down.

MISS ROSELEAF. No, Mr. Broadley, I never mix business and politics. (*Violent ringing from ante-room.*) I'm afraid that must be Mrs. Broadley ringing for me.

BROADLEY. Don't answer her. Didn't she dismiss you?

SIR ROBERT *rushes back excitedly*.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Saints alive O! The van's

coming. (*A rumbling from below, and a knock as on street-door.*) Ay, there it is!

BROADLEY. Miss Roseleaf, let me introduce you to my chief creditor.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*disgusted*). Ye havenà put *her* in the plot?

BROADLEY. It wouldn't have much chance without her.

MISS ROSELEAF (*tactfully*). Ah, yes! Sir Robert could seize the furniture.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Seize the furniture! And what would I do with these nipperty-tipperty gim-cracks?

BROADLEY. Confound 'em! (*Kicks a fragile chair.*) There's no getting rid of 'em.

MISS ROSELEAF (*quietly*). Not when there's a van at the door?

BROADLEY (*his face lighting up*). By Jove! (*More violent ringing from ante-room.*) Don't let anybody go to her. Keep the servants away from her.

MISS ROSELEAF. I'll see to everything, and explain to the vanmen. [*Exit to corridor.*]

BROADLEY. She's a positive genius.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Hoots, mon! Ye're verra indiscreet to trust a woman.

BROADLEY. She's not a woman—she's a machine.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. A feminist, too.

BROADLEY. Look here, is this your bankruptcy or is it mine?

(*The door from ante-room flies open and ANNABEL appears, flaming.*)

ANNABEL. Thomas! Did I not ask you to come to me?

BROADLEY. Sir Robert has detained me. . . . So glad you're *not* prostrate.

ANNABEL. I can hardly stand on my feet.

BROADLEY. My poor Annabel! (*Wheels the Club chair towards her.*)

ANNABEL. Take it away! That would make me worse.

BROADLEY. Poor darling! How fortunate you won't have to entertain to-night!

ANNABEL. And who told you I was not entertaining?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*looking at his watch*). I'm afeared I maun tear mysel' awa'. (*Takes his hat again.*)

ANNABEL (*hysterically*). It's the first piece of consideration anybody has shown me to-day.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Dinna mention it. I never meddle 'twixt man and wife. (*Throws open doors, revealing a perspective of burly vanmen in shirt-sleeves, backed by the exquisite and imperturbable MISS ROSELEAF.*) All alive O!

[*Exit as the men push by him and seize the nearest objects.*]

BROADLEY. Oh, my darling, be brave! (*Slips gold surreptitiously into foreman's hand with a whispered*) Take no notice of us! (*MISS ROSELEAF disappears.*)

ANNABEL (*wildly*). What is it? What has happened?

BROADLEY. I was a coward not to tell you earlier. (*The screen is borne off.*)

ANNABEL. Thomas! (*A man bears in a step-ladder and places it at window for removal of the curtains.*)

BROADLEY. But I hoped up to the last. That was why I was so anxious to see Sir Robert. Ten minutes earlier he might have saved us.

ANNABEL. What are you maundering about? (*Looks at tantalus.*) You've been drinking. (*Tray and tantalus are carried off.*)

BROADLEY. Hush! Not before the lower orders.

ANNABEL. But what are they doing with my furniture? (*The divan and cushions are wafted away. She rings violently.*)

BROADLEY. They're the Law!

ANNABEL. The Law! But this is *my* house. . . . Bewlison, where is Bewlison? Why doesn't he come?

BROADLEY. You dismissed him!

ANNABEL. Well, there are understudies. (*Rings still more violently.*)

BROADLEY. It's of no use ringing. The rats always desert a sinking ship.

ANNABEL. Sinking? (*She totters.*)

BROADLEY. We're ruined—sold up—bankrupt—broke. And our last friend, Sir Robert, you turned away. I told you he was indispensable to my affairs.

ANNABEL. Oh! (*Sinks on the settee before the flimsy round table.*) But it can't be true! (*Sinks her head on the table just as the foreman jerks it away. She falls forward, then springs up.*) Oh, do please be careful.

FOREMAN. So sorry.

ANNABEL. I mean of the furniture. It's all so delicate.

FOREMAN. Bless your 'eart, mum, we've moved Queen Halexandra.

BROADLEY. Don't *you* worry, dear—it's not *your* furniture any longer.

ANNABEL. Not mine? (*She staggers against the writing-desk; it is jerked away. He catches her.*)

BROADLEY. Bear up! Think of what *I* suffered in cancelling your dinner and theatre-party! (*Steers her towards the settee.*) But I kept my face even with the fox gnawing at my vitals!

ANNABEL. So that's why our bankers wrote to me?

BROADLEY. Yes—and why I jumped at getting back the ten guineas for your box. It'll be something to start the new life on.

ANNABEL. Oh! (*Is dropping on the settee.*)

FOREMAN. Got it? (*He and another man pull the settee away. BROADLEY just saves her from collapse.*)

ANNABEL (*frantically*). Doesn't the Law leave you *anything*?

BROADLEY. Only what you stand up in. (*The carpet strip is snatched from under their feet. He catches her.*)

ANNABEL (*looking wildly round the emptying room.*)  
And will they do this all over the house?

BROADLEY. From Blue Room to wine-cellar.

ANNABEL. Good heavens! Not even a bed——!  
Then where do you propose to sleep?

BROADLEY. Not far from the Angel. (*Produces fragments of card.*)

ANNABEL. You may! I stay here.

BROADLEY. With the Man in Possession? (*The curtains and pole are being lowered by the man on the step-ladder.*) No, no! I'll have our bags packed at once. (*Rings violently.*)

ANNABEL. But I thought we mustn't take——

BROADLEY. Oh, bare necessities of life—pyjamas, pomatums——

ANNABEL (*breaking down hysterically*). Oh! Oh!  
Oh!

BROADLEY. Don't. You unman me! . . . Why the devil doesn't Bewlison come?

ANNABEL (*blubberingly*). I dismissed him.

BROADLEY. Oh, d——n! I'll have to pack myself!

ANNABEL (*frenziedly as they seize the easel*). Thomas!  
They are taking the Tiptree!!

BROADLEY. How dreadful!!! . . . But everything on the premises——

ANNABEL (*hysterically*). But it's not mine.

BROADLEY. Not yours?

ANNABEL. No. The cheque was signed Isolde.

BROADLEY (*in terrible tones*). You gave Isolde a cheque-book! You encouraged her to buy Futurist pictures! No wonder my money has gone to the dogs!

ANNABEL. No—no—it was a slip.

BROADLEY. A slip of the paw?

ANNABEL. Of course not. I signed Isolde.

BROADLEY (*in greater horror*). You forged Isolde's name?

ANNABEL. She was barking when I signed.

BROADLEY. No wonder!

ANNABEL (*frenziedly*). You don't understand. I promised Thisbe to sign another.

BROADLEY. Then you *have* paid—with a Futurist cheque!

ANNABEL. I have *not* paid—it's a debt of honour—three hundred guineas!

BROADLEY. Then *you* are bankrupt too!

ANNABEL (*breaking down*). Oh! Oh! Oh! I'm so unhappy! (*Suddenly perceives MISS ROSELEAF entering behind BROADLEY, carrying ISOLDE. ANNABEL utters a great cry.*) Come to me, darling! Comfort me! (*She holds out her arms. BROADLEY, ignorant that ISOLDE is meant, rushes ecstatically into them.*) Not you, stupid!

(*She steps aside; he reels forward clawing at the empty air, and then turns furiously to behold MISS ROSELEAF holding up ISOLDE.*)

MISS ROSELEAF (*placidly*). Where does *she* go?

BROADLEY (*seizes the dog frenziedly*). To the Home for Lost Arts—I mean, to the Creditors.

ANNABEL (*shrieking*). No! No!

BROADLEY. The Law must take its course.

(*Throws ISOLDE into the passing coal-scuttle, the last object but one to leave the room. ANNABEL'S shriek mingles with her pet's yelp.*)

ANNABEL (*stretching out her arms after the retreating scuttle in which the dog is still visible*). Isolde!

(*She sinks hopelessly into the Club armchair. They whisk it away ere she reaches the seat. She comes to the floor with a crash. The curtain falls on an absolutely emptied room.*)



## ACT II

*An afternoon nearly a fortnight later. A garret in Poplar in an old riverside mansion now decayed into lodgings, but bearing remains of grandeur in space and design, and with a picturesque view of the Thames and the tops of ships through a window in the back wall. The garret is cheaply furnished with bare necessities, all, however, crudely new. The door is in the left wall. The right half of the back wall, where the irregular conformation of the garret makes a recess, is pathetically partitioned off as a bedroom by a high floral screen. In the right wall is a fireplace with a small fire burning, a homely kettle on the hob, and a cheap new mirror above. By the left wall is a homely chest of drawers. At a tub near the centre ANNABEL, in a plain gown and a big apron, with her sleeves tucked up, is singing as she washes pyjamas, etc.*

ANNABEL.

There was a jolly miller once  
Lived by the river Dee.  
He laughed and sang from morn till night,  
No lark more blithe than——

*(A knock.)*

Come in!

*Enter MRS. CROW, a full-blown Cockney landlady. She carries a pail of water, which she dumps down.*

MRS. CROW. Hexcuse me, mum; I don't want to be 'ard on you—I was broke once meself—but if your 'usband hexpects me to lug up yer pails—a thing I've

never done for no hunfurnished tenant afore—I do think I ought to hask—well—sixpence a week hextra.

ANNABEL. Most reasonable, Mrs. Crow. I'll write you a cheque at once—I mean, give you the sixpence. (*Putting hand in pocket and bringing out bag.*) No, that's my savings! I'll get my purse. (*Goes behind the screen and returns.*) No, on second thoughts our furnished apartments at Highbury were simply ruinous, and till my husband gets work I must draw my own water. Hewers of wood and drawers of water—doesn't it sound literary? And aren't these old walls picturesque—they ought to be painted!

MRS. CROW (*outraged*). For three and six a week!

ANNABEL. I mean artistically. And you ought to be painted too.

MRS. CROW (*still more outraged*). Me?

ANNABEL. You have such a gay face. An old Dutchman would have loved it.

MRS. CROW. 'Ere, what d'ye take me for?

ANNABEL. I mean, you have so much character.

MRS. CROW. I should 'ope so. No policeman never came hinquring about *my* character. (*Going out in a huff. Perceives that ANNABEL has hung the dripping pyjamas over the back of a chair.*) 'Ere, you'll spile the ceiling!

ANNABEL (*looking up in surprise*). The ceiling!

MRS. CROW. Below! (*ANNABEL looks down in surprise.*) It's no good just rubbing—you must wring.

ANNABEL (*looking round in surprise*). But have you a bell?

MRS. CROW. Not ring! Wring! R-i-n-g! Squeeze! Like this! (*Wrings the pyjamas over the tub.*) Then they dry. (*Re-hangs them.*)

ANNABEL. How miraculous! . . . You see, I have never washed before.

MRS. CROW. One can see that by the state of your 'ands. I don't s'pose you hever did a day's honest work in your life.

ANNABEL. Oh, but I've toiled terribly at literature, music, and science. I was very keen on insects.

MRS. CROW. All my lodgers are.

ANNABEL. Really? (*Fetches a hot flat-iron from the fire.*) Ah, but insects aren't Life! (MRS. CROW'S face looks contradiction.) Even Art is only a shadow. Life is the real! (*Rubs vigorously.*) Do you know, Mrs. Crow, since my husband lost his money I feel born again.

MRS. CROW. Just what I felt when mine lost his life.

ANNABEL (*shocked. Leaves the iron on the pyjamas and returns to tub.*) Oh, Mrs. Crow! Didn't you love him? Your husband! The man whose struggles one shares!

MRS. CROW. 'Usband, indeed! The man who drinks away all *you* 'ave 'usbanded, and then lays ill on your 'ands. Why, to bury 'im proper nearly broke me.

ANNABEL. But why spend money on his funeral?

MRS. CROW. 'Ad my position to keep up. Besides, it's a poor 'art that never rejoices.

ANNABEL. But economy is itself a joy. To cut down a halfpenny, isn't it thrilling! (*Wrings washing.*) To squeeze—and squeeze—and squeeze!

MRS. CROW. Not too 'ard. You'll make 'oles. (*Going.*) And you'll let me 'ave the tub back soon—it's my own washing day, bein' Monday.

ANNABEL. Certainly. Oh! aren't these rainbowed bubbles glorious?

MRS. CROW (*gloomily*). Till they busts. [*Exit.*]

ANNABEL. Ah, but we must seize the moment. And I must seize the moment.

(*Looks round cautiously and dramatically, then lifts up a board on the left, extracts a stocking, drops the bag into it, and covers it up again.*)

Thisbe's three hundred guineas saved at last! (*Sings.*)

And this the burden of his song  
For ever used to be,  
I care for . . . somebody—yes, I do,  
And somebody cares for—

His footstep! At last!

*Enter BROADLEY. He is attired in a shabby jacket and a low hat, and has an air of bewildered bliss. A large strip of plaster on his cheek testifies to the poor shaving facilities. ANNABEL flies to him and flings her soapy arms around him.*

Oh, Tom! Tom! And did you get work?

BROADLEY (*shocked*). Annie, what are you doing?

ANNABEL. The washing, of course. It's Monday.

BROADLEY. Yes, I know. (*Wipes soapsuds from his face and shoulders.*) But you mustn't!

ANNABEL. But it's life-enhancing! And such a saving!

*(She discovers the iron has burnt a great hole in the pyjamas. She conceals the hole hurriedly, while he sniffs suspiciously.)*

But why didn't you come home to lunch, I mean dinner? The red-herring was stupendous.

BROADLEY. I sent you a wire, dear.

ANNABEL. Yes—terribly reckless—thirteen words even.

BROADLEY. How unlucky! . . . I say, you don't wash clothes with Pears' soap.

ANNABEL. Yes, you do—it's the Monkey Brand that won't wash clothes. Oh dear, how unpractical you are! No wonder you lost your money! No wonder you can't find work.

BROADLEY (*with bowed head*). It's not my fault. Too old at forty.

ANNABEL. Never mind, Tom. Your Annie only loves you the more for your cheery courage. How true is Browning's line—"Every man has two faces."

BROADLEY (*alarmed*). Eh?

ANNABEL.

"One to face the world with,

And one to show a woman when he loves her."

BROADLEY (*relieved, and rubbing his cheek against*

hers). Ah, yes, two faces are better than one. And so you are happy at last ?

ANNABEL. Unspeakably. There's only one blot on the blue.

BROADLEY. And what's that ?

ANNABEL. That's unspeakable, too.

BROADLEY. But you can tell your own hubby.

ANNABEL (*shyly*). Well—no bath.

BROADLEY. My darling ! I'll run over to the Emporium at once.

ANNABEL. No—no—not yet. Not till you get work !

BROADLEY. But this tub ! Why not use that in the mornings ?

ANNABEL. Splendid ! . . . Oh, but she wants it back at once !

BROADLEY. Then take your bath at once !

ANNABEL. No, no, dear. You take one. Your need is greater than mine.

BROADLEY. 'No, it isn't—— !

ANNABEL. I insist ! I shall heat that pail of water for you.

BROADLEY. Well, I do feel jolly miserable.

(*Goes behind screen. ANNABEL lifts tub and staggers to window, where she pours it out. At the sound he rushes out in his shirt-sleeves.*)

You mustn't do that !

ANNABEL. But there's an April shower ! They'll think it's the rain. (*A cry comes up.*)

BROADLEY. What's that ?

ANNABEL. Only a cat. . . . Oh, I've poured out the soap !

(*A loud knock at the door. They pause guiltily, and bear back the not entirely emptied tub between them.*)

BROADLEY. Who's there ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*outside*). Me ! Sir Robert—— !

BROADLEY. Sir Robert ! What does *he* want here ?

ANNABEL. Sir Robert! How noble of him! (*Dropping her side of the tub and clapping her hands.*)

BROADLEY (*amazed, just saving its collapse*). You don't want to see him?

ANNABEL. That splendidly real person who rose from a fish-barrow? Rather!

BROADLEY (*sullenly*). Well, take off that apron. (*Puts down tub.*)

ANNABEL. Take off my badge of service—the symbol of solidarity with labouring humanity! Never! Besides, fishmongers are fond of aprons.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*outside, knocking again*). May I coom in?

BROADLEY (*sotto voce as he hustles on his coat again*). Put down your sleeves—it's hardly proper.

ANNABEL. My arms aren't so bare as in evening dress.

BROADLEY. But you didn't go about dressed in bubbles!

ANNABEL. Then I'll hide them. (*Plunges arms into wash-tub.*)

BROADLEY (*frantically*). No! No! You mustn't wash our dirty linen in public!

(*He hurriedly seizes the hanging pyjamas and throws them over the screen.* SIR ROBERT *knocks more impatiently.*)

ANNABEL (*smiling*). Come in!

SIR ROBERT, *in a high hat and carrying an umbrella, enters, and looks round dazedly at the whitewashed destitution.* BROADLEY *gives him a sullen nod.*

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Saints alive O!

ANNABEL (*drying her hands with a handkerchief and fixing SIR ROBERT with a fascinating smile.*) Oh, Sir Robert! How miraculous to see somebody from the old world! But why didn't you come to Mrs. Pennywhistle's—she often sang your praises! (*Rushes*

to him with dried and extended hands.) How do you do ?

*(She smiles bewitchingly. Remorse combines with his flattered feeling; he is conquered in a flash. Obviously only her disdain has suppressed his latent adoration.)*

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. I've been in bed—puir man's gout. And I only just got your address from Mistress Pennywhistle. What for did you leave Highbury ?

BROADLEY *(brusquely)*. Too much money !

ANNABEL. And too little life.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. But it's no far frae the Angel.

ANNABEL. Too far from the intoxication *(SIR ROBERT drops her hand with a start)* of the street-life. Here I have the swirl under my feet. *(Shows him the window.)* Look ! There's the great Poplar Emporium where we bought our bits of furniture. And see ! the tops of ships, just like Holland ! And the market-place at the corner—women with head-shawls—positively Italian ! I've bought one for myself—it's—

BROADLEY *(who has been looking at his watch impatiently)*. I wish you'd buy something for me—I've had no lunch—I mean dinner—yet.

ANNABEL. Oh, my darling—how thoughtless of me ! I'll get my head-shawl. *(Runs behind the screen.)*

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL *(turning angrily on BROADLEY)*. I say, mon, haven't ye been overdoing it ?

BROADLEY. Sh !

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. 'Tis scandalous ! I never meddle 'twixt man and wife. But to drag a delicate leddy— !

BROADLEY. Sh ! I tell you. Wait till she's gone.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. And what for are ye hustling her oot ?

BROADLEY. Sh ! I've just remembered Miss Roseleaf is coming with the cheques.

*Re-enter ANNABEL, looking still more bewitching in a head-shawl, and carrying a cheap string bag.*

ANNABEL (*to SIR ROBERT*). So sorry I must go out. I wish there was a comfy chair to offer you—or a whiskey and soda. And I'm afraid there's only one pipe (*gets a churchwarden from the chest of drawers*), though it's long enough for two. You must come again—there shall always be a pipe for you.

(*Gives it to SIR ROBERT, kisses her hand to her husband, SIR ROBERT behind him smiling fatuously as though the salute was meant for him. Exit ANNABEL.*)

BROADLEY (*calling after her*). Don't get a steak!

ANNABEL (*calling back*). No, dear, a nice piece of fish.

BROADLEY. Not high!

ANNABEL. Of course not. As low as I can get it.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL (*pointing an accusing pipe*). And that's the goddess ye treat like a scullery-wench!

BROADLEY (*losing his temper*). Why, you scoundrel, who suggested——?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. I got ye decent lodgings.

BROADLEY. You heard she didn't like them.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Three rooms I got ye. Ye wanted to get closer together.

BROADLEY. A common sitting-room gets you close enough. It's her economies. She wouldn't rest till she drove me to Poplar—near my hospital, by the way.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL (*obstinately*). Dinna tell me a luxurious leddy——

BROADLEY. But you saw for yourself! She takes it all as an artistic adventure—a romantic play-acting. But what is sport to her is misery to me!

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. You ungrateful humbug! When your Venus of Milo comes down to embracing——!

BROADLEY. And to housekeeping—don't forget that! She actually insists on cooking! Oh lord! I



never was so happy in my life, nor so beastly uncomfortable. (*They sit by the fire.*) Don't smoke that thing—have a cigar! I've got the finest cheroot in the world.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*clinging to the churchwarden*). Thank you, but I'd enjoy this—for auld lang syne.

BROADLEY. Rather you than I. . . . Here's tobacco. (*Throws him a pouch from his jacket-pocket.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Thanks!

(*Catches it, but does not open it, as his attention is arrested by BROADLEY, who, after looking cautiously round, extracts a cigar box from a loose board on the right.*)

BROADLEY. Done her in the eye. She'd never think of that.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. But that's not playing the game.

BROADLEY. Well, I must have *something* to sustain life. (*Lights a cigar and throws SIR ROBERT the matches.*) I pretended I had saved £50 and our dressing bags from the wreck. What does she do but collar the money and sell off even the jewelled hair-brushes, to scrape together three hundred guineas she insisted she owed as a debt of honour for that picture-puzzle. Where she hides the money heaven alone knows. Even if I could find a pretext for displaying any fresh cash—which I can't—she'd only commandeer it. I'm tied hand and foot, I tell you—I'm robbed, starved, poisoned—

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Serve you right! . . . Saints alive O! what sort of caked tobacco d'ye call this? (*Dragging something hard from the pouch.*)

BROADLEY. Oh lord! I forgot to throw it away. That's yesterday's steak! Nothing else handy to smuggle it off my plate into! And they say there's nothing like leather! (SIR ROBERT *with a grimace drops it back into the pouch.*) Try one of these. (*Passes box—SIR ROBERT takes cigar and lights it.*) And yesterday was Sunday too—not even a cookshop open. My

matches, please. (*Gets them back.*) I was so ravenous this morning I had to get up in the raw dawn and feed at a riverside coffee stall with watermen and night birds.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Saints alive O! Was the coffee drinkable?

BROADLEY. Compared to Annabel's it was nectar.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Why dinna ye go to the Club?

BROADLEY. A good old dinner at the Club—don't tantalize me with that heavenly vision—you know I've gone up the Nile with Annabel.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ou, ay, I forgot. Not that they all swallow that story! Some say ye smashed up her furniture, and she left ye for an Egyptian prince.

BROADLEY (*complacently*). They're wrong this time.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. And ithers say it was you that eloped.

BROADLEY (*angrily*). Me? With whom?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. With your wife!

BROADLEY. The scandal-mongers.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. There's nae smoke without fire. (*Voluptuously puffs out a cloud.*) But it's a dom'd shame. Where's your *wife's* cigars?

BROADLEY. I know what you mean. D'ye think I enjoy half-starving her? But what can I do? She says, till I get work—

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. And why dinna ye get work—a great strappin' healthy brute like you?

BROADLEY. Don't be a fool! If I pretended to have work I'd have to moon about from 9 to 6 in all weathers. Pretending to *look* for work is bad enough. I can't go West because I'm in the Orient, and I can't go East for fear of meeting my own hospital staff. I have to slink about the docks, dodging steam-cranes and odd jobs. A nice hole you've got me into!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Me? I like that.

BROADLEY. And so does she. She enjoys it now, but how will it be in a month, a year, hence?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ye white-livered loon ! Ye propose to keep that grand leddy here a twelvemonth !

BROADLEY. Well, how can I confess to her that the man she's at last learned to love is a liar and a brute ? The longer it goes on, the harder to explain.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ye should ha' thocht of that before.

BROADLEY. *You* should ha' thought of it. Her love will turn to hate.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*complacently*). I shouldna wonder.

BROADLEY. I'm living on the verge of a precipice—my happiness hangs by a thread !

*(The door bursts open—ANNABEL flies in. He is caught with the cigar, which he vainly tries to hold behind him for SIR ROBERT to take.)*

Er—Sir Robert's given me a cigar. Where's the fish ?

ANNABEL. I forgot my purse. The fishmonger doesn't give credit. He has a placard "Poor Trust is dead, bad debts killed him." Isn't it delightfully original ? I do love marketing. But you mustn't use Tom to luxuries, Sir Robert. Give it up, you naughty boy. *(She tugs at his cigar.)* There ! *(Throws it out of window.)* We must be economical.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*to himself*). Bang goes three bob !

ANNABEL. Let me fill your pipe. *(Takes up the pouch containing the steak.)*

BROADLEY (*snatching it away frantically*). No, no ! I've smoked enough. We *must* be economical. *(Conceals it in jacket pocket.)*

ANNABEL. Thank you, dear ! *(Snuggles to him.)* Why, I never noticed you're still wearing a gold pin. *(Tugs at it.)*

BROADLEY. No, no—all that glitters is not gold !

ANNABEL. Must go into my savings-bank.

BROADLEY (*grumbling*). Where is this wonderful savings-bank of yours ?

ANNABEL. That's my secret. But you won't be in darkness long. I've written to Thisbe to come for her money

BROADLEY (*upset*). You gave away our address?

ANNABEL. I asked her to keep it secret. I explained that your bankruptcy hadn't leaked out, and that you had hidden away like a stricken deer.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*murmuring*). Stricken deer! Healthy hippopotamus!

ANNABEL. But you're starving—I must get my purse. (*Goes behind screen.*)

BROADLEY. You see how she robs me—and all to pay for that picture-puzzle. (*A whistle is heard outside the door—"Coo-ey."*) O lord! Here's Miss Roseleaf! I say, warn her to come later.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Do your own dirty wark. I never meddle 'twixt man and wife. (*The whistle is repeated—"Coo-ey!"*)

BROADLEY. Oh, hang it all. [*Exit.*]

*Re-enter ANNABEL.*

ANNABEL. Why, where's Tom?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Called away a meenit.

ANNABEL. Ah, that landlady, I suppose! Poor Tom! How do you think he's looking?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Too dom'd weel.

ANNABEL. That's the brave face he puts on. But he can't stand privations like a woman. Oh! if I can only get him comfy again.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Get yersel' comfy first. Buy brawer furniture.

ANNABEL. But we've no money.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. On the Hire System. Ye've an Emporium across the road.

ANNABEL. No, no—no more debt! I *have* been into it with the Emporium, and there's a little lot of the most indispensable articles for Tom set aside in my

name. But they're sixteen guineas. (*Sighs hopelessly.*)  
Where am I to get sixteen guineas?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. There's Tammas's pin.  
Why do ye no buy the things one by one?

ANNABEL. Impossible! They would be *eighteen*  
guineas that way.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Well, *I'll* give ye the sixteen  
guineas.

ANNABEL. How horrid of you! That would spoil  
everything. Good-bye. (*Going.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Na, please—I maun help  
ye buy your fish. I'm an expairt.

ANNABEL. No! You'll try to pay for it.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Honour bricht. I'd only  
get it better and save ye a bob or sae.

ANNABEL. Ha! How many bobs are there in  
sixteen guineas?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*instantaneously*). Three  
hundred and thirty-six.

ANNABEL. Oh dear! You'd have to buy my fish  
nearly a year to save sixteen guineas. (*Pathetically.*)  
Sir Robert, how *does* one make money?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*pouting out his chest*). By  
brains—and honesty!

ANNABEL. Yes, but how did you make yours?  
Fish, wasn't it?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. All alive O! Ye don't  
propose to cry fish! Nae, I made my real fortune on  
the Stock Exchange.

ANNABEL. But that's closed to women.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Not at all—ye deal through  
a broker.

ANNABEL. But it's gambling, isn't it?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*shocked*). Havers! In-  
telligent antecipation! Why, I made my first thousand  
pounds by selling two hundred shares in a diamond  
mine, because I kenned it was a fraud.

ANNABEL. But was that honest?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Pairfectly—only it's deeficult to explain to a novice. Withoot the Stock Exchange eendustry would collapse.

ANNABEL. But how did you get the original money to—prop up the diamond trade ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. That was the fish. But ye could commence even with five pounds if ye ca' canny.

ANNABEL. And what could I buy for five pounds ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Or sell.

ANNABEL. Sell ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. For a fall.

ANNABEL. But I want to prop industry *up*. What would you advise now ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Na! Na! I never meddle 'twixt man and stock. Here's a Stock Exchange List. (*Produces one.*)

ANNABEL (*seizing it eagerly, and giving him the string bag instead*). All in alphabetical order! Why, it's as easy as A B C. (*He looks dubious.*) We'll have something with an M.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. What for ?

ANNABEL. Doesn't Mascotte begin with an M? Now, which is the cheapest ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*horrified*). Lassie! Ye dinna buy the cheapest!

ANNABEL. I must lay out my money to the best advantage. Ha! Mexican Premier Gold Mine.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*alarmed*). Dinna touch it!

ANNABEL. But it's only 2s. a share. A £1 share for 2s.! Why, it's the most wonderful bargain. Fifty shares for £5.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*sarcastically*). Ye can buy 100 while ye are aboot it—they're no mair than a bob to-day.

ANNABEL (*ecstatic*). A hundred pounds for five ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. If ye'll tak' my advice—

ANNABEL. But with the £95 profit I can buy all that Tom wants!

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL (*angrily*). Hoots, woman! Buy Premiers and bang goes your five pounds!

ANNABEL. But I tell you——

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL (*screaming*). Ye shallna throw awa' five pounds.

ANNABEL. But I haven't got five pounds.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. That's true. I'm an ass.

ANNABEL (*persistent*). But if I *had* five pounds——

BROADLEY (*as he opens the door*). My good woman, I've told you three times I'll settle with her.

MRS. CROW (*appearing pertinaciously behind him*). I don't want my 'ouse dragged into the police-court. She come soppin' and screamin'——

ANNABEL. What's the matter, Tom?

BROADLEY. Oh, nothing! Says we poured water on a woman.

MRS. CROW. She's not a woman! She's the wife of a waterman.

BROADLEY (*blandly*). Ah, a mermaid!

MRS. CROW. Your Pears' soap fell on 'er 'ead.

BROADLEY. Let her keep it for her honesty. (*Closes door on MRS. CROW.*)

ANNABEL (*remorsefully*). Oh, Tom! Will she send the police?

BROADLEY. We'll buy her a new dress.

ANNABEL. But where's the money?

BROADLEY (*embarrassed*). Oh, Sir Robert——

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Me!

ANNABEL. No! No!

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Na! Na!

BROADLEY. It's no use crying over spilt water. Cut along, dear. (*Perceiving SIR ROBERT is carrying the string bag*) Why, where are you going?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Fish-buying in Poplar is nae wark for leddies! (*Going towards door. BROADLEY smiles knowingly.*)

ANNABEL (*to SIR ROBERT*). You've forgotten your cigars! (*Picks up box. BROADLEY'S smile dies.*)

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL (*embarrassed*). Ou, ay—I brocht 'em for Tammas.

ANNABEL. No! no! no! I tell you. We are not paupers. (*Shoves them into SIR ROBERT'S tail pocket as he goes out. To BROADLEY*) Take your tub now, dear. [*Exeunt.*]

BROADLEY (*disgusted*). Take my tub with Miss Roseleaf coming! . . . Well, I suppose any smoke's better than none. (*Takes up pipe, humming brokenly throughout*):

There was a filthy fisherman  
Who filched my best cigars.  
He smoked a pipe from morn till night,  
It smelt like motor cars.

(*He takes out pouch and mechanically extracts again the forgotten piece of steak.*)

D——n!

(*Holding the meat gingerly, he goes to throw it out of the window; then remembering the row over the tub, he takes it to the fire, then murmuring, "No, that'll smell," pulls up the loose board. There is a knock. He buries it with guilty haste and jumps up.*)

Come in!

*Enter MISS ROSELEAF, bland and exquisite as usual, with a reticule and a dainty umbrella.*

Oh, you! I thought you had to whistle.

MISS ROSELEAF. But I saw Mrs. Broadley go out with——

BROADLEY. Ah, yes! impeccable one. And I must apologize again for keeping you hanging about in these April showers.

MISS ROSELEAF. But I told you I met some local feminists, and we held a council of war under your window. Here's your weekly report. (*Hands a long blue envelope.*)



BROADLEY (*taking it, not opening*). Nothing wrong, I suppose? (*His eyes go roving all over the floor.*)

MISS ROSELEAF. Nothing to bring you back from the Nile. (*Sits at centre table.*) Mr. Lewis's statement shows that your share of last week's profits was £10,419 6s., only £33 below the same week for last year. I'm afraid your super-tax— Are you looking for anything?

BROADLEY (*almost under the table*). Only a cigar-end. I was hoping Sir Robert—

MISS ROSELEAF. Here's your own that fell on us—quite dry—I was collecting it for the Cause. (*Produces it out of a neat envelope.*)

BROADLEY. My preserver! (*Seizes it.*)

MISS ROSELEAF. My friends thought it was an anti-feminist missile, but I took it as a danger-signal.

BROADLEY (*laughingly*). And so it was. (*MISS ROSELEAF tenders him a fat cheque-book.*) Let me light my end up! Spread 'em out!

(*MISS ROSELEAF tears out the cheques and spreads them over the table, while he, sitting at its left edge, lights up and goes on talking.*)

I say! (*Puffing out pleasantly.*) Your husband must be a lucky man. Are you still keeping him?

MISS ROSELEAF. Naturally—he still writes plays.

BROADLEY. But it's not natural to keep a man!

MISS ROSELEAF. But how could I love a man who kept *me*?

BROADLEY. Eh? Why not?

MISS ROSELEAF. I should feel I *had* to love him—and that would make me hate him.

BROADLEY (*blankly*). Oh!

MISS ROSELEAF. Besides, a woman wants to be her husband's mother, not his mistress.

BROADLEY. I say! This is illuminating!

MISS ROSELEAF (*imperturbably producing stylo*). Sign, please! (*Perpending her words, he begins mechanically signing the sea of cheques. A knock.*)

BROADLEY. Come in!

MRS. CROW (*more meekly*). 'Ave yer done with the tub now?

BROADLEY. Done? I haven't begun!

MRS. CROW. But I need it.

BROADLEY. Not so much as I. Just leave it half an hour, will you—we want it for a bath. Here—here's a sovereign!

MRS. CROW. Eh? (*Gasps.*)

BROADLEY. Sorry I've got nothing smaller.

MRS. CROW. Don't mention it!

(*Bites the coin to test it. Looks at the sea of cheques on the table, gasps again, opens and bangs the door, but remains within, her back to it.*)

MISS ROSELEAF. That was too much money.

BROADLEY. When I'm coining ten thousand a week!

MISS ROSELEAF. When you have the position of a pauper to keep up.

(*MRS. CROW makes a gasping noise and hurries out, not unseen.*)

That woman suspects something.

MRS. CROW (*genially from without*). Certainly, Mrs. Broadley, it shall be biling.

BROADLEY. My wife! (*MISS ROSELEAF and he frenziedly sweep the cheques together.*) Get behind the screen.

MISS ROSELEAF. Certainly not. This isn't a French farce. I'll come later.

*Enter ANNABEL.*

ANNABEL. You here?

MISS ROSELEAF. Yes, I came for a testimonial.

ANNABEL. We can't give you one. You spent too much money.

BROADLEY. But, Annabel—

ANNABEL. My dear, be guided by me! Good afternoon, Miss Roseleaf.

[*MISS ROSELEAF bows and exit.*]

ANNABEL (*perceiving cigar*). Why, where—— ?

BROADLEY. Sir Robert threw it away.

ANNABEL. You pick up cigar ends ?

BROADLEY. Must make ends meet. (*She remorselessly takes his cigar away and throws it in the fire.*) But where is Sir Robert ?

ANNABEL. The Poplar fish is too dear, he says. He's taken a taxi to his own place in Billingsgate. I hurried back because I remembered you had no soap. Here! (*Gives him soap.*) Mrs. Crow is boiling your water—she seems quite changed.

BROADLEY. Yes, I gave her a—piece of my mind. (*Goes behind screen.*) But, I say, you won't let Sir Robert in. An Englishman's tub is his castle—what ?

ANNABEL. I'll lock the door and put a placard on it. (*Writes. In the silence one of his boots is dumped down.*) There! Will this do, Tom? "Leave bag and money with bill on landing." All in capital letters, as it's so dark there.

BROADLEY (*behind screen*). Sounds all right. (*Another boot dumped down.*) But what money ?

ANNABEL. The change. I gave him half a crown.

BROADLEY. How rash !

ANNABEL. And he has to bring back the bill—to show he's not cheating himself.

BROADLEY. Ah! one can't be too careful with Scotchmen.

(ANNABEL *opens the door and pins up paper outside.*)

ANNABEL. Oh dear, this place is a pigsty! (*Gets the pail and a housecloth, and kneels down to scrub.*)

BROADLEY (*looking round screen*). I say, you mustn't do that !

ANNABEL. But it's filthy !

BROADLEY (*hurrying out in his slippers and shirt-sleeves*). I forbid it. You'll spoil your hands! This is *my* job.

*(With much joint wrangling and chattering he wrests the housecloth from her and falls on his knees. THISBE and TIPTREE come through the open door. The artist carries an easel with a replica of his picture of the Bank of England.)*

BROADLEY *(startled, then blandly waving the bucket)*.  
Just practising fire-drill!

*[Exit behind screen with bucket.]*

THISBE. Annabel! *(Embraces her.)*

ANNABEL. So you got my letter?

THISBE. Yes, but I didn't realize—oh, my dear!  
How brave you are!

ANNABEL *(perceiving TIPTREE behind his picture)*.  
The Master!

THISBE *(with mock humility)*. My Master now!

ANNABEL. You've married him?

TIPTREE. Not yet. We marry to-morrow.

*(Embraces her, hampered by the picture. Its back, becoming visible, is seen to bear added legends, "The Bank of England," "This Side Up with Care.")*

THISBE. And then we go—where you are supposed to be—up the Nile.

ANNABEL. Then how lucky I've got a wedding-present for the Master! *(Thrusts pin into his tie.)*

TIPTREE *(pricked)*. Oh!

THISBE. What a lovely pin! *(Takes possession of it.)* Thank you, Annabel.

TIPTREE. Yes, but if Mrs. Broadley's so poor, we can't take her money too.

THISBE. How else can we go up the Nile?

TIPTREE. I'd rather honeymoon here. Such a jolly North light. Never mind, my picture shall enjoy it. *(Adjusts it on easel.)* Yes, dear lady, though your creditors seized my masterpiece, here we are again! You shan't pay through the nose for nothing.

ANNABEL. But what is this? *(THISBE turns it hastily.)* Ah, my Dance of Death!

TIPTREE. Nothing of the sort! (THISBE glares.)  
Oom!

THISBE. Grandison means it's only a copy he has made for you——

TIPTREE. Gratis.

*Re-enter BROADLEY from behind screen, re-clothed.*

BROADLEY (*perceiving picture*). Ah, there's my old friend!

ANNABEL (*dramatically*). And just in time to witness the Redemption——

ALL. The Redemption?

ANNABEL. Of our honour. Observe. (*Approaches her cache with stagey movements.*) This is quite Wagnerian. They ought to play the Dwarf *Motif* from the Ring. (*Lifts board.*) Isn't it thrilling? (*Exhumes stocking.*) The Dwarves' treasure!

BROADLEY. So that's where she sinks our capital! (*ANNABEL holds it up.*)

TIPTREE. Santa Claus in April?

ANNABEL. No, Master, the three hundred guineas I owe Thisbe for your picture.

BROADLEY (*poising it*). I had no idea our liabilities were so heavy.

TIPTREE. Too heavy. Why, thirty pounds——

THISBE (*taking bag hurriedly*). Thank you, Annabel. (*Seizes TIPTREE'S arm.*) We must hurry, dearest, or——

ANNABEL. But you haven't counted it!

THISBE. Oh, but——

ANNABEL. I insist. (*Takes it back.*)

BROADLEY. Why didn't you give her a cheque?

ANNABEL. When we've no banking account!

BROADLEY (*embarrassed*). Oh, ah!

ANNABEL. Besides, I've cheated her with a cheque already. Cheques are not real, they are only scraps of paper. (*Sits at right of table, distributing the money-bags.*)

TIPTREE *sits opposite, and THISBE in between.*) These three, each with a hundred sovereigns; these three, each with a hundred shillings. Now, if each of us takes one bag—— (*Business.*)

BROADLEY. And what about me? Don't I count?

ANNABEL. Not in money matters. But you might hammer down the empty savings-bank.

BROADLEY. But there's no hammer.

ANNABEL. The poker! Oh, how unpractical men are!

*(Following ANNABEL'S example, THISBE and TIPTREE pour out their sovereigns. The table becomes one great mass of glittering gold. ANNABEL hums the Dwarf Motif as she counts. BROADLEY, on his knees, bangs at the board, humming a popular air. There is a knock, but everybody is too engrossed to hear it. MRS. CROW opens the door, and appears with a pail of hot water. As she catches sight of the bags, the sea of gold, the three eager faces bending over it, their lips humming and muttering mysteriously, while a strange, lonely figure beats with a poker, her eyes nearly bulge out of her head.)*

MRS. CROW *(to herself)*. Swell mobsmen! I'll get you 'ot water. *(Puts down the pail and flees silently.)*

ANNABEL. Ninety-nine, one hundred.

THISBE. Ninety-nine, one hundred.

TIPTREE. Ninety-eight, ninety-nine, one hundred.

BROADLEY *(rising)*. *Rien ne va plus.* *(Picks up shovel, and like a mock croupier shovels to each bag its gold.)*

THISBE *(rising)*. We'll take the silver for granted. *(Sweeps the six bags into her stocking.)*

TIPTREE *(perturbed)*. But we must leave Mrs. Broadley something. *(THISBE glares at him.)*

ANNABEL *(graciously)*. You've left me the picture.

TIPTREE. But that's the wrong way.

THISBE. It's the right way—to express our appreciation of our treatment. Good-bye, Annabel. *(Kisses*

*her hastily.*) Come along, dear—we haven't too much time.

TIPTREE. But—

THISBE. If you talk any more, I won't go to your wedding. (*Hurries him out.*)

TIPTREE (*hurrying after her*). Oom—oom! (*Bangs against the bucket.*) Oh, gurroo! [*Exit, limping.*]

BROADLEY. How did it get there?

ANNABEL. Never mind the bucket. Come to me, darling! (*Opens her arms—he flies to them.*) At last we are purged of debt. Now begins the new clean life. Together. (*Kisses him.*) And now for its symbol—the bath.

BROADLEY. *That* can't be together. We must toss.

ANNABEL. No, no, it's *your* hot water.

BROADLEY. I've tried twice to get into it. Providence evidently means it for you.

ANNABEL. But truly, dear—I only need my hair washed. Don't waste that beautiful hot water on a mere head. Besides, can one wash one's hair without a maid?

BROADLEY. We'll ask Providence. (*Spins a sovereign.*) Head, you wash it—tail, I tub it! Head—I've lost!

ANNABEL. But where did you get a sovereign from?

BROADLEY. Eh? That's only a shilling gilded over. They sell 'em on the pavement for a penny. I mean—Come along, or it'll get cold. (*Carries the bucket behind screen.*)

ANNABEL (*lingering by the picture*). Do you know I'm afraid this can't be a good copy? I don't seem to like it half so much.

BROADLEY (*coming back*). Come along!

ANNABEL. But you mustn't let anybody in.

BROADLEY. Not the King of England. There! (*Turns key.*) And there! (*Shoots bolt.*)

ANNABEL. How unselfish you are! These days will always be a beautiful memory. (*Goes behind screen.*)

BROADLEY. Till she finds out. Oh lord! (*Drops dejectedly into a chair.*)

ANNABEL. Oh, Tom, what *have* you done? (*His pyjamas come flying over the screen.*) Damped all the bed.

BROADLEY (*looks round for a place to hang them. Sounds of hair-washing begin behind the screen.*) Ha! How handy! Done *you* in the eye! (*Spreads them on easel over picture. A knock.*) You can't come in!

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*outside*). Hopen in the name of the Law!

BROADLEY. The devil! Annabel, how far are you? (*No reply.*) Annabel! (*Great splashing.*) Oh lord, if she—— (*Runs to screen.*) Annabel, don't you hear?

ANNABEL. How can I hear with my head in the tub?

BROADLEY. So much the better. It's only about the waterman's wife. (*Sounds of hair-washing resumed.*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Hopen, or I'll break down the door!

BROADLEY (*unlocking and unbolting*). Sh! My wife's asleep.

(SERGEANT QUIZZET *and* a CONSTABLE *appear at the door. BROADLEY bars their further advance.*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Why was the door locked?

BROADLEY. It's our early closing day.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Early rising day, you mean. Corfy at the waterside.

BROADLEY, Sh! I tell you. (*Glances guiltily towards screen.*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Trotter, guard the door! See the female does not escape.

BROADLEY. Stop that foolery! (*Produces purse.*) How much does the mermaid——?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Take care! It's my duty to warn you that——

BROADLEY. Don't waste the public time. How much?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Penal servitude for life!



BROADLEY (*drops purse*). What! She hasn't died of the chill?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Stow that spoo! (*Produces handcuffs.*) You'd best come along quietly.

BROADLEY. What on earth for? Where's your warrant?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Under the Coinage Offences Act we need no warrant.

BROADLEY (*picking up his purse*). But you need evidence, my dear Dogberry.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Quizzet, sir; Sergeant Quizzet.

BROADLEY (*murmuring*). Exquisite!

*Enter MRS. CROW.*

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Mrs. Crow!

MRS. CROW. Yes, Sergeant.

BROADLEY (*to MRS. CROW as she enters*). What was it you say you saw?

MRS. CROW (*venomously banging the table*). I saw too much money.

BROADLEY (*his face falling*). Eh? Shall I never get away from it?

MRS. CROW. And I 'eard you tell 'er you was coinin' it!

BROADLEY. Tell who?

MRS. CROW. That lady crook you was forgin' cheques with—

BROADLEY. Sh! (*Glances uneasily at the screen.*)

MRS. CROW. Sh! yerself! And who looked as if margarine wouldn't melt in her mouth.

BROADLEY. Sh! You crimson criminal. You've been listening at the keyhole.

MRS. CROW. Rather! I'm respectable, I am. Coin-in' ten thousand a week! No wonder you could pay a quid for my tub.

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*pricks up his ears*). Your tub! That's to wash the stuff! (*Tries to get past BROADLEY.*)

BROADLEY. What do you want?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. The tub and the woman.

BROADLEY (*seizes poker*). Back! She's in it.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. You said she was asleep.

BROADLEY. You woke her up! Always takes a bath when she wakes up.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. I must hexamine her anyhow . . . Hullo! Are you there? . . . Why don't she answer?

BROADLEY. She didn't hear. Ring up again. I mean, speak louder.

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*shouting*). Hullo there!

ANNABEL (*behind the screen*). Who's there? Go away, or I'll give you in charge. (*Her face and dripping soapy hair appear above screen.*) Tom! You promised me—  
Ha! (*Screams as she perceives police.*)

BROADLEY (*poking the fire furiously to explain away the poker.*) I had to let 'em in. They only want to ask a few questions.

ANNABEL (*angrily*). I call it most inconsiderate. I'm just as wet as the waterman's wife.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Silence! What's your name?

ANNABEL. Now really! As if Mr. Broadley couldn't have told you that!

SERGEANT QUIZZET. No trifling. Are you married or single?

ANNABEL. Oh, do ask my husband! (*Disappears.*)

MRS. CROW. 'Usband indeed! She wanted *me* to paint my face and make up to an old Dutchman.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. And which board did you say he concealed the moulds and dies under?

MRS. CROW. That, Sergeant.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Trotter, prise the board. (*TROTTER prises ANNABEL'S board.*)

MRS. CROW. Nothing!

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Nothing? That's suspicious. Ha! What's this? (*Treading on BROADLEY'S loose board.*) Oho! (*He pulls it up, and draws out the meat.*)  
Another clue!

MRS. CROW. Murder!

BROADLEY (*smiling blandly*). A scrap of steak, hardly of evidence!

MRS. CROW. So that's where the cat 'oards it all!

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*venting his disappointment on her*). Get hout! You put me hoff my game.

MRS. CROW (*indignantly*). And who put you hon to the flash female with the feather?

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*pushing her towards door*). Get hout!

MRS. CROW. And the Hitalian hanarchist as pretended to be dumb——?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Get hout, I tell you.

(*He hurls the meat at her, she dodges and exit, and it hits the picture.*)

Aha! What's this covered up? (*Takes off the pyjamas.*)

BROADLEY. That is the question. Looks like a bad Easter-egg—what?

(*SERGEANT QUIZZET turns it upside down, then studies the back.*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET. "The Bank of England!" A plan of the Bank! Trotter, this is a dangerous gang. Lucky I applied for a pistol. "This side up with care." (*Puts it correct way upward.*) We'll mark this "Hexhibit A."

BROADLEY (*in silent convulsions, holding his sides*). Mercy, Sergeant, I'll split in a moment!

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*occupied in pencilling back of picture*). That'll shorten your sentence. Help us to nab Bill.

BROADLEY. Bill?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Who meets the boat.

BROADLEY. The boat?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Don't prewaricate. The game's hup. We've got your warning to your pals. (*Produces placard.*) "Leave bag and money with Bill on landing."

BROADLEY (*writhing helplessly*). Oh lord!

SERGEANT QUIZZET. "Hexhibit B." (*Pencils on back.*) Now, my man, drop that poker and come along quietly. (*Waves handcuffs.*)

BROADLEY (*grows serious*). Look here, Sergeant, you'll be the laughing-stock of the Force. I'm Thomas Broadley, who built the Poplar Consumption Hospital—opened by Royalty. My wife and I are trying to realize what it means to be poor and to pig in one room. See?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Quite! You don't happen to have read this morning's *Daily Trump*?

BROADLEY. No.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Ha! (*Produces it and reads unctuously*):

A MILLIONAIRE HUP THE NILE.

HINTERVIEW WITH THOMAS BROADLEY.

BY OUR CAIRO CORRESPONDENT.

BROADLEY (*drops the poker*). D——n that interviewer! He's the eleventh plague of Egypt. (*Calls over screen.*) Annabel! Annabel!

ANNABEL (*popping a towelled head excitedly over screen*). What is it, dear?

BROADLEY. Tell the Sergeant my name.

ANNABEL (*disgusted*). Surely you can tell him that!

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Just what I was thinking! Of course, mum, you've all got the same story! (*With grim amusement.*) Ye're living here to study the life of the poor, aren't you, Mrs. Broadley?

ANNABEL. Nothing of the sort. We live here because we can't afford any better. (*Disappears.*)

BROADLEY. Oh, d——n!

SERGEANT QUIZZET. You see! (*Slips handcuffs on him.*)

BROADLEY (*angry*). You ineffable idiot! (*Dashes his handcuffed hands into his pyjamas and holds them to the fire, pretending to dry them. Shouts*) But Annabel!

(*Her head pops up again.*) Tell him where we lived before!

ANNABEL (*crossly*). Well, you know as well as I. Not far from the Angel! (*Disappears again.*)

BROADLEY (*desperately*). Look here, Sergeant, you take me to your Inspector——

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*knocking at door*). May I coom in?

BROADLEY (*ecstatically*). The very man! Come in, you scoundrel!

*Enter SIR ROBERT, with string bag.*

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*recoiling before police*). All alive O!

BROADLEY. Look what you've brought me to! (*Displays handcuffs.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Serve you right! Woman-torturer!

BROADLEY. Shut up! Tell Sherlock Holmes I'm——

SERGEANT QUIZZET. I daresay. (*To SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL*) And who may you be?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*haughtily*). Everybody kens Sir Robert McCorbel.

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*amused*). Ha! You a millionaire too?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Three times ower.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. You don't say? What have you got there? (*Snatches bag, pulls out piece of cod.*)

BROADLEY (*amused*). Fishy! Fishy!

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*pulling out bill*). McCorbel, Billingsgate—aha! that's where you got the name. Two pounds of cod, eightpence. Thank you, Mr. Millionaire. (*Feigns to give back bag, and slips handcuffs on SIR ROBERT, who struggles furiously.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. You blithering blather-skite!

SERGEANT QUIZZET. 'Ere, none o' your Billingsgate !  
(*Pencils bill.*) "Hexhibit C."

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*apoplectic*). But I'm a Baronet, I tell ye.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. And what is a Baronet doing in Poplar ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I can popple if I like.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. And who certifies you're a Baronet ?

BROADLEY. I do, of course.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Of course. Two drunken men leaning on each other. (*Calls towards screen*) Now my good woman ! How long— ? (*Produces handcuffs.*)

BROADLEY (*with desperate politeness*). Look here, Sergeant, I can explain everything. Take me along to your Inspector, and I'll give you the finest box of cigars in the world.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. You heard, Trotter, that shameless hattempt at corruption. They want to lure me hoff the premises. They hexpect more pals. *You* take this crook to the station.

BROADLEY. Thank you, Sergeant. . . . Annabel !  
(*Knocks at screen with handcuffs.*)

ANNABEL (*behind*). Oh, do let me dry my hair !

BROADLEY. By all means. I'm off to settle the matter with the Inspector.

ANNABEL (*in relieved tone*). So glad.

BROADLEY. But Sir Robert's back—he'll look after you.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Trotter, by the right, march.

[*Exit* TROTTER. BROADLEY *is following*. SERGEANT *tugs at his coat.*)]

My cigars !

BROADLEY (*turning on SIR ROBERT*). Fork 'em out, filcher !

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*agitating his handcuffed hands*). Hoo can I fork 'em out, ye donnered idiot ? What the devil am I padlocked for ?

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*humorously*). For filching cigars, of course. (*Pulls them from his coat tail and smells them approvingly, and strikes a match.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ye canna smoke in a leddy's bedroom. Stand guard outside.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Don't mind. You're safe from mischief. Better to trap your pals too. (*Going.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Wait! Wait! (*Gestures wildly towards his high hat.*) Pit on my hat!

SERGEANT QUIZZET. You've got your hat on!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Na, na! On my hands! We mauna skeer her.

(SERGEANT QUIZZET *removes SIR ROBERT'S hat and drops it over his handcuffs.*)

Muckle obleeged. [*Exit SERGEANT QUIZZET.*]

*Enter ANNABEL, her hair charmingly fresh and loosely arranged.*

ANNABEL. Ah, you've brought the fish! How kind! Won't you put down your hat?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Na, thanks—I'm just awa'! What on airth brings the bobbies here?

ANNABEL. Didn't Tom tell you? We poured water on a waterman's wife.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Eh? What for?

ANNABEL. There was nowhere else to pour it.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Except on a waterman's wife? For shame!

ANNABEL. But it was raining. The waterman's wife was wet when we wetted her.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*screams dazedly*). But I never wetted the waterman's wife!

ANNABEL. Of course not. (*Opens bag.*) Where's the bill?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*embarrassed*). It—was only eightpence.

ANNABEL. Then where's the change?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*still more embarrassed by handcuffs*). Er—ye can get it oot o' my waistcoat pouch—puir man's gout, ye ken.

ANNABEL. Oh! Poor Sir Robert! (*Touching his waistcoat gingerly.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Dinna be skeart. I winna hug ye.

ANNABEL (*smiling*). I'm not afraid of that.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ye're no? (*Palpitates impotently under his hat. A knock at the door.*) Dahmna-tion!

ANNABEL. Come in!

TIPTREE *rushes in breathlessly with flying mane, waving a money-bag.*

TIPTREE. You *must* take this back, dear lady.

ANNABEL. No—no!

TIPTREE. But it's discount on cash. Only a hundred shillings.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. And *my* hundred shillings.

ANNABEL. Yours?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ay. Ye keppit arguing sae in the street that I *did* buy ye your Mexican muck.

ANNABEL (*wildly excited*). You did?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Yes, I 'phoned frae Billingsgate tae my stockbrokers. But I dauredna tell ye till ye had the siller.

ANNABEL (*emphatic*). You bought me a hundred Mexican Premiers?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ay, and sold a hundred thousand for myself.

ANNABEL. Sold a hundred thousand. What for?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. To teach ye a lesson. Pit your brains against a male expairt, indeed! I shall win £2,000 and you will lose every penny! D'ye still stick to your bargain?

ANNABEL. I must. Business is business. (*Takes*



*bag from TIPTREE.*) Thank you, Master. (*Offers it to SIR ROBERT.*) Count it and give me a receipt.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL (*embarrassed by handcuffs, crossly*). Count it yourself.

(*She tries to undo the string, but is too excited and cuts it with a table-knife, then pours out the stream of silver on the table. TIPTREE turns and perceives his picture is now right side up.*)

TIPTREE. At last! Thank you, dear lady, thank you. Ah, it is only in a garret that Art is understood. (*Takes up table-knife and scrapes at picture.*) Only in a garret can one paint freely, breathe freely, speak freely— (*Door flies open and closes. SERGEANT QUIZZET, with back to it, points pistol.*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Hands up, Bill!

(*ANNABEL screams. TIPTREE drops knife with a clash. SERGEANT handcuffs him.*)

And you, madam, red-handed! (*Handcuffs ANNA-BEL.*)

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Ye dir-r-ty dog! (*Jets his hat at him.*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*imperturbably marking bag*). "Hexhibit D."

ANNABEL (*bewildered*). What are these bracelets for?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. For the false coin, of course.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Eh?

ANNABEL (*still more dazed*). That little gilded coin they sell on the pavement for a penny?

TIPTREE. But *I'm* a painter, not a gilder!

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*pricking up his ears*). Aha! Did you paint that? (*Points to picture.*)

TIPTREE. Of course.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Well, hain't that enough?

TIPTREE. What do you mean? What will they do to me?

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Get your hair cut!

TIPTREE. You blunderin' son of a jibberin' jackass,

with the mug of a mule and the brains of a half-witted critic——

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Stow that! (*Levels pistol.*)  
Another word and I'll blow your brains out!

TIPTREE. Oom—oom—oom——! (*A knock.*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Sh! No warning! (*Threatens ANNABEL with pistol.*) Say "Come in!"

ANNABEL (*tremulously*). Come in!

*Enter THISBE, hugging the great stocking.*

THISBE. Is my fiancé——? (*Screams.*) Ah!

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Hands up!

(*THISBE drops the stocking with a heavy thud. The SERGEANT handcuffs her.*)

THISBE. Grandison! What does it mean?

TIPTREE. You shouldn't have followed me, darling, especially with your stocking.

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*pulls up bag after bag with increasing unction.*) "Hexhibit E."

THISBE (*breaks down blubberingly*). But how are we to get married with these on? (*A whistle outside—"Coo-ey."*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*threatens them with pistol*). Turn to hide your hands! (*The four prisoners all execute a melancholy manœuvre, and stand dismally with manacles clanking as he throws open the door.*) Miss Roseleaf!

MISS ROSELEAF (*entering*). Sergeant Quizzet!

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*lowering pistol shamefacedly*). You know these people?

MISS ROSELEAF. As well as you know every feminist speaker. Oh, Sergeant, Sergeant, I thought that constant attendance at our meetings and my lectures had improved your brains! (*He hangs his head.*) I came, Mrs. Broadley, to ask you to reconsider your decision.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Then she is Mrs. Broadley?

MISS ROSELEAF. Of course. I am happy to give her a testimonial.

SERGEANT QUIZZET. And this ?

MISS ROSELEAF. Is Sir Robert McCorbel. These papers will prove——

SERGEANT QUIZZET. That's henough. A woman speaker's word is a haffidavit. I beg your pardon, everybody. And to think what I owe to Mr. Broadley's Hospital. My mother-in-law died there. I'll run and release him at once.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Stop ! Stop ! What about us ? (*Clanks handcuffs.*)

SERGEANT QUIZZET. Hexcuse my hoversight. (*Automatically.*) Line up in your queue—I beg your pardon. Ladies first !

(*Frees ANNABEL, who at once collects her silver ; and THISBE, who at once collects her bags ; and SIR ROBERT, who picks up his hat and smooths it resentfully ; and TIPTREE, who starts scraping his picture.*)

Don't be hard on me, Sir Robert.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Well, fork out those cigars.

SERGEANT QUIZZET (*doing it glumly*). Rotten luck ! (*Looking at picture.*) I did think that was a clue.

[*Exit.*

THISBE (*looking at her watch*). Good gracious ! Nearly four ! The Bank will be closing ! Good-bye, everybody. Come along !

TIPTREE. This Bank's more important.

THISBE (*snatching knife from him*). Not if we're to go up the Nile ! (*TIPTREE is dragged away, protesting inarticulately.*)

ANNABEL (*offering bag to SIR ROBERT*). And there's your money ! Give me my Mexican Premiers.

MISS ROSELEAF. You've been buying Mexican Premiers. I congratulate you.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*startled*). Eh ?

MISS ROSELEAF. Haven't you seen the tape ? Great new gold veins just discovered—— !

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. What? (*Turns to ANNA-BEL.*) Ye've ruined me, woman!!!

ANNABEL. Me?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*to MISS ROSELEAF*). Run to the first 'phone—tell my brokers to buy me 100,000. (*Hustles her out. Looks frantically at watch.*) The Stock Exchange is closing. They'll be up to 8 or 10 bob to-morrow. Bang gaes £40,000!

ANNABEL. Never mind your loss—how much do I win?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. And what does your beggarly forty pounds matter?

ANNABEL (*ecstatic*). Forty pounds! I've won forty pounds! (*Thrusts money-bag into his hand.*) Over to the Emporium!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*clutching it dazedly*). The Emporium?

ANNABEL. To buy Tom's things! You may advance the rest now. Oh, what a joyous surprise for Tom when he comes back from the police-station! (*Clapping her hands.*) Run! Run! (*Throws open door.*) If you get 'em here before he comes back, I'll—I'll hug you!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*with a shriek of ecstasy*). You will? (*He bounds madly forward, and the sounds of his wild career come up from the stairs.*)

ANNABEL. Forty pounds! Why, it's a fortune! Dear Tom! (*Wipes her eyes.*) Won't he be surprised? . . . (*Sees fish.*) Oh, my poor, famished boy! (*Begins to prepare fish for the pot.*) Sixteen guineas for the furniture. Sixteen from forty leaves twenty-four. Now, if there's £40 profit on £5, how much would there be on twenty-four? Why, nearly £200! Hurrah! It's the road back to comfort. Dear little Tommie! (*Sings at her work*):

There was a jolly winner once  
Lived by the River Thames,  
She staked and won from morn till night,  
Till they grew rich again!

Not much of a rhyme, I'm afraid, but, oh, if it could only come true . . . !

BROADLEY *rushes in, leaving the door open. She springs to him with a great cry.*

ANNABEL. Tom!

BROADLEY. My prisoner. (*Hugs her.*)

ANNABEL. Oh, Tom! Tom! And what did they do to my poor boy?

BROADLEY. Nothing. Gave me a whiskey and apoll—I mean apology. I say, isn't Miss Roseleaf wonderful?

ANNABEL. What is there wonderful in being known to the police?

BROADLEY. You're jealous.

ANNABEL. I'm not. In a moment you'll think *me* wonderful.

BROADLEY. I always think that.

ANNABEL. My own hubby! (*Hugs him.*)

SIR ROBERT *appears at the door, panting.*)

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Saints alive O! I've lost!

BROADLEY. Lost? Lost what?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL (*sullenly*). Never you mind. (*Shouts angrily towards stairs.*) Slow-coaches! Ye get nae cigars now! I've saved that anyway. (*A breathless, aproned showman, bounding up behind him with a tantalus and a shaving-stand, barges into him and hurls him to one side.*) Dahmnation!

BROADLEY. What's this?

ANNABEL (*in ecstasies*). I've bought them for you!

BROADLEY (*dazed*). For me?

(*Mrs. Crow with a big bath barges into SIR ROBERT'S back, and hurls him to the other side.*)

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Deil tak' ye!

BROADLEY. Why, wherever did you get the money?

ANNABEL (*almost dancing*). I made it!

BROADLEY. You made it! How? Where?

ANNABEL. At the real place to coin money—the Stock Exchange!

BROADLEY. What! (*Turns to SIR ROBERT.*) Ah, you gave her a tip!

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Me! Why, she's ruined me! £40,000!!!

BROADLEY. No?

*(Collapses. A great Club armchair with casters, exactly like his old one, is being wheeled briskly into the room. It just arrives under him as he falls. He plumps into it with a voluptuous thud.)*

CURTAIN.

## ACT III

*The following April. Mrs. Broadley's drawing-room as before, save that the finikin furniture, and the divan, screen, etc., have been replaced by solid comfort, with a broad guard round the fire, and there are conventional pictures on the walls that tone down the decoration, and a large writing-table in place of the desk, with a telephone on it. The Club armchair, however, still stands out unique in the foreground, while the Tiptree picture still glares on its easel the wrong way up. MISS ROSELEAF enters from the ante-room, and a terrible tic-tac of typewriters comes through till the door springs to behind her. Exquisite and imperturbable as before, she is a shade graver, as though weighed down by responsibilities. She gets a paper from the desk. Enter BEWLISON by the central doors, with a toppling tower of business letters, great and small, on a tray.*

MISS ROSELEAF. Ah, the afternoon post !

BEWLISON. All for Mrs. Broadley.

MISS ROSELEAF. Leave them there !

BEWLISON. Yes, Miss. But is Mrs. Broadley at home to Mr. and Mrs. Tiptree ?

MISS ROSELEAF. The Tiptrees back from the Nile ?

BEWLISON. Yes, Miss ; but my instructions being to admit only business people——

MISS ROSELEAF. Mrs. Tiptree is a business person.

BEWLISON. And man and wife are one. I see.

MISS ROSELEAF. Quite so. Show them in. I dare say Mrs. Broadley will see them.

BEWLISON. Yes, Miss.

*[Exit MISS ROSELEAF by the ante-room, through the tic-tac accentuated by a telephone bell.]*

*Enter FOOTMAN with a letter.*

FOOTMAN. You left one in the box, Mr. Bewlison.

BEWLISON. That's only one for *Mr. Broadley*, stupid. And do put that picture the other way up. It'll madden the Master.

FOOTMAN. Mr. Broadley?

BEWLISON. No, you Philistine, Mr. Tiptree. Mrs. Broadley never looks at it now—nothing but Stock Exchange Lists.

FOOTMAN. No, Mr. Bewlison.

BEWLISON. That's the worst of women; they always run to extremes—especially when she wears the breeches.

FOOTMAN. Yes, Mr. Bewlison.

BEWLISON. Don't stand chattering. Be quick. Tiptree's here.

*(FOOTMAN turns picture. Exit BEWLISON, who comes back ushering in the TIPTREES. The lion, who follows at his wife's heels, is now covered up in a frock coat, his mane is cropped close, and he carries a high hat; his claws are cut and concealed under gloves; only a portfolio under his arm suggests the artist. The FOOTMAN hardly succeeds in suppressing a titter at the transformation. TIPTREE drops the portfolio as soon as his eyes catch sight of his picture.)*

THISBE *(catching the portfolio)*. What's the matter now? It's right side up!

TIPTREE. Yes, but it's rotten. It ought to be burnt. And I for painting it.

*(Snatches up a paper-knife and scrapes desperately at it, going back with odd attitudes to squint at it from different angles. Re-enter MISS ROSELEAF through the tic-tac.)*

MISS ROSELEAF *(bowing)*. How do you do, Mrs. Tiptree? Why, Mr. Tiptree, I hardly recognized you.

THISBE *(beaming)*. Yes, isn't he improved?



TIPTREE (*with an ominous growl of the old lion*).  
Oom—oom!

MISS ROSELEAF. But Mrs. Broadley is so sorry. She asks you to excuse her. She's so very busy.

THISBE (*thunderstruck*). Eh? Annabel too busy to see *me*!

MISS ROSELEAF. She sees nobody socially between 10 and 6.

THISBE (*outraged*). But I've come to her first the day after our landing, and when I ought to be looking for a studio. And after I've had the trouble of tracking her in a taxi from Poplar to Mayfair—

MISS ROSELEAF. But it's a Special Mining Settlement on the Stock Exchange. The old boudoir and ante-room simply swarm with typists.

THISBE. Typists! The Stock Exchange! What has that to do with *Mrs.* Broadley?

MISS ROSELEAF. What! Didn't you know that she has become one of the greatest and most daring operators in London, that in one short year she has turned a five-pound note into a colossal fortune—

THISBE (*breathlessly*). No?

MISS ROSELEAF. And that passing back almost as rapidly as your taxi from Poplar to Mayfair, she now holds this house in her own name.

THISBE. Grandison, do you hear that?

TIPTREE (*absorbed in his scraping and squinting*).  
Im—im—!

MISS ROSELEAF. Even Isolde is now run at a profit. Her puppies fetch twelve guineas apiece.

THISBE. And *we* imagined it was *Mr.* Broadley who had won back his position.

MISS ROSELEAF. No—*Mr.* Broadley's position remains absolutely unchanged since we all met in Poplar—under somewhat peculiar circumstances.

THISBE (*dropping on central couch*). Do not recall that horrible experience. But if Mrs. Broadley is no longer dependent on her husband's cheque-book, all

the more reason she should see our sketches up the Nile.

MISS ROSELEAF. I'm afraid I must ask you to leave them.

THISBE. Oh, I can't do that. Won't you take them in ?

MISS ROSELEAF (*doubtfully*). I'll try——

[*Exit with portfolio through the tic-tac.*]

THISBE (*excitedly*). Grandison !

TIPTREE. Im—im—

THISBE. Nothing under five hundred guineas.

TIPTREE. Why not ?

THISBE. It was Annabel that won back the money. Didn't you hear ? Mr. Broadley lives on her.

TIPTREE. Poor chap !

MISS ROSELEAF *returns with portfolio.*

MISS ROSELEAF. Mrs. Broadley is most sorry, but really she has not a moment. In any case she finds the market for water-colours not speculative enough. But if Mr. Tiptree has brought back any oil-paintings, she is open to purchase any quantity at five hundred guineas apiece.

THISBE (*in disgusted accents*). Five hundred guineas ! When Tiptree is booming from Kensington to Khar-toum ! Why, even the donkey-boys at Cairo pointed him out—didn't they, dear ?

TIPTREE (*growling savagely*). Before you had my hair cut ! Surely five hundred guineas is a long enough price.

THISBE (*glaring at him*). For one of these. (*Picks up portfolio.*) For oils, nothing under a thousand.

MISS ROSELEAF. I will tell Mrs. Broadley what you say, but I know in wholesale transactions she expects considerable concessions. [*Exit through the tic-tac.*]

THISBE (*angrily*). I wish you hadn't interfered.

TIPTREE. I must interfere. You make my prices too long and my hair too short.

THISBE (*stamps her foot*). Silence! Say another word and I get a separation.

TIPTREE. What?

THISBE. I mean it.

TIPTREE (*overjoyed*). You do? Another word! Another word! Another word! Another—

THISBE (*bursting into tears*). Oh, Grandison! And we've not been married a twelvemonth!

TIPTREE. Is that all?

THISBE. You're a brute. You men get everything out of a woman and then throw her aside like an old paint-brush.

TIPTREE. Just what we don't throw aside. It is you women that cut off our old friends and our old pipes and our old hair.

THISBE (*weeping*). You said it was *my* hair you loved.

TIPTREE. We can't be always up the Nile. . . . Now don't cry into my water-colours.

*Re-enter MISS ROSELEAF through the tic-tac. THISBE blows her nose. TIPTREE continues his scraping and squinting.*

MISS ROSELEAF. Mrs. Broadley's compliments, but five hundred guineas is her last word.

THISBE. What! With this Tiptree boom—

MISS ROSELEAF. Booms are not born, they are made. To sell off all those pictures of yours, Mrs. Broadley had to insert your husband's praises in the papers at advertisement rates. Don't forget she paid you three hundred guineas when nobody else would have paid thirty.

TIPTREE (*enthusiastically*). They wouldn't have paid twenty. You remember my "Doss-house in Baden-Baden."

BEWLISON (*announcing*). Sir Robert McCorbel.

*Enter SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL, likewise spruced up and with a high hat.*

MISS ROSELEAF. Will you please go to Mrs. Broadley at once? She's been waiting for you.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*complacently*). Aha! Wants news of the irrigation scheme.

MISS ROSELEAF (*to the TIPTREES*). Good-bye. (*They murmur a reply.*)

[*Exit MISS ROSELEAF to the ante-room. SIR ROBERT is following her.*

THISBE (*getting in his way*). How do you do? You've forgotten your companions in misfortune.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ou, ay! Saints alive O, Tiptree! Did they clap you in gaol after all?

THISBE. No, no, he had his hair cut in Cairo on our way home. Would you like to buy a sketch up the Nile?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I'm no patron of painting. Unless ye've got a picture of Mistress Broadley.

THISBE (*eagerly*). Why don't you ask her to sit?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. That's no a bad idea.

THISBE. What price would you——?

TIPTREE (*disgustedly hurling knife at table and nearly hitting SIR ROBERT*). Art is not concerned with the Beautiful. If Sir Robert wants a portrait, I'll do Mrs. Crow.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*holding up hands of horror*). Mistress Crow! Saints alive O! [*Exit hurriedly.*

THISBE. Paint a pauper!

TIPTREE. The only people worth painting. I've always wanted her garret for a studio. Come along, Thisbe, we'll go back and take it. (*Seizes his hat and portfolio.*)

THISBE (*outraged*). Poke ourselves in Poplar!

TIPTREE. It's much more picturesque than the Nile.

THISBE. But, dearest——

TIPTREE. Silence! Another word and I'll chuck my chimney-pot into the Serpentine. Oom—oom—oom!

[*Exeunt. They cross BEWLISON and a FOOTMAN bringing in tea.*]

BEWLISON. You see how much happier he looks. (*Surveying the picture.*) We'll leave it like that—Mrs. Broadley never looks at it now. I'm the only friend of art in this house. Ah, Reginald! (*Rings tea-bell.*) I liked the place far better in the olden days. Then a bourgeois like Sir Robert hardly dared show his nose here. Now——

*Enter SIR ROBERT from the ante-room.*

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Bewlison, you scoundrel, where's my whiskey?

BEWLISON (*cringingly*). Coming, Sir Robert, with the *aqua pura*.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Never mind the irrigation. (*Drinks.*) [*Exit BEWLISON with FOOTMAN.*]

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*speaking to ante-room through the terrible tic-tac of typists*). Come along, partner, the tea will be cold.

ANNABEL (*appearing at door, preoccupied with a mass of papers*). Oh, do help yourself, won't you? (*The door closes behind her, but she remains as if petrified.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Thank you. (*Pours out whiskey.*)

ANNABEL (*not raising her eyes from a letter*). But isn't that too strong, Sir Robert?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*misunderstanding, ceasing to pour*). Eh?

ANNABEL. I should soften the language and strengthen the demand.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Oh, that! (*Pours more profusely.*)

ANNABEL. Yes—that's *my* diplomacy. (*Calls to ante-room.*) Miss Roseleaf! Send me a stenographer.

MISS ROSELEAF (*appearing with her notebook*). They're all busy. Can't I take it ?

ANNABEL. How kind of you ! (*Dictates while SIR ROBERT drinks.*) Dear Sirs,—With regard to the con-tango in your account of to-day, I think the carry-over might have been arranged at one-eighth per cent. less.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*shocked*). Ye canna reasonably ask more than one-sixteenth.

ANNABEL (*remorselessly*). One-eighth per cent. less, as the market was amply provided with funds, and there seems to have been even some difficulty in placing them. Yours, etc. (*Hands letter.*)

MISS ROSELEAF. I'll get that done in two ticks.

[*Exit to ante-room.*]

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*smiling*). Ye're verra unscrupulous.

ANNABEL. Not against you. I do appreciate your faith in me.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. And what for should I no have faith ? Losh ! Your Mesopotamia scheme is the biggest thing since the Punjaub irrigation.

ANNABEL. Bigger. That only paid 18·8 per cent.; this will pay 25.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. If the Young Turks really grant the concession.

ANNABEL (*alarmed*). But didn't you say that at twelve to-morrow—— ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Provided our million and a half is forthcoming——

ANNABEL. But it will be, won't it ?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. *My* million is ready.

ANNABEL. And so is my half-million. But it has taken some getting.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Naturally. Even *your* financial genius—oh, by the way, it canna be in your name, I'm afeared.

ANNABEL. Oh, but it must be !

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Turks dinna understand a female financier.

ANNABEL (*disgusted*). No wonder they need irrigating.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. But you're an exception. A man's a man for a' that. (*Drinks complacently.*)

ANNABEL. A Turk isn't a man—he's a turkey-cock. Look at that Under-Secretary. By the way, was he satisfied with his thousand pounds?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*dropping his glass*). I am an auld ass.

ANNABEL (*in terrible accents*). You didn't forget to give him his baksheesh?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Saints alive O! And he may go over to the enemy. (*Is rushing out, but rushes back to gulp down the rest of his drink.*) Bewlison! A taxi!

ANNABEL. Oh, these men! (*MISS ROSELEAF returns, with the letter. ANNABEL sits at table, reading it.*) Ah, that's better! (*Signs it. MISS ROSELEAF passes it into the ante-room.*)

MISS ROSELEAF. Shan't I give you some tea?

ANNABEL. Not to-day. It distracts me. You have some. (*MISS ROSELEAF takes tea. ANNABEL ponders papers.*) And how is your husband getting on with my new play?

MISS ROSELEAF (*eating bread and butter*). Oh, Mr. Biggs seems as fatuously pleased as ever.

ANNABEL. But do warn him that the love-interest must be all-dominating. I won't take up my option if it isn't.

MISS ROSELEAF. He won't listen to a woman.

ANNABEL. But it was a woman who had the insight to see that he could write winners.

MISS ROSELEAF. And a woman who brought them to you. But he's already forgotten that no male manager would look at them. (*Drinks tea.*) Since his success, his head has swelled so he's quite another man. He makes me feel like a bigamist. (*Speaking with her*

*mouth full of bread and butter.*) I foresee we shall have to separate.

ANNABEL (*shocked*). My dear Miss Roseleaf!

MISS ROSELEAF. He's getting too much money. (*Drinks tea.*) He actually wants me to give up my post here.

ANNABEL. Give up your work! Which I only gave you back because of your sex. What a dreadful idea!

MISS ROSELEAF. He even begins to murmur against my feminist activities.

ANNABEL. The monster!

MISS ROSELEAF. My only hope is that his new play will be a failure.

ANNABEL. Miss Roseleaf!

MISS ROSELEAF. Oh, I don't want *you* to lose, of course. But then you'd be sure to let the theatre at a profit. Look at the profit you made on *Parsifal*. You have such wonderful luck.

ANNABEL (*outraged*). Luck? There's no such thing. It's intelligent anticipation. And do pray show some as regards your husband. If you do separate, get hold of his money first, for he'll only make ducks and drakes of it. Look at Mr. Broadley. Began life as a billionaire and now has to come to me for his pocket-money. (*Resumes study of papers.*) Ah, talk of the angel!

BROADLEY *comes in*. *He is beautifully dressed as by a fond mamma, but looks profoundly miserable.*

ANNABEL (*looking up from her papers*). Late for tea again, Tommy.

BROADLEY (*sulkily*). Don't want tea! (*Looks at tantalus.*) I see, *he* has been here again.

ANNABEL. Sir Robert is indispensable to my affairs.

BROADLEY. But not to my drawing-room.

ANNABEL. *Whose* drawing-room? I do hope Tommy didn't get his little feet wet.

BROADLEY (*crossly*). No!



ANNABEL. We don't want toothache again.

BROADLEY (*grimacing angrily*). Oh!

ANNABEL (*solicitously*). Was that a twinge?

BROADLEY. No!

ANNABEL (*her head immersed in papers*). And did he have a pleasant afternoon at the picture-palace?

BROADLEY. No!! (*Plumps violently into the Club chair.*)

ANNABEL. No? I expressly picked out an amusing programme. Wasn't it funny?

BROADLEY. No!! (*MISS ROSELEAF offers him a teacup.*) I told you, no!!!!

ANNABEL. You sound cross.

BROADLEY. I *am*! You might give me your society at tea.

ANNABEL. You're not taking tea.

BROADLEY. Don't quibble.

ANNABEL. But it's a Special Settlement day.

BROADLEY. Can't you get a special man?

ANNABEL. I wouldn't even trust a woman. . . . That reminds me, Miss Roseleaf, did you make a note to warn your husband the love-interest must be all-dominating?

MISS ROSELEAF. I'll do so now.

ANNABEL. Thank you. . . . Oh, and not *devilled* oysters to-night! (*MISS ROSELEAF notes that too.*)

BROADLEY. But I love them *devilled*.

ANNABEL. Sir Robert prefers them raw.

BROADLEY. He's dining here, too!!!

*Enter BEWLISON and FOOTMAN to clear away tea.*

ANNABEL. There's such lots to discuss over the walnuts—we have a big irrigation scheme in Mesopotamia. And, on second thoughts, Miss Roseleaf, let the *poularde* be *à la Valenciennes*, not *à la Millicent*; Sir Robert hates wine in his sauces.

[*Exit* MISS ROSELEAF.]

Bewlison, put out the '68 port. Sir Robert loves the '68 when there's a heavy operation forward.

[*Exit BEWLISON and FOOTMAN with tea.*]

BROADLEY. Unless the oysters are devilled, I dine at the Club.

ANNABEL. Do!

BROADLEY (*bitterly*). You would prefer it?

ANNABEL. Well, I don't like to pay your subscription for nothing. And business only bores you. (*Telephone rings.*) Ye-es?

BROADLEY (*jumping up*). That's the last straw!

ANNABEL. Sh! I can't hear.

BROADLEY (*taking receiver away by force*). Listen to me!

ANNABEL. But it's an American millionaire who wants to buy this Tiptree.

BROADLEY (*eagerly returning the receiver*). Oh, go ahead! Go ahead! (*Makes faces at the hated picture.*)

ANNABEL. Hulloo! . . . Yes, I was cut off. . . . You would prefer Tiptree's "Pauper Funeral in Poplar"? But that's two thousand guineas. . . . Yes, the "Chrysanthemums near Cromer" is only fifteen hundred. . . . You'd still rather have the "Pauper Funeral." . . . Very well. Yes, you can send up for it at once. . . . Good-bye.

BROADLEY. Oh lord! And I thought you'd got rid of *that*! (*Looks miserably at picture.*)

ANNABEL. I *have*! And at 1,700 guineas profit.

BROADLEY. But that's "The Dance of Death."

ANNABEL. Not this season. (*Rubs off title from back.*) My tame critics worked so hard to sell off Tiptree's slum subjects that now *everything* sells best under East End names.

BROADLEY. But is that honest?

ANNABEL (*rubbing*). Perfectly. The art's in the picture, not in the title. Besides, from a "Dance of Death" to a "Pauper Funeral in Poplar" is not such

a far cry. Look at the hearse. (*Points to the adumbration of a motor-bus.*)

BROADLEY. But I didn't know you had his "Chrysanthemums near Cromer" as well.

ANNABEL. This *is* the Chrysanthemums as well—for those who prefer Tiptree in a sunny mood.

BROADLEY (*shocked*). Oh, Annie! (*Telephone rings again.*)

ANNABEL (*at telephone*). Yes? . . . You'll take "The Chrysanthemums" too?

BROADLEY (*chuckling*). Ha! Ha! Ha! Caught!

ANNABEL (*frowning*). Sh! . . . By all means. Then 3,500 guineas the two . . . no, don't send up to-day—to-morrow . . . Good-bye.

BROADLEY (*smiling maliciously*). You're nicely cornered!

ANNABEL. Rubbish! I've got out of tighter bear squeezes. At the worst I can get one of Tiptree's Egyptian mysteries for a thousand guineas and make five hundred.

BROADLEY. But chrysanthemums don't grow in Egypt.

ANNABEL. In that strong sunshine it isn't so easy to tell chrysanthemums from crocodiles.

BROADLEY (*sarcastically*). Wonder you don't call it *Crocodiles* in Cromer. Well, anyhow, it's gone at last. And now—dear— (*Advances amorously. Telephone goes again.*) You really must throttle that!

ANNABEL. Does it worry the boy? I'll switch it on to my office. There! (*Gathers up her papers to go.*)

BROADLEY. But, Annie! I want *you*!

ANNABEL. To-morrow.

BROADLEY. To-day, now, at once!

ANNABEL. What's the matter with my pet? (*Caresses his hair.*) Has it been spending too much? Shall I write it a little cheque?

BROADLEY (*maddened*). No! I've got too much money.

ANNABEL (*quietly*). But not too much gratitude for it.

BROADLEY. Then let me earn my own money.

ANNABEL. By what? Have you forgotten the crash you came?

BROADLEY. There can't be a crash if I just get a job in the city.

ANNABEL. And what would be the good of that?

BROADLEY. It will save you from planning out my every hour. I should have regular work.

ANNABEL. My poor Tommy! I couldn't dream of it. While *I* can work for two, my pet shall not soil his fingers with a pen. A man's place is the Club. (*Smooths his cheek. He tries to embrace her.*)

MISS ROSELEAF *appears at the door of the ante-room.*

MISS ROSELEAF. I'm so sorry, but Sir Robert insists on speaking to you from the Embassy.

ANNABEL. In a moment. Hold on. (*He clings to her hand.*) Not you, silly. (*MISS ROSELEAF disappears.*) Good-bye, precious. Till after dinner. (*Gives him a maternal kiss on the brow; he returns it passionately on the lips and holds her to him.*)

ANNABEL. Let me go—Sir Robert——!

BROADLEY. D——n Sir Robert! (*Strains her tighter. At last she extricates herself, and smoothing her ruffled hair, vanishes into the tic-tac.*)

BROADLEY. Fool! (*Wipes his lips.*) I've embraced slavery again. I've hugged my chains.

*Re-enter* MISS ROSELEAF. *She goes towards desk.*

MISS ROSELEAF. Mrs. Broadley left some papers.

BROADLEY (*desperately throwing them towards her*). This must end!

MISS ROSELEAF. Just what I've been thinking. The complications and legal fictions are getting too

much even for scientific management. Why, Mrs. Broadley has twice all but collided with *your* business transactions, and I must draw the line at downright lying. (*Is going back.*)

BROADLEY. But stop—I want to talk to you.

MISS ROSELEAF. Very sorry—I'm Mrs. Broadley's employee now.

BROADLEY. But I pay you twice as much as she.

MISS ROSELEAF. I can't help that. I could hardly tell her I was already engaged to you at double salary, could I?

BROADLEY. I don't say you could. But considering you get three salaries——!

MISS ROSELEAF. And have six clandestine country-houses to look after——!

BROADLEY. I quite realize that without you I should burst like a bubble.

MISS ROSELEAF. You'd better own up.

BROADLEY. Too late. Mrs. Broadley would never forgive my cruel trick—especially now she has her own money. She'd want a separation.

MISS ROSELEAF. Then you and my husband could console each other.

BROADLEY. You are leaving him?

MISS ROSELEAF. Now that he has money, he wants to be my master.

BROADLEY. And you want to be his mother—I remember. And yet you expect me to confess to *my* wife! To rob her of the joyous illusion of restoring my fortunes! To tell her she is not my mother, but my martyr! No, I must go on lying. (*Drops into his chair. MISS ROSELEAF goes with the papers to her door.*) Oh, Miss Roseleaf, why have you women this terrible power over us?

MISS ROSELEAF (*turning with her hand on the door-knob*). I suppose it's because you want us more than we want you.

BROADLEY. That's true in my case at least. (*He*

*broods miserably.*) But we must emancipate ourselves! (*Springs up resolutely.*) If we can't have you and our self-respect together, we must give you up. Ask Mrs. Broadley to come in.

MISS ROSELEAF. You're not going to confess *now*!

BROADLEY. I must——!

MISS ROSELEAF. But you know how busy she is.

BROADLEY. If I put it off, I may grow cool again.

MISS ROSELEAF. Well, I'm sure she won't come.

BROADLEY. Tell her it's a matter of life and death.

MISS ROSELEAF. I'll tell her it's a matter of business.

[*Exit.*

BROADLEY. Ah, thank heaven, I've at last found the strength!

(*Pours out whiskey. As he is drinking, ANNABEL, her hands full of her papers, re-enters through the tic-tac and switches on the 'phone.*)

ANNABEL (*annoyed*). I thought you had gone to the Club.

BROADLEY (*puts down his glass confusedly*). I hadn't finished here.

ANNABEL. Couldn't you have had more at the Club? Interrupting me like this! What business can *you* have?

BROADLEY (*sulkily*). I had plenty once.

ANNABEL. My dear Tommy, you didn't call me out to tell me that! You know it's a Special Settlement day.

BROADLEY. That's why I want to have ours. (*Takes her paperless hand.*)

ANNABEL. Ha! (*Pulling her hand away.*) You only want to make love again!

BROADLEY. No, I don't. But I can't say what I have to say to a business woman.

ANNABEL. And yet you pretended you wanted me on business.

BROADLEY. I wanted to talk about my losses.

ANNABEL. But, my dear, have I ever reproached you?

BROADLEY. No, but——

ANNABEL. And haven't I enough for both ?

BROADLEY. Yes, but——

ANNABEL. Then why not let bygones be bygones ?

BROADLEY. With all my heart, only——

ANNABEL. Only you want to waste my precious time. (*Returning.*)

BROADLEY. No! No! I haven't spoken yet.

ANNABEL (*half turning back*). Why, you've done nothing but speak. (*Going.*)

BROADLEY (*desperately*). But listen! The day our furniture was seized—— (*Telephone rings. Frenziedly.*) I thought you'd throttled that!

ANNABEL. I switched it on again when you lured me in. (*Speaks through it.*) Ye-es? No, no—not to take up for cash! . . . For the account, of course! . . . I say, are you there? How's the option quoted? . . . Yes, for three months. . . . No, I don't want the put *and* call. Good-bye. (*Hangs up receiver.*) Yes, my poor darling, you were speaking of your losses. But what could be expected? You were handicapped from the start by having too much money.

BROADLEY (*savagely*). You mean too little brains.

ANNABEL. Don't let us split hairs. I was silly enough myself when I had too much time. (*Opens her door; the tic-tac is heard.*)

BROADLEY (*desperately following her and closing door*). But, Annie! I want you to understand——

ANNABEL. Of course I understand. To know all is to forgive all, and I do forgive you.

BROADLEY. But you don't know all!

ANNABEL. But I forgive you all the same. . . . Now do run away and play.

BROADLEY. But I haven't told you yet! Wait! For heaven's sake!

ANNABEL. Don't be such a cry-baby. There! (*Turns as if to humour a child.*) Tell Mummy, then!

BROADLEY. Not if you rustle those papers.

ANNABEL. There! (*Lays them down.*) They shall go bye-bye!

BROADLEY. But I can't tell you when you're standing perched like a bird ready to fly.

ANNABEL. Well, I sit. (*Perches on the arm of the Club chair.*)

BROADLEY. But give me your hand—what I have to say can only be said in an atmosphere of sympathy and tenderness.

ANNABEL. There is my hand. Next, please.

BROADLEY. But you mustn't laugh at me. (*Slips down beside her on the chair-arm.*) I want you to be thinking of those lines from Browning about my having a double-chin (*confused*)—two faces, I mean.

ANNABEL. I am thinking. And I remember that you said two faces are better than one. Do you want my face?

BROADLEY. It would be an improvement.

ANNABEL. There is my face! (*Puts it to his.*)

BROADLEY. Thank you, darling! Well, the fact is— (*Telephone rings. He jumps up.*) To blazes!

ANNABEL (*jumping up to speak through it*). Ye-es? Oh, Mrs. Tiptree! So sorry I couldn't see you. Eh? You *will* let me have an oil at five hundred guineas? "Natives up the Nile." Thank you. . . . Eh? Oh! Only if I promise to take two water-colours for another five hundred guineas. I see. Rather a lot of money. . . . But look here! Hullo! Are you there? Give me three water-colours for two. . . . Yes, one thousand guineas in all. . . . Good. . . . Send them up at once, please. . . . Oh, hullo! Are there chrysanthemums in the oil? Yes, I know they don't grow there. . . . What's that? Cotton in flower? Yes, that will do quite well. Good-bye. (*Hangs up receiver.*) You see, dear, while you are fooling and philandering, I've made a thousand guineas at least.

BROADLEY. Yes, yes, but sit down.

ANNABEL. I can't—I'm too excited to-day. There's



Mesopotamia—but, of course, you couldn't understand. It's too big.

BROADLEY. There is nothing bigger than me. You *must* sit down.

ANNABEL. Oh! Oh! Of course, little Tommy is a big thing in his way. (*Strokes his hair.*) But he can't be his Mummy's whole existence.

BROADLEY. I *was*, in Poplar.

ANNABEL (*moves away, frowning*). In Poplar I had nothing else. In normal life love must take a back seat.

BROADLEY. You won't even do that. . . . Go on stroking my hair at least. (*Tries to nestle his head on her breast. She flings apart.*)

ANNABEL. There are moments, Tommy, when you remind me irresistibly of Isolde! (*Seizes her papers and runs out through the tic-tac.*)

BROADLEY (*wounded to the quick*). Isolde! Isolde!  
(*Collapses into the Club chair. SIR ROBERT enters unannounced, and without perceiving him goes straight to the ante-room and lays his hand on the door-knob. BROADLEY turns his head.*)

Where the devil are you going?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. That's *my* beezness.

BROADLEY. *Your* business.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. *My* beezness. Ye ken verra weel it's a Special Settlement.

BROADLEY. Yes, I haven't had it with my wife, but I'll have it with you.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. What on airth do you want?

BROADLEY. To see a little more of my wife and considerably less of you.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Well, of all the ungrateful blatherskites. And who got ye your wife? Thanks to me, ye're enjoying all the pleasures of poverty and all the luxuries of a lap-dog!

BROADLEY (*springs up frenziedly*). Lap-dog! You——! (*About to rend him.*)

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL (*facing him fearlessly*). Losh, man, I see what it is, ye've been drinking my whiskey.

BROADLEY. *Your* whiskey ?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. And would it have been here but for me ? Who taught your wife all the tricks of Threadneedle Street, who made her Mistress Midas ?

BROADLEY. You old humbug ! Why, it's her financial genius that's doubled your fortune.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. I dinna deny it. She's got a wonderful nose for money—but who trained her to gae smellin' about with it ? All *you* did was to give her silk pocket-handkerchers. Ye treated her like a dressmaker's dummy. And now that she gangs her ain gait, Tammas, ye're jealous.

BROADLEY. Jealous of you ? Ha ! Ha ! Ha !

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Jealous that I now do all my big financial combinations with the mistress instead of with you.

BROADLEY. To hell with your combinations ! I've got too much money already—there's a million and a quarter on deposit, eating its head off.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Why not ask the mistress to find you a profitable investment ?

BROADLEY. Spare me your irony. You know the position your devilish advice has landed me in.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. *My* advice, ye auld runt ! I only advised you to keep up the reek a fortnight.

BROADLEY. The reek ?

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Was it no a reek ? A game, a farce, a frolic. Is it my fault ye're minus the spunk to unfool her, that ye havena the speerit of a tapeworm ?

BROADLEY (*beside himself*). Leave my house !

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Your house, indeed ! It's Mistress Broadley's house.

BROADLEY. Only by a legal fiction.

SIR ROBERT McCORBEL. Well, you gae intae the box and prove that. I am here under Mistress Broadley's protection.

BROADLEY. You have the brazenness to——  
(*Speechless with fury.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I never meddle 'twixt man and wife, but I'm an obstinate beggar to bully. (BROADLEY *advances menacingly.*) Lay a finger on me, and it all cooms oot in Court. (BROADLEY *stops, paralyzed.*)

BROADLEY. You filthy fishmonger!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*cheerfully*). All alive O!  
(BROADLEY *moves towards the ante-room.*) Where are ye gaeing?

BROADLEY. To tell Mrs. Broadley to turn you out.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Bide a wee! Bide a wee!  
Or it all cooms oot in camera—richt here before your wife!

BROADLEY (*paralyzed afresh*). You mean skunk!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. You meeserable mollusc!  
Ha! Ha! Ha! I kenned richt weel ye'd no daur.

BROADLEY. I do dare—but I won't have *you* blab, you Billingsgate blighter! Reek, indeed! You'd make it smell even worse than it does.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*stung at last to shouting*). It couldna stink much stronger. To turn your wife out o' the house, to tak' the carpet from under her feet and the chair from under her——

BROADLEY. Ha!!!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I've been mighty magnanimous not to blab before and show her the sort of man I wasna.

*Enter ANNABEL excitedly.*

ANNABEL. Do I hear Sir Robert back? (*Breathlessly.*) Well—have you nobbled the Turkish Under-Secretary?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*drily*). I think Tammias has something mair important to tell ye.

ANNABEL (*exasperated*). I am fed up with Thomas's affairs. He ought to be at the Club. (BROADLEY'S *brow blackens impotently.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. But it's verra pressing.

ANNABEL. Yes, I know it is. Tell me about Mesopotamia!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*gestures to BROADLEY*). Tell her about molluscs. (*BROADLEY writhes impotently.*)

ANNABEL. Still harping on your devilled oysters? Don't be so greedy, Tommy. When I'm so excited about Mesopotamia.

BROADLEY. Mesopotamia! Mesopotamia! I'm sick of the blessed word. (*Going distractedly towards central exit.*)

ANNABEL. Where are you going?

BROADLEY (*turns back*). To Jericho!

[*Exit, with a bang.*]

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*grins triumphant*). Ha! Ha! Ha! Is he no comical?

ANNABEL. You mustn't laugh at Tommy! He gets fretful sometimes—I think it's his teeth. And what did the Under-Secretary—?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I've saved a hundred poonds!

ANNABEL (*delighted*). No? How?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Paid him in poonds Turkish.

ANNABEL. You genius!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Am I no? And the concession at twelve to-morrow!

ANNABEL. Hurrah! And in my name?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. They agree—provided there's a man with you!

ANNABEL. Shake, partner! (*Sits beside him on couch near fire.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*seizing both her hands*). Ah, why didna we coom thegither when my wife died? We'd have cornered creation.

ANNABEL. Yes, what a pity!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Both with big brains and iron backbones! Me from a barrow and you from a garret! Fecks, 'tis a marriage made in heaven.

ANNABEL (*laughingly*). For better or worse, for richer or poorer.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ay, for rise or fall. (*Shakes her hands.*)

ANNABEL. For premium or discount. (*Shakes.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. For flotation or liquidation. (*Shakes.*)

ANNABEL. For options or margins. (*Shakes.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. For bulling or bearing. (*Shakes.*)

ANNABEL. For assets or liabilities. (*Shakes.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*solemnly*). Till death us do part.

ANNABEL (*rising, smilingly*). Or debt.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*still clinging to her hands*). Nae fear of that. (*Rises.*) Why, I call ye Mistress Midas. Everything ye touch turns tae gold. (*Tries to draw her to him.*)

ANNABEL (*still smiling*). Well, hadn't you better let go my hands? You look a bit yellow already.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. It's my heart ye've touched.

ANNABEL. Then why not pay it into the syndicate?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I gave it ye long ago—a heart of bur-r-ning gold! Oh, Annie! (*Embraces her.*)

ANNABEL. Sir Robert! What do you mean? Take your arms away!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. But ye're my partner!

ANNABEL. Not unlimited. (*Throws off his grasp.*) I'm ashamed of you.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I'm prood o' mysel'. I have spoke out. I canna live without ye.

ANNABEL. You've lost your senses. Do you think I'm transferable like a signed debenture?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. And what for no? Who's your registered proprietor? A man withoot a vertebra, a man with neither feck nor——

ANNABEL. Silence! You know I love my husband.  
A man of your age!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I'm a young man inside—  
a gey young man.

ANNABEL. Leave my house!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. That's the only order of  
yours I willna obey. But pit your foot on my head  
and I will kiss it.

ANNABEL. Thanks, I am not an acrobat.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. There, then! (*Goes on his  
knees.*) Wipe your shoon on me, and like the doormat  
I will cry, "Welcome."

ANNABEL. My shoes are not muddy. Do get up.  
You've fallen low enough in my estimation.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I'm a sound stock. I shall  
rise.

ANNABEL. The sooner the better, then.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Not till you gie me a hand.

ANNABEL. Neither a hand nor a foot. Good-bye.  
(*Going.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Stop! Ye're forgetting  
Mesopotamia.

ANNABEL. We can irrigate by correspondence.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Never! If you blast my  
life like this, I blast your beezness. (*Holds up a hand  
for a lift.*) Your hand, or I withdraw my million.

ANNABEL. You can't frighten me. You know you'd  
lose far more.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. We'll suffer together.  
That's a sweet thought, Mistress Midas.

ANNABEL (*alarmed*). You don't really mean—?  
When you know I've only till twelve to-morrow—!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Be thankful I dinna collar  
the concession.

ANNABEL. I know you're too honest for that. But  
to leave me in the lurch unless I— Oh! aren't you  
ashamed?

*Re-enter BROADLEY. He hears the last words.*

BROADLEY. You scoundrel! What are you doing on your knees?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. What's that to you? They're my ain knees.

BROADLEY. And you shall beg pardon on them.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. 'Tis *you* should be begging pardon of her.

BROADLEY. Then why are you in my place?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Because I've got the gumption to appreciate her. I tak' nae shame for that.

ANNABEL. Get up—someone will be coming in!

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Let them. Let the whole world see a true man at warship!

BROADLEY (*menacingly*). Get up——

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. You gae back to Jericho.

BROADLEY. Get up, or I'll——

ANNABEL. No violence, please.

BROADLEY. Does he propose to be a permanent ornament of the drawing-room?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. I'm an obstinate beggar to bully. I gang my ain gait. I kneel when I please and I rise when I please.

BROADLEY. That's all very well in kirk. But not in *my* house.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. In *whose* house?

BROADLEY. Get up, you obstinate mule—you pig-headed——

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Dinna slang a fishmonger. He can beat ye.

ANNABEL. Let him alone, dear. Our partnership has been dissolved. Come! (*Takes his arm.*)

BROADLEY. But he can't be *always* on the tapis! I've heard of a carpet knight, but a carpet Baronet—— (*Telephone rings.*)

ANNABEL (*speaking into it*). Hullo! Yes. Sir Robert McCorbel is still here. You want to speak to

him? Hold on a moment. Sir Robert—— (*Tenders the receiver.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Ye dinna fool me.

ANNABEL. Oh, very well. (*About to hang it up.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Stop! Stop! (*He slides along obstinately and awkwardly on his knees till he gets to the 'phone.*) Who is speaking? Mistress Tiptree? What do ye want? Will I ask Mistress Broadley to sit? Ask her yerself. Eh? Will I sit? Never! . . . What? Or *stand*? Gae to the devil! (*Bangs down the receiver.*)

ANNABEL. Come along, Tommy.

BROADLEY. To the devil?

ANNABEL. To let Sir Robert get over *his* devil. Would you like a hassock, Sir Robert? (*Offers him cushion.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*roaring*). Na!

ANNABEL. May as well be comfy. (*Adjusting it near his knees.*)

BROADLEY. How to be happy though cranky! (*SIR ROBERT hurls the hassock away.*)

ANNABEL. Best let him be, dear. (*Drawing him out.*)

BROADLEY. But how can we explain him away?

ANNABEL. Mat fever. It's a disease a missionary told me they have in Malaysia. A native gets glued to his mat and can't move.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*pathetically*). You too, woman!

BROADLEY. Mat fever might explain why Sir Robert can't move. But not why we don't move him. I shall ring for a carpet-sweeper.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*glaring*). What!!

BROADLEY. I shall have you swept off the premises.

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. You will have me sweppit off the premises?

BROADLEY. Into the dustbin. (*Moves towards bell.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Let me see you daur! I've



spared you so far, but ring that bell and you shall be sweppit off the premises *with me!*

BROADLEY. You threaten that again?

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. You shall be draggit in the dust to the same dustbin. Touch that button and I do the rest. Ha! I thought that would petrify the mollusc.

BROADLEY (*galvanized by the epithet*). Indeed! (*Rings.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL (*jumping to his feet in sheer surprise*). Eh? Ye've daured me?

BROADLEY. So it seems. (*Folds his arms.*) There's my wife! Now, sir! (*Their eyes meet in dramatic defiance—two strong men testing each other.*)

SIR ROBERT MCCORBEL. Do your own dir-r-ty wark! (*To BUTLER entering with his hat*) Och, I can find my ain way oot. (*Snatches his hat.*) I never meddle 'twixt man and wife. [*Exit.*]

BROADLEY. Ha! Ha! Ha! And all the while I was sure Miss Roseleaf would have only a vacuum cleaner!

ANNABEL (*bursting into hysterical laughter and tears*). Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha! Oh! oh! oh! (*Takes out handkerchief.*)

BROADLEY. You're not crying over Sir Robert?

ANNABEL. Of course not—but to lose the Mesopotamia Concession—

BROADLEY. Don't cry—you mustn't cry—otherwise I shan't have the strength to speak.

ANNABEL. To speak about what?

BROADLEY. To prove Sir Robert was wrong about molluscs—

ANNABEL (*frenziedly*). Do leave off about those oysters!

BROADLEY. But, sweetheart—

ANNABEL (*blubberingly*). Of course they can be devilled (*with heartrending pathos*) now! (*Weeps.*)

BROADLEY (*distracted*). Don't! Don't! What *are* you crying about?

ANNABEL (*blubberingly*). I want to irrigate Mesopotamia.

BROADLEY (*wiping away her tears*). Well, you haven't enough water for that. And I've something much more serious to tell you. Now, do please leave off—if you cry before I begin, how can I have the cruelty to go on?

ANNABEL. What can possibly be worse than Mesopotamia?

BROADLEY. Highbury.

ANNABEL. Highbury?

BROADLEY. And Poplar. (*Nervously.*) You see, when we lived there I—hadn't really—lost my money.

ANNABEL. When then?

BROADLEY. Never. Only, you see, I was distracted for love of you—

ANNABEL. You went mad and thought you had lost it?

BROADLEY. I was mad to be such a brute. But *you* had maddened me by complaining I had too much money, and so—

ANNABEL. Don't go so fast. Do I understand you were *not* bankrupt? (*Begins drying her eyes.*)

BROADLEY. There was never a time when I couldn't have paid twenty hundred shillings in the pound. And yet, my darling, with a cruelty—

ANNABEL (*impatiently*). Then you are really richer than before?

BROADLEY. Richer in your love, and yet with a cruelty—

ANNABEL. With our expenses so reduced for a whole year, and with the other money at compound interest—!

BROADLEY. And yet with a cruelty—

ANNABEL. And have you any capital not tied up?

BROADLEY. A million and a quarter—yet with a cruelty—

ANNABEL. Hurrah! The very man and the very million! Sit down, dear, and let me tell you all about it.

*(Presses the bewildered BROADLEY into the Club chair and settles herself almost unconsciously on his knees; she pours out breathlessly)*

You see, the Concession will be for a million and a half acres on the old Narwhan canal, and if we irrigate them at a cost of eight millions, they will be worth thirty-eight millions even before the Bagdad Railway reduces the porterage to sea-board of agricultural products, which is at present from thirty to fifty per cent. of their gross value, so that when we turn over our Concession to an Irrigation Company——

BROADLEY *(who by this time is himself again)*. Shall we water the shares too?

ANNABEL *(sublimely serious)*. No need for that with a billionaire like you on the Board. How lucky you are so much richer than Sir Robert—you see, darling, for these great operations one can't have TOO MUCH MONEY.

QUICK CURTAIN.

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