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SEARCHLIGHTS

BY HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

NOVELS

QUINNEYS'

LOOT

BUNCH GRASS

BLINDS DOWN

JOHN VERNEY

THE OTHER SIDE

PLAYS

JELF'S

QUINNEYS'

SEARCHLIGHTS

**GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY
NEW YORK**

SEARCHLIGHTS

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

AUTHOR OF "BLINDS DOWN," "LOOT," "BUNCH GRASS,"
"JELF'S," "QUINNEYS," ETC.

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

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TO
H. B. IRVING

All information and applications for permission to perform this play by Amateurs must be addressed to MESSRS. SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD., 26, Southampton Street, Strand, London.

CHARACTERS

ROBERT BLAINE	-	-	-	-	-	<i>A Capitalist</i>
SIR ADALBERT SCHMALTZ	-	-	-	-	-	<i>A Capitalist</i>
HARRY BLAINE	-	-	-	-	-	<i>A Guardsman</i>
FIRMIN	-	-	-	-	-	<i>A Physician</i>
MONYPENNY	-	-	-	-	-	<i>A Solicitor</i>
FEWSON	-	-	-	-	-	<i>A Butler</i>
TREMLETT	-	-	-	-	-	<i>A Butler</i>
FOOTMAN						
HON. MRS. BLAINE						
LADY SCHMALTZ						
PHOEBE SCHMALTZ						
NURSE						

SCENES

ACT I

The Smoking-room, Corriefeuran Castle

[Ten months elapse]

ACT II

Library of Blaine's country house

[Four months elapse]

ACT III

Drawing-room in Blaine's town house

TIME

THE PRESENT

SEARCHLIGHTS

ACT I

SCENE: *Smoking-room at Corriefeuran Castle,
Sutherland, N. B.*

TIME: *September, 1913.*

Curtain discloses the smoking-room at the Castle.

Stags' heads embellish the walls. There is a deep fireplace L., in which peat is smouldering. A club fender surrounds this. The room indicates opulence. There is a glazed cupboard full of guns and rifles, R. The chairs are upholstered in red leather, and a Turkey carpet lends warmth to the room, which is simply furnished. Big windows opening on to a verandah are C. Through these the audience will have a glimpse of a Sutherland landscape, under rainy skies.

At a table L.C. HARRY BLAINE is sitting, L. of table, with materials for fly-making near him. A small vice is on the table. He is busily

engaged in dressing a salmon fly. Seated in arm-chair, above fireplace, is PHOEBE SCHMALTZ.

HARRY is a very handsome young man, dressed in rough tweeds. PHOEBE is a pleasant, jolly-looking girl, healthy rather than pretty, also in Scotch tweeds. She is leaning her head upon her hands and keenly interested in her companion's doings.

Doors R. and C. Upon the wall R. of window is a barometer. There are bookcases, and below the stags' heads are some sporting prints by Thorburn.

PHOEBE. (*After a pause.*) You can dress flies.

HARRY. (*Taking the fly from the small vice, and examining it critically.*) I can dress flies, old thing, and I can dress myself. Also, I can ride a bit, and shoot, and dance. (*Yawns.*) That's about the extent of my accomplishments. (*He gets up, walks to barometer up R., taps it, and yawns again.*)

PHOEBE. Going up?

HARRY. A wee bittie. What a beastly day it has been!

PHOEBE. Father was rather glad of a day off.

HARRY. (*Sitting on table L.C. Decisively.*)

Yes. That jumped even to my undiscerning eye. Why does Sir Adalbert take a deer forest?

PHOEBE. Why does he wear a kilt?

HARRY. Why, indeed? (*Laughs.*)

PHOEBE. Because he is lineally descended from Marshal Keith, who fought under Frederick the Great.

HARRY. What ho!

PHOEBE. (*Smiling.*) And he's prouder of that Scotch ancestry than of all his German blood. Also, he's an altruist. (*Sits on curb fender.*)

HARRY. Ah?

PHOEBE. He likes to give stalking to undeserving subalterns in the Guards.

HARRY. (*Coming back to arm-chair L.*) I've had a topping week of it.

PHOEBE. Thanks. I hope your father has not been bored to tears.

HARRY. Father? He's been bored right enough, but I hope he hasn't shown it.

PHOEBE. Mr. Blaine never shows his feelings.

HARRY. (*Pulling out his pipe and beginning to fill it.*) I say, Phoebe, we've a rummy brace of fathers—hey?

PHOEBE. I'm quite satisfied with mine.

HARRY. (*Genially.*) Girls are easily pleased. I admit that Sir Adalbert is a good sort. He simply worships you. My father, as perhaps

you've noticed, is not conspicuously fond or proud of me.

PHŒBE. Your mother is devoted to you. (*Takes hat from wicker chair down L.*)

HARRY. The mater is a dear. She likes you, Phœbe, most awfully. You've made a hit with her.

PHŒBE. (*Simply.*) I'm glad. Harry— (*Crossing to front of table, L.C.*)

HARRY. (*Not looking up.*) Eh?

PHŒBE. Harry, have you quarrelled with your father? (*Sits on right arm of arm-chair, by HARRY.*)

HARRY. Lord! no. Why do you ask?

PHŒBE. Your eye may be undiscerning, but mine isn't. You don't seem quite to hit it off with your father.

HARRY. I don't. (*Blows pipe that is stopped-up.*)

PHŒBE. (*Seriously.*) But why?

HARRY. (*Rather bored, but polite.*) He has a sort of general down on me. I'm his—(*business pipe*) damn!—I'm his what d'ye call it?

PHŒBE. (*Suggesting.*) Antithesis?

HARRY. Got it in one!

(*HARRY takes feather from her hat, cleans his pipe. She goes away from him in amazement.*)

I'm sorry for the old man. He's horribly sick because I'm not cut to his confounded pattern. (*Throws feather into fire.*) If he'd a sense of humour, he'd rejoice. In another way of speaking, I'm his——

PHŒBE. (*Profoundly interested. Crosses to fire, sits on curb.*) His complement?

HARRY. Sharp little dear you are! Wonderful vocabulary! It's like this. (*Rises.*) He's a great banker, a money-maker. (*Goes C., lighting pipe.*) I'm a money-spender. He's dead nuts on business. I'm dead nuts on having a good time. There you are!

PHŒBE. It seems a—pity.

HARRY. (*Goes to table L.C.*) I've stopped worrying over my father's singular want of appreciation of his one and only child. Live and let live, is my motto! (*He laughs genially, and sweeps his fly-dressing materials into box.*)

PHŒBE. You are certainly alive. (*Crosses to C.*)

HARRY. Full o' beans. (*Bangs box on table at back.*) You're a sympathetic little dear, Phœbe. I like talking to you. . . . (*Lies on table L.C.*)

PHŒBE. When there is nobody else more attractive about. (*Sits R. of L.C. table.*)

HARRY. (*Examining her critically.*) Bless you! You're quite attractive enough. I hate your scornful, swanking beauty.

PHŒBE. Oh! Thank you!

HARRY. You'll make some lucky fellow a jolly little wife.

PHŒBE. Knit his stockings for him. (*Smiles.*)

HARRY. Jove! You're a nailer at that.

PHŒBE. Run his house properly?

HARRY. Do him top-hole at meals. That's the tip. Come down smiling in the morning.

PHŒBE. (*Seriously.*) Is that all you would want in a wife?

HARRY. I shan't be hard to please.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Off.*) Ach! Und he say to me, "Schmaltzy"—he call me Schmaltzy—"Schmaltzy," he say, "you are a dam fool!"

(At the sound of SIR ADALBERT'S voice the young people move apart. PHŒBE to fireplace.)

PHŒBE. Here's Father.

(SIR ADALBERT enters.)

(SIR ADALBERT is rather comical in appearance. He is very sportingly got up, kilts, stockings with skene d'hu and the latest sort of shooting coat. He has slung round him a stalking telescope in a well-polished brown case. He speaks with a German accent.)

PHŒBE. I expect you want your tea, daddy?
(*Crosses to bell at fireplace.*)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Very genially.*) I hafe
no batience with dose beoples who bretend
to despise der bleasures of der table.

HARRY. Same here, Sir Adalbert.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Unctuously.*) I lofe my break-
fast—I lofe my lonch—I lofe my tea—and
I adore my dinner. If I was dying, I think
I could eat a dres-s-sed cr-r-rab!

PHŒBE. (*Rings bell.*) Daddy! It sounds so
greedy!

(*Enter FEWSON, with letters.*)

SIR ADALBERT. Come here, Phœbykins! Gif
your old fader a kiss.

(*PHŒBE goes to her father. Bus: then back
to fireplace. He kisses her on both cheeks
and pinches her plump little chin, chuck-
ling and grunting.*)

HARRY. Talking of smiling faces, where is my
father?

SIR ADALBERT. He went for a walk in the rain.

PHŒBE. Tea here, Fewson.

FEWSON. Very good, miss.

(*FEWSON hands one letter to HARRY, and a
big pile to SIR ADALBERT. He places an-
other pile on the desk.*)

For Mr. Blaine.

SIR ADALBERT. Put dem on der table. Haf dose potted sh-rimps come from Appenrodt's?
(*Down to R. of table R.*)

FEWSON. I think so, Sir Adalbert.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Rubbing his hands.*) Good.
Bring dem in to tea.

FEWSON. Yes, Sir Adalbert. (*Goes out.*)

SIR ADALBERT. (*To HARRY.*) Harry, you like potted shr-r-rimps—no?

HARRY. I love potted shrimps.

(SIR ADALBERT *approaches his pile of letters, picks them up with a grimace, and examines them.*)

HARRY. (*Who has opened his letter.*) Phew-w-w! (*He displays a long bill.*)

PHŒBE. What a bill!

HARRY. Shan't spoil this happy time by looking at it! (*Throws it into the fire.*)

PHŒBE. Have you saved enough money out of your allowance to pay it?

HARRY. Not a bob!

PHŒBE. You foolish boy!

HARRY. Come off it! How much have you saved out of your allowance—eh?

PHŒBE. (*Considering.*) Twenty-seven pounds.

HARRY. I say! (*Crosses to C. To SIR ADAL-*

BERT.) Sir Adalbert, do you give Phoebe an enormous allowance?

SIR ADALBERT. I gif her enough, Harry. Yes, yes. (*Opens a letter.*)

HARRY. I'm jolly glad I haven't to deal with your correspondence.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Displaying his shrewdness for the first time.*) Und I too am glad you have not, my young friend.

HARRY. (*To PHOEBE.*) One up on me, eh?

(*Going back to PHOEBE; sits on club-fender.*)

(*SIR ADALBERT betrays excitement.*)

SIR ADALBERT. Bewundernswürdig!

PHOEBE. What it is, daddy?

SIR ADALBERT. Ach! She will be pleased—yes.

PHOEBE. Who will be pleased?

SIR ADALBERT. Und he deserve it, too.

PHOEBE. Who deserves—what?

SIR ADALBERT. (*Mysteriously.*) Himmel! (*Goes to door, R.*) Dear lady!

MRS. BLAINE. (*Off.*) Yes, Sir Adalbert.

(*SIR ADALBERT comes down, chuckling, as MRS. BLAINE enters, a tall, distinguished woman, one who has been a beauty in her day.*)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Attitude.*) My congratulations. (*Taps letter.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Smiling.*) Congratulations?

(*Enter FEWSON and FOOTMAN. They proceed to set out on the table a very variegated and copious tea: cakes, sandwiches, etc. They move quietly and quickly.*)

SIR ADALBERT. Gott! You English! Always you pretend. But I—(*taps his chest smartly*)—I know. Once again, my congratulations!

MRS. BLAINE. (*Sincerely.*) Sir Adalbert, you are very *knowing*. But I haven't the remotest idea of what you mean.

SIR ADALBERT. Impossible!

MRS. BLAINE. Why do you congratulate me so—so effusively?

SIR ADALBERT. (*Staring at her.*) So! (*A long-drawn exclamation.*) Your husband has not told you?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Lightly.*) My husband never bothers me with details about his business, thank goodness!

SIR ADALBERT. (*Confounded.*) But——

MRS. BLAINE. I suppose he has made another big *coup*. Congratulate him, not me.

SIR ADALBERT. My wonderful news concerns you, too.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Sharply.*) Concerns—me?

SIR ADALBERT. Intimately.

MRS. BLAINE. Then please tell me.

SIR ADALBERT. No, no—your husband—

MRS. BLAINE. (*Impatiently.*) He never tells me anything.

SIR ADALBERT. Surely, surely he has brebared you—

MRS. BLAINE. (*More and more curious.*) Prepared me—for what?

SIR ADALBERT. For a great change.

MRS. BLAINE. You tantalize me! What has happened?

SIR ADALBERT. (*Chuckling.*) It is good news, yes. But I cannot speak here. (*Glances at servants.*) After tea, we will find an obbortunity. So! (*Chuckling.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Firmly.*) I shan't enjoy my tea unless I know now. Can't you show me your letter? Didn't this exciting news come in that?

SIR ADALBERT. You must enjoy your tea. In str-riect confidence, dear lady.

(*He hands her the letter, which she reads.
Her face betrays amazement. She rises.*)

Ach! Pardon! I see you did not know.

MRS. BLAINE. I am simply thunderstruck!

SIR ADALBERT. (*Rises. Kisses her hand.*) You accept my congratulations now, my—lady?

MRS. BLAINE. Thank you very much.

SIR ADALBERT. Now you will enjoy the potted

shr-rimps! Tea, good beoples, tea! (*Goes to door.*) Milly! Milly!

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Off.*) Yes, Bertie.

SIR ADALBERT. Tea, my lofe, tea.

(*Enter LADY SCHMALTZ.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. Oh dear! It can't be time to eat again!

SIR ADALBERT. My Milly!—what nonsense talk! Sit you down!

(*The MEN-SERVANTS go out. LADY SCHMALTZ sits down, smiling, at head of table. THE OTHERS gather round the table and sit. SIR ADALBERT, at L. of table L.C., points triumphantly at the different plates. MRS. BLAINE R. of table L.C.*)

Cucumber sandwiches! Salmon sandwiches! Goose-liver sandwiches! Jam sandwiches! Honey sandwiches! Nice leedle cakes! Buttered toast! For what we are going to receive may der good Gott make us truly thankful! (*Sits.*)

HARRY. Mother looks as if she had received something pleasant already. (*Crosses to above SIR ADALBERT'S chair.*)

(*PHOEBE sits on club fender.*)

MRS. BLAINE. I have.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*In a nice fat voice.*) Tell us, dear.

MRS. BLAINE. (*With a certain excitement.*) I'll tell you all at dinner. (*A general babble follows.*)

HARRY. Here's Father.

(*BLAINE enters from the verandah R. to C. He is a big man, very quietly dressed in rough tweeds. For an instant, as he removes his cap, he stands still, surveying the company rather grimly.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Anxiously.*) I hope you're not wet, Mr. Blaine?

BLAINE. (*Putting down cap R.*) Nothing to matter. Have the letters come?

HARRY. (*Pointing.*) Your pile is on the table.

SIR ADALBERT. Business before bleasure, my friendt. Sit you down und eat some nice fr-r-resch shr-r-rimps.

MRS. BLAINE. Why don't you sit down, Robert?

BLAINE. (*Tersely, but not unpleasantly.*) Because I prefer to stand.

HARRY. (*To LADY SCHMALTZ.*) Father likes standing. You will see him sit, presently, on —me.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Fatly.*) Do let me give you a cup of tea.

BLAINE. I never touch tea.

(He walks to desk R., picks up his letters and begins to open them. His wife, who is watching him, gives a slight shrug of the shoulders.)

LADY SCHMALTZ. *(Who has been pouring out the tea.)* I never can remember, Harry, whether you take sugar or not.

HARRY. Two lumps. Thanks. *(Takes a cup down to PHOEBE.)*

(LADY SCHMALTZ smiles at his pleasant face. HARRY goes down to PHOEBE with tea and back to get his own cup.)

LADY SCHMALTZ. *(To MRS. BLAINE.)* You know, my dear, your Harry reminds me so of somebody—and I can't think who it is.

MRS. BLAINE. *(Ignoring the question.)* Milly, dear, how old is your Phoebe?

LADY SCHMALTZ. I'm sure I don't know. This is September, 1913. Phoebe was born——

HARRY. I know. Judging by what she's saved, she must be eighty. *(Looking at PHOEBE. Sits in wicker chair L.)*

LADY SCHMALTZ. There! Harry said that just like—— Who does he remind me of?

MRS. BLAINE. *(Ignoring the question.)* Did you go to Homburg before you came up here?

LADY SCHMALTZ. No. (*Artlessly.*) The truth is, I don't like Germans.

MRS. BLAINE. My dear Milly!

HARRY. One up on you, Sir Adalbert.

(BLAINE wanders to the gun cupboard, which he opens. While the others are talking, he takes out a Mauser rifle and looks at it.)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Genially, and waving a sandwich.*) Ach! It is true, I am Sherman-born.

MRS. BLAINE. You are a naturalized Englishman, Sir Adalbert.

SIR ADALBERT. (*With rising excitement.*) I am more English than the English. I am Scotch! So! Und I make my money in Shermamy. Milly here, she think that the Shermans hate England.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Yes; they do. I'm quite sure they do.

SIR ADALBERT. That is untrue, my Milly.

HARRY. (*To PHOEBE.*) Now he's fairly off!

SIR ADALBERT. (*Excitedly.*) I tell you, my friendts, that Shermamy—Shermany stands for what we English stand for: peace und quiet, und minding our own business. First and last, Shermamy means peace.

BLAINE. No! (*Opens breech.*)

SIR ADALBERT. What was that?

MRS. BLAINE. He said—*no!* It's his favorite monosyllable.

SIR ADALBERT. Und I say yes. Und I tell you anoder thing. In science—yes, und Kultur—yes, und industry—the arts of peace—Shermany is on top.

BLAINE. (*In a deep voice.*) She makes the best rifles.

(His tone challenges attention. Everybody looks at him. BLAINE surveys those present with a slightly derisive smile. Finally, his glance rests upon SIR ADALBERT.)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Complacently.*) Rifles—yes—und——

MRS. BLAINE. Why does Germany make the best rifles, Sir Adalbert?

SIR ADALBERT. In de interests of peace, dear lady.

BLAINE. Um!

SIR ADALBERT. What do you mean now by your "Um"?

(BLAINE looks at the rifle. When he speaks, there is no animosity in his tone, but a veiled derision.)

BLAINE. I think that these rifles may be put to other uses than killing stags. (*Puts rifle back.*)

SIR ADALBERT. I don't understand you, my friendt.

BLAINE. I think you do, Schmaltz. (*Back to letters.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Helplessly.*) I'm quite sure I don't.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Recovering his genial manner.*) Ach, my Milly, I will exblain—Blaine. So! I haf made a joke. (*Chuckles.*) He is thinking of dot so foolish play.

MRS. BLAINE. What play?

SIR ADALBERT. *Der Engländer's Home.* I see dot. Milly and Phœbe dey come with me. It make me sick dot play, but— (*chuckling*)—between der acts, I slip out to Appenrodt's, und I eat de delicatessen, und I say to myself, What tosh!

(BLAINE *stares at him, making no reply.*)

SIR ADALBERT *begins to gesticulate.*)

BLAINE. You are grievously mistaken, Schmaltz. (*He rises to his full height.*) Germany wants war—we don't.

SIR ADALBERT. Blaine, you are a big man. I haf a sincere respect for you, my friendt. But you take away my appetites, yes.

(BLAINE *gathers up his letters and moves to door R.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Robert——

BLAINE. Yes? (*At door.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Are you coming back?

BLAINE. After I have changed my boots. (*Goes out.*)

HARRY. Um! Another cup of tea, please.

(*PHŒBE takes cup and goes up to LADY SCHMALTZ.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. I do wish I could remember who it is that Harry reminds me of. (*Pouring out tea.*)

PHŒBE. I can tell you, Mummie.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Can you?

PHŒBE. (*Promptly.*) Captain Arthur Trevor, V.C.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Of course!

HARRY. (*Lazily.*) Who was Captain Arthur Trevor?

LADY SCHMALTZ. I knew him when he was your age, Harry. Such a nice fellow!

(*The audience will remark that the mention of Trevor's name has slightly startled MRS. BLAINE.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Nervously.*) I knew Captain Trevor. (*Turns to PHŒBE.*) But he died when you were a child, Phœbe.

PHŒBE. I never saw Captain Trevor, but I have a photograph of him, which belonged to Mother. I commandeered it because it was so ridiculously like Harry.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Quietly.*) Indeed? You must show it to me.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Reminiscently.*) I remember that photo.

HARRY. (*Rising.*) I think I shall try for a fish before dinner. (*Crosses to rods at back, R.*)

SIR ADLBERT. (*Rising.*) Good! If you catch him, I will help to eat him. Come; I will show you der best pool. (*Crosses to R.*)

(HARRY gets together his tackle.)

LADY SCHMALTZ. A little exercise will do you good, dear.

PHŒBE. (*Rising.*) I'll order a ghillie.

SIR ADALBERT. Yes, yes.

(PHŒBE goes out, L.)

What a good, thoughtful child!

HARRY. Topping!

SIR ADALBERT. Wunderkind! Gemüthlich!

HARRY. Yah, mein Herr! I'm ready if you are, Sir Adalbert.

SIR ADALBERT. Vorwärts!

HARRY. You'll take a rod, too?

SIR ADALBERT. No, my young friend; I will take an umbrella.

(HARRY goes out C., followed by SIR ADALBERT. MRS. BLAINE rises, crosses R., takes cigarette from table R., lights it.)

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Comfortably.*) Do have another cup of tea, Alice.

MRS. BLAINE. No, thank you. I didn't know you knew Arthur Trevor.

LADY SCHMALTZ. It was a long time ago. He used to chaff me.

MRS. BLAINE. He played with me, too.

LADY SCHMALTZ. A charming fellow—quite irresistible. Of course, I was much older than he was. I fell desperately in love with him! And to console me he gave me his photograph. I know now why your dear Harry attracts me so. He has the same pleasant little ways with him. Afterwards, Arthur Trevor changed, didn't he? Not for the better. (*Sits R. of L.C. table.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Sombrely.*) He did, indeed.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Purrs on.*) Something soured him. Some woman, probably. I was told that he exposed himself quite too recklessly during the Boer War. It was terrible his being shot after getting the V.C.

MRS. BLAINE. (*With a shudder.*) Appalling!

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Maternally.*) My dear, you look positively ill.

MRS. BLAINE. It's nothing. (*Rises and goes to fireplace.*) Phœbe mentioning Arthur Trevor so suddenly upset me. He was a relation of ours—which may perhaps account for any likeness you see between Harry and him.

LADY SCHMALTZ. I'm so sorry. Was Arthur Trevor related to you, or your husband?

MRS. BLAINE. To me. After my marriage I lost sight of him for four years. He was in India with his regiment. When he came back he had changed greatly, as you say. Then he drifted out of my life altogether. If my husband comes in, will you please tell him that I shall be down directly? (*Crossing R.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. Certainly. (*Rising.*)

(*MRS. BLAINE goes out R. LADY SCHMALTZ sings, and moves to chair R. of L.C. table; picks up a little cake and is nibbling at it when PHŒBE comes in L., carrying a big album, which she places on the table R.*)

Phœbe, darling.

PHŒBE. Yes, Mummie?

LADY SCHMALTZ. Come here.

(*PHŒBE kneels by LADY SCHMALTZ. LADY SCHMALTZ holds her face between her*

*hands, which are rather heavily ringed,
and kisses the girl fondly.)*

PHŒBE. Dear Mummie!

LADY SCHMALTZ. Have you anything to tell me?

PHŒBE. N-n-no.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Smiling and patting her cheek.*) Oh! He has not—er——?

PHŒBE. (*Hastily.*) He has not.

LADY SCHMALTZ. You like him, dearest?

PHŒBE. (*Nervously.*) I can't help liking him. Sometimes I wish I didn't. (*Rises.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. Why?

PHŒBE. Don't you think he's a wee bit selfish? (*Gently she releases herself, rises, and goes back to table.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. My dear! All young men are selfish—and most old ones. I shall lie down for half-an-hour. (*Crosses to door R.*) If you see Mr. Blaine, tell him that Mrs. Blaine will be down directly. (*She drifts out.*)

(*PHŒBE stands still for a moment, half-pouting, half-smiling. Then she sits at table, and opens her album.*)

(*BLAINE enters, wearing a thinner coat; crosses C. PHŒBE looks up.*)

PHŒBE. Mother asked me to tell you——

BLAINE. Yes; I met Lady Schmaltz in the hall. (*Comes near to table.*) What have you got there?

PHOEBE. My album.

BLAINE. An autograph album?

PHOEBE. More than that. I'll show you what I mean. (*Picks out a cutting from an illustrated paper and holds it up to him.*) Who is that?

BLAINE. (*Examining it.*) I don't know.

PHOEBE. (*Jumping up.*) It's you.

BLAINE. Nonsense.

PHOEBE. Of course it's not really you, but it's awfully like you. Not quite so stern as you are. You—after smoking a very good cigar.

BLAINE. (*Relaxing.*) Well, upon my word, I do see a dim resemblance.

PHOEBE. I shall stick it into the book, and you must write your autograph under it, and something original. I've a most awfully funny one of Father. I cut it out of the *Sketch*. It's an advertisement for whisky. (*Holds up the album.*)

BLAINE. (*Laughs.*) Is he?

PHOEBE. Mr. Blaine, I do like you when you joke. But the gem of my collection is Harry.

BLAINE. Harry? (*Crosses to C.*)

(PHŒBE *lays down the album and turns over some pages; she finds a small photograph.*)

PHŒBE. (*Holding up photo.*) Isn't that Harry to the very life?

BLAINE. It is Harry.

PHŒBE. (*Triumphantly.*) No, it isn't. That's the portrait of a hero.

BLAINE. (*Grimly.*) Then it is not Harry.

PHŒBE. This is a picture of Captain Arthur Trevor, V.C.

BLAINE. (*Harshly.*) What are you saying? (*Takes photo.*)

PHŒBE. (*Surprised.*) It's written on the back. Look! "Arthur Trevor, *aetat* 25."

BLAINE. (*Sombrely.*) I did not know Arthur Trevor when he was twenty-five. (*Gives back photo.*) How did you get that photo?

PHŒBE. It belonged to Mother. (*Putting photo back.*)

BLAINE. (*Absently.*) Did it?

PHŒBE. Yes; and, oddly enough, Mother spoke of the likeness to Harry at tea. Mrs. Blaine was so interested.

BLAINE. Was she?

PHŒBE. And I promised to show her this old photo. That's why I brought down my album. Couldn't you swear it was Harry?

BLAINE. Yes.

(His rather unresponsive tone is not lost on PHOEBE.)

PHOEBE. *(Briskly.)* Now for your autograph.
(Takes him to L. of table. She goes R. of table.)

BLAINE. You really want it? Where do I write?

(PHOEBE links his arm into hers. He smiles pleasantly. She marches him to the desk, makes him sit down, selects a pen, dips it into the ink, and hands it to him.)

PHOEBE. You must write on my celebrity page.
Here we are! Look at that! *(Sitting on table.)*

BLAINE. *(Reading aloud.)* "The Queen of Song." What does her Majesty write for you?

PHOEBE. *(Quoting.)* "A beautiful voice is the golden gift of God."

BLAINE. Um. Is it?

PHOEBE. Of course it is. Now, you write there, please. Something characteristic.

BLAINE. *(Writes rapidly.)* How will this do?

PHOEBE. *(Reads.)* "God's most merciful gift may be—silence." *(Delightedly.)* That's simply splendid! Most characteristic! Now for your signature.

(He writes it.)

What a fine signature! It means a lot, doesn't it?

BLAINE. At the bottom of a cheque?

PHŒBE. I mean, there's tremendous character in it.

BLAINE. (*Amused and relaxing.*) Can you read character by handwriting?

PHŒBE. (*Modestly.*) A little.

BLAINE. Read mine.

(*She, still sitting on table, bends over the album. BLAINE leans back in his chair.*)

PHŒBE. You are very business-like. Every letter is firmly and carefully formed. You are not a bit conceited. No flourishes. I see tenacity, order, self-restraint, great will-power, and feeling.

BLAINE. (*Sharply.*) Feeling?

PHŒBE. You feel things deeply, and you suppress your feelings.

BLAINE. (*Challenged.*) You're a very sharp young lady. Do you divine this by my handwriting?

PHŒBE. (*Rises from the desk, and looks down upon him.*) I won't fib. I divined it just now. When you mentioned Captain Trevor's name. Your voice shook a little. He died splendidly, didn't he?

(*He nods gravely.*)

And you were thinking of that, weren't you?

BLAINE. (*Slowly.*) I was thinking that death in battle is—purging.

PHŒBE. (*Surprised.*) Purging?

BLAINE. It wipes out all stains.

PHŒBE. (*Gravely.*) Was there any stain?

BLAINE. Arthur Trevor was a man of thirty-five when he died. (*With a lighter manner.*)

Now, let me read your character.

(*She sits R. of table, looks at him ingenuously. He eyes her from head to foot, slowly and searchingly.*)

PHŒBE. (*With a tiny gasp.*) Mr. Blaine, this is rather an ordeal.

BLAINE. (*Kindly.*) From which you need not shrink. You are quick-witted, sympathetic, affectionate, loyal, and *dangerously* sentimental.

PHŒBE. (*With a grimace.*) Sentimental?

BLAINE. I use the word in its best sense. God help the woman who is without sentiment, and God help the woman who has it in—excess.

(*He speaks slowly, weighing his words, regarding her with a kindly smile, which reveals the humanity in the man generally reckoned to be hard and unsympathetic.*)

So! (*Rises.*) Beware! (*Pats her cheek. He*

holds up a minatory forefinger.) And now, my dear, do me a favour.

PHOEBE. With pleasure.

BLAINE. *(Resuming his cold voice.)* My wife wishes to speak to me; and as it's cleared up, I want to go out again. Will you tell her I'm here?

PHOEBE. Of course I will. *(She runs out.)*

(At once BLAINE's manner changes. He becomes alert, watchful. He listens for an instant, and then walks to the album, and opens it. He takes the photograph of TREVOR, stares at it grimly, and then puts it into his pocket-book and pockets it. After a pause, he hears MRS. BLAINE coming, takes a paper, sits and reads.)

(MRS. BLAINE enters R.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Rather effusively. Above table.)*

Oh! there you are, my dear Robert.

BLAINE. *(Without rising.)* Lady Schmaltz said you wished to speak to me.

MRS. BLAINE. *(Gaily.)* And don't you wish to speak to *me*? *(Playfully.)* What an actor you are, Robert! Well, is it in the paper?

BLAINE. In the paper?

MRS. BLAINE. Why do you tease me?

BLAINE. *(Quietly.)* But I am not teasing you.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Coldly.*) You have no special news for me? (*Warmly.*) Robert, I know. And I am so delighted, so proud of you.

BLAINE. Proud of me? (*Takes cigarette.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Losing her warmth of manner.*) Just now, Sir Adalbert showed me a letter from a friend of his, a Privy Councillor. You are to be offered a peerage. I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart.

BLAINE. (*Rises and goes to L. of L.C. table and lights cigarette while speaking slowly.*) Privy Councillors can be indiscreet. Yes; I have been offered a barony.

MRS. BLAINE. What will you call yourself?

BLAINE. I have no liking for titles.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Amazed.*) What? (*Coming, C.*)

BLAINE. (*Gravely.*) You ought to be aware that I dislike them. In fact, I—I did not intend to tell you of this.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Confounded. Crosses to L.C. table.*) You are offered a peerage, and you intended to keep so vital a matter a secret from your wife! Why, may I ask?

BLAINE. I shall refuse this honour. (*Sits in arm-chair above fireplace.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Refuse it! Are you serious?

(*He doesn't answer.*)

Refuse it! Refuse the honour for which I

have worked so hard for ten years! (*Coming to front of table.*)

BLAINE. You worked for it?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Fiercely.*) Yes—yes. I have played your game, not my own. (*With increasing temper.*) Oh! those boring dinners to your dull business friends—those dreary receptions to advance your interests, not mine. What a treadmill! I tell you that you owe this honour very largely to—*me!*

BLAINE. Indeed! I fear that I must refuse it, just the same.

MRS. BLAINE. You—*can't!*

BLAINE. (*With finality.*) I shall.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Exasperated almost beyond endurance.*) But why? Give me a reason—any reason!

BLAINE. I have nothing in common with the aristocracy.

MRS. BLAINE. You have me.

BLAINE. True. That is quite enough.

MRS. BLAINE. You will drive me mad! (*Sits L.C.*) I believe that you are talking this nonsense on purpose to annoy me.

BLAINE. Take care! One day your temper will drive you to say something you will regret all your life.

MRS. BLAINE. I say that your reasons, if you

have any, are absurd, ridiculous. Besides, apart from us, there is Harry.

BLAINE. (*Sombrely.*) I have not forgotten Harry.

MRS. BLAINE. You are defrauding him!

BLAINE. Of an honour he is not likely to earn for himself. (*Rises.*) You must allow me to do as I please in this matter.

(*He stands up and looks into fire. She stares at him and then approaches him.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*More temperately. Rises to front of table.*) I am not a snob, Robert, but I feel very strongly about this, on Harry's account.

BLAINE. I daresay. You are a devoted mother. I regret sometimes. . . . (*Smiles grimly.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Yes?

BLAINE. (*Coldly.*) Yours was a marriage of convenience.

MRS. BLAINE. Be honest! Say—*ours*.

BLAINE. (*Impassively.*) No.

MRS. BLAINE. You had brains, Robert; I had position, the connections which would help you.

BLAINE. I was not thinking of them when I asked you to become my wife.

MRS. BLAINE. I don't understand you.

BLAINE. You have never understood me; you

have never tried to understand me. It is too late to begin now.

MRS. BLAINE. You spoke of regrets. What do you regret?

BLAINE. The five unhappy years before Harry was born.

(He looks at her keenly. She exhibits the faintest trace of confusion. Her teeth meet upon her lower lip. Then swiftly she assumes her normal mask.)

MRS. BLAINE. How oddly you say that!

BLAINE. *(Very quietly.)* I remember I had given up hopes of a child. When you told me, I was tremendously surprised and pleased.

MRS. BLAINE. *(Acidly.)* You didn't show it.

BLAINE. *(Heavily.)* Perhaps not. And since. . .

MRS. BLAINE. Go on!

BLAINE. I have wondered whether those first five years when I was working and you were playing, would have been happier if Harry's arrival had been less belated. Hence my regret.
(Crosses to R. for cap.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(L.C.)* Robert! If you are sincere about any regrets connected with those first years—and they were not happy years—this is an opportunity to wipe them out. For Harry's sake, please!

(He stares out, as if he were attempting a bird's-eye glance at past, present, and future.)

BLAINE. (R.C.) For Harry's sake! If you must have it, Harry is the obstacle.

(She betrays for the second time a hardly perceptible agitation.)

The very qualities that may fit a man to serve his country as a peer are often conspicuously absent in his successor. I might have been tempted to accept this honour if Harry had been more like me.

MRS. BLAINE. What can you mean?

BLAINE. Harry is almost abnormally unlike me. I have watched in vain for anything in Harry I could recognize as mine. To-day, when I was out there on the moors, I thought it all over, and decided to refuse this honour. Robert Blaine will die with me. You have given me a son, but not a successor. It's fine again now. I am going out.

(Exit C. to L. MRS. BLAINE is left alone on the stage. Her face indicates her rage and exasperation. She goes to the desk, R., sits, picks up a pen, and then flings it down. She rises as PHŒBE enters, R.)

PHŒBE. Has Mr. Blaine gone out?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

PHŒBE. (*Coming down to album.*) I have got that photo to show you.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Absently.*) What photo?

PHŒBE. Captain Arthur Trevor, V.C.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Wincing.*) Oh! Yes—I'd like to see it.

(*PHŒBE turns over the pages of the album, looking for it.*)

PHŒBE. How extraordinary!

MRS. BLAINE. Extraordinary?

PHŒBE. It was here ten minutes ago. I showed it to Mr. Blaine. (*Laughs.*) He thought it was Harry.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Nervously.*) Did he?

PHŒBE. He must have taken it.

MRS. BLAINE. Absurd! Why should he take it?

PHŒBE. (*Confidingly.*) I think I can guess.

He was very moved. Evidently Captain Trevor was his friend. And, perhaps, he didn't like my joking about the likeness to Harry. (*She shuts up the album, and picks it up.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Sitting, R.*) It's of no consequence.

(*PHŒBE glances at her face and moves towards the door.*)

Phoebe, dear—

PHŒBE. (*Pausing at door.*) Yes?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Lightly.*) Don't mention this to Mr. Blaine.

PHŒBE. Of course not. He suppresses his feelings, doesn't he?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

(PHŒBE goes, humming. MRS. BLAINE betrays slight agitation. She rises, crosses to the fireplace, and is staring into the glowing embers, as the CURTAIN falls.)

ACT II

SCENE: *Blaine's Library, at his house in the country.*

TIME: *Ten months later, July, 1914.*

CURTAIN discloses a handsome but rather austere furnished room. There are many books, a few engravings, and a massive desk is piled high with pamphlets and papers L. A sofa is down R. There are windows C., open, disclosing a moonlit garden scene and a terrace outside. Big mahogany doors L. lead to the drawing-room. Fire-place R. and big single door down R.

At a card-table L.C., BLAINE and SIR ADALBERT are playing piquet. From the drawing-room comes the sound of a piano. Both men are in evening dress. Chesterfield R. C. Round table at back of it with tray of drinks.

SIR ADALBERT. (*L., looking at his hand.*) I have got you this time, my friend. You are *ausgespielt*! I haf a point of six.

BLAINE. (*R., glancing at his scoring-card.*) Not good.

SIR ADALBERT. Ach! You haf kept dose dam diamonds! Himmell!!! My sixième in clubs no good, hein?

BLAINE. Not a bit!

SIR ADALBERT. You are lucky, Blaine! But always, always you are lucky.

(He throws down the king of clubs with a gesture of annoyance.)

BLAINE. *(Counting his hand)*. A septième in diamonds, headed by the ace. Seven and seventeen make twenty-four. Fourteen aces—ninety-eight.

(SCHMALTZ puts down king of clubs.

BLAINE covers king with his ace.)

Ninety-nine. *(Lays down seven diamonds.)*
One hundred and six.

(SIR ADALBERT discards seven cards.

BLAINE plays his two aces.)

One hundred and eight. Give you the rest. One hundred and eighteen. *(Picks up scoring card.)* Big hand! You're rubiconed, Schmaltz.

SIR ADALBERT. *(Adding up his score.)* Ninety-eight!

BLAINE. Three hundred and forty-seven.

SIR ADALBERT. Siebenteen pounds, sieben shillings. Gott! I most send you a cheque, Blaine.

BLAINE. Give you your revenge?

SIR ADALBERT. (*Getting up.*) No, no.

BLAINE. (*Rising.*) Have a cigar?

SIR ADALBERT. I don't mind if I do. Your cigars are good.

(BLAINE goes to round table R.C. He gets box, and offers it to SIR ADALBERT, who selects a cigar. While BLAINE is fetching the cigars SIR ADALBERT stands C., listening to the music.)

SIR ADALBERT. My leetle Phœbe! She play fine, hein?

BLAINE. Almost professionally. (*Hands cutter.*)

SIR ADALBERT. Shermamy, my friend. You haf to go to Shermamy for music, yes. Und many oder things, yes. (*Puffs contentedly, goes to fireplace R. and lights cigar.*)

BLAINE. Yes. Waiters.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Sinking into settee.*) Blaine, I should like fine to interest you more in Shermamy.

BLAINE. (*Slowly.*) I am profoundly interested in Germany.

SIR ADALBERT. But you put no money into Sherman enterprises.

BLAINE. Not a farthing.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Sits on couch.*) Ach! You

believe all der nonsense-talk about war. It is foolishness, Blaine, dam foolishness. I like to bet you a tausand pounds about that.

BLAINE. You've lost seventeen already.

SIR ADALBERT. Himmel! Yes.

BLAINE. You have no interests outside Germany?

SIR ADALBERT. (*Beaming.*) No, no. I put my eggs in one basket, my friendt, und I watch that basket. (*Hastens to double doors L., opens one and applauds loudly.*) Bravo! Bravo! Beautiful! Wunderschön! (*Addressing. PHOEBE off.*) I haf lost siebenteen pounds, but I forget it when she play—Phoëbe, my little Phoëbe!

BLAINE. (*Tinkles glass.*) Have a drink?

SIR ADALBERT. A drink?

BLAINE. You will find two kinds of beer over there—light and dark.

SIR ADALBERT. Dunkel und Hell! (*Crosses to table R.C.*)

BLAINE. I suppose you take Hell. (*Crosses C.*)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Going to tray.*) Why, my friendt?

BLAINE. (*Drily.*) As a change. You don't get it at home. (*Crosses to fireplace R.*)

SIR ADALBERT. But I do. Ach! it is a joke! (*Laughs.*) (*Calls.*) Milly! Phoëbe! Come you here. I haf a joke.

BLAINE. (*Hastily.*) Don't repeat that silly joke, Schmaltz.

(*Enter LADY SCHMALTZ, MRS. BLAINE, PHOEBE, and HARRY. LADY SCHMALTZ to head of couch, MRS. BLAINE to card-table, HARRY to desk.*)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Uncorking his bottle.*) It is a good joke, Blaine, and you make few jokes—hein? Milly, Phœbe, listen to my joke! (*Addresses the women.*) My good friendt, knowing that when I hear *Tannhäuser* I want to drink nice Sherman beer, provides me with two kinds—Dunkel und Hell. Und den he say: I subbose——

BLAINE. Schmaltz! Please!

MRS. BLAINE. Go on, Sir Adalbert. My husband's jokes are rare indeed.

SIR ADALBERT. So gombliamentary, too. He say: I subbose you take Hell. Und I say: Why? Und he say: Because you never get Hell at home. (*Doubles himself up with laughter.*) It was dam funny, and dam gombliamentary. (*Drinks.*)

HARRY. Good for you, Sir Adalbert.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Helplessly.*) I am so stupid. I don't see the joke. Bertie does get Hell at home. We are never without it. I order it direct from Bavaria.

(HARRY and PHŒBE laugh.)

What are they laughing at?

SIR ADALBERT. I can't think.

HARRY. (*At window.*) I say, Phœbe——

PHŒBE. Yes?

HARRY. Come on out.

(PHŒBE crosses up R.)

BLAINE. Harry, ask Tremlett if there's a telegram for me. (HARRY rings bell above fireplace.)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Anxiously.*) Phœbykins, der dew is heavy.

HARRY. I'll keep off the grass, Sir Adalbert.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Winks comically.*) I don't tink!

(Enter TREMLETT L.)

TREMLET. Yes, sir?

HARRY. Mr. Blaine wants to know if there's a telegram for him.

TREMLET. (*To BLAINE.*) No, sir. (*Exit.*)

HARRY. No, sir. Come on, Phœbe.

(HARRY and PHŒBE go out together C. to L.)

BLAINE. Have a rubber? (*Crosses to card-table.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*To LADY SCHMALTZ.*) Would you like a rubber?

LADY SCHMALTZ. I play so badly, my dear.

SIR ADALBERT. You can play with me, my Milly.

I don't care. Her blunders—Himmel! dey make me laugh. (*Turns to MRS. BLAINE.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. I don't like to be laughed at, Bertie. (*Sits on settee.*)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Finishes his beer.*) Good. We make conversations instead. (*Crosses to fireplace.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Crosses to couch head.*) Sir Adalbert—

SIR ADALBERT. Dear lady, yes?

MRS. BLAINE. Are you at all anxious about this Servian question?

SIR ADALBERT. All anxieties is der Teuffel! When I am anxious I cannot sleep, no. Und when I cannot sleep I lose my appetites, so! Und when I lose my appetites, I am no man. But my poor Blaine, he is funksticks, yes. (*Chuckles.*)

(*SIR ADALBERT crosses to R. of card-table.*)

MRS. BLAINE *sits on arm of couch.*)

BLAINE. I am. (*He has sat down to card-table and begins to lay out a patience.*)

SIR ADALBERT. (*Beaming at everyone.*) I do

not understandt you, Blaine. You are so different from me.

MRS. BLAINE. He is.

SIR ADALBERT. Dot beerage—hein? You refuse it! Vy so?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Sarcastically.*) He has nothing in common with the aristocracy.

SIR ADALBERT. I vhas proudt, dear lady, when dey make me Knight of the Victorian Order. I jump at it.

MRS. BLAINE. It set the seal on your naturalization papers.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Very expansively.*) For myself I care leetle; but it please Milly to be miladi. She jump at it.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Bertie, I never jump!

SIR ADALBERT. Not now, my Milly. (*To BLAINE.*) And you haf a fine son, a nice young man. I like 'im, yes, your Harry.

MRS. BLAINE. (*With feeling.*) Thank you, Sir Adalbert. (*Goes to fireplace.*) Harry has a very warm regard for you and yours.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Staring at BLAINE, who is tranquilly playing Patience.*) Ach! It beats me that you do not tink of der family, der unit of national life. So! Dat dam silly game interest you, hein?

BLAINE. Patience?—it does.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Shrewdly, winking at the oth-*

ers.) I know. Because, my friendt, you play it by yourself. Oho! you are not at der mercy of a stoopid pardner—hein?

BLAINE. I am not. Have a game of billiards—a hundred up? (*Rises.*)

SIR ADALBERT. You gif me fifty in a hundred, und I play you double or quits for der siebenteen pounds.

BLAINE. Certainly.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Rises.*) Milly! Send Phæbykins to bed soon. She must haf her beauty-sleeps.

BLAINE. Another drink? (*Up at door.*)

SIR ADALBERT. No—yes. I take 'em to der billiard-room.

(*As BLAINE goes out L., SIR ADALBERT seizes a small bottle of lager, brandishes it, and follows his host.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Sir Adalbert——

SIR ADALBERT. (*At door.*) Dear lady?

MRS. BLAINE. Hadn't you better take a glass, too?

SIR ADALBERT. No; I drink out of der bottle. It keep me young.

(*He goes out L., chuckling.*)

MRS. BLAINE. He is wrapped up in you and Phæbe, Milly.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Comfortably*). Bless him!

MRS. BLAINE. He doesn't get hell at home.

LADY SCHMALTZ. But he does! Oh-h-h! I see Bertie's joke. (*Laughs.*)

MRS. BLAINE. It was Robert's joke.

LADY SCHMALTZ. How dense of me, to be sure!

I must try to remember that, dear.

MRS. BLAINE. I must try to forget it.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Mildly surprised at the tone of her hostess.*) Why, Alice, you——

MRS. BLAINE. (*Sits R. of LADY SCHMALTZ on couch.*) I shall not pretend with you. Robert wished Sir Adalbert to infer that I—I made home life impossible. He wanted to get his knife into me.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Soothingly.*) No, no. (*Shakes head.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Vehemently.*) And it's true—*true*. Life in this house is becoming more intolerable every day. The servants notice it. All my intimate friends know it, and pity me behind my back.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Shush-h-h!

MRS. BLAINE. And I am helpless. I can do nothing. I would leave him to-morrow——

LADY SCHMALTZ. Alice!

MRS. BLAINE. —if it were not for Harry. It is—(*rises and goes C.*)—hell here—hell for

Harry, hell for him, and hell for me. (*Breaks down.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Terribly flustered and quite helpless.*) Alice! My dear! What can I say? I—I—— (*Puts handkerchief to her eyes, and gulps.*)

MRS. BLAINE. I am a fool, and a beast to inflict my troubles on you. (*Dabs fiercely at her eyes.*) But it was the sight of your simple happiness which broke me up. It's over.

(*She pats LADY SCHMALTZ on the shoulder.*
LADY SCHMALTZ sobs.)

It is sweet of you to be sorry for me. (*Big sob.*)
Milly—you must stop. (*Goes to back of couch.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. I ca-c-can't! (*Sobs.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Half laughing.*) I shall shake you, if you don't.

(*She gives her a little shake.* LADY
SCHMALTZ quivers like a jelly.)

There!

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Tearfully.*) I had better go to bed. I always look so awful when I cry. Yes; I'll go to bed. (*Rises.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Going C., contritely.*) Perhaps it would be better. Sir Adalbert would never forgive me.

(LADY SCHMALTZ *moves towards the door R., and pauses.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Still tearful.*) I can't.

MRS. BLAINE. Can't what?

LADY SCHMALTZ. Go to bed.

MRS. BLAINE. Why ever not?

LADY SCHMALTZ. Phoebe is in the garden. I promised Bertie. And I'm sure it's very damp out there.

MRS. BLAINE. It's getting very damp in here. You slip off, Milly. I'll look after Phoebe.

LADY SCHMALTZ. You'll call her in?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes, yes.

LADY SCHMALTZ. At once?

MRS. BLAINE. Regardless of Harry's feelings—at once.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Then I'll go. (*She turns.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Kiss me, dear, and forgive me.

(*The two women embrace affectionately.*)

Good-night, Milly.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Good-night, Alice.

(LADY SCHMALTZ *goes out R., with her handkerchief to her eyes.* MRS. BLAINE *goes to little table R. C. She takes up the cut-glass decanter of brandy and looks at it. Obviously she is tempted to fortify herself. Then she makes a grimace, shrugs*

her shoulders, puts down the decanter, and walks slowly to the open windows C. She stands for a moment staring into the moonlight. She steps on to the terrace, and calls.)

MRS. BLAINE. Coo-ee! Coo-ee!

HARRY. (*Off.*) Coo-ee!

MRS. BLAINE. Come in, you two.

HARRY. (*Off.*) Not much!

MRS. BLAINE. Yes; be good, obedient children.

(She comes back, with a kind smile on her face.)

(HARRY and PHOEBE enter.)

(MRS. BLAINE sits on settee. PHOEBE stands by table by settee.)

HARRY. (*Genially.*) Shame! (*Goes back of couch to fireplace.*)

MRS. BLAINE. It's half-past eleven.

PHOEBE. Where's Mother?

MRS. BLAINE. Your dear mother has gone to bed. Quite fagged out. Don't disturb her. She made me promise to call you in. She thought you might catch cold.

HARRY. We weren't cold, were we, Phoebe?

PHOEBE. Mummie is a darling old fuss-pot.

MRS. BLAINE. Sir Adalbert is playing billiards.

(*At tray. Offers glass to PHŒBE.*) Will you have barley water or lemonade?

PHŒBE. No, thanks. Good night. (*Comes round to MRS. BLAINE.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Kissing her.*) Good night, you dear little thing.

PHŒBE. Good night, Harry. (*Holds out her hand.*)

HARRY. (C.) Nighty-night.

(*He opens door R. PHŒBE passes him, then turns. He moves to her, and hidden by door from MRS. BLAINE, kisses her hand.*)

(*PHŒBE goes out R.*)

(*MRS. BLAINE sitting. HARRY wanders to fireplace. He doesn't look at his mother, whose eyes are keenly set upon him.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*In a soft voice.*) Was it—warm—in the garden, Harry?

HARRY. It was rather—snug.

MRS. BLAINE. She is very fond of you.

HARRY. (*Gravely.*) She is.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Sharply.*) You are not playing with her, amusing yourself at her expense?

HARRY. (*Crosses C.*) I'm in a hole, Mother.

MRS. BLAINE. Another?

HARRY. (*Moodily.*) The bottomless pit this time.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Quietly.*) Tell me.

HARRY. I nestled up to that little dear to-night.

I very nearly came to grips with her, but . . .

MRS. BLAINE. You didn't?

HARRY. I didn't.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Leaning forward.*) Why not?

HARRY. I must speak to Father first.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Derisively.*) You are displaying a delicacy and nicety of behaviour which is refreshingly old-fashioned.

HARRY. (*Slowly.*) I owe three thousand pounds—

MRS. BLAINE. Harry!

HARRY. More or less.

MRS. BLAINE. Help!

HARRY. (*Takes cigarette from case.*) There it is. If Father will stump up, I can marry Phœbe. Unfortunately, he won't. (*Sits R. of card-table.*) Hence my allusion to the bottomless pit. (*Lights cigarette.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Reflecting.*) Three thousand pounds is a scratch of the pen to him.

HARRY. Last time he paid up he imposed conditions.

MRS. BLAINE. He would! (*Rises and stands by fire.*)

HARRY. He made me promise that I would not exceed my allowance. He was rather decent about it.

MRS. BLAINE. Why did you break your promise?

HARRY. (*Sits on head of settee. Rises and goes to couch.*) Because I'm a fool. You see, I wanted clinkin' good polo ponies. Had to pay ready for 'em. So I tried backing dead certainties.

MRS. BLAINE. Which were left on the post!

HARRY. (*Grinning, sits on couch.*) Rummy go that Father's one and only son should be such a mug!

MRS. BLAINE. And then? (*Sits R. of HARRY.*)

HARRY. I—er—accepted a very pressin' invitation to call upon Mister—(*gesture indicating shape of large nose*)—Isaac Gordon. Once in his parlour—bif!

(MRS. BLAINE *laughs*. So does HARRY.)

HARRY. I say, Mother, Old Gordon Highlander does know a soft thing when he sees it. He had me—to rights! (*Doubles with laughter, and then suddenly stiffens and grows grave at sight of his mother's face. She rises and goes C.*) Why do you look at me so coldly?

MRS. BLAINE. I am thinking of your father.

HARRY. (*Slips down on settee. Ruefully.*) So am I, by Jove! Well, there it is! I've been a fool, but I'm not knave enough to propose marriage to Phoebe with this over my head.

(MRS. BLAINE *sits on arm of couch and places her hand on his shoulder.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Harry, do you love Phœbe?

HARRY. (*Uneasily.*) She's one of the best.

MRS. BLAINE. Do you *love* her?

HARRY. (*Lying full length on settee.*) She'll make me a topping little wife. If you must have it, I'm not madly in love. I don't love her as much as I love you. (*Looks up at his mother.*) As a matter of fact, I don't know that I could be madly in love with anybody. I'm a cool sort of cove. I've made up my mind that this marriage will be the saving of me. By the luck of things, old Schmaltzy thinks Father the biggest man on earth. Milady is fond of you. Phœbe, little dear, has taken a shine to me. Bar this debt, I've a sitter.

MRS. BLAINE. I will speak to your father.
(*Goes C.*)

HARRY. (*Sits up quickly.*) I say, is that fair on you?

MRS. BLAINE. I'll be nice to him.

HARRY. (*Gesture of winding head of couch.*)
Wind him up, eh?

MRS. BLAINE. For your sake—yes.

HARRY. Will you speak to him to-night?

MRS. BLAINE. I will. Sir Adalbert is an early bird. They'll be here in a minute or two. You

slip off with Sir Adalbert. But don't go to bed. Hang about the billiard-room, because you may be wanted.

HARRY. I shall be wanted right enough. (*He beckons her. She sits L. of him.*) You are a dear. I—I wish that I was a better chap, on your account. I wish that I was more like Father. It's odd, isn't it? that I've none of—of his—what d'you call it?—his—er—

MRS. BLAINE. Chronic capacity for coming out on top. Cheer up, you have a heart, Harry, which is bigger than his head.

(*He kisses her again. She takes his hand.*)

That is what counts with me.

(*She has been lying back with her eyes half shut, as if she were gloating over his caresses. Suddenly she turns, listening.*)

I hear them coming.

(*HARRY moves from her, and leans against the mantelpiece.*)

HARRY. You're in for a rotten time, Mother.

(*SIR ADALBERT enters L., followed by BLAINE, who goes to desk. SIR ADALBERT exhibits exuberant spirits.*)

SIR ADALBERT. I beat him! I beat him! Und we are quits! I play der game of my life. I

make my fifty in ten minutes und I drink my beer. Now I go to bed. (*Crossing R.*)

HARRY. Deutschland über alles!

SIR ADALBERT. (*Beaming.*) But I am English.

HARRY. Gott mit uns!

SIR ADALBERT. You haf your jokes, Harry.
Good-night, everybody!

HARRY. (*Going to door.*) Good-night.

MRS. BLAINE. Good-night, Sir Adalbert.

(*Rises.*)

SIR ADALBERT. Good-night, Blaine.

BLAINE. Good-night.

(*SIR ADALBERT goes out L. HARRY follows him leisurely and comes back to end of couch and makes gesture of winding up*
BLAINE. *BLAINE goes to his desk and sits, turns on electric lamp, pushing aside some papers with the air of a man about to tackle some work.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*At table R.C., in her pleasantest voice.*) Shall I get you a small drink, Robert?

BLAINE. (*Half turning to stare at her.*) Thanks, no. Well, yes, a very small one.

(*She pours out whiskey and soda, and takes cigar from box. As she fetches the drink he watches her with a faint smile upon his face. She brings a cigar with it.*)

BLAINE. (*Taking a drink.*) Thank you.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Cuts cigar.*) A cigar? I have cut the end.

BLAINE. Thanks. (*Takes it.*) (*She strikes the match, and he takes it.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Sir Adalbert beat you! (*Up stage end of desk.*)

BLAINE. (*Apparently surrendering to her pleasant manner.*) I let him.

MRS. BLAINE. Because you hate robbing a guest.

BLAINE. (*With a laugh.*) Schmaltz is a duffer at everything—except his own particular job, and he doesn't know too much about that.

MRS. BLAINE. I have never known what his own particular job is.

BLAINE. He's the typical German man of business; capable of indefatigable energy and unlimited enthusiasm. Like most of his race, he can only see one point of view. He believes in Germany's commercial prosperity, which has been phenomenal. He has been shrewd enough to invest money in all those big enterprises which are distinctively Teuton. And he is able to persuade Englishmen to do the same. Schmaltz has negotiated some immense loans. He has earned huge commissions. And every farthing has gone back to Germany.

MRS. BLAINE. How clearly you put things!

Thank you, Robert. (*He turns to his papers.*)

(C.) Have you work to do?

BLAINE. I have always work to do.

MRS. BLAINE. Aren't you afraid sometimes of overworking yourself?

BLAINE. (*Intensely.*) Would you care—*much*—if I did? (*Turns to her.*)

(*She remains silent, nervously regarding him.*)

I am a fool to ask that question. As the family bread-winner, my health does concern you. Well, I am what the doctors call "a good life." I am likely to make old bones. (*Resumes writing.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Protestingly.*) Robert!

BLAINE. Good-night.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Faltering.*) Robert, I have something of importance to say.

BLAINE. (*Swings round sharply.*) I thought so.

MRS. BLAINE. What do you mean?

BLAINE. I ought to know that warning purr in your voice by this time. You want something. What is it?

MRS. BLAINE. Nothing.

(*He laughs incredulously.*)

Nothing—for myself.

(He stares at her. She does not meet his keen gaze.)

BLAINE. Harry is in trouble?

(She winces slightly, because he speaks so decidedly, and with an accent of contempt. Crosses to L. side of desk.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Faltering.)* How sharp you are!

BLAINE. Why can't he come straight to me? Why does he send you?

MRS. BLAINE. You are unjust to him, and mistaken. *(Sits L. of desk.)* Harry is no coward. He wanted to come to you, but I asked him to let me speak first.

BLAINE. Why? *(He has his pen in his hand. He plays with it impatiently.)*

MRS. BLAINE. He is so young.

BLAINE. Twenty-five. At twenty-five I was earning fifteen hundred a year.

MRS. BLAINE. *(Trying to be pleasant.)* But you didn't know how to spend money. He does.

BLAINE. That is your teaching, not mine.

MRS. BLAINE. He is very ignorant of you.

BLAINE. *(Icily.)* Let me have the facts as briefly as it is possible for a woman to state them.

MRS. BLAINE. The boy is in debt.

BLAINE. Again? (*She nods.*) How much?

MRS. BLAINE. He owes three thousand pounds, more or less—afraid that means *more*. You gave £5,000 to a charity the other day.

BLAINE. It was a deserving one.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Tartly.*) You mean you won't help him?

BLAINE. Not in that way. Does Harry owe this money to tradesmen who can wait?

MRS. BLAINE. No—to a gentleman who won't.

BLAINE. To whom?

MRS. BLAINE. Mr. Isaac Gordon.

BLAINE. A brother Guardsman?

MRS. BLAINE. A money-lender.

BLAINE. Really! Anything else?

MRS. BLAINE. Isn't that enough for the moment?

BLAINE. Quite enough; but I can tell from your manner that your plans for Harry's future include more than my settling his debts.

MRS. BLAINE. I think he had better leave the army. It leads nowhere—except to Mr. Gordon. I want him to marry.

BLAINE. Marry! Who is she? Wait! (*Rises.*)

(She is about to speak. He silences her with a gesture. He spreads out the fingers of his right hand, obviously checking

in his mind certain names. Then suddenly he clenches his fist.)

Phœbe Schmaltz!

MRS. BLAINE. (*Rises.*) Yes. Why do you frown?

BLAINE. The last woman I should have chosen for him.

MRS. BLAINE. Her father is a friend of ours.

BLAINE. Exactly! As you say, a friend.

(Crosses to R. C.)

MRS. BLAINE. Phœbe simply adores Harry. Sir Adalbert would settle an immense sum on her.

(Crosses to L. C.)

BLAINE. Does Harry adore Phœbe?

MRS. BLAINE. He is ready to marry her.

BLAINE. That's quite another thing.

(Enter TREMLETT, with telegram; presents it to BLAINE.)

MRS. BLAINE. A telegram at this hour!

TREMLETT. By special messenger from London, ma'am.

MRS. BLAINE. How strange!

BLAINE. (*To TREMLETT.*) No answer. Ask Mr. Harry to come here.

TREMLETT. (*Going. Stops.*) Mr. Harry is in

the billiard-room, sir. (*Crosses at back and exit L.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Rising.*) You won't be hard on Harry?

BLAINE. I shall listen patiently to what he has to say. I ask you to listen too.

(*She goes up to door, hesitates, turns and comes down a couple of steps. Her voice is soft and caressing.*)

MRS. BLAINE. I want him to be happy.

BLAINE. Because you have been unhappy?

(*Crosses to fireplace R.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Almost inaudibly.*) Ye-es.

BLAINE. Your logic is amazing. If a marriage of convenience resulted disastrously for you, why do you anticipate a different result for your son?

(*Enter HARRY L.; goes up back by window; goes to table R.C., winding gesture; pours out drink. MRS. BLAINE sits L. of card-table. BLAINE reads telegram again, frowning heavily; puts it in pocket.*)

(*To HARRY.*) Dutch courage?

HARRY. I didn't funk it, sir. I wanted Mother to keep out of it. As between man and man——

BLAINE. You affirm yourself to be a man?

MRS. BLAINE. Robert!

HARRY. That's all right, Mother. I don't mind his ragging me. I wish you'd go to bed.

(Crossing and sitting R. of card-table, puts glass on floor R., puts hands in pockets, sticks legs out.)

(BLAINE sits on couch and copies him, at which he draws his feet in.)

BLAINE. You are in debt again?

(He nods.)

Two years ago I paid your debts in full.

MRS. BLAINE. Not in full.

BLAINE. What?

MRS. BLAINE. He hadn't the nerve to turn in the lot.

BLAINE. *(Coldly.)* He lied.

(HARRY takes a drink—first drink; keeps glass in hand. He faces his father ingenuously.)

HARRY. I had gone to a money-lander for a couple of hundred; and I knew, of course, that that would make you chatter with rage.

BLAINE. Indeed! You lied deliberately?

HARRY. I suppose I was afraid to speak all the truth.

BLAINE. I paid your debts upon your solemn pledge to me that you would not incur more. You have a liberal allowance. I warned you that if you broke that pledge, I should not chatter with rage and then pay up, but——

HARRY. (*Rising towards him.*) All right. You don't mean to pay up.

BLAINE. Have you anything more to say?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Driven.*) I have. As the son of a very rich man—you don't understand; you've never been the son of a very rich man—Harry was expected to do certain things. He played polo as it's played in his regiment. He raced a bit. He got badly hit. He went to——

BLAINE. Mr. Gordon.

HARRY. (*Second drink; then puts glass on tray.*)

Yes. Now I want to chuck it.

BLAINE. Chuck the Army?

HARRY. Rather not! Chuck being a fool.

BLAINE. Your mother mentioned your leaving the Army.

HARRY. (*Ruefully.*) Oh! I say! That's a bit thick. (*To her. Crosses to R. of card-table, sits.*)

(*MRS. BLAINE takes his hand. He refuses her.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Well, dear——

HARRY. Of course there's always your bank.

BLAINE. (*Derisively.*) What do you think you could do in my bank?

MRS. BLAINE. Surely he could help you.

BLAINE. (*Grimly.*) Harry has never helped me. Occasionally I have asked him to do me some small service. Invariably he rings for a servant to do it.

HARRY. Sorry! (*Hands in pockets, feet out.*)

BLAINE. What do you think you would be worth to me in the bank?

HARRY. Hanged if I know!

BLAINE. I will tell you. You are fairly intelligent; you have bad manners—

(HARRY *draws his feet back.*)

and plenty of cheek, which is an asset. The energy which you devote to the pursuit of pleasure might prove of value to me if you concentrated it on business. As an experiment, binding upon neither party, I might offer you seventy-five pounds a year.

HARRY. (*Rising.*) Chuck the Brigade for that! Not much! (*Goes down L. to desk, picks up pen.*)

BLAINE. It is not easy to make money, Harry. I understand from your mother that you contemplate marrying it.

HARRY. Phoebe is a jolly little thing.

BLAINE. She is.

HARRY. (*Warmly.*) I'm glad you see her good points.

BLAINE. I think I do.

HARRY. (*Confidently.*) I'm sure we should hit it off and be as happy as larks.

BLAINE. What?

HARRY. (*Fluttering his hand.*) Larks. (*Sits on desk, feet on chair.*) Sir Adalbert would want me to chuck soldiering. I fancy he left the happy Fatherland to escape conscription. If I did go into the bank—(*pen in ear*)—he would give me Phœbe at once, with his blessing.

BLAINE. And something more substantial.

HARRY. (*Flippantly.*) It would be no blessing without that. If I didn't give satisfaction in the bank, I could clear out. (*Throws pen away. Gets off desk.*) I could help old Schmaltzy a lot. (*Crosses C.*)

(*He looks quite himself, genially cool and self-possessed.*)

BLAINE. Help "old Schmaltzy" in his office?

HARRY. (*Turning to him C. quite seriously.*) No; out of it! He has a deal to learn, has Schmaltzy. He can't run his deer forest. I could take charge of his sporting interests. I could buy his horses.

BLAINE. And ride them?

HARRY. (*At table, playing with glasses.*) You bet! (*Goes up C.*) He would leave all that to me. I'd be a good son to the old boy. But I must pay my debts. I can't ask Phœbe's father to pay 'em.

BLAINE. I believe you—could.

HARRY. Anyway, Phœbe is willing enough.
(*Down C. a little.*)

BLAINE. (*Sharply.*) You've spoken to her?

HARRY. Not yet.

BLAINE. Don't.

HARRY. (*Defiantly.*) Why not?

BLAINE. (*Rises, to fireplace. Coldly.*) Because I object to the marriage.

HARRY. Well—I'm damned! And you won't pay my debts?

BLAINE. (*Shakes his head.*) No.

HARRY. (*Folds his arms. R.C.*) You can queer my pitch, but if you do—

(BLAINE *raises his brows.*)

It will be beastly—unpaternal. I leave it at that. Good night. (*Crosses and goes out, whistling, R.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Rises.*) Why do you object to Phœbe?

BLAINE. (*Drily.*) I don't object to Phœbe. I object to Harry. If Schmaltz is fool enough to support Harry, he can. I wash my hands of

this detestable marriage of convenience. Let me never hear it mentioned again. (*Walking backwards and forwards. Goes up to window.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Much agitated.*) You are a hard man, Robert.

BLAINE. You have often said so. I am a man of my word.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Approaching and touching him at C.*) Pay the boy's debts!

BLAINE. (*R.C.*) Why don't you pay them?

MRS. BLAINE. (*L.C.*) I?

BLAINE. (*Coldly.*) Those pearls. I gave some thousands for them. Pearls have gone up in value. Give them to me. I'll sell them to settle Harry's debts, and hand over the balance to you.

MRS. BLAINE. (*With a derisive smile.*) I am afraid, Robert, they won't fetch—*much*.

BLAINE. What do you mean?

MRS. BLAINE. I sold the original necklace many years ago. These are sham.

BLAINE. (*Astonished.*) Harry's weakness for getting into debt comes from you.

MRS. BLAINE. I sold them to pay debts, true, but not my own debts.

BLAINE. (*Fiercely.*) Whose?

MRS. BLAINE. My father's.

BLAINE. My wedding gift!

MRS. BLAINE. You need not remind me of that.

Yes; it was part of the price paid for me. You bought me, Robert.

BLAINE. (*Grimly.*) I have made better bargains since. (*Throws cigarette into fire.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Trembling, at head of couch.*)

When you say things like that, you make me—

BLAINE. Go on.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Intensely.*) Hate you.

BLAINE. (*Turning to her.*) You hate me when I refuse to gratify your wishes, however unreasonable they may be. (*Sits on couch.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Excitedly.*) I won't be crushed and humiliated!

BLAINE. Humiliated!

MRS. BLAINE. (*To head of couch. Slowly.*) I have it in my power to humiliate you. (*Pause.*) Don't drive me to do that! I ask you for the last time to help Harry.

BLAINE. Because he is your son, or mine?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Evasively.*) He is our son.

BLAINE. (*Deliberately.*) There have been moments when I have questioned that. Only the children of love, so we are told, take after the father. Is that why I can trace no resemblance in Harry to myself?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Excitedly.*) Will you help Harry?

BLAINE. (*Iceily.*) No.

MRS. BLAINE. I can read your thoughts. And,

as usual, you are right—right! (*She laughs disdainfully, carried away by anger and disappointment.*) There is nothing of you in Harry, thank God!

BLAINE. (*Rising.*) That was my impression.

(*They face each other.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Violently.*) You don't yet understand. Harry is my son, not yours.

BLAINE. (*Slowly.*) He is Trevor's son.
(*Pause.*) You admit that?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Violently.*) I admit it, and glory in it—to you. There is not a drop of your cold blood in Harry's veins.

(*MRS. BLAINE, alarmed at her own words. BLAINE crosses to the writing-table, opens drawer, and takes up a sheet of paper. He sits down and writes rapidly.*)

BLAINE. If Harry is not my son, the situation is altered. Sign that paper, and I will settle his debts. (*Comes back slowly to R.C.*)

(*MRS. BLAINE goes to desk, reads paper without taking it.*)

(*A pause follows. MRS. BLAINE reads paper, staring at it.*)

MRS. BLAINE. "I swear that my husband is not

the father of my son Harry." (*Hoarsely.*) I don't understand.

BLAINE. I think you do. I have never underrated your intelligence where your own interests are vitally concerned.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Falteringly, sitting at desk.*) If I sign this paper, what will you do with it? (*Takes up pen idly.*)

BLAINE. Isn't that my affair? By signing it at once you gain your end.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Still sitting.*) In a moment of anger I told you the truth, a truth which I should deny publicly—(*puts down pen*)—so long as breath remained in my body. Legally, Harry is your son. You cannot wash your hands of him, or of me, by signing a paltry cheque for £3,000. (*Rises.*)

BLAINE. So be it!

MRS. BLAINE. I shall push on this marriage. Harry must leave the Army.

(*She is going to the door R. He stops her at C.*)

BLAINE. (*R.C.*) Wait!

(*She stops C., arrested by his tone. He takes from his pocket the telegram.*)

This telegram is in cipher. It seems that I have not been mistaken. I have never believed

in the chances of peace. I knew that Germany would strike with all her strength when her hour came. It has—come. My most trusted agent in Berlin—he's seldom wrong—tells me that Germany is mobilising secretly. She means war with France and Russia.

MRS. BLAINE. War!

BLAINE. If I know the temper of this country—and I do—we shall be involved. If Harry sends in his papers, they will not be accepted.

MRS. BLAINE. Ah!

BLAINE. It will be an appalling conflict.

MRS. BLAINE. War! It can't be!

BLAINE. My informant *knows*. If a force is sent out of this country, the Guards will be amongst the first to go.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Overcome.*) Oh-h-h! My God!
(*Comes up C., then turns.*)

(*BLAINE to desk and sits.*)

(*Entreatingly.*) Robert, you are a just man. If Harry has to go, release him from this burden. I'll make it up to you. (*Hurriedly crossing to him.*) I said just now that you bought me, as you have bought everything that you wanted. I was dear to you then. Because of that, Robert, be kind to me now. I'll—I'll
——(*She breaks off, gasping.*)

BLAINE. You are an Englishwoman. This is no

time for whimpering. This war will have incalculable effects upon all of us.

(A pause.)

I can promise you this. If your son falls on the field of honour, I will pay his debts. No such stain shall rest upon his memory. Now—go! *(He tears up telegram.)*

(As MRS. BLAINE opens door R.)

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE: BLAINE'S *drawing-room in Portland Place.*

TIME: *October, 1914.*

CURTAIN *discloses the front drawing-room. It is furnished in exquisite taste, a fitting background for a distinguished hostess. Fireplace, L. Settee R.C., arm-chairs L.C., and by fire, with small table between piano, U.L. Big doors C. open into the back drawing-room, which has been fitted up as a temporary bedroom. A door R. opens into a handsome corridor.*

(BLAINE *is alone in the room, walking up and down. He pauses to listen.*)

(*Enter TREMLETT R., from corridor.*)

TREMLETT. Mr. Monypenny, sir, by appointment. I have shown him into the library.

BLAINE. Very good. (TREMLETT *turns.*) Wait! Ask him to come up here.

*(Business till MONYPENNY is announced.
He is a brisk, rosy little solicitor.)*

TREMLETT. *(Announcing.)* Mr. Monypenny.
(Goes out.)

MONYPENNY. *(Effusively.)* My dear Sir—
(Shakes hands.)

BLAINE. Morning, Monypenny. You have carried out my instructions?

MONYPENNY. *(Professionally.)* Yes, yes. *(Puts hat, gloves, and bag on piano L., and produces a blue paper from bag.)* Mr. Harry's debts are paid. I have here Mr. Gordon's receipt in full. *(Hands him receipt.)* £3,751 9s 11d.

BLAINE. *(Taking it; sitting on settee R.C.)* Thank you. Um! Three thousand pounds—
more or less.

MONYPENNY. *(Genially.)* It was a bit *more*, but youth must have its fling.

BLAINE. *(Drily.)* Do you say that to your own son?

MONYPENNY. Ah! Mr. Blaine, we mustn't be too hard on our soldier lads. This war has melted many a heart. Brightened some mean streets.

BLAINE. Has it—in London?

MONYPENNY. I've seen it with my own clients. Searchlights. Searchlights in dark places, Mr. Blaine.

BLAINE. Good morning. (*Rises, shakes hands, goes L.*)

MONYPENNY. (*Picking up hat, etc.*) Well, well, I congratulate you with all my heart. I heard that Mr. Harry returned last night. How is he?

BLAINE. The doctor is with him now.

MONYPENNY. Indeed? A good report, I trust? (*Comes C.*)

BLAINE. I have not heard it yet. (*Drily.*) There isn't much amiss.

MONYPENNY. I am rejoiced, my dear sir; *re-joiced*. An only son! So valuable a young life!

BLAINE. (*Pause.*) Good morning. (*Shakes hands again.*)

(*MONYPENNY moves to door.*)

MONYPENNY. (*At door.*) Good morning. My heartiest good wishes to your son. These gallant young fellows! Rather expensive! Good morning. (*Goes out R.*)

BLAINE. Damned old fool!

(*BLAINE crosses to writing-table R., examines receipt and puts it in his pocket. One of the big doors C. opens. FIRMIN comes in, followed by MRS. BLAINE, who closes door softly. FIRMIN is an alert, middle-aged doctor, clean-shaven.*)

BLAINE. (*Silently awaiting him.*) Well?

FIRMIN. (*R.C., pleasantly.*) In a sense it is well.

MRS. BLAINE. (*L.C., anxiously.*) In a sense?

FIRMIN. (*Looking from husband to wife, but finally addressing the man.*) For all the ordinary purposes of life your son will recover, and recover soon.

MRS. BLAINE. Thank God! (*Sits in arm-chair L.C.*) He looked better than I expected when I met him at Charing Cross.

FIRMIN. (*Sitting in small chair by couch. Lifting a hand.*) At the same time——

BLAINE. Yes?

FIRMIN. (*With finality.*) He must serve his country in some capacity other than a soldier.

MRS. BLAINE. Why? Sunstroke is not a very serious affair.

FIRMIN. (*Professionally.*) Sunstroke, followed by typhoid fever, even in a mild form——

MRS. BLAINE. He was inoculated before he went to France.

FIRMIN. So he told me. Inoculation is not an absolute preventive. The sunstroke was severe; and for some years he must exercise discretion. Never overtire himself. That is all.

BLAINE. He will have to leave the Army?

FIRMIN. He must go before his Medical Board.

But their decision is inevitable. In fact, without vanity, I can say that if there were any doubt in a cerebral case of this kind, I should probably be consulted.

MRS. BLAINE. It will be a dreadful blow to him.

FIRMIN. I fear so. The pipeclay seems to be in his marrow. He has an excellent constitution—(*rises, looks at BLAINE*)—like his father. I will call again in three days' time.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Rises.*) Call to-morrow, Dr. Firmin.

FIRMIN. I am not wanted. It's very pleasant to say that. (*He bows formally.*)

(*BLAINE touches electric bell. MRS. BLAINE holds out her hand.*)

MRS. BLAINE. What can Harry do?

FIRMIN. Um! (*Considers.*) I suggest his father's bank.

MRS. BLAINE. Doctor, would this sunstroke prevent his marriage?

FIRMIN. Marriage would be a capital thing for him, and keep him quiet. Good-bye. (*Shakes hands.*) (*Crosses to BLAINE. Shakes hands.*) Marriage—paternal responsibilities keep us all quiet.

(*Exit FIRMIN R.*)

BLAINE. You will tell Harry?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

(He turns to leave the room.)

Robert—

(Her voice indicates anxiety rather than distress. BLAINE pauses to look keenly at her.)

BLAINE. *(Kindly.)* Can I do anything for you?

MRS. BLAINE. You can, but—you won't. *(Goes on, as he raises his brows in interrogation.)*
Phoebe is coming here.

BLAINE. *(Sharply.)* Phoebe Schmaltz? Why?
(He frowns.)

MRS. BLAINE. She has a right to come.

BLAINE. *(Approaching nearer.)* A—right?

MRS. BLAINE. Phoebe and Harry are engaged.

BLAINE. Without my knowledge!

MRS. BLAINE. I thought your heart would soften.

(Exit BLAINE.)

(MRS. BLAINE makes a gesture, goes up to C. door and opens it.)

You can bring him in, Nurse.

(HARRY appears. He is in a dressing-gown, without either collar or tie. He looks pale

and thin, but very cheery. The NURSE L., carrying rug, supports him, and MRS. BLAINE R., assists.)

HARRY. I'm all right, Mother. Bless you! I can walk alone.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Smiling.*) You'll have to put up with some coddling, for my sake.

(He laughs and kisses her cheek. NURSE and MRS. BLAINE instal him comfortably in arm-chair L.C.)

MRS. BLAINE. Is the light too strong?

HARRY. Come off it!

NURSE. He's a bit above himself this morning.

HARRY. I'm at home. (*Grins cheerfully.*)

MRS. BLAINE. I'll call you, Nurse, in a few minutes.

(NURSE arranges a light rug about his knees.

MRS. BLAINE watches her with rather a set face. HARRY winks. The Nurse goes back into bedroom, closing door.)

HARRY. You're jealous of my nurse!

MRS. BLAINE. (*Smiling.*) Perhaps I am.

HARRY. What did old Pill-box say? I feel fit enough to join again in a week.

(MRS. BLAINE draws a light chair from L. of settee near to him, and sits. She takes his hand and strokes it.)

You dear thing! I know it's a bit rough on you, but I'm simply mad to be at it again.

MRS. BLAINE. Are you?

HARRY. Hang it! We must admit that I haven't had my innings yet. I was clean bowled in the first over. Sunstroke! Rotten luck!

MRS. BLAINE. How did it happen?

HARRY. (*With a grimace.*) Running away at Mons. We legged it, I can tell you, under a blazing sun. We had to. They were five to one. I thought we were going to be wiped out. I lost my cap. We got into a better position, and then I felt beastly sick. I don't remember anything else till I found myself in a field hospital. Humiliating, I call it! (*He frowns.*) And our fellows have done wonders ever since.

MRS. BLAINE. You did your duty, Harry.

HARRY. I've done nothing—nothing!

MRS. BLAINE. (*With emphasis.*) Two *splendid* things.

HARRY. What? Are you pullin' my leg?

MRS. BLAINE. I went to Netley Hospital about a fortnight ago, and saw a wounded Tommy—Godwin.

HARRY. Godwin? He was in my platoon.

MRS. BLAINE. Godwin told me that during the retreat from Mons, when the men were begin-

ning to fall out, you kept them going with your jokes.

HARRY. What rot!

MRS. BLAINE. And he said that when a bridge you had just passed over was being badly shelled, you ran back to put a wounded horse out of his misery.

HARRY. I'm so sorry for the horses. Anybody would have done it.

MRS. BLAINE. I am proud indeed that it was you, Harry. (*Presses his hand.*) You are all I have, dear; and you came back to me only last night.

HARRY. I know, Mother. All the same, I—er—

MRS. BLAINE. Wait. The doctor is quite satisfied—

HARRY. Hooray! Ask the Governor to give him double fees.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Nervously.*) He says you have a fine constitution.

HARRY. I get that from Father. He's as tough as they make 'em. He was rather decent when I rolled up yesterday.

MRS. BLAINE. (*With swift change.*) To return to your health, Harry—

HARRY. (*Eagerly.*) I say, what topping news for little Phœbe! She must have worried most awfully. (*Eagerly.*) Have you told Father about my engagement?

MRS. BLAINE. I told him just now.

HARRY. What did he say?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Rises.*) Nothing. His mind is fixed. I can read him. He'll oppose this marriage tooth and nail.

HARRY. Um! When is Phœbe coming?

MRS. BLAINE. I am expecting her mother and her at twelve.

HARRY. (*Glancing at a fine clock on mantel-piece.*) What! And you let me sit here in this kit! (*Rises.*) I must fix up at once.

(MRS. BLAINE *pulls him gently down into chair; she stands at back of him, hands on shoulders.*)

MRS. BLAINE. No hurry. (*Incisively.*) Harry, do you want to marry Phœbe against your father's wish?

HARRY. Mother! Do you think I'd chuck the little dear now? You amaze me.

MRS. BLAINE. I wanted to make sure. You must face the fact bravely that you are absolutely dependent upon your—father. (*Her voice is almost inaudible.*)

HARRY. (*Cheerily.*) Right O! After all, he is my father. We've not hit it off quite up to date, but this war has changed things and people. Lawsy! hasn't it just changed me!

I shall deal gently with Father. And when he sees how keen I am to go back——

(MRS. BLAINE *moves to R. of chair.*)

and do something which will make him proud of his son, why, then——

(*She sobs.*)

Mother, what's the matter?

(*He sees that MRS. BLAINE is profoundly moved.*)

HARRY. You're not crying? Cheer up! Things will be brighter. I'm out for a D.S.O.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Choked.*) Stop!

(*She turns and sits R. of him. He stares at her in astonishment.*)

Harry—(*she speaks in a low, thrilling voice*)
—you can't go back.

HARRY. Can't I just!

MRS. BLAINE. This sunstroke——

HARRY. What of it? I'm ashamed to mention it.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Controlling herself, very tenderly.*) It was more serious than you think. (*Takes his hand.*) For a long time you will have to be careful. The doctor says so positively. They won't let you go back.

(She nods sorrowfully.)

HARRY. *(Excitedly.)* You mean that? They won't have me? You are telling me—*(he falters)*—that I'm—*scrapped!*

MRS. BLAINE. *(Hastily.)* Harry, darling, you mustn't excite yourself. I would spare you if I could, but it's true. You must leave the Army—*(rises)*

HARRY. Oh, my God!

MRS. BLAINE. —and try something else.

(There is silence. MRS. BLAINE kisses him, crosses in front to L.)

HARRY. It's all right, Mother. It was a nasty knock. Give me time. I won't grouse about it. I——

(The door opens and TREMLETT appears, R.)

MRS. BLAINE. What is it, Tremlett?

TREMLETT. Sir Keith and Lady Howard, and Miss Howard——

HARRY. Who the devil is Sir Keith Howard?

MRS. BLAINE. Sir Adalbert Schmaltz. He has changed his name. Ask them to come up, Tremlett.

(TREMLETT goes out.)

HARRY. Changed his name! They mustn't see me like this. Hi! Nurse! What ho!

NURSE. (*Off.*) Coming!

(NURSE *enters C., down L. of Harry.*)

HARRY. Get me out of this—quick!

(*Bus. Exeunt HARRY and NURSE.*)

(TREMLETT *ushers in* LADY SCHMALTZ, *followed by* PHCEBE and SIR ADALBERT.)

(SIR ADALBERT *looks comically smart in London kit. LADY SCHMALTZ is quietly dressed, but wears handsome furs. PHCEBE is looking her prettiest.*)

(LADY SCHMALTZ *to couch, PHCEBE L.C., SIR ADALBERT to L.*)

TREMLETT. (*Announcing sonorously.*) Sir Keith and Lady Howard. Miss Howard.

MRS. BLAINE. You dear things!

SIR ADALBERT. Und herè we are again!

MRS. BLAINE. (*To TREMLETT.*) Tell Mr. Blaine that Sir Keith is here.

TREMLETT. Very good, madam. (*Goes out, slightly smiling.*) (*General greetings.*)

SIR ADALBERT. So! Harry is home again?

LADY SCHMALTZ. We were so glad to get your wire.

PHCEBE. Mrs. Blaine, *how is he?* (*Sits L.C.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Gravely, sits on couch.*) You must be prepared for a change. He is white and thin, but his spirits are wonderful.

SIR ADALBERT. Ach! those Shermans! I haf relations, yes. I should like to stick my umbrella into der stomach of my fat cousin, Fritz. (*Makes a lunge and crosses round C. to piano, puts down hat and umbrella.*) So!

PHOEBE. (*Laughing.*) Poor Father is furious with the Germans. He drinks English lager, and has bought a Gillette safety razor, because his razors were made in Germany.

SIR ADALBERT. Und I change my name. I take der best. (*Comes C.*)

(*Enter BLAINE; comes C., shakes hands with SIR ADALBERT, then with LADY SCHMALTZ over couch.*)

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Plaintively.*) I can't get accustomed to it.

BLAINE. How are you, Schmaltz?

SIR ADALBERT. (*Shaking hands with BLAINE.*) Howar-r-rd, my friend, Howar-r-rd. Do you know what der English for Schmaltz is?

(*BLAINE shakes his head.*)

It means suet. My poor friend Koenig, he call himself King; my poor friend Goldenbaum, he call himself Goldtree. But I—I—

could I call myself Sir Adalbert Suet? No!
LADY SCHMALTZ. Certainly not. Don't be foolish, Bertie.

SIR ADALBERT. I haf lost my money, I haf lost my business, but I keep der family. Milly haf her diamonts (*going L.*)—und some monies I gif her. We shall lif in a cottage. I like cottages. I shall schmoke der pipe. I shall plant my own cabbages. So!

BLAINE. Schmaltz! (*Crosses to SIR ADALBERT, who is L.*)

SIR ADALBERT. Howard!

BLAINE. I beg your pardon. My dear Howard, you have taken this change in your fortunes like a Briton.

SIR ADALBERT. I haf lost my money, but you, Blaine, haf made more money? (*Rubbing his hands.*) Good! Den it will be all right for der young beoples.

(BLAINE *goes to door R.* MRS. BLAINE and LADY SCHMALTZ *talking in a low voice.*)

PHOEBE. (*Rises, and down to SIR ADALBERT.*)
Father, dear, please don't mix up business with this visit.

SIR ADALBERT. Business, my Phœbykins! The wedding bells was ringing in my ears. (*Bus. of bell sounds.*) Und Harry? His wounds are healing nice?

BLAINE. Harry was not wounded.

PHŒBE. (*Reproachfully.*) Father, I told you it was sunstroke and fever.

SIR ADALBERT. Sunstroke und fever, yes. My good friend, I wish I had a brave son like yours. (*Crosses to BLAINE, who is R.C. above settee.*)

BLAINE. Come and smoke a cigar with me downstairs.

SIR ADALBERT. (*Taking hat and umbrella from piano.*) I haf given up cigars. I smoke der pipe. It is good, der pipe. Yes—we economize. I drink English lager (*makes a grimace*). It is my ponishment for having been born in Bavaria.

BLAINE. One cigar?

SIR ADALBERT. It would be Sherman manners to refuse.

(*BLAINE leads him off R.*)

PHŒBE. (*To C.*) Mrs. Blaine, I know—I mean, I— (*Gasping.*) Of course Father losing his money will make a difference.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Yes; Phœbe is ready to release Harry. (*To MRS. BLAINE.*)

PHŒBE. Father doesn't know that Mr. Blaine objects. Mother thought it better not to tell him.

MRS. BLAINE. You haven't told him?

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Upset.*) Not yet. I so hate being bustled and hustled.

MRS. BLAINE. But you *must* tell him!

LADY SCHMALTZ. My dear, he's had so much to worry him lately.

MRS. BLAINE. Robert may be telling him now.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Oh! (*Rises.*) How I wish I could go home and lie down for half an hour!

PHŒBE. We hoped that Mr. Blaine would melt.

MRS. BLAINE. In November! He is as cold as ice even in the dog-days.

LADY SCHMALTZ. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Alice—won't *you* tell Bertie?

MRS. BLAINE. I have said too many disagreeable things to my own husband.

LADY SCHMALTZ. (*Rising desperately.*) Then, I'll do it *now*. Mr. Blaine's cigars always put Bertie into a good temper. (*Walks round C. to door. At door.*) Dear man! How lucky that I ordered a dressed crab for his lunch!

(*Exit LADY SCHMALTZ, R. MRS. BLAINE rises.*)

PHŒBE. Poor Mother!

MRS. BLAINE. Do you think Harry wishes to be released?

PHŒBE. I don't know. I——

MRS. BLAINE. You shall settle it with him.

PHOEBE. Can I see him alone?

MRS. BLAINE. He is looking forward to that.

PHOEBE. May I go to him now?

MRS. BLAINE. He will come here. Nurse is dressing him. He came back with a beard.

PHOEBE. A beard!

MRS. BLAINE. In patches. He was shaved this morning; he's quite presentable now. But he mustn't be excited.

PHOEBE. I promise you that.

MRS. BLAINE. I hope things will come right, but they're in a sad muddle. I wish——

PHOEBE. Yes?

MRS. BLAINE. That we were all more like you.
(*Kiss.*) The loss of this money hasn't affected Sir Adalbert. I'll fetch Harry.

(She goes out C.)

(PHOEBE assumes an expectant smile.)

(HARRY comes in to C., with MRS. BLAINE at back. He has smartened himself up. He wears a light grey suit and a becoming tie. PHOEBE L.C.)

HARRY. You look rippin', Phoebe. (*Takes both her hands.*)

PHOEBE. Oh, Harry, how thankful I am to see you again! You are thin!

HARRY. Nice riding weight.

(They install him as before, but he shoves the light rug aside. MRS. BLAINE offers rug.)

I'm warm enough. The sight of Phœbe would warm a skeleton.

MRS. BLAINE. I shall be downstairs.

HARRY. With Father?

MRS. BLAINE. *(Going.)* Downstairs. *(Puts rug on settee.)*

(She goes out. PHŒBE is following her.)

HARRY. Give me a kiss, Phœbe.

(She kisses him lightly on brow, from R. back of chair.)

Can't you put more ginger into it?

PHŒBE. *(Sits R. of him. Demurely.)* You mustn't be excited. Doctor's orders!

HARRY. I got your letters.

PHŒBE. I didn't get many of yours. Before you went into hospital, I mean.

HARRY. Hadn't a minute! Never changed my clothes for ten days. Never thought I'd see you again.

PHŒBE. What did you think about during those awful days?

HARRY. Mostly food. All the jolly good dinners I'd eaten at the Ritz and Savoy. We had

bully beef and mangoldwurzels for three days.

Lord! what indigestion I did have! (*Groans.*)

PHŒBE. What else did you think about?

HARRY. Peace—quiet. The gunning got on one's nerves. I used to imagine myself in a punt in some quiet backwater of the Thames, with the bees buzzing in the willows. (*Sighs.*)

PHŒBE. Alone in a punt!

HARRY. Not alone, Phœbe. (*Smiles.*) There was a jolly girl with me.

PHŒBE. I expect you have taken lots of girls out in punts.

HARRY. I have. Did I ever take you, dear?

PHŒBE. Never.

HARRY. (*Smiles again.*) We must put that right next summer.

PHŒBE. (*Rises, to C. Nervously.*) I'm not a very jolly girl now, Harry.

HARRY. Why not?

PHŒBE. (*Turns to him.*) Haven't they told you?

HARRY. Told me—what?

PHŒBE. Poor Father is ruined. He never believed in war—don't you remember? His money was in Germany. And now—

HARRY. (*In a low voice.*) Good lord!

PHŒBE. Your father, Harry, has made more money.

HARRY. Your father will make more, too.

PHŒBE. He is rather old. Mother has a small income. (*Crosses L.*)

(*A pause.*)

HARRY. I say, Phœbe, this war has been an eye-opener for some of us.

(*PHŒBE sits on small table L. of him.*)

HARRY. I'll tell you, just between our two selves, that I was out for Death or Glory. I wanted to—to "make good." I wanted to see something in the Governor's eyes which I'd never seen.

PHŒBE. (*Incredulously.*) And you haven't seen it?

HARRY. Not yet. He thinks a lot of success. I have not been a shining success yet, have I?

PHŒBE. (*Softly.*) You want to go back?

HARRY. Not quite so much as I did. Phœbe, dear—I can't go back.

PHŒBE. Oh, Harry!

HARRY. (*Takes her right hand.*) I want to ask you to forgive me.

PHŒBE. (*Sadly.*) I understand. (*Kneels L. of HARRY.*)

HARRY. (*Decisively.*) I must make a clean breast of it. It's a dirty job, but I shan't rest easy till I've done it. I made up to you, you

jolly little thing. I—— (*Hesitates.*) Oh, hang it!

PHŒBE. (*Softly.*) I'll say what you can't, Harry.

HARRY. Eh?

PHŒBE. (*Simply, but with dignity.*) It will be easier for you. You were nice to me—such a dear, that I thought you cared as—as much as I cared. But—after you'd gone, when I used to lie awake at night and think over every word you'd ever said to me, I—I—well, somehow, I began to get frightened.

HARRY. (*Eagerly.*) Phœbe!

PHŒBE. (*Laying her finger upon his lips.*) Let me finish. I used to walk in the Park. I saw some of our Tommies saying good-bye to their best girls, and then I knew . . .

(Her voice dies away. There is a significant pause.)

HARRY. Tell me what you knew.

PHŒBE. That you liked me, that you thought I might make you a good wife, but that you didn't love me as I wanted to be loved. (*Sitting back on her heels.*)

(Another pause.)

HARRY. (*Awkwardly.*) I was badly in debt, Phœbe. I was rather desperate. And—and

your people liked me. Now I come to the jumping-off place. Sit tight! The fact that you were a big heiress did count. When Father refused point-blank to pay my debts, I—I opened fire on you against his wishes.

PHOEBE. I know.

HARRY. (*Positively.*) He objected—confound him! He still objects. But I went ahead, because I counted on your father to pull me out of my hole. (*With a groan of despair.*) My God! what a cad I feel!

PHOEBE. I understand everything. (*Kneels up again.*)

HARRY. You're a wonder. (*Takes her hands.*) Well, dear, over there, when I made certain that I should never see you again, I went over, as you did, all that had passed between us, and I began to loathe myself. I began to think it would be a jolly good thing for you if I was potted.

PHOEBE. Oh-h-h!

HARRY. (*In a low voice.*) I used to think of your kisses the day before I went. How sweet you were!

PHOEBE. Isn't this too much for you, Harry?

(*He takes her hand and grips it.*)

HARRY. (*Hoarsely.*) I must get it off my chest. Over there, in the dark, a sort of mental light

came to me. I saw myself clearly, and I saw you, you dear, dear thing.

PHŒBE. (*Almost breaking down.*) Harry, you may be able to stand this. I can't! (*Sinks back on heels.*)

(*Slight pause.*)

HARRY. You must. (*Firmly.*) Two women shone out of the darkness.

PHŒBE. Two women?

HARRY. You and—(*pause*)—mother. Aha! I spoofed you there, Miss Schmaltz! (*Laughs lightly; then his voice changes and deepens.*) Can you ever forgive me?

PHŒBE. You know I can, and do.

HARRY. I have given you the powder first. Now for the jam—such as it is! (*Takes her hands.*) To-day, I want you as you wanted me. I love you.

(*She gives a little quiver.*)

Whatever the future holds for me, Phœbe, it must hold you, or it will be no future at all.

(*She stares at him. He smiles reassuringly and nods his head. Her face gradually lights up.*)

PHŒBE. (*Ecstatically.*) Say it again!

HARRY. I love you!

(She gives a little gasp of satisfaction.)

You don't believe? If you will do exactly what I tell you, I'll make you believe. Will you?

(She nods shyly.)

Put both your little arms around me.

(She does so with an adorable modesty.)

Put your lips on mine. *(Kiss.)* No shirking!

(Bus—ad lib.)

(Triumphantly.) There! Do you believe me now?

PHŒBE. *(Releasing herself.)* Yes, I do, Harry. You are strong! *(He lies back in his chair.)*

HARRY. *(With a weak laugh.)* I kept every ounce of strength I had for that hug. Now, let me look at you, and—gloat!

(He stares at her. She wriggles a little as she sees how his handsome eyes are devouring her.)

I'm recovering quickly. The doctor spoke of my recuperative powers. This is the medicine my system needs. Repeat the dose! *(Pulls her to him.)*

PHŒBE. Be sensible!

HARRY. *(Decisively.)* Love is the only sensible thing in life. Come on!

(Another lingering embrace.)

Now I'll be sensible. *(In a business-like tone.)*
I've got to tackle Father.

PHŒBE. *(Rises.)* You aren't strong enough
for that.

HARRY. Yes, I am.

PHŒBE. *(Anxiously.)* What will you say to
him?

HARRY. You wait and see. Fetch him. He's
downstairs in his den. If I'm to get well I
must know exactly how I stand with him. You
nip off now.

*(PHŒBE rises slowly, to C., not liking her
errand.)*

PHŒBE. Let your mother break the ice.

HARRY. Never again. We tried that before,
with disastrous results.

PHŒBE. Then you want to see him alone?

HARRY. Alone! I don't think! I must have
numerical strength to outflank him. I want
you to stand by—and Mother. Tell her.

PHŒBE. If you insist——

HARRY. *(Masterfully.)* I do. Cut along!

*(She goes to door R., hesitates, smiles, runs
back and gives him another kiss, and then
vanishes with a laugh.)*

(The NURSE comes in silently, puts medicine and chart on table L.C., and gets rug from settee.)

(HARRY, with a wink visible to the audience, closes his eyes and feigns sleep. The NURSE bends down. HARRY opens his eyes cautiously. The NURSE comes back. Medicine on table. HARRY hears her and closes eyes again. The NURSE listens, hearing some slight noise outside. She puts rug around HARRY'S knees.

(MRS. BLAINE appears first. NURSE, with finger upon lip, imposes silence. MRS. BLAINE approaches HARRY.)

(BLAINE appears R., down to C. Then PHOEBE.)

NURSE. Shush-h-h! (L. of HARRY.)

(BLAINE'S face is quite impassive.)

MRS. BLAINE. (Approaching on tiptoe.) Asleep! (In a whisper.) Dear fellow!

HARRY. (Opening his eyes.) Spoofed the lot of you! Never was more wide-awake.

NURSE. Time for your medicine.

HARRY. Ugh! Father——

BLAINE. Yes?

HARRY. Father, keep puffing away. I want

something to take the everlasting taste of quinine out of my mouth. Cheer ho!

(NURSE presents glass, which HARRY takes with a grimace, and drinks. NURSE takes empty glass, marks a chart which she carries, and goes to door. PHŒBE remains up.)

NURSE. (*At door.*) No excitements, please!

HARRY. Right ho! You come and fetch me in five minutes.

(NURSE goes out.)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Bending over him.*) Quite comfy? (*Back of HARRY'S chair.*)

HARRY. Ask Father to sit in that chair.

(*He indicates the arm-chair down L. BLAINE crosses and sits.*)

HARRY. Where's Phœbe?

PHŒBE. (*Coming down.*) Here. (*Sits in chair L.C.*)

HARRY. (*Draws her to him.*) You can hold my hand, if you like. (*PHŒBE hesitates.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Anxiously.*) Please humour him, my dear.

(*PHŒBE sits in the upright chair. BLAINE has sat down in the arm-chair. MRS.*

BLAINE *remains standing.* HARRY *holds*
PHŒBE'S *hand.*)

HARRY. I suppose you saw Firmin, Father?

BLAINE. I did.

HARRY. And he told you that I should have to
chuck soldiering?

BLAINE. He made that quite plain to me.

HARRY. I shall have to ask for a stool in your
bank, after all.

BLAINE. (*Quietly.*) We will talk about your
future some other time.

HARRY. Now, please.

(BLAINE *makes a gesture indicating protest*
but acquiescence.)

HARRY. I've caused you a lot of worry, Father.

BLAINE. (*Drily.*) You have.

HARRY. I'm sorry. Will you give me a billet,
when I'm ready for it?

BLAINE. (*Evasively.*) I have told you what I
think of your business capacity.

HARRY. I suppose you know that I engaged my-
self to Phœbe just before I went out?

BLAINE. (*Stiffly.*) Your mother informed me
of that.

HARRY. At that time Sir Adalbert was a very
rich man. Phœbe tells me that this war has
practically ruined him.

BLAINE. (*Glances at PHŒBE.*) Your father will weather this storm. He is a born money-maker.

HARRY. Quite so. But I am *not*.

BLAINE. No?

HARRY. As a soldier I'm down and out. I want to marry Phœbe, and she wants to marry me; but what have you got to say about it?

BLAINE. You *want* to marry Phœbe?

HARRY. (*Intensely.*) More than anything else in the world.

BLAINE. (*Gravely.*) Sure of that?

HARRY. Quite.

BLAINE. Irrespective of my wishes?

HARRY. (*Humbly.*) Of course we are dependent upon you.

BLAINE. (*Incisively.*) You are. Would you face poverty with Phœbe?

HARRY. (*Speaking almost rudely, with great vehemence.*) Yes, I would!

BLAINE. I must talk this over with your mother.

HARRY. Now?

BLAINE. Now.

HARRY. (*To PHŒBE.*) Take me out, dear.

(HARRY rises. PHŒBE glances at BLAINE, who nods impassively. PHŒBE takes rug and hold of HARRY'S arm; assists him to rise, then goes to door C.)

MRS. BLAINE. (*C.L. of HARRY. Impulsively.*)

Before you go, let me say this. Harry, your happiness is dearer to me than my own.

HARRY. I know that, Mother.

MRS. BLAINE. I would do anything to help you—anything but—

BLAINE. (*Interrupting.*) The Nurse forbade excitements. (*Makes a gesture.*)

(*HARRY goes out with PHOEBE. He turns at the door to wave an encouraging hand at his mother. MRS. BLAINE closes C. doors.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Standing near door.*) Robert. You hold in your strong hand my future and Harry's.

BLAINE. Some months ago I asked you to sign this paper. If I provide for Harry and Phoebe, will you sign it now? (*Takes paper from pocket.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Coming closer to him.*) I understand what you want. Such a paper would free you from me and Harry.

BLAINE. Yes.

MRS. BLAINE. I won't sign it. I won't give you the chance of making my son nameless.

BLAINE. You are thinking only of him?

MRS. BLAINE. (*At head of couch. Passionately.*) You know that I am not thinking of

myself. I am beyond caring what you do or say to me, far beyond any thought of self. (*Sits L.C.*) All *that* passed from me during those agonizing weeks in September. (*Scornfully.*) We were told to carry on as usual! Has any man or woman in the kingdom carried on as usual, except *you*?

(*A pause.*)

What have been your thoughts? Ah! (*Laughs derisively.*) I had forgotten. You have made money out of this war, which you had prepared for.

BLAINE. As you say, I had prepared for it. That's all. (*Rises.*) I will admit to you that I should have liked a child of my own, a daughter—like Phoebe—who might be as tender an object of solicitude to me as Harry is to you. I am not too old to marry again, if—if I were free. (*He gently knocks the ash from his cigar.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Abruptly.*) Why did you object to Phoebe as a wife for Harry?

BLAINE. I considered that Phoebe Schmaltz was too good a girl to marry your son.

MRS. BLAINE. How you hate Harry!

BLAINE. That surprises you? He isn't my son. (*Crosses behind her to R.C.*)

(Her face is hidden from him, but not from the audience. It must be evident that some new thought has come to her, that she is nerving herself for a fresh attack upon the man who is quietly smoking, master of the situation. Her interlaced fingers, her twisted face and a furtive glance serve to indicate her emotion.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Rises. Down a little to L.)* Do you hate Harry for himself, because he's so different from you? Or do you hate him because he is *not* your son?

BLAINE. *(Turning quietly.)* I have never liked him—much.

(She seizes his arm. He brushes her aside. She glances hastily from right to left, turns swiftly.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(In a choked voice.)* Don't repulse me! I will try to see things from your point of view.

BLAINE. I shall listen with interest. *(Sits at desk R.)*

MRS. BLAINE. *(L. of couch.)* I couldn't marry the man I loved.

BLAINE. Why?

MRS. BLAINE. Arthur Trevor wouldn't ask me to face life in a marching regiment on tuppence ha'penny a year.

BLAINE. Had he asked you, would you have done it?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes. Well—we parted. And then you wanted me. You were stronger than me. Robert, I thought I was to count for something in your life. You were as cold as ice to me within a month of our marriage.

BLAINE. I will tell you why. (*Pause.*) I heard you murmuring Trevor's name in your sleep.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Wincing.*) Oh-h-h!

BLAINE. (*Grimly.*) You went to your lover in your dreams.

MRS. BLAINE. Ah! You might have made me forget him. Day after day I scarcely saw you. I was *alone*.

BLAINE. Those were critical days. I stood to lose everything—to win everything.

MRS. BLAINE. Except my love.

BLAINE. (*Grimly.*) I won.

MRS. BLAINE. Arthur Trevor came back. I implored you to take me away. (*Sits on settee.*)

BLAINE. The Goring Bank crisis was on.

MRS. BLAINE. And then Harry was born. Arthur Trevor went back to India. I never saw him again, but your suspicions were aroused. But you said nothing. Every time you looked at the child I could read what was in your thoughts.

BLAINE. Yes.

MRS. BLAINE. And yet I had sent Arthur Trevor away.

BLAINE. (*Grimly.*) Rather late.

MRS. BLAINE. Without any evidence—(*rises*)—except the ill-natured gossip of so-called friends, you judged me guilty. In your mind I had the name without the game.

BLAINE. You were spending my money.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Rises.*) I admit that. I became extravagant—(*crosses C.*)—reckless, but I did my part, too. I entertained your friends, worked for you. I thought you wanted that peerage. When you refused it, I saw to the very depths of your soul. You gave yourself away then—absolutely. Till that moment I had never been quite sure what you really thought about Harry.

BLAINE. Well?

MRS. BLAINE. Well—I revenged myself.

BLAINE. (*Betraying a little emotion.*) What do you mean? (*Crosses to her, stands.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Looking up.*) I don't think I had ever hated you till then. The idea of hurting and humiliating you grew and grew. Then my chance came, and I—I took it. I wanted to grind your very soul to powder. I told you that Harry was not your son. Well—he is!

BLAINE. Look me straight in the eyes and

tell me that Harry is my son. (*Pulls her to him.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Yes!

(*For an instant the wife meets the keen, piercing glance of her husband; she goes up to couch and sits. BLAINE crosses slowly to L.C., takes photo from pocket and walks to C. MRS. BLAINE sinks into the sofa. She sits there limp and listless, evidently unnerved by the strain and suspense. After a pause, BLAINE turns. His face has softened. When he speaks the hardness and coldness have gone out of his voice. He comes slowly down, and in his hand he holds the picture of Arthur Trevor, taken by him from PHŒBE.*)

BLAINE. I have been looking at this. (*He holds it in front of her eyes.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Harry? You have carried about with you a picture of Harry?

BLAINE. It's a good likeness?

MRS. BLAINE. Excellent. I don't remember seeing it before. Where did you get it?

BLAINE. From Phœbe Schmaltz. (*Looks down on her.*) Look at the back. (*Turns photo.*)

(*She does not take it. She reads what is written and gives a half-suppressed gasp*

of dismay. Her attitude is pathetically helpless and hopeless.)

BLAINE. (*In a whisper.*) Is Harry my son?
Is he? (*Puts photo back in pocket, after a pause.*)

(She opens her mouth, but no sound escapes from her lips. She goes to the desk and signs the paper, giving it to BLAINE, who takes it from her trembling fingers.)

BLAINE. (C.) Thank you. Please fetch Harry.
MRS. BLAINE. (*Rises. R.C.*) You don't—you can't mean to tell him? And—and you ask me —! (*Sinks, collapsed, into sofa.*)

(BLAINE walks to door C.)

BLAINE. (*Opening door.*) Harry!

HARRY. (*Off.*) Yes, sir!

(PHŒBE helps HARRY in.)

(BLAINE C., HARRY to chair, PHŒBE to head of settee.)

PHŒBE. (*Nervously.*) Shall I stay, Mrs. Blaine?

BLAINE. (C.) Please. (*Takes her hand.*) It's you whom I wish to speak to more particularly. Do you love Harry for himself regardless, let us say, of his position as *my* son? An-

swer me, my dear, with entire frankness. Look into your heart. If Harry were not Harry Blaine——

PHŒBE. If he were the son of a poor man—if he had nothing, I should love him, and want to marry him.

HARRY. I have less than nothing. I'm in debt, Phœbe.

PHŒBE. He's in debt.

BLAINE. I have here a paper which concerns you.

(BLAINE takes blue paper from his breast-pocket. MRS. BLAINE gasps and rises; does not look round. BLAINE hands HARRY the blue receipted bill.)

HARRY. Father! How perfectly splendid of you! Mother! Paid!

BLAINE. If you want Harry, you can have him.

(BLAINE, with a gesture checking HARRY'S gratitude, goes down to fire.)

HARRY. *(Rises.)* Father, I promise you that I will try to be a better son.

BLAINE. I have kept my word. I told your mother that I would pay your debts, if you fell on the field of honour. Because you have borne arms for England I will make suitable

provision for you, if you marry Phœbe.

(Leans on fireplace.)

PHŒBE. May I go and tell Dad?

BLAINE. Run along.

(Exit PHŒBE R.)

HARRY. *(Going to C. door, turns.)* Mother, aren't you pleased?

MRS. BLAINE. For you, Harry, yes. *(Clutching him.)* I'm not going to lose you.

HARRY. Why, Mother——!

MRS. BLAINE. *(Intensely.)* This will not take you from me?

HARRY. Nothing I could do would take you from me.

MRS. BLAINE. Nothing I could do would come between us?

HARRY. Rather not! *(Kisses her, and exit.)*

(BLAINE is at fireplace.)

(As soon as HARRY has left the room, it must be evident that MRS. BLAINE is nerving herself for a supreme effort. Passion in the woman, long suppressed, is about to break bonds. Her blazing eyes, her clenched hands, her quivering lips and heaving bosom must excite the anticipations of the audience. She takes a step nearer BLAINE, and pauses, drawing her-

self up to her full height. During the scene that follows, her emotion must be dramatically contrasted with his frigid impassivity.)

MRS. BLAINE. Thank you, Robert.

BLAINE. For what?

MRS. BLAINE. I thought you were going to show that paper to Harry.

BLAINE. Not yet.

MRS. BLAINE. He must never see it, never. You are quit of him, Robert. He will drift peaceably out of your life. It is I, only I, who stand between you and your heart's desire. If I were dead, you could marry again.

BLAINE. Possibly. You are not dead.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Coming nearer, with increasing intensity of tone.*) I will make a bargain with you. Give me that paper, which I signed in a moment of weakness, give it to me now, and I pledge you my word that you shall be free, and—soon!

(He looks at her keenly, but makes no sign.)

MRS. BLAINE. You said that this war would work incalculable changes in all of us. It has worked such a change in me. Do you think that I can sink back to the old life? Harry is going from me. That is inevitable. What is

left for—me? What is the one thing, to-day, dearer to me than life itself—his happiness! I have sinned—yes, and I am prepared to pay for my sin to the uttermost farthing. Give me that paper (*she holds out her hand steadily*) and trust me to find a way out—of—your—life!

BLAINE. By the sacrifice of your own?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Fiercely.*) By God! Yes.

(They hold each other's glance. The woman is rigid with excitement and determination; the man, for the first time, indicates some relaxation of the tissues. His glance falls beneath hers; his head bows itself upon his chest.)

MRS. BLAINE. You do not believe me?

BLAINE. (*Hoarsely.*) I do.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Derisively.*) I read you, Robert. Your cold brain is weighing the means to such an end. Have no fear! For my son's sake, not yours, I promise you immunity from gossiping tongues. (*In a thrilling whisper.*) I shall find what I seek in France. I shall fall where Harry might have fallen!

BLAINE. No.

MRS. BLAINE. You refuse to give me that paper?

BLAINE. You are magnificent. (*Slowly.*) I have made you suffer too much.

(*He tears up the paper. She regards him almost suspiciously, incredulous of the change in his voice and manner.*)

MRS. BLAINE. You—you mean——? Say something—anything!

BLAINE. (*Gently.*) Last Autumn, in Phœbe's album, I wrote: "God's most merciful gift may be *SILENCE*." I stand in need of forgiveness myself. Your love for Harry has redeemed you.

(*A slight pause.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Passionately.*) Robert, am I to live alone with you, eating my heart out, wondering what you are thinking?

BLAINE. (*Taking her hand.*) I shall be thinking, Alice, of—*PEACE!*

CURTAIN.

