

OUGHT WE
TO
VISIT HER?

W. S. GILBERT

OUGHT WE TO VISIT HER?

A play by W. S. Gilbert, first performed 1874 in London

Based on the novel "Ought We To Visit Her?" by
Mrs. Annie Edwardes, first published 1871 in London

Edited by David Trutt

June 2003

Copyright © David Trutt 2003

All rights reserved.

Published by
David Trutt
Los Angeles, California
USA

davett@verizon.net

INTRODUCTION

Ought We To Visit Her? is a 400+ page novel published by Mrs. Annie Edwardes in 1871. It was adapted by W. S. Gilbert as a play and opened at the Royalty Theatre, London in 1874.

The play was printed by Samuel French as a manuscript, presumably for use by Mr. Gilbert and the cast during rehearsals. It was never printed for general distribution.

The manuscript copy contains many errors, most of which appear to have come about through errors in transcribing it from a written to a printed format. These include: obvious spelling errors, inconsistent spelling - the same word spelled differently in two or more places, the wrong form of a word obscuring the meaning of the sentence. These errors could usually be resolved by referring to the novel, which the play follows very closely. As one purpose of this edition is to provide a format which is easy to follow on a first reading, it includes such corrections without a notation.

Inconsistencies also appear due to Gilbert not always editing passages which he lifted from the novel. An example is where he uses the phrase "once for all", which becomes "once and for all" when lifted from the novel. Another example is where he lifts two sentences referring to "...the Miss Theobalds..." (pages 7 & 28). There is no explanation of who they are, though Francis Theobald's two older sisters are described in detail in the novel.

Gilbert's unique spelling and grammatical conventions have been preserved. There are two places which may be errors, but can also be interpreted as providing dramatic touches. Near the end of the first act Rawdon says to Emma, "I beg your pardon, of course, Jane." There could have been the unwritten stage direction *pause after "of course" then turns to Jane* or maybe *Emma taken aback by Rawdon's slip*. The other place is during the third act where Gilbert changes, from the novel, how Rawdon is to give the sign (page 41), but Rawdon follows the directions in the novel (page 44).

A typical Gilbertian sentence appears near the beginning of the play: "...her uncle plays the trombone...in the orchestra of the Theatre Royal." This was, however, written by Mrs. Edwardes in 1871, before Gilbert and before the play was at the Royalty Theatre.

Perhaps Gilbert recognized that he could mine the novel for many quotations which were Gilbertian in nature. This edition illustrates what parts of the play are original with Gilbert. **Shown in bold** are passages lifted verbatim, or nearly so, from the **novel**; they account for more than half of the play. **[Shown in bold and brackets]** are portions written by **Mrs. Edwardes**, but not incorporated by Gilbert. They illustrate how Gilbert, the wordsmith, made small changes to get the exact nuances for which he was looking.

The play and the novel both open in the Belgian resort town of Spa; the scene then shifts to the English countryside. The story of the play closely follows that of the novel. A major departure is the insertion into the play of Lady Rose at the end of the third act with her speech of contrition (page 44). In the novel, Theobald receives a telegram telling of Jane becoming ill (not part of the play), and he leaves an unhappy Lady Rose to return to Jane.

It is noted that Lady Rose is described as a “tall lady” (page 24), which contradicts the “little lady” designation of the novel. Perhaps Gilbert changed the description to match the actress.

Mrs. Crosbie makes reference to the “Almanac de Gotha.” First published in 1764 in Gotha, a German city, this was the definitive genealogical table of the royal and titled families of Europe.

Lord Barty Beaudesert, the brother of Lady Rose Golightly, keeps a yacht named the “Laïs.” Laïs was a famous hetaera, or courtesan, in ancient Greece.

Jane makes reference to (Marie) Taglioni, the famous Italian ballerina. Taglioni came to prominence in 1832 when she created the title role in “La Sylphide.”

The major characters’ ages help provide an insight to their actions and attitudes: Theobald - 31, Jane - 20 (married at 16), Rawdon - 22, Emma - 21, Rose - 29. **[Shown in brackets]** in the list of characters are the first parts of their names and the addition of three characters; these were not included in the original.

Gilbert’s stage directions, as seen by the actors, include: L - Left, C - Center, R - Right, R 1 E - Right First Entrance, L 2 E - Left Second Entrance, R U E - Right Upper Entrance. The others can be deduced from these examples.

OUGHT WE TO VISIT HER?

A Comedy,

IN THREE ACTS.

Dramatized from Mrs. Edwardes's Novel.

BY

W. S. GILBERT.

First performed at the Royalty Theatre (under the management of Miss H. Hodson), on Saturday, the 17th of January, 1874.

CHARACTERS.

MR. [Charles] CROSBIE	-	-	Mr. BANNISTER.
RAWDON CROSBIE	-	-	Mr. WYNDHAM.
FRANCIS THEOBALD	-	-	Mr. PEVERIL.
MRS. [Jane] THEOBALD	-	-	Miss H. HODSON.
MRS. [Juliana nee Hervey] CROSBIE	-	-	Miss E. THORNE.
EMMA MARSLAND	-	-	Miss A. WILTON.
MRS. COVENTRY BROWN	-	-	Mrs. MONTAGUE.
MRS. PIPPIN	-	-	Miss ASHLEY.
MARIE	-	-	Miss DELARNE.
[Blossy Theobald]			
[Esther, Blossy's Nursemaid]			
[Lady Rose nee Beaudesert Golightly]			

SCENERY.

ACT 1.
AT BELLEVUE HOTEL, SPA.

ACT 2.
FLOWER SHOW AT LIDLINGTON CROQUET GROUND.

ACT 3.
DRAWING ROOM AT THEOBALDS.

MODERN COSTUMES

Notice.—The exclusive right of dramatizing “Ought We To Visit Her?” has been purchased of Mrs. Edwardes by W. S. Gilbert.

OUGHT WE TO VISIT HER?

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Courtyard of Hotel Bellevue, Spa. Entrance to hotel, C.; a large arched door giving on to street, L.; door, R.; verandah runs round the courtyard; small marble-topped tables, R. and L.; a large photographic album and a small work basket on table, R.*

MRS. CROSBIE, L., and EMMA, R., *discovered seated.*

MRS. CROSBIE. The Princess Czartoriska, my dear Emma, is as I learn from the Almanac de Gotha, the only living representation of the very oldest family in the world—not only that, but there is the blood of five royal lines in her body. She has fifteen estates, extending over an area of twenty-seven thousand square miles, and such is her personal popularity that her serfs, one hundred and eighty thousand in number, have unanimously declined to be emancipated.

EMMA. Her diamonds, mamma, have a chest to themselves. Parker heard it this afternoon from her courier. Her dresses are indescribably superb, and she has already lost half a million of francs at the tables this season!

Enter CROSBIE, C., with newspaper.

CROSBIE. **Juliana, my dear, who do you think that Englishman, we saw this morning, turns out to be? Our scapegrace neighbour, Francis Theobald,** who has just succeeded to Theobalds, on the death of his cousin James!

MRS. C. **Francis Theobald in this hotel? Dear, dear, how inopportune! Is he—** (*looking at EMMA, and lowering her voice*) **Is he alone?**

CROS. **No, I suppose his wife is with him. He had a little girl in his arms.** (*sits left of table, L.*)

Enter RAWDON, C.

MRS. C. **A little girl! Ah, I think I do recollect hearing something of the kind. It makes it additionally painful!**

RAW. Additionally painful, mother? Why painful at all?

MRS. C. **Well, if you force me to speak of such things in Emma's presence, you must know that our position as regards him and his household will be *most delicate*. Emma, my dear, what is that splendid red creeper yonder, round the trellis work?**

RAW. **Scarlet runners. Don't move, Emma, you are only to be sent out of the way because we happen to be talking of improper subjects. Mother, by the way, why *are* the Theobalds an improper subject?**

MRS. C. **It is not a question for discussion** before a young and innocent girl, who is soon to be your wife, Rawdon; **it is a question of what everybody in the neighbourhood will *do*.** And until we know the attitude that Lady Rose Golightly, Lady Laurie, and Mrs. Coventry Brown will assume, our position as regards him will be most delicate.

RAW. **Well, now, I can't see that. The Theobalds are as old a family as there is in the county; and Theobald, from what men say of him, is not at all a bad sort of fellow, bar gambling. As for his wife, if she hadn't been a pretty woman and a nice woman, you may depend upon it he wouldn't have married her.**

MRS. C. I understand that Mrs. Theobald was once upon the stage in a dancing capacity, that her **sister is at this present [time] moment a very poor actress at one of the minor theatres, and that her uncle plays the trombone—yes, Rawdon, *the trombone*, in the orchestra of the Theatre Royal.** Consequently however much we may pity the position of Mr. Theobald, and however much we may wish well to his wife, the question for us all will be, “Ought we to visit her?”

CROS. **Do we know anything against Mrs. Theobald's moral character, Juliana, either before or since her marriage?**

MRS. C. ***Moral* character? Really, Mr. Crosbie, I must ask you not to make use of such strong expressions before Emma.**

CROS. **Because if we do not, and as we *do* visit Lady Rose Golightly, my dear, who *has* a history, I think we might deal a**

little more charitably with Mrs. Theobald, who hasn't. I for one shall not turn the cold shoulder on my old schoolfellow's son.

(going up back of stage) There is no reason why we should cold shoulder *Mr. Theobald*. *(rises and goes up stage)*

EMMA. **Mamma, is this justice? Mr. Theobald is not to be punished for being the husband of an actress, and Mrs. Theobald is to be punished for being the wife of a gentleman!**

Enter JANE, C.

CROS. Bless me, who is this very pretty woman in the blue and white dress?

*(RAWDON and EMMA up stage R. of C. entrance—
CROSBIE and MRS. CROSBIE down stage, L. C.)*

EMMA. Blue and white dress? **It must be the Princess! Mamma—Rawdon, look! It must be the Princess!**

MRS. C. *(aside to CROSBIE)* **Your hat—remove your hat, Charles.** *(he does so, so does RAWDON—EMMA and MRS. CROSBIE bow)*

EMMA. **And bonnets are worn small after all! And she wears shoes and buckles. I wish I had a foot that looked well in shoes.**

CROS. **She's an uncommonly pretty woman. Looks remarkably young, too, and yet the Princess Czartoriska is forty if she's a day.**

Exit JANE, R., who has returned the salutations.

RAW. **I wonder if it is the princess after all! Before we go into any more raptures, hadn't we better be sure the lovely being is not her highness's ladies' maid!**

Exit RAWDON with EMMA, C.

MRS. C. *(L. C.)* Nonsense. I hope—I *hope* I know style when I see it. What grace, what distinction, what a carriage! I am not infallible—I *may* be mistaken in some things, but the instincts of a Hervey are not likely to err as regards attributes of high birth and high breeding. Charles *(to CROSBIE)* **I trust it will be given to us to make that sweet Princess's acquaintance before we leave this afternoon.**

CROS. (R. C.) **I hope it will profit us if we do. A foreign Princess reminds me, more than I like, of the foreign Archduke we met at Boulogne last summer.**

MRS. C. **And he borrowed twenty pounds of us, and turned out not to be an Archduke after all. What can that have to do with the Princess Czartoriska?**

CROS. **Nothing. Only as you seemed so squeamish about taking Francis Theobald's wife on trust, I thought you might like to make a few enquiries as to this Russian woman's antecedents, too.**

MRS. C. **The Princess Czartoriska is received by every crowned head in Europe. I have seen her name repeatedly among the distinguished guests at different foreign courts, and she has been presented in London. Would any reasonable being talk about antecedents after that?**

Exit MRS. CROSBIE through archway.

CROS. **Very well. Only if we get acquainted with the wrong person, you will be to blame, my dear, that's all!**

Exit CROSBIE.

Enter BLOSSY, a child of three; she dances up to EMMA.

EMMA. (*seated, L. C.*) **What a dear little girl. Come here, darling. What is your name?**

BLOSSY. **Bossy Teaball.**

EMMA. **Bossy Teaball? Oh, that's nonsense! (*laughing*) And who taught you to dance like that?**

BLOSSY. **No one taught me. Mamsey dance, Bossy dance too.**

Enter JANE, R. 1 E.—EMMA stands up and bows with great deference.

JANE. **I'm afraid my little girl has been giving you a great deal of trouble. (*EMMA stammers inarticulately*) Wherever that child goes she makes friends. I never saw anything like it.**

EMMA. (*stammering*) **I—I am so fond of children, and your little lady is—is so very graceful and pretty. I hope I may soon have the pleasure of seeing her dance again.**

JANE. Ah, not much wonder she can dance well. (*sitting, R. C.*) That's an heirloom.

EMMA. Yes. I believe all foreign nations dance better than we English do. (*very timidly and with great deference*)

JANE. It's the fashion to say so. For my part I think the reverse. Just look at the meagre dark skinned French women the managers bring over sometimes. They are agile certainly—so are monkeys; but put them beside a troupe of ordinary English ballet-girls, and see where they are as far as beauty goes—and in these days beauty, for the ballet, is everything.

EMMA. I don't know much about [theatres] the ballet, and I've seen very little of the Continent. We—we are leaving this place this afternoon, and if it would not be too great a liberty, *might* I take your sweet little girl in to see mamma, before we go?

JANE. Thank you—you're very good. Of course I'm always glad when anyone takes a liking to Bloss.

EMMA. Bloss! oh, that is a pet name, I suppose?

JANE. Her name is Blossom—it was a whim of her father's. She was born in spring, and nothing would do but the baby must be called Blossom. I say it's like a cow. I'm sure the country people, in the after pieces, always call their cows Daisy and Blossom and names like that.

EMMA. I could not catch her other name.

JANE. And yet we always think she says her name so well. Blossy, come here, child, and tell your name directly.

BLOSSY. Bossy Teaball.

JANE. There—Bossy Theobald. What can be plainer than that? Of course little children never can pronounce the Th.

EMMA. Th! but her name—your name—does not begin with— with Th. (*rather dismayed*)

JANE. Our name begins with Th. Our name is Theobald.

EMMA. (*much taken aback*) Oh! I have heard—I mean I know Mr. Francis Theobald's name well. We shall soon be near neighbours, I hope—that is to say, the Miss Theobalds are old acquaintances of mamma's. (*awkward pause*) It—it must be getting late—almost time for me to be going. (*rises*) We—we leave Spa this afternoon.

JANE. **I thought you [wanted] were so very anxious to see another of Blossy's dances?**

EMMA. Oh, thank you, I—I—we start in half-an-hour. (BLOSSY *dances up to* EMMA) Go back to mamma, my dear. We shall probably meet in Chalkshire. At least—good morning!

Exit EMMA.

JANE. (*taking* BLOSSY *on her lap*) So that is one of our Chalkshire friends, Blossy! I wonder what she thinks of us, and who she took me for? Her manner changed as soon as she heard my name. Did you remark that, Blossy? I'm afraid this augurs badly for our reception in Chalkshire.

Enter ESTHER, L., *and takes* BLOSSY *off*, R.

Enter THEOBALD, C., *with note-book*.

THEO. (*adding up*) **Forty and eighty are certainly one hundred and twenty—from this subtract fifty—add ten—divide by [four] six. Jenny, my dear, I don't know where the balance can be; but according to all the rules of arithmetic we are exactly fifty pounds better off than I thought.**

JANE. **The only kind of arithmetic I believe in is counting one's cash. How much money have you in your pocket?**

THEO. (*puts up his eye-glass to count*) **Four Napoleons.** Only four Napoleons.

JANE. **I remember the days when I thought four Napoleons riches. Oh, Theobald, what a queer sensation it is to think that we are rich people at last! Now your cousin is dead, bless him, we shall live in a home of our own, in our own dear country.**

THEO. **I hope we shall like our own dear country when we get there.** Oh, I forgot to tell you, Barty Beaudesert has invited me to join a bachelor party on board his yacht, the "Laïs," at Cowes, next month. (*sitting down*, L.)

JANE. But you'll not go! You'll not leave your home so soon after taking possession?

THEO. No, my darling, not I; but don't be too sanguine about our *home!* **Our home, too! How in the name of fortune do you**

suppose we are going to keep up a place like Theobalds on our pittance of an income?

JANE. Pittance! he calls six hundred pounds a year a pittance! The dream of my life is England—not London. I know London too well; but the country—a jolly home-like old country place, such as Theobalds must be. (JANE lolls on seat, L.)

THEO. We have been very well contented as Pariahs, my dear Jenny. I hope we shall be equally so when we set up as Brahmins. You'll have to trim a bit, Jenny; you'll have to stiffen up a bit—you mustn't loll then.

JANE. Till I was sixteen—till the time you raised me above my station, sir, I was trained to move my limbs well; and although I'm in the position of a lady now, I can't remember always to be awkward. (JANE picks up a tattered old doll, fantastically dressed) Isn't that taste? (he rises) What, not for a baby only three years old? And see—she's actually cut [Nancy's] Mary's hair short on the forehead, to be in the fashion, bless her heart.

THEO. Oh, bless her—certainly—bless her. [*stretching out his hand theatrically over the doll's battered head*]

JANE. Oh, you never see any cleverness in what the child does. I do. If little Blossy inherits my gifts— (*going up, R. C.*)

THEO. She will be an exceedingly charming woman—a good milliner, a good cook, and a perfect dancer.

JANE. A cook—a dancer! Oh, I understand you, Theobald—a dancer! And this, after four years, is the highest praise you can give me?

THEO. I dare say I could find more if you'd give me time to think. You have faults, but experience will cure them. If we had come into six thousand pounds a year instead of six hundred, [we should] you'd be the nicest [people] woman in Chalkshire. (*sitting*)

JANE. (*coming down, C.*) I've read in the papers lately about the grand model markets set up for the poor—Bishops and Lords at the opening ceremony—no selling on Sunday—cleanliness—ventilation—every advantage; and the poor won't go to them, and will sooner get worse things and pay dearer to their old friends, the costermongers, in the gutters!

THEO. The poor are proverbially an ungrateful set of devils.

JANE. (*angrily*) They are human beings, and [I] they feel as [they] I do. At heart I've never given up my old associates, or my love for them, or my belief that their [life is] lives are as good as other lives, and I never will—no, not if all the ladies from all the counties in England were to preach to me at once. I'd be like the ungrateful heathen poor—I'd stick to the costermongers still.

THEO. Do you know the meaning of the word logic?

JANE. Of course I do. I wasn't pretending to talk logic, I was talking common sense; yes, and I was speaking from my heart—straight out, as I generally do!

THEO. (*rising*) As you always do? Well, Jenny, we shall see if speaking straight out from the heart will do in Chalkshire; I'm very much afraid it won't.

Exit THEOBALD, C.

Enter MRS. CROSBIE, L.

MRS. C. Oh! here is the Princess at last. Your Highness is, I trust, like ourselves, visiting this charming retreat for pleasure, not because your Highness's health requires the renovating agency of the springs?

JANE. (*aside*) My Highness? (*with much servility—aloud*) I am perfectly well, thanks, and I'm thankful to say never tasted a drop of atrocious mineral waters in my life.

MRS. C. I am charmed. As my daughter, that is my adopted daughter, and your charming baby have made acquaintance, might we—*might* we be permitted—staying under the same roof, to pay our respects before we go?

JANE. (*rather surprised*) You're extremely good, I'm sure.

Enter RAWDON and EMMA, C.

MRS. C. (L.) Rawdon, come here, let me have the honour of presenting my son, Mr. Rawdon Crosbie, an officer in our English Artillery, to the Princess Czartoriska.

JANE. (R.) The what? (*in blank astonishment*)

MRS. C. (L. C., *rather blankly*) The Princess Czartoriska, think.

JANE. The Princess Czartoriska!—the Princess Czartoriska!

Ha, ha, ha! (*laughing immoderately*) **Oh, I see it all now, and the Princess Czartoriska; why she's forty—and she paints—and she's got the gout!**

MRS. C. **And—and am I to understand—**

EMMA. (L.) **Mamma, it's all my stupidity, I ought to have told you. This lady is—is—is Mrs. Francis Theobald!**

RAW. (C.) **Mistake or not, mother, the accident is a fortunate one, inasmuch as it brings us acquainted with Mrs. Theobald, who is to be our neighbour in Chalkshire.**

EMMA. (*aside*) **What a pretty woman! Yes, I was saying—I was remarking to Mrs. Theobald that we shall be near neighbours soon.**

MRS. C. (*after a struggle*) **Emma, my dear, you really should be more careful in these foreign places. A mistake of the kind has often entailed the most embarrassing results. To this lady—** (*indicating JANE who is seated right of table, R.*) **we owe, I am sure, every apology.** Come with me, Emma, and pray be more careful in future.

Exeunt MRS. CROSBIE and EMMA, C.

RAW. (L. C.) Mrs. Theobald, you must not misunderstand my mother.

JANE. (R. C.) Mr. Crosbie, I do *not* misunderstand your mother.

RAW. **The stiffness of English manners, [living] being a good deal out of the world—**

JANE. Had you not better leave me? **What will your [mamma] mother and Miss Marsland say?**

RAW. [Emmy] Miss Marsland **never voluntarily committed [any unamiable] an unkind action in her life.**

JANE. ['Emmy'] Miss Marsland **talked to me for [five] two whole minutes, after knowing that I was not the Princess Czartoriska, too! I have [every reason] many reasons to be grateful to Miss Marsland.** But there, I forgive *you*, at all events. (*offers her hand*)

RAW. This is very kind of you.

JANE. Nonsense—I like you! **[I shall see you at] Are you going to the ball to-night?**

RAW. No—we leave this afternoon; besides, I don't dance well.

JANE. Don't you? *I do.* But, then, I ought to, **having been brought up to the profession. I tell Theobald, sometimes, that, when everything else fails, I can earn my bread by giving dancing lessons. Will you attend my classes, Mr. Crosbie? I'll take you on moderate terms, as an old friend.**

RAW. **You do look on me as a friend already, then?**

JANE. **Not only as a friend, but as a neighbour.** Come and look at my photographs. You must give me yours—by the way, I'm sure you'll make a good one.

RAW. After—after what has taken place, **I wonder you take the trouble to talk to me at all.**

JANE. **To tell you the truth, I wonder at it, too! We all act according to our lights; and I tell you, when your mother and Miss Marsland walked away—the crime of my not being a Princess discovered—I was within an ace—yes, within an ace—of insulting you, sir, as you stood there!**

RAW. (*approaching her*) **You couldn't have insulted me. However harshly you had treated me, I should have felt that I—that all of us—had deserved it. If you had told me to go about my business—**

JANE. **Well?**

RAW. (*sitting L. of R. table*) **Well, I don't think I should have gone, Mrs. Theobald—that's all!**

JANE. **Well, I didn't quarrel with you, and I don't mean to—"not never no more," as Blossy says. Now let me show you my photographs. I've put [them] the people as near as I could by date. The people you see here and for the next three pages are vagabonds—the professional people I knew before I married Theobald. This old fellow is my uncle Dick—he plays in the orchestra of the Theatre Royal—dear jolly old face that he has—bless his heart! And this is my sister Min—you have seen her, of course?**

RAW. I don't know that I have had that pleasure.

JANE. **Minnie Arundel is her professional name. If you [go about to] are in the habit of going to the London theatres at all, you must have seen her. She is like me, rather, isn't she? And now, I suppose you would never know who this is?**

RAW. **I have never seen you wear wings, but the likeness is excellent.**

JANE. Well, well—that is past and done with. From this point onward you'll find [yourself in different] me in better company. *(showing portrait)* Theobald—a landmark between the old life and the new. Now you come to a common crowd—all the men I have known during the past four years—"the army of martyrs," Theobald calls them.

RAW. *(tenderly)* Of whom I am to be one?

JANE. *(abruptly)* Of course!—who are you, that you should escape more than your betters?

RAW. Who is this?

JANE. That is the young Marquis of Wastelands, and that's Lord Paget Vaurien.

RAW. And this?

JANE. Oh, that's dear old Carl Hofman. He keeps the "Golden Eagle" in Frankfort.

RAW. And do you really honour Mr.—ah—Carl Hofman by giving him a place in your book.

JANE. Indeed I do. Theobald was ill—very ill in his house once, and I shall never forget Carl's kindness. He was like a brother to us.

RAW. But you may be grateful to a man of that kind without—

JANE. Without looking upon him as an associate. But you see we *did* look upon Carl as an associate. However I shouldn't presume to put *you* in such company! I've got a bishop somewhere. Oh, indeed I have, Min gave him to me when she was weeding out her [book] album! I don't remember his name, but he is someone very celebrated, who went wrong about the deluge, and I'll put you by him. There, that's all. Now tell me all about yourself; what are you, and where do you live, [et cetera] &c.?

RAW. *(rising)* I'm a gunner, and have been stationed at Woolwich, Alderney, Plymouth, Portsmouth. I've always a lot of time on hand. I run up to town as often as I can. Somewhere I got through Napier's "History of the Peninsular War." As a rule I read a three-volume novel a day. I smoke. I have no particular ideas about life that I can recollect, except that it makes a great difference to [an artilleryman] a gunner if he happens to be at a station where he can join a good mess. I—I should like to know where I [may] can find you out in London.

JANE. **Well, Theobald belongs to the “Rag.”** We are going to knock about in Brussels and Antwerp for a few days, but **this day fortnight we shall be Mr. and Mrs. Theobald, of Theobalds, Chalkshire.**

RAW. **And our next-door neighbours.** Well, I must go. (*sighing*)

JANE. I’m so sorry you’re not going to the ball to-night.

RAW. We are off now, and I have to pay the bill. We have a capital courier, but he only speaks English, and francs and centimes drive him mad. I shall see you again to say good-bye. (*aside, going*) The most charming woman I ever met in all my life!

Exit RAWDON, L.

Enter THEOBALD, C.

JANE. Oh, Theobald, **I’ve met them all. I’ve been dying to tell you—all the Crosbie family, minus papa, and we’ve crossed swords already!** I saw them here. **Of course I didn’t know who they were; but I thought they were cads by the women’s dress. Every colour of the rainbow like a beetroot salad!**

THEO. Well, were they civil to you?

JANE. **Wonderfully civil!**

THEO. Nonsense!

JANE. I thought they’d never leave off bowing. Mrs. Crosbie hoped to be permitted to pay her respects to me before she left, and begged to be allowed the honour of “presenting” her son.

THEO. Mrs. Crosbie did this! Come, that’s well.

JANE. Yes, she mistook me for the Princess Czartoriska!

BOTH. Ah, ha, ha! (*laughing immoderately*)

THEO. The Princess Czar—ha, ha, ha! **And so for once in your life you were taken for a Princess! Poor Jenny!**

JANE. Yes; **and cut dead the moment the mistake was discovered!** “Emmy, my dear” (*mimicking MRS. CROSBIE*) “you really should be more careful. A mistake of this kind often causes the most embarrassing results!” **And with a withering glance at Vice-[poor] that’s me—Virtue puts her hand under the arm of innocence, and exits!**

THEO. **And the young fellow, Rawdon, what of him, Jenny?**

Am I to call Rawdon Crosbie out, or—

JANE. **You are to be as nice as you can be to Rawdon Crosbie. He is a very good kind of [little boy] fellow—worth a world of the others.** When they cut me, he stood up for me like a gentleman. Mind that—you are to be as nice to him as you can be. Here he is!

Enter RAWDON, L., looking at hotel bill.

JANE. Mr. Crosbie, this is my husband, Francis Theobald.

THEO. (C.) **Rawdon Crosbie**, of course. **I [thought so] ought to have known that by the family likeness.**

RAW. (L.) Mr. Theobald, I am very glad indeed to know so near a neighbour. I have already had the pleasure of making Mrs. Theobald's acquaintance.

THEO. Yes. Jane has just been telling me the circumstances. (RAWDON *rather confused*) I am much obliged to you.

RAW. Don't say that. **I—I hope you won't be too grand to admit me if I call.**

JANE. **If! You are wise to put in that proviso.**

THEO. Come over as soon as we get in, which will be in about a fortnight. I—I am sorry you are leaving this afternoon. (*going up C.*)

RAW. But—I don't think I *am* leaving this afternoon. My father and mother will go, but I shall knock about Brussels and Antwerp for a fortnight or so before I go home. (*looking significantly at JANE*)

JANE. Why, that's delightful! You must come with us.

THEO. *Will* you come with us? And we can all go to Chalkshire together. Then, that's settled.

Exeunt THEOBALD and JANE, C.

RAW. A few days—only a few days—and it's a bore to be always tied to the family apron strings. I wonder what Emmy will say? Mrs. Theobald! What a charming woman! Not beautiful! No; but better than beautiful—pretty! This is her work basket—hers! What's this? (*takes a small silver heart out of the basket*) **A silver heart, (opens it) [scented] with a vanilla bean inside! And here, a few dead rose leaves!** There's a history attached to this. I wish that history was mine.

Enter EMMA, C.

RAW. (R., *starting—puts the heart into his pocket*) Emmy!

EMMA. (L.) Rawdon, how flurried you look. **You've been saying good-bye to Mrs. Theobald, I suppose? (*goes close to him*) Oh, Rawdon, what a dandy you're getting! What is this new scent you wear? And what put it into your head to buy it?**

RAW. **I never bought a bottle of scent in my life, Emmy. It must be these foreign fusees. I believe I have a box of them somewhere.**

EMMA. **Oh, indeed! Fusees! I never knew fusees smell [so sweet] of rose leaves before. I remember when you used to say you despised men who wore scent.**

RAW. **My dear Emmy, I've quite left off despising people for being fools. It's a bad habit, and leads one into being personal.**

EMMA. Well, are all your things packed? Because we are going now.

RAW. Yes; but I—I—think I shall stop here over to-morrow.

EMMA. To-morrow!

RAW. I promised Milson and his wife to go to the ball to-night, and as they don't know any one here—

EMMA. Rawdon! What ball?

RAW. **The ball at the Casino. Didn't I tell you this morning I meant to go? Stupid kind of affair, I believe—never kept up after midnight—still, when one is at Rome—**

EMMA. Rawdon! **Can you care for such things as balls and parties, and [me] I left behind?** I suppose Mrs. Theobald's going?

RAW. Yes—no—I suppose so. It's a promise, and it's only for one day—to-morrow I shall join you, or the day after at latest.

Enter CROSBIE and MRS. CROSBIE.

MRS. C. (C.) Emmy—crying, my child? Why is this?

EMMA. (L.) Mamma, Rawdon is going to stay—he is not going with us. He is stopping for the ball to-night, and Mrs. Theobald is going to it.

RAW. (R.) I promised the Milsons—I forgot all about it—but I shall find you at Brussels before you leave.

Enter JANE and THEOBALD, C.

MRS. C. I can only say, Rawdon, that this sudden change of intention is most extraordinary; but (*looking at JANE*) *not* unaccountable! Mr. Crosbie, what do you say to this?

CROS. (L.) Say? Why, that the boy's his own master, of course. Why not let him stop if he likes? (*crossing to RAWDON*) Good-bye, my boy, we shall be at Brussels till Friday—then at Antwerp till Tuesday—you'll know where to find us when you want us. Come along, my dear, or we shall miss the train.

Exit CROSBIE, L.

(MRS. CROSBIE *bows stiffly to JANE as she passes her and goes off.* L.—JANE *takes no notice of her*—EMMA *goes up to kiss RAWDON, who kisses her mechanically*)

EMMA. Rawdon, aren't you going to see us to the station?

RAW. I beg your pardon, of course, Jane.

Exit RAWDON with EMMA, L.

THEO. Good gracious, Jenny, they bowed to you—you should have returned it!

JANE. I don't like those women.

THEO. (*sitting L. of R. table*) You will have to learn to seem to like a good many people you never can like, when you get to Chalkshire, my dear Jane.

JANE. (*advancing to him and placing her hand on his shoulder*) Theobald—I'm going to tell you the truth plainly. **If our going to England, and living at Theobalds, is to make me a hypocrite—I mean if I am to choose between becoming a hypocrite and declaring war to the knife with every fine lady in Chalkshire—I have made my choice already—it is, War to the Knife!**

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Flower Show in the Lidlington Croquet Ground.*
Marquees, L. and R. C., and on cloth in distance; garden benches,
R. and L.

MRS. CROSBIE, R., and MRS. PIPPIN, L., *discovered seated.*

MRS. C. Yes, we met Mrs. Theobald at Spa, under the most distressing circumstances. We were unfortunately quartered in the same hotel, my dear Mrs. Pippin, and will you believe, she actually had the audacity to attempt to thrust her acquaintance on us, before we knew who she was!

MRS. P. My dear Mrs. Crosbie, I cannot conceive anything more embarrassing.

MRS. C. The question, of course, arose whether she would be visited in Chalkshire, and it was impossible to commit myself to a decided course of action, until I knew what Lady Rose Golightly, Lady Laurie and Mrs. Coventry Brown would do.

MRS. P. Naturally.

MRS. C. To complicate matters, my son Rawdon took a fancy, as young men will, to the particularly barmaidish style of beauty which distinguishes Mrs. Theobald, and detached himself from our party, in order to follow her wherever she might choose to go. He travelled from place to place in her society (it is only fair to add that Mr. Theobald accompanied them) for nearly a fortnight!

Enter MRS. BROWN from marquee, L.

MRS. BROWN. Well, I'm sure, **what will the club come to next?** The extraordinary person whom Mr. Theobald has married has actually ventured to present herself here, in our Lidlington Croquet Ground!

MRS. P. (*rises*) Mrs. Brown, surely there must be some way of preventing these things?

MRS. C. By our rules, **anyone can bring in anybody.**

MRS. B. (*C., emphatically*) **For once. But in framing that law, the proprietors of the club assumed that the friends of members**

would be persons in society.

MRS. C. (*seated*, R. C.) Happily, if Mrs. Theobald should have the audacity to cause herself to be proposed as a member, we have a rule, number twenty-[three] eight, which says, “**If any person notoriously ineligible** should be introduced by a member, the committee may exclude that person for the future meetings.”

Exeunt MRS. BROWN *and* MRS. PIPPIN, L.

Enter RAWDON *and* EMMA *from marquee*, R. C.

RAW. (C.) Stop, mother. **What is the charge brought against her? Why is Mrs. Theobald notoriously ineligible?** (*Emma sits*, L.)

MRS. C. (*rising*) Why? Because **in the first place, Mr. Francis Theobald’s wife does not belong by birth to the same station of life as ourselves.** (*crosses*, L.)

RAW. (C.) **Birth! And Mrs. Coventry Brown**, the daughter of a cotton spinner, and the granddaughter of a linen-draper, **is the leader of Lidlington society.**

MRS. C. **Mrs. Theobald’s ideas, habits, associations, must be fast! I detest the word, but you oblige me to use it.**

RAW. **Fast! Let me ask you who, at the present time, is the most sought-after woman in Chalkshire? Who dines everywhere, from the Archdeacon’s upwards and downwards? Whose name have we vainly tried to get at the head of our croquet list? Who is the show guest at our entertainments? To whose table do we move heaven and earth to get invited? Lady Rose Golightly! Visiting Lady Rose—associating with her—courting her as we do—have we the right to condemn any woman upon the bare supposition of her being fast? It is a question of abstract justice!** (*sits*, R.)

EMMA. (*rising*) **What has abstract justice to do with one’s visiting list? Everyone in the county knows Lady Rose, and no one in the county knows Mrs. Theobald. I suppose Rawdon thinks we ought to set ourselves above the Archdeacon and every respectable person in the neighbourhood!**

MRS. C. **It would be a hard matter to say what Rawdon does think; but it is not at all a hard matter to know how this Quixotic championship of unpopular persons must end. I am far from accusing Rawdon of anything, as yet, but boyish folly; but folly**

beyond a certain point becomes guilt. And while there is still time, (crosses, L. C.) and here in our dear Emma's presence, I ask you to draw back from an acquaintance—I fear I must say an intimacy which could only end in discredit and unhappiness to us all.

(crossing, L.)

EMMA. (crosses to RAWDON, R. C.) Mamma, you must not be angry with Rawdon. I am sure he loves me very dearly, and men don't look at these things as we do.

RAW. **My dear little Emmy, you have always been the best and kindest girl in the world.**

EMMA. Rawdon, you do love me, don't you?

RAW. Of course I do, Emmy; what a silly little lady to doubt that after all these years!

EMMA. I don't doubt it, dear, only we are so unlike others who are engaged.

RAW. My darling, Heaven forbid that we *should* be like others who are engaged. Besides our courtship is not a thing of yesterday. We are to newly engaged people what an old married couple are to a bride and bridegroom. Why we made love over Cinderella and Bluebeard, and I proposed to you on a rocking-horse!

EMMA. I'll try—I'll try and think that it's not because you love me less, but because you've loved me so long.

MRS. C. (L.) But *others* do not know this. The feelings of *others* must be consulted. And when society sees you, an engaged man, in the company of a woman who has enticed you—

RAW. (EMMA goes to MRS. C.) Mother, I know what you refer to; I am sorry that I left you at Spa, very, very sorry; I should not have left you, and I beg your pardon for having done so; but please understand that she was not to blame for it. Whatever you may have to say of *my* conduct, I am ready to hear; but I will not allow anyone, not even you, mother, to speak lightly of Mrs. Theobald.

Exit RAWDON, R.

MRS. C. (EMMA begins to cry) My poor darling! don't cry. The man who entertains such detestably "advanced" views cannot be worth crying for. (crosses to L.)

EMMA. Mamma, **I've been very foolish—it will never happen;**

no mamma, dear, **it will never happen again!** (*wiping her eyes, goes up C.*)

MRS. C. I shall make it my business to see that it never *can* happen again! (*JANE and THEOBALD have entered, from marquee, R. C.*) Come, my dear, let us follow Rawdon, and come to an understanding.

EMMA. (*coming down, L.*) Mamma, **mamma—here are the Theobalds! What in the world shall we do?** (*much agitated*)

MRS. C. (*L.*) **We shall pass quietly on, my dear Emma, and see nobody. A cut direct would be the worst possible taste, until we know what [everybody else] Lady Rose Golightly means to do. We shall just walk quietly, and see—nobody.**

(*MRS. CROSBIE and EMMA pass along the stage from L. to R., and exeunt, R.—THEOBALD and JANE look steadily at them, from R. U. E.—THEOBALD bows—JANE does not move*)

JANE. **So that's settled! I like to know exactly how I stand—and now I do know! You told me I should have sermons preached to me, and so I have! Fortunately they are sermons that are easy to understand!** (*sits, R.*)

THEO. **Let us hope we can exist without the Crosbie patronage!** The next question is, what will Lady Rose do? I don't think Rose will cut an old friend.

JANE. Rose!

THEO. (*rather confusedly*) Lady Rose—Lady Rose Golightly.

JANE. Oh! **She and you were friends, rather, in old days?**

THEO. Yes—rather.

JANE. **I believe you and Lady Rose were once a great deal more to each other than I know anything about. Yes, I am sure of it!** (*rises*) **And what is more, I shall show Lady Rose that I *am* sure of it, unless you take the trouble to contradict me!**

THEO. (*R.*) **And suppose I can't contradict you, Jenny—what next?**

JANE. (*L.*) **Oh, if you tell me that, I have done. It is extremely flattering, of course, if I only had the sense to appreciate it, that I should have been the rival or successor of a Duke's daughter!**

THEO. The fact is, Jenny, we were both rather young, and one

of us extremely foolish. I was [an officer] in the Guards then, and wore moss roses in my button-hole, and spent my nights at balls and my afternoons in the park and at kettle-drum teas.

[Kettledrumming] That was just coming into fashion, and whatever was in the fashion Francis Theobald did! (*sitting, L. C.*)

JANE. Even to falling in love with Lady Rose! (*crosses to THEOBALD*)

THEO. I don't know that I ever fell in love with her—perhaps I did. I imagined so at the time. You see, she was one of the prettiest [woman] women in London—a Duke's daughter too! I dare say I was snob enough to be influenced by that. Well, she always gave me her best dances, and threw over Earls and Marquises by the dozen for me—fact, Jenny, I assure you—and then at last, one fine night, my eyes were opened, and I found out that I had been a [fool] donkey—Lady Rose was engaged to Jack Golightly!

JANE. Lady Rose had jilted you! I hate her—no I don't—I love her for behaving so badly that *you* must hate her. Tell me that you hate that woman, Theobald?

THEO. No, Jane, I can't tell you that. Till a few minutes ago I had clean forgotten there was such a person as Lady Rose in existence. When Lady Rose got engaged, I took to another way of life altogether. (*rising*)

JANE. The life you were leading, when you came across me?

THEO. Exactly. Jenny, how all this talk brings back the old days! How plainly I remember you as you looked that day when I met my fate at the Royal. I had gone with Jack Thornton to see his burlesque rehearsed, but all I saw was you. You wore a green frock with darns in it, Mrs. Theobald. You had shabby pink roses in your hat and I fell in love with you as you danced.

JANE. You *couldn't* have fallen in love with me. I looked [horrid] hideous that day.

THEO. Didn't I come up and speak to you directly the [class broke up] rehearsal was over, and didn't you say that for no earthly consideration would you allow me to see you home—and then didn't I see you home—all the way to the Waterloo Road?

JANE. And then how soon you began to get jealous—jealous of

old Adolphe Dido, because he called me “my dear,” as if anyone in a theatre didn’t call every one else “my dear”—jealous of poor little Montague Stokes, because he happened to be my lover in the piece—jealous of everybody! You have quite left off being jealous, Mr. Theobald, by the way—

THEO. Yes, my dear Jane; I leave that branch of domestic duty to you [now].

Exit THEOBALD, L.

JANE. (*sitting*, L.) Jealous of Lady Rose—not I, indeed! At least, I don’t think I am. He loved her very dearly once—I know that—but she jilted him; and I *love* him— (*rising*) Bah! I must try and keep that woman out of my mind, or I shall make a fool of myself—I know that!

Enter RAWDON, R. C.

RAW. Mrs. Theobald! (*going to her*)

JANE. Rawdon Crosbie, by all that’s wonderful! Why, what in the world are you doing down here? We left you in London a week ago, with no prospect of seeing you for ages! **Are you [always] on leave? I don’t know much about military matters, but I thought people in the army were generally stationed somewhere.**

RAW. I am quartered at Woolwich. I enjoyed those ten days we all spent together in Belgium so much, that I longed for an after-taste, so that I got leave to come down here, and see you.

JANE. (*briskly*) Now, that’s very jolly of you—you must come and see us at home, at Theobalds. **I feel an inch taller, I can tell you, when I speak of Theobalds as home. Think what it is for us vagrants to possess [twenty-] two-and-twenty mildewed rooms and a whole legion of domestic rats!**

RAW. (*tenderly*) Do you remember our first meeting—the day I first met you at Spa?

JANE. I shall never forget the day I first met you; (*he is delighted*) for on that day I lost something that was very dear to me.

RAW. And that was—

JANE. A heart! (*he is again delighted*) A little silver heart. (*he relapses*) I would give the world to find it—it is very dear to me!

RAW. Shall I tell you the truth?

JANE. The truth—of course—why not?

RAW. Mrs. Theobald, I—I took it. (*producing it*)

JANE. (*amazed*) **And what put it into your head to take property that did not belong to you?**

RAW. **If I had known the peculiar—the tender interest that attaches to that poor little old heart you may be sure I should have left it alone.**

JANE. **You would have done wisely. The locket is mine—not yours—consequently its rightful place is, not in your pocket!**

RAW. Why do you always laugh at me?

JANE. I don't know. Perhaps, because **laughing at people is my way of showing [how well] that I like them.** Now, come along, and tell me who everyone is—oh, don't be frightened—I'm not going to ask you to introduce me to any of them!

RAW. Why not? Here comes the very best friend you could possibly have in this Vanity Fair!

JANE. What, the tall lady with the light hair!

RAW. No, dark hair. (*looks again*) No, you're right, it is light to-day. She's the Lidlington Lioness, and a very jolly one too, a high class Bohemian, a little bit fast, perhaps, and a most desperate flirt; but notwithstanding that she's the most popular woman in the county with men and women too.

JANE. And who is this paragon?

RAW. That is no less a person than Lady Rose Golightly.

JANE. Is that Lady Rose?

RAW. Yes, by-the-bye, she's an old flame of Theobald's.

JANE. I know she is. (*annoyed*)

RAW. What do you think of her?

JANE. **I think she looks washed out. [hair, complexion, eyes, all the same colour]** (*turns up and sits, R. U. E., back to AUDIENCE*)

Enter LADY ROSE, L. 1 E.

LADY R. **How do you do, Mr. Crosbie, come here? Who is the young [person] lady in the extremely brilliant silk** to whom you have been talking? I don't remember ever having seen her before.

RAW. Probably not, Lady Rose, but for all that she is one of the nicest women I ever met with in all my life!

LADY R. **Oh, I'm sure of all that.** [Their] Her name is—

RAW. **Theobald.**

LADY R. Is that **Mrs. Theobald?**

RAW. Yes. You knew her husband once, I think.

LADY R. Oh, of course. And is that Mrs. Theobald? Dear me. And **who was she, do you know?**

RAW. **I—I rather think she was connected with the stage.**

LADY R. **You are right, I am sure.** (*using eye-glass to JANE*) **She has the indescribable look all those people have.** I knew—I knew Francis Theobald well in the old days; (*sighing*) but he was not like other men of his “set,” and **I thought it [wise] better to make a few [domestic] enquiries before renewing the acquaintance.**

Enter THEOBALD, L. U. E., he goes to JANE, who is still seated.

Surely, that is Frank Theobald!

RAW. That is Frank Theobald.

LADY R. (*after a pause, and with hesitation*) **I—I should like to ask him to join our party, to-morrow. Anything in the shape of a new face is pleasant in Chalkshire.** One could ask—one could ask him to dinner without his wife, surely?

RAW. **One might ask him.**

LADY R. **But you don't think he would accept?**

RAW. **You must allow, Lady Rose, it would look rather like a slight to his wife to leave her out in a first invitation.**

LADY R. **A first invitation! I thought I told you I knew Francis Theobald well in the old days.** But, however, I dare say you're right; but mind, **I shall look to you to take Mrs. Theobald completely off my hands, if I do ask her.**

RAW. I shall be delighted, indeed, to do so. (*goes up R., and talks to JANE and THEOBALD*)

LADY R. I'm as nervous as a girl. I didn't think my heart had so much beating power left in it. This is absurd. Why should I be nervous? He and I are nothing to each other now. (*goes up to THEOBALD, who is talking to JANE, he does not see her*) Good morning, Mr. Theobald!

THEO. (*turning round suddenly*) Lady Rose! (*he takes her hand, they come down*)

LADY R. (L.) You know me then?

THEO. (R.) **I should have known you anywhere.**

LADY R. And yet we have not met for many years.

THEO. Seven years! }

LADY R. What lovely weather. } (*with forced*

THEO. Very lovely. } (*indifference*)

LADY R. People prophesied rain. }

THEO. I think there is no chance of that. (*pause*)

LADY R. **It seems odd that you and I should meet like this.**

What—what became of you after the Cameron's ball?

THEO. **Lady Cameron's was the last London party to which I ever went. From that day [on] I dropped from the world, and from everything belonging to it.**

LADY R. **From one section of [the world] it you mean. You have [managed] contrived to exist in another.**

THEO. **So have you, Lady Rose.** You treated me very cruelly.

LADY R. I did; but I have been punished for it! **We spend our [lives] hours, most of us, in making mistakes and repenting of them afterwards. But what am I thinking of all this time not to [ask] have asked about your wife. Mrs. Theobald is here, I know. Mr. Crosbie pointed her out to me, and I think her *charming*. Will you introduce us, please?**

JANE and RAWDON *appear at tent*, R. C.

THEO. Oh, there she is—Jane. Let me introduce you to Lady Rose Golightly. (*the two GENTLEMEN remain up stage*)

LADY R. My dear Mrs. Theobald, I am so glad—so very glad to know you. **Shall we take a turn round the gardens? I don't know whether you have noticed the azaleas; but perhaps you don't care for flowers. I am foolish about them. I am obliged to create interests to fill up my life. You have children, I think?**

RAWDON *goes off*, R. C.

JANE. **I have one child—a little daughter of three.**

LADY R. That is a source of excitement. **What one wants of**

course is constant excitement, if excitement would only last. I was a little amused at the pigeon shooting, at Hurlingham, [last season] a few seasons ago, just while it was new. Then I got sick of it. Everyone shoots so well, and the pigeons die so monotonously. You like a pigeon match?

JANE. (*warmly*) **I wouldn't be at such a cruel thing if I was shot for it myself!**

LADY R. **Ah, tenderhearted. I have heard some people are like that. I don't know at first that I *quite* liked seeing the poor little wretches tumble over, but I got used to it. Oh, I was about to ask[ing] your husband if you will dine with us to-morrow? Oh, indeed, you must come. I want so much to show you the Folly—the ugliest house in England I call it! You will come? Thanks. Now, Mr. Theobald, you must take me to see the azaleas. (*rising and taking THEOBALD'S arm*) [*thinks* LADY ROSE] **Thank heaven, that duty is over; I need never say as much to her again while I live!****

Exeunt LADY ROSE and THEOBALD *up stage, and off, L.*

JANE. (R.) That's an odd thing to do. Why did she leave me behind? An old flame—a woman of whom everyone has a story to tell; but a woman whom everyone visits because she is Lady Rose. She walked him off as soon as she could decently get away. Well, I pay myself a very poor compliment if I think I can't hold my own against Lady Rose! But I'm beginning to hate that woman, more fool I. Poor woman, she has more reason to hate me!
(*crosses to L.*)

Enter RAWDON, R. C., *with croquet hammer.*

Mr. Crosbie, I want to play. (*with forced gaiety*) I suppose I know enough of croquet to do so. **You [start] set off at one little stick, and [you must] try to reach the other, and you go under hoops and ring little bells as you go along, don't you? Come, get a pair of hammers, or whatever they are called, and let us start at once.**

RAW. **I'm afraid it's against the rules of the club for anyone to touch the ['hammers'] mallets until they have become members. But why not be a member?**

JANE. **Be a member! that's very easy to say. First catch your hare. I must find a proposer to begin with, and then a seconder, and lastly I must make up my mind to be black-balled.**

RAW. **Black-balled! you black-balled! I'll propose you, and this day week I hope you'll be a member of the club.**

JANE. **You need not put such a spiteful emphasis on the "hope." Why should I *not* be a member? Nobody knows me, and therefore—**

MRS. C. (*without*) Rawdon! Rawdon!

JANE. **I conclude nobody will take the trouble to black-ball me.** Here comes your mother; she has given me the cut direct once. I shall go and find Theobald.

RAW. We had better not disturb him, he is very happy as he is. (*significantly*) He is with Lady Rose.

JANE. (*sharply*) I know he is, what of that?

RAW. (*taken aback*) Oh, nothing.

Exit JANE, L.

Enter MRS. CROSBIE, MRS. COVENTRY BROWN, *and*
MRS. PIPPIN, R. C.

MRS. C. Rawdon, oblige me. I regret to see that all I have said to you about Mrs. Theobald has been without effect. I have been speaking seriously to Mrs. Coventry Brown on the subject. **Mrs. Coventry Brown entirely disapproves of her style and manner.**

RAW. The deuce she does!

MRS. C. **If she had dressed plainly and kept very quiet, and considering the Miss Theobalds and everything else, in time, perhaps they might have lived their position down. But Mrs. Theobald being what she is—**

RAW. **A pretty woman, who does *not* dress plainly, the Lidlington ladies can't find it in their hearts to forgive her. Well, I dare say that's natural enough. I hope, by-the-bye, mother, that you will give your vote to Mrs. Theobald, when she is balloted for at the Lidlington Croquet Club?**

Exit RAWDON, R. C.

MRS. C. **When she is balloted for? Poor woman, I am afraid she would have to [go] search far for a proposer and seconder.**

Enter EMMA, R. C.

EMMA. Mamma, dear, Mr. Theobald and his wife **have plenty of friends already. Lady Rose is quite intimate with them, and as to the officers,** they quite hem her in! Lady Rose has actually asked her to dinner!

MRS. B. **Birds of a feather! Birds of a feather! Ah, my dear friend, we all know what Lady Rose is at heart!**

MRS. C. (*aside*) Asked her to dinner! Dear me! (*aloud*) I don't know how it presents itself to you, Mrs. Brown, but it seems to me **that the question whether Mrs. Theobald is to be noticed will have to be reviewed from a higher stand-point.**

MRS. B. Eh?

MRS. C. The question that now arises is—**will it be in good taste not to visit anyone with whom Lady Rose Golightly may choose to associate?**

Exeunt MRS. BROWN, MRS. CROSBIE, and EMMA.

Enter JANE, LADY ROSE and THEOBALD, L. C.

JANE. Then I will say good bye, Lady Rose, until to-morrow.

LADY R. You are going shamefully early. There is a dance afterwards in the marquee. Won't you stay—now do!

JANE. Thank you; but I have a headache, and I had rather go home. (*retires up*)

LADY R. (*to THEOBALD*) **No use asking you to join us, of course—if you will—** (*looking up affectionately into his face*)

THEO. **Jenny would [be afraid] not like to drive home by herself.**

Enter RAWDON, R. C.

JANE. (*going down*) Oh, pray don't consider me—I like everything. I am not at all afraid to go home alone.

RAW. If you will allow me to see you home—

THEO. Thanks, Rawdon—that's settled, Jenny. Rawdon will see you home, and I'll join you early.

JANE. Rawdon, come and find my shawl. I'm not very well, and I'd better wrap up. I left it in the marquee.

Exeunt JANE and RAWDON, R. C.

LADY R. (*aside*) **Now for the reward!** (*aloud*) Do you know I call this delightful. (*they sit, R. C.*) **Why isn't there a rule that no party shall ever consist of more than [four] two people?** How like the old times this is!

THEO. It seems strange indeed to find myself *tête-à-tête* with you again, Lady Rose. Seven years! How much has happened since we met!

LADY R. Much indeed! Much that is terrible to look back upon—much that I would willingly forget—much that I would ask you to forgive! Do you remember the Cameron's ball?

THEO. Well!

LADY R. With that ball the heaven of my life ended. But I brought my unhappiness upon myself, and I must not complain. I treated you shamefully, Francis; but I have been bitterly punished. Are you glad to know that I have been punished?

THEO. I loved you dearly then. I am as deeply sorry for your unhappiness, as if that love had lasted till now!

LADY R. And to meet like this, Frank! How naturally the old name comes to my lips, when I talk to you. I can't—I can't call you Mr. Theobald.

THEO. Why should you, Rose?

LADY R. (*earnestly*) Thank you—thank you; (*taking his hand*) but your wife—

THEO. My wife and I are Bohemians, and drop as a matter of course into Christian names more readily than other people.

LADY R. And so **you and my brother, Barty, have become fast friends again? By-the-bye, how glad—how very glad I am that you are to be one of the party on board the "Lais!"**

THEO. **Am I to be one of the party on board the "Lais?"**

LADY R. **So Barty says.** I heard from him to-day, and he tells me **that you have promised to join us all at Cowes next week.** Surely you won't disappoint us—surely you won't disappoint *me*, Frank?

THEO. **Lord Barty was kind enough to ask me, but as to my promising, Rose, I never promise anything. I hold that for a married man, there is no such thing as a future. He may propose—**

LADY R. **But his wife disposes, so I am told. Without promising then, you have some weak and vacillating intention of joining our party?**

THEO. I am afraid Jenny will want me here.

LADY R. *(aside)* Jenny! *(aloud)* **I can understand a wife not liking her husband to go to a ladies' party without her. But I cannot understand a wife quarrelling with bachelor parties, and my brother's are purely bachelor parties. I—I come across them, sometimes, by accident, but they are bachelor parties still. But, perhaps, Mrs. Theobald is afraid of [Beware of] Barty's loo and lansquenet. She knows your failing in that respect. The very atmosphere of the "Laïs" is a demoralization to people with gambling propensities. *(insidiously)***

THEO. Then as I have decided gambling propensities, **the best thing for me will be to steer as clear of the "Laïs" as I can—unless, indeed, you will solemnly promise to take care of me, Rose.**

LADY R. *(tenderly)* **And if I do promise—if I do undertake the tremendous responsibility of looking after your morals, you will go?**

Enter JANE and RAWDON, R. C., JANE with a shawl over her shoulder—she stops and listens, C.

THEO. My morals! **Would Rose's presence on board the "Laïs," or anywhere else, make my safety certain?** I am afraid not!

LADY R. *(softly)* **Everything depends, does it not, upon what one means by "safety," Frank?**

(LADY ROSE'S hand is on THEOBALD'S arm, he takes it in his hand, gazes on it for a moment, and gently raises it to his lips—JANE with an effort, controls herself)

JANE. *(to RAWDON)* Come!

Exit JANE and RAWDON, hurriedly, L. 2 E.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*A Drawing Room, at Theobalds; rather stately in character, but evidently neglected; windows, R.; doors, C. and R.*

JANE *discovered.*

JANE. Six o'clock, and no Theobald! No need to wonder where or with whom he is. Seven times in the last fortnight! Seven days with her—seven days with me! Well, I suppose I [**Yet she**] **must bear it all. (suddenly) Must?—and why, must? Why mope through such an existence as this cold, unloved and neglected one that [she sees] I see opening out before [her] me? Why not cut this “lady’s life”—return to the stage? No fear of coldness or neglect there! The public is not Lidlington society—the public is not Francis Theobald! Would not any admiration—any notoriety be better than such a life as Chalkshire is likely to [offer her] afford me? At last—he’s here!**

Enter THEOBALD, L.

JANE. So you have returned? How is Lady Rose? Why have you left her?

THEO. I have come for—for my portmanteau. I have been thinking that, after all, Jenny, a little change of air will do me good; and, as Lord Barty *has* kept a spare berth for me on board the “*Laïs*,” why I thought it would scarcely be fair not to use it. Lady Rose starts by the afternoon train, but I need not go until to-morrow. (JANE *shows emotion*) **But, if you don’t like me to leave you—**

JANE. **Like! And how do you suppose it can possibly matter to me whether you leave me or not? Do you think I could not find plenty of people to take care of me if I wanted them?**

THEO. **I am quite [sure] certain you could, under any circumstances, find [plenty of people] Rawdon Crosbie, at least, to take care of you!**

JANE. **Lucky for me that I can! I don’t know how it may be for ladies, of course. Outsiders, like me, do well to accept whatever attention comes to them.**

THEO. **You are a fool, Jane, and you will live to repent your**

folly! If *you* have no self-respect, have the goodness to remember, please, that you owe something to me. I am bound, in common civility, to accept this invitation.

JANE. **Do as you like. Go on with this intimacy till you have brought things to their bitter end; but remember, whatever comes of it, will be your doing! I'm not a woman to watch and [waylay] suspect, and be silent—to quarrel to-day and make up to-morrow! I love, or I hate! Go on as you are going [on] with Lady Rose, and leaving me and the child [alone] in this wretched place, and, by the Lord that made me, I'll leave *you*!**

THEO. **You are certainly the most [unreasonable] unreasonably jealous woman in the world, Jenny. *You leave me!* Come and give me a kiss, [Jane] love, and don't be a little fool. We shall have Blossy threatening to run away on strike if she doesn't get all she wants next!**

JANE. **Poor Blossy! How much better it would have been for me, if I had never had a child.**

THEO. **Better for you if you had never married Blossy's father, you mean. Out with it, Jenny! Don't think of my feelings; you know that is what you are burning to say.**

JANE. **If I was burning to say it, I should say it. No, I can never wish I hadn't married you.** The years before we set up being *respectable*—the years before we came to this hateful place, are [too] to the good, all of them! God bless you for those years, if for nothing else! (*weeping*)

THEO. **And Blossy is the sole impediment, then, that you want removed out of your way?**

JANE. **Oh, poor [baby] Bloss, she is now the only thing I have to live for!**

THEO. **You wish no one gone at all then?**

JANE. **I wish Lady Rose Golightly was dead. You hear me? Dead! Be as shocked as you like!**

THEO. **I'm not [in] the least shocked, Jenny. If fate obeyed the [kindly] amiable wishes of women in this respect, I don't believe there would be a hundred of you left on the face of the earth!**

JANE. (*sitting on sofa, L.*) **Shall I tell you how often you have been to the "Folly" during the last fortnight, Theobald?**

THEO. **Three or four times, at most, Jenny; and each time, you know, Lady Rose would have been only too [glad] delighted to see you, if you would have gone [too].**

JANE. **You have been there, in fourteen days, exactly seven times, to my knowledge. Seven times since I came here I have spent my evenings alone. When Blossy is gone to bed, and the rats begin to get well about, do you know that this ancestral home of yours—in spite of its smell of blue blood—is not cheerful, Theobald!**

THEO. **I never thought it [was] cheerful. If you remember, my first advice, after Cousin James's death, was to sell it, and live abroad, as we had always done. Only—** (*sitting beside JANE*)

JANE. **Only I, like a fool, proposed that we should try to make a home in England, and turn respectable. I thought you would be less likely to gamble away your last inheritance. I thought the child would be brought up better. I thought—**

THEO. **You thought Mrs. Grundy was not such an utter brute as she is.** (*putting his arm round JANE'S waist*) Do you remember me saying that, after being happy as Pariahs, we should be fools to try to set up as Brahmins? Come, my darling, you know that my love for you is unchanged—you know—

JANE. I know that **I like reality, Theobald! Sham, made-up speeches have no effect upon me—I've heard too many of them on the stage. Give up this passion of yours, and I will believe you care for me as you used!**

THEO. (*rising and crossing to R.*) **Passion! Jane, what a silly girl you are! When will you learn that life is not a melo-drama? I feel a passion for any woman except you—for Lady Rose Golightly, most of all—or Lady Rose for me! Why, she tells me that she has invited you to join the party on the yacht—not that I think it is a place for *you*. Of course, you won't go?**

JANE. **I am glad to hear you say that, you will be the less angry with me for what I am going to do. I [got a note] did get an invitation this morning from Lady Rose. Read it.** (*gives note*)

THEO. (*reads*) **“My dear Mrs. Theobald,—Will you and Mr. Theobald [dine with me] join my brother's party on board the ‘Laïs.’ We are going to Cowes, this afternoon, by the 6:30—you can join us to-morrow—knowing your prejudice against gambling,**

we mean the rule of the [evening] trip to be ‘no cards.’ You can address a reply to the ‘Lais,’ at Cowes, if this does not reach you before I go.” **It is a friendly note enough in its way.**

JANE. **And here is my answer.**

THEO. (*reads*) **“Mrs. Theobald does not accept Lady Rose Golightly’s invitation!” You have no intention of sending that note, I presume, Jane?**

JANE. **What should I have written it for else?** I shall most certainly send it.

THEO. (*angrily*) **You will commit the unwisest action of your life, if you do. Refuse Lady Rose’s invitation if you like—the only woman in this [blanked] damned neighbourhood who has shown you a civility, but refuse it with common politeness. I don’t want you to accept it. I would rather, on every account, you did not accept it. Stay away, I’ll stay away too, if you choose; but put your refusal into decent terms. That is all I ask of you. I only want you to make use of the [common,] stereotyped phrases of civilized life, in doing so. (*goes up*)**

JANE. **Civilized life! (*rising and crossing to R.*) I don’t belong to the civilized life. My note expresses what I mean, neither more nor less.**

THEO. (*coming down*) **Once and for all, do you mean to send that atrocious note, or not?**

JANE. **I do! I will not stoop to be civil to anyone on this earth, whom I hate!**

THEO. **It is not a note that a lady could, under any circumstances, write to another lady.**

JANE. **But I am not a lady. You seem to forget that!**

THEO. **By heaven I wish I could forget it! Unfortunately your actions give me no chance of that. (*going, C.*)**

JANE. **Theobald, are you going?** You—you are coming back to me this evening?

THEO. **I cannot say at all. Very likely you will not see me! I have engagements that may keep me away.**

JANE. **You—are not—you are not going to [The Folly] see Lady Rose?**

THEO. **Most undoubtedly I *am* going to [The Folly] see Lady**

Rose. **Such an insane note as you have written shall not arrive quite without explanation on my part.** Good evening!

Exit THEOBALD, C.

JANE. Gone, gone, gone! What is all this tending to? **My heart's breaking**—oh, my heart's breaking! (*going to window*) **On this earth there doesn't walk a more miserable woman than [me]!** Theobald, come back to me—for the love of heaven come back to me!

Enter RAWDON, L.—JANE *thinking that it is* THEOBALD *rushes towards him, when she sees who it is, she controls herself by a violent effort.*

JANE. (*with forced gaiety*) Rawdon, is that you? I'm very glad to see you. You—you've no idea how apropos you're come. I'm quite alone. **Theobald is [dining out] away to-night. I hope in common charity you will stay and drink tea with me?** (*both sitting*—JANE, L. C., RAWDON *on sofa*, L.)

RAW. (*looking at her earnestly*) **Has anything happened?** Is anything wrong?

JANE. **Oh thousands of things have happened,** but they're none of them wrong. **I've got news of all sorts to tell you. If you hadn't come, I meant to have written you one of my lovely epistles.**

RAW. My leave is up to-morrow—I have to start for Woolwich to-night—you won't see me again for many months. I have come to say good bye. (*rises*)

JANE. **Good bye, before you've said how [do you] dy'e do? You are actually going to-night?**

RAW. To-night!

JANE. That's bad news, indeed, for me. (*sadly*) I never wanted a friend about me as I do now! (*with forced cheerfulness*) **I hope you think I'm looking my best, [Mr. Crosbie] Rawdon? I'm just in the humour for compliments this evening, so please tell me something flattering!**

RAW. **I think you're looking desperately ill—this bleak Chalkshire air [can surely not] doesn't agree with you.**

JANE. (*bitterly*) **No, that's just what it is—this bleak Chalkshire air does *not* agree with me! I was thinking how I could best have a change from it, when you came in.**

RAW. How's Theobald? (*sitting*)

JANE. Theobald's all right; **Chalkshire is Theobald's native air, you see—it is not mine—that makes all the difference.**

RAW. I'm very down at leaving you. Do you know, I begin to think it would have been a blessed thing for me if I had never seen you?

JANE. **Perhaps—I can never go into the might-have-beens of life. The facts, as they are, are enough for me—rather too much just at present. If I hadn't left the stage I might have been a second Taglioni by this time, and made heaps of money; and money—my dear child—money, is everything! As Lady Rose's brother] says, what is there that money can't buy?** (*rising and crossing to R.*)

RAW. **And has it got to your thinking with Lady Rose's [brother's] thoughts already?**

JANE. **Of course. What is the use of having noble acquaintances if you don't try to raise yourself to their standard?** (*RAWDON rises to go*) Don't go yet. I must go and put Bloss to bed—*she* is at an age when a girl not only expects attentions, but gets them!

Exit JANE, C.

RAW. Yes—it would have been a blessed thing for me if I had never seen her—a blessed thing for both of us! I'm an infernal cur to put it so! With all her freedom of manner, a purer, better, worthier girl than Jane Theobald don't breathe in this world! I must fight with this—and fight it down—for Emmy's sake, if for no other. It is well that I am to leave Chalkshire to-night, and for so long. But I can't bring myself to drop Jane! I can't band myself with the miserable crew of those who hold that she is a blot on this blotless Chalkshire world!

Enter EMMA, L.

EMMA. Rawdon!

RAW. Emmy!—*you* here?

EMMA. Mamma has had occasion to write an official note to Mrs. Theobald to tell her that she has been black-balled at Lidlington Croquet Club. That note was a cruel and insulting note, and I took upon myself to suppress it. Heaven knows I have no desire to know Mrs. Theobald, but my heart bled for her, and I came to break the news to her more kindly; and, if the truth must be told, to beg of her to give you back to me. And, oh, Rawdon, I find you here!

RAW. To give me back to you? What in the world are you talking of? As for my being here—I called to say good bye, and—

EMMA. **Spare yourself all this, Rawdon.** It is unnecessary. **Of [her] Mrs. Theobald's want of principle, and of right feeling in trying to entrap the attentions of an engaged man, I won't speak. Thank heaven I have nothing to do, even in idea, with such women! But you, Rawdon—yes, for the time has come when I mean to speak in the plainest language—you must make your choice between your present associates and me! Once for all—do you mean to give Mrs. Theobald up or [do you] not?**

RAW. **“Give up” a lady who has a husband, home, child, already.** Do be reasonable. Do reflect a little on the absurdity of what you are saying.

EMMA. I am perfectly reasonable. **I have reflected well over everything. Will you give up calling at Theobalds? If you meet her [at any time] in any place, and I am with you, will you pass her by without recognizing her? In short will you give up Mrs. Theobald—that is what I want to know?**

RAW. Very well, Emma, then I will tell you: If by “giving her up” you mean that I am not to go out of my way to seek her society—this I will promise to do—and most faithfully will I keep my promise, for I think you are entitled to demand it. **I will not, under any pressure whatever, give up her acquaintance. And whenever and wherever I may meet Mrs. Theobald, I shall hold myself only too much honoured if she will condescend to notice me.**

EMMA. **This—this is quite sufficient.** We need have no further discussion. **From this moment everything is at an end between us.**

RAW. Let it be as you please. **If you choose to give me up**

because I refuse to offer a gratuitous insult to a perfectly innocent woman—

EMMA. **Innocent!**

RAW. **Yes, innocent, by heavens! And not only [innocent] so, but honester, truer, better in every [way] sense than half the people you and my mother court as associates. If you feel yourself justified in [doing] breaking off this engagement for such a cause as this, do it. You will at least have the good opinion of Chalkshire society to support you, and what more could heart desire?**

EMMA. You have said the word, Rawdon, and you are free—you to take your course, I to take mine. I loved you, Rawdon, and held on to the belief that you were innocent when everyone believed otherwise. I did this because I loved you; but my eyes are opened now. From the bottom of my heart I forgive you, as from the bottom of my heart I love you. God bless you, Rawdon, and God forgive you!

Exit EMMA, L.

RAW. Emmy, Emmy, come back! No, let it be so. Emmy free to take her course, I free to take mine. Well, it is better, much better for her, that it should be so. It is my duty not to love Jane Theobald, and I was prepared to do my duty at any cost; but it is also my duty to protect her, or any innocent woman, from such studied deliberate insult as my mother and my wife that was to be would have inflicted on her. Emmy, Emmy, this is your doing, you might have taken me at my word.

Enter JANE, C.

JANE. Who are you talking to? I heard voices, surely.

RAW. The last woman but one you ever expected to see under your roof—Emma Marsland!

JANE. Emma Marsland! What does this mean?

RAW. It means that everything is at an end between Emmy and me. She wanted me to promise to think no more about you. I promised to do that. She wanted me to promise to cut you dead, now and for ever. I couldn't do that. (*sitting, R. C.*)

JANE. (C.) I'm sorry this has happened, because it's going to bring things to a smash between you and me; and yet, in another way, I'm glad. It has opened my eyes pretty sharply to something good for me to see. Now, my dear fellow, listen, and take the best bit of advice that has ever been given you in your life. Cut me. I'm a bad business as far as you are concerned. Run away to Miss Marsland, and make the [prettiest] best apology you can for having been seen so often with such a doubtful associate. Do you hear?

RAW. I hear!

JANE. There's one more thing I should like you to do. But you need not promise about this; do it only if it seems good to you. Some day or other, then, when you are a steady old married man, and when you are talking to your wife about the past, I should like you to say to her that before I left Chalkshire, I, Jane Theobald, wished her happiness, and that if I ever gave her pain I was sorry for it. Do you hear?

RAW. I hear!

JANE. And without [my] making any fine company speeches, my dear boy, let me tell you that the only happy hours I ever had in Chalkshire were the hours I spent with you. I shall like, whatever becomes of me, to look back to them and to remember how pluckily you used to stand my friend. "Good bye for ever" is a nasty thing to say, Rawdon, so we won't say it—that's all.

RAW. As long as we both live I shall never feel that "Good bye for ever" has been said between you and me.

JANE. You think so now—but the day will come, depend upon it, when you'll thank your stars "Good bye for ever" *was* said between you and me; and then—oh, heaven!—whatever we do, don't let us get sentimental. You'll want all that kind of sugary material, you know, child, for the grand reconciliation scene in which you and Miss Marsland are coming on. People seldom fail in pleading when they really want to be pardoned. The question is, how am I, outside in the cold, to know that the pardon [is] has been spoken? *(she takes a rose from her bosom)* Here, take this, Rawdon, and wear it until the moment your sweetheart says "Yes." *(puts it in his button-hole)* Then I, outside in the cold, must have my sign, and

the sign shall be that you take my flower—my last gift—and [let it drop at] place it in your sweetheart's [feet] hair. You promise?

RAW. And do you think you are going to get rid of me like this? Be a little franker—say straight out you are tired of me.

JANE. And suppose I am *not* tired of you? Don't be a fool, Rawdon. You cannot honestly remain her sweet-heart and my friend. You have to make your choice. I am nothing to you. Miss Marsland is—or will be—everything.

RAW. Are wives always everything to their husbands? *You* should know better than that, I think!

JANE. I know what you mean—I know what you mean! Is it generous of you—is it like yourself—to have said this?

RAW. I am not like myself—I am maddened, and I know not what I say—I have no thought—no object—no interest, that is not wrapped up in you!

JANE. (*amazed*) Rawdon!

RAW. Oh, it is as well said! From the first hour I saw you, my life and everything belonging to it have been set adrift; and, if I could choose, I would not have it [different] otherwise!

JANE. (*in amazement*) Well, whatever else I thought, I did not think you would be such a fool as this, Rawdon Crosbie! You have made a ridiculous—a preposterous mistake!

RAW. And have you thought I could be alone with you—over and over again, as I have been—and since we met at Spa, and *not* grow to care for you more than I ought?

JANE. Ought! Oh, dear me, don't let us get upon moral stilts, in addition to everything else! It isn't the right and wrong of the thing—it's the absurdity of it, that takes away my breath!

RAW. The absurdity of such a man [of my age] as I losing his senses under the influence of such a face [like] as yours?

JANE. A face! Yes—that's all men think of! A pink and white complexion—a pair of blue doll's eyes—a stray dimple or two—are excuses enough for everything! Has the doll got a heart? Oh, not worth the loss of time to guess at that!

RAW. And you—you, Mrs. Theobald—is it loss of time to speculate if *you* have a heart?

JANE. **From most men I should call a question like that balderdash! With you—I'm sure I don't know why—I can talk differently to how I ever talked before. I'll say to you what I thought I never could have said to any one while I lived. I have a heart—and it's full! (*with an effort*) Fuller than it can hold—the worse for me, perhaps, already! (*sitting, L.*)**

RAW. Yes, the worse for you!

JANE. What do you mean?

RAW. I mean that it is full of a man who values not his privilege! I mean that it is full of a man who, blessed with the most priceless treasure on earth, trifles with it—toys with it!—despises it!

JANE. Rawdon Crosbie, are you mad?

RAW. I am; but I am telling you the truth! Do you know where your husband is?

JANE. At Lady Rose's.

RAW. No, he is not at Lady Rose's, but he is with Lady Rose. He is at this moment on his way to Cowes, to join the yachting party. In a day or two he and Lady Rose and Lord Barty will be off to the Mediterranean—to Norway—heaven knows where!

JANE. If I thought that (*rising*)—

RAW. (*eagerly*) Yes; if you thought that?—

JANE. I would leave him for ever! No; I would follow him for ever! (*crosses to L.*)

RAW. (C.) I have told you the truth.

JANE. He left me to go to "The Folly!"

RAW. He left you to go to the devil! I heard him tell the groom to drive to the station. The train that takes Lady Rose to Cowes starts at 6:30. He told the groom to drive fast to catch that train.

JANE. You may be mistaken. (*pauses—rings the bell*) I shall soon know. (*she sits, R. C.*)

Enter MARIE, L.

JANE. (*with assumed indifference*) Marie, did you hear the directions your master gave to Robins before he started?

MARIE. Yes, ma'am; master told him to drive to the station to catch the half-past six train.

JANE. Thank you, that will do. (*Exit MARIE, L.*) When can I start? (*earnestly and very rapidly*)

RAW. The train that I go by starts at eight.

JANE. It is now a quarter to seven.

RAW. My trap can call for you on my way. I suppose you will allow me to travel by the same train? Or do you wish me to break my leave, and defer my departure till to-morrow?

JANE. Break your leave! No! Why in the world should you do that? Allow you to travel by the same train? Of course! Why not?

RAW. Of course—why not? Have you decided?

JANE. Give me a moment to think. I believe I'm going mad; or have I been mad, and am I regaining my senses?

RAW. You must decide at once; there is no time to lose. Speak, Mrs. Theobald! speak, for heaven's sake! Think—think—how he has deceived you. (*she still appears irresolute*) Once for all, will you go? (*she is about to consent*)

Enter THEOBALD and LADY ROSE, L.—JANE sees them, but RAWDON does not.

JANE. No! (*she rushes to THEOBALD'S arms, and bursts into hysterical tears*) I am saved! I am saved! My darling! My darling! You are here back again with me! How good of you! Oh, Theobald, how good of you!

THEO. Oh, Jane, child, don't let us speak about my goodness. Rawdon, old fellow—

RAW. I dare not—

THEO. Dare not? What do you mean? Have you taken leave of your senses?

RAW. No, I've returned to them.

Exit RAWDON, C.

JANE. They told me you had gone with Lady Rose; and oh, Theobald, I believed them! Heaven forgive me, I believed them!

THEO. You have Lady Rose to thank for my being here.

JANE. (*sees LADY ROSE*) Lady Rose!

THEO. Yes, I intended to have gone; but when she saw me without you, she spoke to me like a woman, and brought me back to you.

LADY R. Mrs. Theobald, I have much to ask your pardon for; but, in judging me, remember that I am not of your world—I am not of your honest, unaffected, true-hearted world—it would have been better for me if I had been! Vain, thoughtless, frivolous, as I am—hollow-hearted, unscrupulous, if you will—believe, if you can, that there is an end to the folly of even such a woman as I! If, in my bringing your husband back to you, you can see anything to atone for the wrong I have done you, make the most of it, and let me take your hand!

JANE. (*taking it*) Lady Rose, what am I, that I should judge you harshly? If my forgiveness can avail you anything—from the bottom of my heart, you are forgiven! As for the past—

THEO. The past! **Let us agree that the past shall be done with! We will go back to the old vagabond-days, Jane, you and I! Let us sell Theobalds—let Chalkshire and everything belonging to Chalkshire be as though they had never been!**

JANE. **The old vagabond-days! You and [me] I alone again! As long as I can hold your hand, I'll go anywhere! Oh, my dear, put your arms round me—close! Love me, Theobald—me alone in the whole world!** (*she puts her arms round him—as she does this, RAWDON and EMMA appear at the back, so that she sees them, but THEOBALD does not—RAWDON takes the flower from his button-hole and drops it at EMMA'S feet*)

CURTAIN.