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قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

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الفرقة....الأولى

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The silver Box

by John Galsworthy

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I- New Directions on Realism

British theater of the early 20th century was dominated by Shaw. By infusing discussions of social problems with wit and paradox, Shaw lent power and success to the 19th-century tradition of realistic drama. Galsworthy, with his talent for dramatic situations and scenes, fit right into emerging modern drama of the Edwardian period as he turned out one thesis play after another for twenty-three years. *Strife* (1909) deals with labor-management conflict.

He’s remembered principally for writing realistic social dramas that hit hard on the subject of the class system, especially on there being one law for the rich and another for the poor. As the son of a wealthy solicitor and member of an old Devonshire family, educated at Harrow and Oxford, and aimed by his father at a lucrative law practice (which target he deliberately missed), Galsworthy was born into the “upstairs” world of wealth and privilege. The “downstairs” world of the servant class and their relatives in the slums he gradually came to know as an adult, knowledge which disillusioned him and played upon his very generous and sympathetic nature. Once established he regularly gave half his considerable income to the poor and other needy causes, motivated by both pity and guilt.

Though Galsworthy had a reputation as a social reformer, humanitarian, and animal-rights advocate, he really had little more in mind than reinforcing the old aristocratic code of ***noblesse oblige***. His essential, rather innocent message

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was that the aristocracies of birth and wealth shouldn’t be so hard on the lower classes and on nonconformists of their own class; they should practice the charity of their religion and in general act on the principles of their nobility. But he was not so innocent that he did not see, finally, how the ideals of nobility were sometimes ineffectual in the capitalist world of every man for himself. When he saw that, the mood of “tragedy” came on him, as he could see no way out of a destructive denouement. Most of his social indignation and crusading zeal came from the outrage of a purely personal sense of justice rather than from political comprehension or commitment. For example, his exposure of social and legal

conventions that made it difficult for abused women to escape an unhappy marriage was based much less on an intellectual grasp of the problems of modern marriage than on his personal experience with Ada. First his cousin's abused wife, Ada eventually became his wife, and once he was able to marry her, help her live down the scandal of an illicit relationship of ten years, and restore her to her rightful social position, Galsworthy's reformist spirit considerably evaporated.

Both Galsworthy's plays and novels strike us now as having something of the highbrow soap-opera quality television's "Masterpiece Theater" often indulges in, but at the time it was less noticed because disguised with a naturalistic method. Granville Barker was the perfect director for Galsworthy because Barker's flair for atmospheric detail, ensemble acting, and stiff-upper-lip underplaying

emphasized that naturalistic quality. Galsworthy thereby succeeded in creating the illusion of authorial neutrality so crucial to both the scientific pretensions of naturalism and the artistic creed of evenhandedness. Yet this reputation for a balanced presentation was seemingly contradicted by the fact that his plays were so powerfully persuasive of the need for reform. Galsworthy saw no contradiction, however, for, as he said, the best way for a playwright to be persuasive is to be "fair," that is, to show both sides and let the truth arise naturally out of the conflict, allowing the audience to go where their feelings take them. Of course, as with all so-called naturalists, Galsworthy secretly stacked the deck. Believing that "the physical emotional thrill is all that really counts in a play,"[40] he deliberately charged his plays with a heightened

emotionalism that played on the audience's feelings, much in the manner of nineteenth-century melodrama. With his supposedly naturalistic plays imbued with a sneaky theatricality, Galsworthy had his cake and ate it too.

In Galsworthy's twenty-seven plays (including seven one-acts), written from 1906 to 1929, though a few experiment with comedy and poetic symbolism, there is a uniformity of style, tone, and subject matter that suggests artistic complacency or stagnation. From prewar to postwar, he stuck mostly to the social problem plays expected of him. Curiously, for a novelist, Galsworthy did not make his plays as readable as they were playable. Much of his language is rather flat, unrhetorical, unpoetic, and generally not of the

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sort that lifts the imagination by itself. But the spareness of the dialogue lends a certain swiftness and authenticity that adds up to greater clarity and a more direct emotional effect. Unlike Ibsen, who compensated for modern inexpressiveness with symbolic overtones, poetic imagery, and a psychological subtext, Galsworthy was unable to make his naturalistic language very evocative. And where Ibsen would be subtle, ambiguous, and suggestive, Galsworthy tended to be blatant and repetitious in making his points, as though less trusting of his audience. And whereas the famous realistic detail of an Ibsen play is crammed with suggestive meaning, Galsworthy's detail, though convincing as "photography," is not always significant. Several of his trial scenes, for instance, remind one of crime thrillers in which the detail of a court scene is presented for its ability to build tension but in lieu of more meaningful action. And, in what was otherwise a

golden age of comedy, Galsworthy's plays generally lack a sense of humor, even of the grim Ibsen sort, though occasionally he fell back on comic relief. Not comic sparklers, nor even bittersweet tragicomedies, his plays are mostly "dramas," as the French came to call any non-comic play that wasn't a tragedy. But even after tallying up all the ways that Galsworthy's plays fall short of the day's best models, we are left with the fact that audiences for over two decades found his plays compelling and worthy of high regard. ***The Silver Box*** (1906), the only Court Theatre production of his plays during the great Barker experiment, set the mold

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for Galsworthy's particular brand of genteel naturalism. The characters, unidealized and unheroic, are shown to be products of culture. They behave automatically, according to their conditioning, and it is the inhumanity of this machine of culture against which the play indirectly inveighs. Jack Barthwick, the son of a wealthy family, coming home drunk late one night, enlists the aid of one Jones, unemployed husband of the family's charwoman, in unlocking the door. Invited in for a drink to reward his assistance, Jones steals a silver cigarette case and a purse containing money that, ironically, Jack had stolen earlier from a woman, apparently to pay her back for refusing him sex. Jones is eventually arrested, and the action of the play mostly consists of Jack's parents coming to the awful realization that their dissolute son has committed a crime as serious as Jones's, with no poverty to justify it, but resisting the implications of their knowledge. Typically in such Galsworthy plays, one of the hard-hearted wealthy, usually an older man, reveals a redeeming sentimental streak, susceptible to the sufferings of others, and here it is Mr. Barthwick who, after

hearing Jones's pathetic case tried in court and feeling uncomfortable with the parallel between Jones and his son, asks that most of the charges be dropped. But still Jones gets one month at hard labor while Jack gets off scot-free. The audience of 1906 was overwhelmed by what appeared to be the naked truth about the injustice of the class system.

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II- Galsworthy's Dramatic Craftsmanship

Referring to Galsworthy's dramatic craftsmanship, Coats has observed : " Galsworthy is a master of dramatic technique and his plays are well worth studying from this point of view alone . 'A good plot', we are told, is that sure edifice which slowly rises out of the interplay of circumstance on temperament, and temperament on circumstance. Within the enclosing atmosphere of an idea . A human being is the best plot there is'. His plots are not the unwinding of a skein of complicated happenings, so intricately contrived that the interest mainly depends on the ingenuity of the story . Rather, they are the unfolding of a situation, with its effects on character and corresponding reactions the other way. All this is 'within the atmosphere of an idea'. A play in Galsworthy's conception should have a theme, and every scene, even every word, should contribute something to the exposition of that theme, as integral parts of an organic and artistic unity.

"On the whole, Galsworthy's climaxes are good. They are not included in every play; but where they do occur, they are reached naturally and inevitably by a kind of sure pointing forward and acceleration from the beginning . **The Fugitive** is a good example of this. We see the end coming from the first Act, and when it does come it is terrible, piteous, and heart-rending in the extreme. The

same may be said of **The Mob** and **Justice,** though in both of these an element of accident or sudden impulse rods the climax of

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genuinely tragic power. In these three plays no other characters of importance are allowed to distract our attention from the leading personages, and we follow their fortunes with breathless interest to predestined close . There is an important dramatic climax also in **Joy,** but it is subtle and psychological and one is not so prepared for it before hand as in the other plays .

Five of Galsworthy's plays end with the death of the principal character. These are **Justice, The Fugitive, The Mob, Loyalties,** and **Old English.** In nearly all these cases it is to be noticed that Galsworthy softens the tragic close by casting a glamour of tenderness and pity over the final scene…

Violent death is not deemed necessary in a play by Galsworthy, in order to make the conclusion tragic . There is a consummate art in the close of **The Silver Box,** where the good and evil characters (if so they may be termed) are finally brought together, and the unspeakable wrong and sorrow and sorrow of the play are condensed into a single look . Similarly tragic are the looks which John Anthony and David Roberts give one another at the close of Strife, and Dancy and de Levis exchange towards the close of **Loyalties…**

In most of the above cases the interest lies in tragic consequences which may be said to be foreseen. In other instances, the interest lies in the way are help in suspense while some issue remains in doubt.

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There are many interesting examples of dramatic **parallelism** in Galsworthy's plays … Occasionally, parallelism takes the form of contrast . Galsworthy excels in the employment of **ironic contrast .** At the meeting of the directors in Strife, the death of Roberts' wife is announced immediately after Wilder has been whining about the desirability of getting his own ill wife despatched to sunny Spain. A fine example of ironic contrast occurs in **The Mob.** When the Highlanders march past More's house to the skirkling of the bagpipes and the martial beating of the drums, and patriotic emotion is thus intensified and sublimated, More surrenders his position, and is actually giving his promise to hold his peace about the war . But after the soldiers come a surging, howling mob of people who shout, 'Give the beggars hell', and More at once reverts to his attitude of un

III- The Social and Historical Background:

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Due to the rise of the rising middle classes and decline of the English aristocracy between I901-1914 there was a severe divergence that dominated the English society. As a result of the declining business and rise of unemployment, workmen's strikes increased. The society of the time was marked for three features. First, the gap was widening excessively between rich and the poor classes. Second, rich and middle classes were limiting birth whereas the poor classes never did so, and were growing excessively. Third, poor classes were migrating abroad to Canada to make fortune and class prejudice came into existence.

Those who were born in the lap of luxury were spending money on clothes, food and house decoration but that did not secure their happiness. To be poor was a hallmark, and to be rich was

goodness. To keep up an appearance of respectability, they had to spend more money on ostentation at the expense of household allowances. To middle class respectability was the catchword besides they adhered to certain conventions. Behind the mask of respectability that hid the class vices such as cruelty, drunkenness and madness. Therefore, playwrights and novelists adopted a critical and ironical attitude towards the upper middle class and its ills as basing class distinction on difference in income.

Galsworthy's world concentrated on the commercial upper middle class that honored property, as it was their main concern. They were in fact enslaved by convention and society. In his works there is always a conflict between the

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oppressors and the oppressed. The oppressors were the rich maintaining a secure position in society due to their property and wealth adopted a cruel attitude towards the poor and the needy. Consequently, the oppressed were the poor who underwent hard conditions due to the decline of the British commerce, industry and agriculture that left their impact on them.

IV - The Title of the play:

Galsworthy succeeded in choosing the title of his play. So the choice was not haphazard. It is in fact symbolic. The silver box stands as a symbol of property owned by a middle class family that regarded property as sacred and when lost, the family exerted every effort to restore it. Unfortunately a poor man out of spite for this rich class stole the silver box. In this way he exposes himself to their revenge for his foul deed. Thus the theft results in dangerously in the life of the Jones who own nothing and reflects the hypocrisy and cruelty of the propertied class. The Barthwicks

and their helpers, the detective and the lawyer, carry out their orders and do their duty on behalf of the stronger party with the result that the have-not suffered much; Mrs. Jones lost her work and reputation and the whole family was exposed to severe conditions and dark future.

In The Silver Box, Galsworthy presents a real depiction of the early 20th. Century society in England with its two-antagonistic classes possessing two extremely hostile

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attitudes. The greedy rich people versus the poor needy class. Both had their ills but were alike in essence. They approved of their government's colonial policy hoping to make fortune and rise in the social scale to become middle class.

Galsworthy was so sensitive as to depict the subtle change in society. The middle class was decaying and the working was advancing. The degeneration of the middle class was symbolized by Barthwick, the lawyer and the detective. Private property is to be symbolized by the silver box and the victorious attempt to get it back. The play traces back the advance made by the working class in England, with its large number due to their good qualities of facing responsibility, ability to survive, endurance, patience, solidarity, emancipated women, courage, bravery in facing the world bare of any property. It came after two world wars. Galsworthy is to be praised for hitting upon such a point as early as 1906. This makes the play a document in tracing the decay of the middle classes.

Both John Galsworthy's strengths and weaknesses as a dramatist derive from his commitment to the ideas and methods of realistic drama. He was neither a religious man nor a political activist, and

his plays spoke for no specific ideology or orthodoxy, but he believed that every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral; and the business of the dramatist is so to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of day. This meant, as he said in Some Platitudes Concerning Drama, that drama must be

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shaped so as to have a spire of meaning. Such a theory of drama attempts two mutually contradictory tasks: first, the objective, balanced, impartial depiction of reality, and second, the embodiment of the playwright's subjective, ethical, emotional response in the posing or shaping of a moral spire of meaning. Galsworthy's plays are secular morality plays. His gentlemanly didacticism issues in dramatic sermons that attempt to evoke sympathy and understanding for the human condition and that teach the humanistic creeds of civility, compromise, and fair play. In Galsworthy's plays, the sentimental or melodramatic pointing of a moral frequently undercuts the attempt to depict faithfully the problems of individual characters or social groups. The realistic problem play was not a new form when Galsworthy took it up; its development in England can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when Tom Taylor and Thomas William Robertson attempted to leaven their melodramas with realistic settings and restrained social comment. (Robertson's /Caste/, produced in 1867 and notable for dramatizing a marriage across class lines, was Galsworthy's favorite play when he was at Oxford.) In the late nineteenth century, this English tradition drew strength from the influence of Henrik Ibsen's realistic social dramas, which were championed in England by William Archer and also by Shaw, who published /The Quintessence of Ibsenism/

during this period (1891, 1913). Following Ibsen's example but lacking his genius, Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero combined upper-

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middle-class marriage problems with the form of the well-made play; the result was a rejuvenation of English drama. Though he wrote comedy in the paradoxical mode pioneered by W. S. Gilbert and Oscar Wilde, Shaw's challenging and idiosyncratic variety of dramatic realism was also inspired by Ibsen. Shaw's plays and polemics helped to create an atmosphere of critical acceptance in England for the realistic theater of ideas and social problems.

Throughout Galsworthy's dramatic works, there is a tension between oppressive moralism and melodramatic theatricality. As critic Allardyce Nicoll has observed Galsworthian realism and Socialist Realism tend to suffer from the same pathetic complaint deplorable and even tawdry sentimentalism. In plays such as /Strife, Loyalties/, and /Escape/, however, Galsworthy successfully combined realistic representation with dramatic presentation of theme. His plays remain historically interesting because they embody his perceptions of English social and ethical attitudes in the early twentieth century. As examples of realistic drama, his plays have merit as the works of a sincere and careful craftsperson who wrote in a tradition made great by the true artists who made it their own: Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Anton Chekhov, and George Bernard Shaw. *The Silver Box* In a letter, Galsworthy remarked that the â€oemain idea of /The Silver Box/ was one law for the rich, another for the poor is true, but not because society wills it so, rather, in spite of society's good intentions, through the mere mechanical

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wide-branching power of money. Galsworthy's play contrasts the unprincipled, propertied, and pragmatic upper-middle-class characters with their lower-class victims in the manipulation of the judicial system. The audience knows from the beginning who the culprits are in two related cases of petty thievery, but Galsworthy creates suspense through gradual revelation of their guilt to their families. The first thief is young Jack Barthwick, down from Oxford on vacation, who, while out drinking with a female companion, steals her purse containing seven pounds. The play opens as Jack returns to the Barthwick home with Jones, a drunken, unemployed groom. When Jack passes out, Jones steals the purse and a silver cigarette box. Jack's theft is revealed to his family but is concealed in court at Jones's trial until after Jones's sentencing, when he can only cry out in helpless frustration, thus giving the audience the main idea of the play: is money got. The Barthwicks coward hypocrisy is illustrated throughout the play, especially in one scene at the end of act 2. Jack's father, John Barthwick, a Liberal Member of Parliament, is so concerned that the scandal of a trial will damage his political and social reputation that he betrays his Liberal sympathy for the poor. One of the Jones children is heard sobbing outside the Barthwicks window because the child cannot find Mrs. Jones, his mother and the Barthwicks housekeeper (she has been wrongly. The most important element in summarizing a Galsworthy play is to delineate

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the two sides of the social question he is dramatizing, since he starts with finding a serious conflict that has two.

Mr. Galsworthy has reaffirmed the existence of the common man; an individual long ignored upon the English stage. The West End society drama had no place for him. The man in the drawing-room is not upon speaking terms with the man in the street. Epigrammatic comedy gave him no part, for the common man does not deal in epigrams. The music halls burlesqued him, figuring him only with a battered silk hat, a red nose and a pair of parti-coloured trousers. Even melodrama failed to represent him fairly, for the common man is not addicted to crime. Bernard Shaw , engaged in bombarding the very civilization in which the common man believes, burlesqued him as completely as the music hall, stuffed him with persiflage to bursting point, and hurled him at the social order as a new weapon of offence.

At this point, Mr. Galsworthy arrived. To all appearance he might never have read a line of Shaw, but he had just as little in common with Sir Arthur Pinero. The Court Theatre opened its doors and Mr. Galsworthy walked in. He proceeded at once to set up his pair of scales upon the stage and to test the social values. In the one pan a Liberal member of Parliament and his son; in the other Mrs. Jones, the charwoman, and her husband. As a makeweight the silver box. Here we see at once the interpenetration of classes which distinguishes Mr. Galsworthy. As in the novel *Fraternity*, and the plays *Strife* and *Justice*, he refuses to

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accept the class divisions which separate ordinary West End drama from life as a whole. He takes up the floor of the drawing-room and shows us the kitchen. He examines the psychology of the butler as minutely as that of the member of Parliament. He follows the charwoman home to her tenement dwelling. He gives

us the history of her husband in search of work. He introduces the solicitor, the detective, the prostitute. He accompanies the police-court missionary upon his rounds. He sits upon the bench with the magistrate. Each of these persons moves upon a separate daily round, a separate social plane; but he brings them all together and makes drama of their lives. Briefly, his case is this. No one can live his own life merely by the virtue of possessing a thousand a year. No class can seal itself hermetically from others. Mrs. Jones' children will come and cling to the railings of the area, and even through the closed window their crying can be heard. One day there arises a petty complication, a workmen's strike, a moment of folly or crime, and the sky-scraper civilization collapses. We are all on the ground floor together, scrambling. The graduated coinage of society is in the melting-pot. Interest fights interest upon common ground.

Upon that common ground stands Mr. Galsworthy with his pair of scales. He is scrupulously fair. Even in a drama of the vices no virtue escapes his notice. No individual is altogether a blackguard. *The Silver Box*, in some respects the most one-sided of his plays, shows this discrimination clearly. The Liberal member of Parliament means well. If he

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does not understand Jones' unemployment, at least he is always prepared to "ask a question in the House." His wife is unscrupulous, but only in defense of her son. The son himself, although a vicious type, is amiable enough. He has a rudimentary notion of playing the game. Jones did not steal the silver box; he "took it" half-contemptuously while he was in liquor. The magistrate is kindly. The police-court trial is as fair as it can humanly be

considering the balance of interests. Jones is sent to prison, it is true, in order to prevent a newspaper scandal. But "one law for the rich and another for the poor" is not merely a propagandist cry; it is a platitude. The trial scene is as mechanically inevitable as all the forces which move Mr. Galsworthy's characters. The limitations of free will are narrow. In a social crisis the common man is helpless. He must accept his fate for good or evil. *The Silver Box* is an indictment of society, although not one of its characters would accept it as such. It is more than an indictment--a complete trial, in which Mr. Galsworthy appears both for the prosecution and the defense.

In *Joy* he failed because the subject did not suit him. Still the balance of pleading is honourably adjusted. On the one hand the mother of middle age with a lover; on the other the daughter who cannot comprehend until she, too, discovers romance. In *Strife* he returned to social drama on a larger scale. Here class meets class once more. A strike of quarrymen brings them together. The conflict appears at first sight individual, for two figures, the chairman of the

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employing firm and the leader of the strikers, stand out clearly from the rest. Actually neither drives. Both are driven. *Strife*, like *Justice* and *The Silver Box*, is an interplay of forces rather than of persons. The collective will to resist concentrates upon either hand in the strongest individual. In the quarrymen's leader it is active; in the old employer obstinate and passive. The lesser characters propose compromise, offer sympathy, attempt reconciliation; but the forces are too strong for them. The play ends with a settlement which might have been made at the beginning.

The balance remains steady. In *Justice* the scales are loaded. Mr. Galsworthy is as fair as ever to individuals, but he attacks deliberately a part of the social system that they have created. In the first act we learn that William Falder, a clerk in a lawyer's office, has stolen eighty-one pounds for the purpose of carrying off the woman whom he loves and rescuing her from a brutal husband. He is found out, arrested and sentenced to three years' penal servitude at the following assizes. The third act shows him in solitary confinement, and in the fourth, returning to the world after two years on ticket-of-leave, he finds conditions against him, is arrested again for forging testimonials, and commits suicide. That is, baldly stated, the history of William Falder. He is no heroic figure pursued by Fate; nothing but a pitiful creature who is not wanted, an unsolved problem in a world too busy with its own affairs to study him. It is his life that is painful; his death brings nothing but a feeling of intense relief.

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Mr. Galsworthy has named this play a tragedy. Just as Mr. Barker has created a new type in the hero-raisonneur, so he had created a new form in the tragedy without a hero. There is not a single person in *Justice* whose removal could be a loss to the world in any but a limited personal sense; no one (with the possible exception of the counsel for the defense) who could conceivably entertain a universally valuable idea; no one with the individual power and passion which alone can give inspiration to drama. Lawyers and clerks, judge, jury and officers of the court; governor, warders and chaplain of the prison--they all exist by the thousand, and they could all be raplaced a hundred times a day. They go about their work as slaves of inexorable law. Their human feelings,

their kindliness and sympathy, are the emotions of people who, in the midst of a world unknown, and therefore presumably hostile, find two friendly camps of men and women like-minded to themselves--the family and the office--and cling to them both as instinctively as sheep huddle beneath a hedge for shelter from the drifting snow. There is no color, no mystery, no surprise about them. We can see not only their part in the passing incidents of the play, but the whole round of their lives. They may be interesting or uninteresting personally, but their chief business in life is to be a part of the social machinery. William Falder is one of them. He becomes entangled in the machinery, and it crushes him. The process is as mechanical as an execution. One feels that it is inhuman, barbaric, detestable; but never

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that it is tragic. It arouses anger and pity, not inspiration. And inspiration is the test of tragedy. In the conflict of the gods and men the sense of the tragic depends upon the greatness of the protagonists. He who fights well cannot but die nobly. Mr. Galsworthy's Falder does not fight at all, and he dies like a rat in a trap.

It should be the tritest commonplace to say that no playwright can make great drama out of little people. The naturalistic drama has had opportunities enough ... and it has justified itself only in proportion as it has created exceptional figures and splashed the grey background of actuality with living colours; in proportion, that is to say, as it has become unnaturalistic. It's naturalism is then only external. Mr. Galsworthy's is internal. The characters of *Justice* are grey at heart. The play has many extraordinarily moving passages. It is a fine destructive attack upon solitary

confinement as a part of the prison system, but it is not a tragedy, and it is not great drama. Mr. Galsworthy has a place of his own upon the modern stage. Every play of his has a strongly marked individual atmosphere; his characters are distinctive without being distinguished. He understands the limitations of the theatre as well as its advantages, and he has never sacrificed drama to dialectics. At the beginning of the newer movement the English stage was out of touch alike with art, with ideas and with actual life. The latter two are only accessories--but let that pass. Bernard Shaw and Mr. Barker brought the ideas; in a

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measure, too, the art. Mr. Galsworthy's preoccupation is with actuality. A gulf still remains.

V- The Themes of the play :

The main theme in the play revolves round social justice. Before the law, all people are equal but to the English society of the time not all men were equal before the law. As a proof Jones was not tried on equal terms with Jack although they were subject to the same circumstances. Barthwick admits his son’s immorality but he also admits that his son’s wealth protects him. Jones who is exposed to the same situation is helpless because of his poverty.

The second theme is prejudice between classes in England. The rich were prejudiced against the working classes and the poor envied them due to their wealth and titles. The upper classes wanted what the middle class had. Jones stole the silver box out of spite to the middle class. He disrespects the Barthwicks and even the maid wheeler does so and ridicules them for spoiling jack and his sleep on the sofa, as he was drunk. The third theme is hypocrisy. Both masters and servants were hypocrites the masters

needed the servants and demanded their respect yet they grudged their wages. The servants on the other hand, needed the wages and grudged the masters their privileges. They criticized their masters in spite of their apparent respect. Mr. Barthwick claimed to be a man of principle but practically he proved to be a hypocrite who used his money

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to keep his reputation and hide his son's scandals. He pretended to sympathise with the poor put he never did so with Mrs. Jones.

The fourth theme dealt with in the play is unemployment and its resultant effects Jones was forced to be absorbed in drinking and to steal because he was unemployed. He lost his job due to the changing conditions of society also, this led to the use of violence when the detective came to look for the stolen silver box. The family suffers later on and was exposed to poverty.

The fifth theme is the fate of the children. The poor classes seemed to have to marry children with result that they lift in deprivation whereas the rice had few children they could spoil and satisfy their needs.

The sixth theme and the last is that of environment. Environment leaves its impact on the individuals characters. For example, Jones hoped to change his lot by travelling to Canada. Jack would never grow up as he was treated as the child unable to shoulder responsibility. The Livens girls were sent to a home to be kept a way from their improper-mannered mother.

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VI- Characterization

The criticism has been made that Galsworthy in his dramatic work gives us types rather than individuals, and that his characters do

not develop within the compass of his plays in which they appear… This would perhaps be true to say that Galsworthy does not take an independent interest in his characters as such; that is to say, he does not elaborate them for their own sake and apart from the function they are intended to serve in the play as a whole. In this he is different from Shakespeare, for example, whose characters insist on existing in their own right as independent human beings, quite apart from the duties they have to perform in the play itself. Galsworthy does not tell us more of his characters than we need to know for the purpose of following the play. In this he is true to the recognized canons of dramatic art.

A closer study of the play leads to symmetry in gathering the characters together and rhythm in the occurrence of the events.

The characters of the play can be easily classified as two contrast antagonistic groups. Each one has his counterpart in the other group. So we have two fathers and two mothers, with a difference in social status and material resources.

First we have Mr. Barthwick who belonged to the high middle class. He is propertied and a Liberal member of the parliament. On the other hand, we have Jones an

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unemployed father who lost his job as a groom due to changing conditions. He is full hatred towards the other class. He commits illegal acts out of need. Mrs. Barthwick, spoils her son and looks down upon the lower classes. Her counter part is Mrs. Jones who his to struggle day and night to support her children and worked as a char for this reason.

The son Jack is a drunkard and a thief too. Although he is wrapped in the lab of luxury yet he is ill mannered. Mrs. Jones' sons are

needy and suffer much from the lack of money and food. They sometimes go to school without food due to utter poverty.

Through his use of Irony Galsworthy sets the two contrastive groups of people against each other. Barthwick, the professional politician holds bright mottoes and ideal principles. Seemingly he is a principled man who claims to be sympathetic to the poor and have nots, but he turns to be unprincipled when he treats Mrs. Jones roughly when she tries to defy her right and turns a deaf ear to her sons' cries. He assumes the position of a confirmed father but through the use of his money he tries to save his son from scandals. He indirectly spoils his son and encourages him to be ill-mannered by trying to hush his scandals and at the same time be is trying to protect himself from being shown up if these news reached the newspapers.

Barthwick's prejudiced attitude drives him to use dishonest ways to clear his son and penalize the thief Jones

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although his son is in fact a thief like Jones. Barthwick is an embodiment of the man of property who uses his money to achieve the desired aims. He is a symbol of the unbalanced social scale and its materialistic viewpoint.

Barthwick's counterpart is Jones who is unemployed, and holds the same opinion about money as a means to an end and after stealing a sum of money he aspires to migrate to Canada to make a fortune for himself and secure a good future for his sons. Nevertheless, he is Barthwick' s extreme or opposite He is regarded as a symbol of failure. Like Barthwick, he is a father and a husband who at times ill-treats them but never loses interest in them. He thinks of migration to better their conditions and attacks

in the detective to keep Mrs. Jones ’ good names. He is full of paradoxical attitudes. He never humiliates himself: though he is unemployed, he keeps his dignity. Though he admits that he is a thief, he denies the accusation directed to his wife. He shoulders responsibility and marries her when she gives birth to a child

Unlike his other counterpart Jack, he never shows himself as a coward or a liar. Both of them were thieves and drunkards. They had many things in common. They had immoral affairs with immoral women. Both were a source of trouble to society. When chastised, they were unequal before the law. Jack was backed by his wealth and the allies of his class who were the detective and the lawyer. Though he reveals the fact that they were thieves because he stole the silver box and Jack stole the reticule, Jones is penalized

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whereas jack is cleaned. Here Galsworthy reveals the corruption of the law as it differentiates between the poor and the rich, and encourages one class to have more privileges before the law than the other.

On the feminine level we have two antagonistic women. Both are mothers and have children but they were not the same in most cases.

Mrs. Jones is a devoted mother. she strives to support her chidden. She stands for what is good in the lower class. She is a symbol of a powerful mother. She is marked for her self-denial. Though her husband ill-treat s her children when was not himself yet she sympathizes with him and tries to find excuses for his harshness. She speaks well of him on any occasion her power diminishes when she comes face to face with the middle class.

She becomes timid when Mr. Barthwick suspects her of stealing and she is unable to clear herself. Also, she is exposed to the same situation at home when the detective searches her home and finds the silver box. In court she neither helped her husband to be declared not guilty nor restored her job at Mr. Barthwick's. In this way she was a powerful - powerless woman.

Her counterpart is Mrs. Barthwick. She managed to protect her son and keep the family' s reputation by imposing her strong will on both her husband and son. She persuades her husband to hide her son's immoral behavior hush all sources of complaint. He is forced to pay the owner of the reticule the money she demands and the tailor who was

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given unpayable cheques. The son also is exposed to her influence, as he is to declare that he had never seen Jones before. Yet she is powerless. As far as her son is concerned, she is ready to do anything to protect him from the dark future awaiting him owing to his ill legal deeds. She is a failure in imposing a moral effect on him. She is cruel and merciless. She wants to inflict a severe punishment on the Jones's by showing up their immorality to the judge. She wants to ruin them and she succeeds in doing so by dismissing MRS Jones like her husband she turns a deaf ear to the heart - aching cries of Jones' s children. She could not get over her class prejudice and her hostile attitude towards the poor.

VII- Critical Analysis of the play

The Play takes the form of a pseudo-novel. This is the form that was favorite to Shaw. Only Shaw wrote a long introduction to each of his plays, and sometimes an epilogue. Galsworthy was a disciple of Shaw and his play, The Silver Box was accepted by

Shaw and Granville Barker as fit for production on the stage. The pseudo-novel is a play in which the playwright tells much about his characters and narrates some incidents in his stage directions. The reader gets the feeling that he is reading a

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novel that gives great attention to dialogue. The pseudo-novel is something in between a play and a novel. (1)

The behavior of each character is determined by his or her background. But very often in life and in art people and characters grow and experience a spiritual change, and overstep, in their behaviour, the bounds underlined by their material circumstances, and physical and sensual needs. Galsworthy lacks this spiritual growth and this change. Although his plays are well built, yet they lacked what makes them seem natural. He did not let his characters act as they ought to or liked but they seem to be puppets moving according to someone' s will and speaking out what ideas he wants them to say. As a matter of fact he succeeded in writing realistic plays dealing with social problems but his plays lack the force that makes them live for long like Shakespeare's.

His characters may be labeled as wooden and his plays lacked the swiftness and skill of Shaw. His dialogue is dull and his characters act their role in the actions and never grow or develop.

This is the main weakness of the play. But this is the penalty of the Propagandist who invents characters to serve an idea or to prove a case.

)1(**Williams, Raymond, op, cit. p. 157 .**

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VIII- The Structure of the play:

Galsworthy has given great care to the structure of his play. The structure takes the form of a beautiful architectural pattern characterized by symmetry and rhythm. The symmetry is in grouping of the characters. The rhythm in the occurrence of events like the revelations about Jack' s life and about Jones' s life.

Good dialogue, in Galsworthy's view, ' is character marshaled so as to continue to stimulate interest or excitement… From start to finish good dialogue is hand-made, like good lace; clear, of fine texture, furthering with each thread the harmony and strength of a design to which all must be subordinated'.

The dialogue of Galsworthy weaves the fabric of a play together in a harmonic unity of design. It unfolds plot on the one hand, and reveals character on the other, both of them in a perfectly natural manner… By means of ordinary conversation, carefully selected but reduced almost to bareness, his characters convey to the audience everything that is necessary to a full understanding of themselves and their situation. This skill is well exemplified in the opening scenes of The Silver Box. No need to tell us in a roundabout way, what are the antecedent of Jack Barthwick, Jones, and Mrs. Jones. Their talk tells us that, in a free a manner as if they were speaking to one another only, without being overheard by anyone else at all.

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Moreover, dialogue is successfully employed by Galsworthy for the purpose of revealing character. The speakers, while furthering the plot by what they say, also disclose their secrets of their own hearts. Yet there are few long speeches. All Galsworthy's characters talk well, but they do not, like those of some other

dramatists, talk at great length simply for the pleasure of hearing themselves talk…

One more point to be noted is the condensed brevity of Galsworthy's dialogue in moments of supreme crisis.

In The Silver Box, there is of course the threat of being dull. There may be little action and very silly plot. The dialogue may be lengthy and oratory. But Galsworthy' s brilliance showed itself. We have an interesting dramatic structure. We are always in expectation and are excited at certain carefully studied moments. Our suspense is aroused from the very beginning and we are shocked by revelation after revelation about the Joneses, the Barthwicks, and society at large. Many surprises await the reader and the audience. There are also tears to drop for the sentimental as when the children of Mrs. Jones cried under Mr. Barthwick's window, and certain things to contemplate for the thinker as the fate of Mrs. Jones and the exercise of justice. The play is never dull and the stage is full of action. Sometimes the action is melodramatic like the assault on the detective and the weeping of children. And while we read or watch, we compare and contrast the characters in the depth of our hearts.

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The dialogue is brilliantly clear and vastly better than the dialogue of his contemporaries, and to his middle class audience. The speech came off as something fresh and amusing. We have two antagonistic groups. Any character in one group has his or her counterpart in the other group. Though a character sometimes can be more than one thing. We have before us two mothers, who are at the same time two wives, two young men, and two fathers. Thus, we have five characters, two females and three males.

These are the main characters and it is difficult to point out a hero. They are not so much individuals as types.

Mr. Barthwick was a liberal M P. and he was like another Liberal M.P. who belonged to the propertied classes. His son is spoilt, and irresponsible. He was also a thief. But he had his like everywhere. Mrs. Barthwick was not the only woman of means who spoilt her son, She was not only passive, but filled with Prejudice against the lower classes. Jones was unemployed and a drunkard but he was like many people and his wife Mrs. Jones was not the only working class woman who supported a husband and children. Even their children were not the only children suffering from ill nutrition or threatened with being thrown on the streets.

VIII- The Technique of the Play

Galsworthy constitutes the content of The Silver Box as ‘a slice of life, something that probably happened or happen’. The content was a rendering into art of certain and

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political features of his day. The form, he chose was realistic. We see the characters behaving as in real-life. The Barthwicks had their breakfast, ate their nuts, and drank their coffee before us on the stage. Jack and Jones drank whisky and smoke cigarettes. Jack slept on the sofa.

IX - The function of satire and irony in The Silver Box

Galsworthy’s interest in symmetry needs him to divide his main characters in seemingly contrastive pairs. But he does this with irony. He wants us to notice simultaneously the explicit contrast between the units in each pair, and their implicit similarity. Galsworthy cannot help being ironical and satirical, since the contrastive units are, in truth, similar. One of the units in each pair

belongs to the rich class, the other belongs to the working classes. The symmetry made him use the same phrase twice. Mrs. Barthwick accused her husband of lacking imagination in politics and he said that she lacked it concerning their life.

Galsworthy thus provides us with five living symbolic images, whose fate brought them together in strife which started by accident and which helped Galsworthy' s Propagandist purposes.

Galsworthy is satirical because the rich and the poor were moved by the same principles, and the apparent contrast did not exist at all. The difference is only in society's attitude to each group. Although all the political

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parties professed in theory that "all Englishmen were equal before the law", as Jack told Jones, yet that was 'rot'. Jack himself added, to Jones. And this was the truth of the matter. Jack meant that this could never be true in practice and this is what the play is about.

Galsworthy raises a fundamental question in this play. It is the equality of the people before the law. Facts are given that there was a law for the rich that connived their mistakes and another the poor chastising them severely if they were wronged. This in fact a realistic picture of the society of Galsworthy which he satirized in the play.

Galsworthy with his legal background has set himself to prove that in England there was one law for the poor and another for the rich. With the intellectual coldness and the impartiality of a historian and a lawyer, he holds the balance between the opposing forces, and thus gives a true and realistic picture of England at the beginning of the twentieth century. The picture is unflattering Both sides of the struggle, the haves and the have nots, were, the outcome of

environment and of social forces stronger than them. Nobody in England, Galsworthy saw, could get rid of class prejudice even the poor looked down upon the rich as snobs.

But the types Galsworthy chose to prove his case were typically representative. Not all working men were drunk nor were they apt to violence even if they were out of work. And the Barthwicks did not belong to the bulk of the middle

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class. Galsworthy gave his characters a life of their own. He made them do and say what they believe and what served his case and this is why the play is a good one. The only character allowed a bit of and growth was Mrs. Jones. She did not leave her husband though he treated her badly and was a burden on her. she sure that leaving him might be good.

Galsworthy evoked a case. What was tolerated in the past and regarded as a misdemeanor of an irresponsible child, is now regarded as a serious crime for which a poor man was sent to prison and his family had to face utter poverty. The right to have property was sacred. The propertied class was a privileged.

Anther cause tackled by Galsworthy is the lack of money and its destructive results. Money is the root of all evil but running short of money as in Jones ’s case leads to harmful results both to society and individuals. Jones becomes a drunkard, immoral and a nuisance and is put in prison, his family is ruined and his wife loses her reputation and job.

Barthwick owns too much money and that is harmful too, because he uses it to hide his son’s crimes and keep his good name and respectability. He turns be a hypocrite and professes to sympathize with the poor.

Practically, he is unjust and cruel particularly to Mrs. Jones, after the trial. Jack, the son, is a thief like Jones but he is not punished or put to shame like him just because he is rich. The Barthwicks stand as a symbol of the

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degenerating middle class and what they did was only a trial to survive.

The lack of money in Galsworthy's view led to drunkenness and to immorality. When a man lost his job or was put in prison, his family was thrown on the streets. This is how society begot criminals and immoral women. And this is the purpose of the propaganda Galsworthy shocked and surprised his audience and readers with. The other part of the propaganda is that having too much money helped a man to hide his crimes, a hypocrite, to keep appearances, and to show a respectable to the whole sympathy of the guardians of society, lawyers and detectives. Money helped a man like Barthwick to protect home and to suppress his conscience. He did not feel pity for Mrs. Jones children when they came weeping to his window. He did not sympathise with Mrs. Jones when she tried to speak to him after the trial so she might get her work back. Refusing to listen in both cases an indication that he was acting cruelly and unjustly, and not want a reminder of the fact.

The lack of money, on the other hand, brings a man and his family shame. It made them subject of suspicion. Barthwick, even the Butler, suspected Mrs. Jones, of stealing the silver box although she was innocent. Mrs. Jones was behind in paying the rent of her room. She took home the scantiest of food that the cook was kind

enough to give her. The detective got a warrant for her arrest before he had had proof of her guilt. He would not listen to her

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husband when he defended her and put the blame on himself. Money was at the root of evil. There were two thieves, only one, the poorer, was punished.

Nobody of course contradicts this, and it is a good subject for attack on crime and social evils, and about social reform. But such a subject is difficult to deal with in the form of a play, as out of two thieves, one only got his punishment. So the criminal law and the procedures of law were under doubt.

X- The play as a tragedy

Referring to Galsworthy as a tragic writer, Galsworthy as a Tragic Dramatist

• Though the plays of Galsworthy have a prevailing tragic cast, Galsworthy can hardly be called a writer of tragedy in the ordinary sense of the word. In order to illuminate this view, one might first briefly mention some types of tragedy in literature:

• First, there is what may be called the classical type of tragedy, in which hero and fate come into conflict. A man of eminent rank and dignity, generally a king, violates a divine law, such as that forbidding parricide or incest. He may do this undesignedly, through chance or ignorance; or he may do it in obedience to other divine law. In either case, swift retribution as a result of the wrath of Gods falls upon the

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wrongdoer or the hero. Oedipus, who slays his father and marries his own mother, may be taken as a good example.

• Secondly, there is the romantic type of tragedy in which hero and villain come into conflict. Here the tragedy moves within a more restricted range. The background of supernatural machinery or fate is discarded and the scope of action confined to human agents. In this type of tragedy, the machination of the villain usually lead to the death of the hero and at the same time brings about his spiritual exaltation Othello and Iago are the best representatives of Shakespearean romantic tragedies.

• A third type, which may be termed as psychological, which gives us the tragedy of the divided self. Here we have still a conflict between good and evil, but it is now shifted to the realm of inner life. A man's enemy no longer confronts him in the outer world, but lie concealed within his own bosom where the lusts of the flesh contest with the spirit or divided loyalties rend the heart in twain. There remains what may described as social tragedy, in which the society takes the place of the divided self. The conflict is now transformed from the individual to the community. Groups, classes, interests pull in different ways. There is neither spirit of harmony, nor reasoned co-operation. The result is friction, waste havoc, a house divided against itself, the exhausting struggle of clashing forces at cross purposes within one another.

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• It is this last type of tragedy that is chiefly, though not exclusively, exemplified in Galsworthy's plays.

The points on which it differs from those brought into comparison may be chiefly indicated.

There is here no question of external fate. As in romantic and psychological tragedies, the influence of supernatural forces is eliminated and the struggle confined to human beings.

It is social tragedy, which Galsworthy seems to dramatize. In a word The silver Box mainly concentrates attention on the strife of man who faces his fate and other social inadequacies; inequality, victimization and injustice that individuals might confront.

There is a sentimental element used by Galsworthy to make the readers or audience shed tears or sympathize with the characters. Tears are shed at the shattered family of Mrs. Jones and her three children. We sympathize with the Jones for their fate and feel great indignation against the Barthwicks we share Jones his Joy at the idea of going to Canada to improve his lot and sorrow when his hopes are shattered at the hands of the detective. We feel angry on hearing of Mrs. Jones fault before being legally married, yet, we think highly of her for backing Jones in his hard financial conditions and beating him in spite of hitting her when he got drunk.

Jones can not be regarded as a tragic hero though he may not conform to the definition of the tragic heroes

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because he is not a noble man; hence he can not answer the fundamental requirement of a tragic hero. He is a drunkard and a thief. He stole the silver box and the reticule. He assaults the detective on coming to look for the stolen property. What makes for his defects is that despite the failure of his plans and its resultant frustration, he tells the truth to convince the detective of Mrs. Jones's innocence. So these moments reveal his good traits. He was a drunkard when he stole the silver box so he brought the punishment inflicted upon him due to that foul deed.

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The silver Box

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

JOHN BARTHWICK, M.P., a wealthy Liberal

MRS. BARTHWICK, his wife

JACK BARTHWICK, their son

ROPER, their solicitor

MRS. JONES, their charwoman

MARLOW, their manservant

WHEELER, their maidservant

JONES, the stranger within their gates

MRS. SEDDON, a landlady

SNOW, a detective

A POLICE MAGISTRATE

AN UNKNOWN LADY, from beyond

TWO LITTLE GIRLS, homeless

LIVENS, their father

A RELIEVING OFFICER

A MAGISTRATE'S CLERK

AN USHER POLICEMEN, CLERKS, AND OTHERS

TIME: The present. The action of the first two Acts takes place on Easter Tuesday; the action of the third on Easter Wednesday week.

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ACT I

SCENE I :Rockingham Gate. John Barthwick's dining-room.

The curtain rises on the BARTHWICK'S dining-room, large, modern, and well furnished; the window curtains drawn. Electric light is burning. On the large round dining-table is set out a tray

with whisky, a syphon, and a silver cigarette-box. It is past midnight. A fumbling is heard outside the door. It is opened suddenly; JACK BARTHWICK seems to fall into the room. He stands holding by the door knob, staring before him, with a beatific smile. He is in evening dress and opera hat, and carries in his hand a sky-blue velvet lady's reticule. His boyish face is freshly coloured and clean-shaven. An overcoat is hanging on his arm.

JACK. Hello! I've got home all ri——[Defiantly.] Who says I sh'd never 've opened th' door without 'sistance. [He staggers in, fumbling with the reticule. A lady's handkerchief and purse of crimson silk fall out.] Serve her joll' well right—everything droppin' out. Th' cat. I 've scored her off—I 've got her bag. [He swings the reticule.] Serves her joly' well right. [He takes a cigarette out of the silver box and puts it in his mouth.] Never gave tha' fellow anything! [He hunts through all his pockets and pulls a shilling out; it drops and rolls away. He looks for it.] Beastly shilling! [He looks again.] Base ingratitude! Absolutely nothing. [He laughs.] Mus' tell him I've got absolutely nothing.

[He lurches through the door and down a corridor, and presently returns, followed by JONES, who is advanced in liquor. JONES, about thirty years of age, has hollow cheeks, black circles round his eyes, and rusty clothes: He looks as though he might be unemployed, and enters in a hang-dog manner.]

JACK. Sh! sh! sh! Don't you make a noise, whatever you do. Shu' the door, an' have a drink. [Very solemnly.] You helped me to open the door—I 've got nothin, for you. This is my house. My father's name's Barthwick; he's Member of Parliament—Liberal Member of Parliament: I've told you that

before. Have a drink! [He pours out whisky and drinks it up.] I'm not drunk [Subsiding on a sofa.] Tha's all right. Wha's your name? My name's Barthwick, so's my father's; I'm a Liberal too—wha're you?

JONES. [In a thick, sardonic voice.] I'm a bloomin' Conservative. My name's Jones! My wife works 'ere; she's the char; she works 'ere.

JACK. Jones? [He laughs.] There's 'nother Jones at College with me. I'm not a Socialist myself; I'm a Liberal—there's ve—lill difference, because of the principles of the Lib—Liberal Party. We're all equal before the law—tha's rot, tha's silly. [Laughs.] Wha' was I about to say? Give me some whisky.

[JONES gives him the whisky he desires, together with a squirt of syphon.]

Wha' I was goin' tell you was—I 've had a row with her. [He waves the reticule.] Have a drink, Jonessh 'd never have got in without you—tha 's why I 'm giving you a drink. Don' care who knows I've scored her off. Th' cat! [He throws his feet up on the sofa.] Don' you make a noise, whatever you do. You pour out a drink—you make yourself good long, long drink—you take cigarette—you take anything you like. Sh'd never have got in without you. [Closing his eyes.] You're a Tory—you're a Tory Socialist. I'm Liberal myself—have a drink—I 'm an excel'nt chap.

[His head drops back. He, smiling, falls asleep, and JONES stands looking at him; then, snatching up JACK's glass, he drinks it off. He picks the reticule from off JACK'S shirt-front, holds it to the light, and smells at it.]

JONES. Been on the tiles and brought 'ome some of yer cat's fur. [He stuffs it into JACK's breast pocket.]

JACK. [Murmuring.] I 've scored you off! You cat!

[JONES looks around him furtively; he pours out whisky and drinks it. From the silver box he takes a cigarette, puffs

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at it, and drinks more whisky. There is no sobriety left in him.]

JONES. Fat lot o' things they've got 'ere! [He sees the crimson purse lying on the floor.] More cat's fur. Puss, puss! [He fingers it, drops it on the tray, and looks at JACK.] Calf! Fat calf! [He sees his own presentment in a mirror. Lifting his hands, with fingers spread, he stares at it; then looks again at JACK, clenching his fist as if to batter in his sleeping, smiling face. Suddenly he tilts the rest o f the whisky into the glass and drinks it. With cunning glee he takes the silver box and purse and pockets them.] I 'll score you off too, that 's wot I 'll do!

[He gives a little snarling laugh and lurches to the door. His shoulder rubs against the switch; the light goes out. There is a sound as of a closing outer door.]

The curtain falls.

The curtain rises again at once.

SCENE II. The same.

In the BARTHWICK'S dining-room. JACK is still asleep; the morning light is coming through the curtains. The time is half-past eight. WHEELER, brisk person enters with a dust-pan, and MRS. JONES more slowly with a scuttle.

WHEELER. [Drawing the curtains.] That precious husband of yours was round for you after you'd gone yesterday, Mrs. Jones. Wanted your money for drink, I suppose. He hangs about the corner here half the time. I saw him outside the "Goat and Bells" when I went to the post last night. If I were you I would n't live with

him. I would n't live with a man that raised his hand to me. I wouldn't put up with it. Why don't you take your children and leave him? If you put up with 'im it'll only make him worse. I never can see why, because a man's married you, he should knock you about.

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MRS. JONES. [Slim, dark-eyed, and dark-haired; oval-faced, and with a smooth, soft, even voice; her manner patient, her way of talking quite impersonal; she wears a blue linen dress, and boots with holes.] It was nearly two last night before he come home, and he wasn't himself. He made me get up, and he knocked me about; he didn't seem to know what he was saying or doing. Of course I would leave him, but I'm really afraid of what he'd do to me. He 's such a violent man when he's not himself.

WHEELER. Why don't you get him locked up? You'll never have any peace until you get him locked up. If I were you I'd go to the police court tomorrow. That's what I would do.

MRS. JONES. Of course I ought to go, because he does treat me so badly when he's not himself. But you see, Bettina, he has a very hard time—he 's been out of work two months, and it preys upon his mind. When he's in work he behaves himself much better. It's when he's out of work that he's so violent.

WHEELER. Well, if you won't take any steps you 'll never get rid of him.

MRS. JONES. Of course it's very wearing to me; I don't get my sleep at nights. And it 's not as if I were getting help from him, because I have to do for the children and all of us. And he throws such dreadful things up at me, talks of my having men to follow me about. Such a thing never happens; no man ever speaks to me.

And of course, it's just the other way. It's what he does that's wrong and makes me so unhappy. And then he 's always threatenin' to cut my throat if I leave him. It's all the drink, and things preying on his mind; he 's not a bad man really. Sometimes he'll speak quite kind to me, but I've stood so much from him, I don't feel it in me to speak kind back, but just keep myself to myself. And he's all right with the children too, except when he's not himself.

WHEELER. You mean when he's drunk, the beauty.

MRS. JONES. Yes. [Without change of voice] There's the young gentleman asleep on the sofa.

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[They both look silently at Jack.]

MRS. JONES. [At last, in her soft voice.] He does n't look quite himself.

WHEELER. He's a young limb, that's what he is. It 's my belief he was tipsy last night, like your husband. It 's another kind of bein' out of work that sets him to drink. I 'll go and tell Marlow. This is his job.

[She goes.] [Mrs. Jones, upon her knees, begins a gentle sweeping.]

JACK. [Waking.] Who's there? What is it?

MRS. JONES. It's me, sir, Mrs. Jones.

JACK. [Sitting up and looking round.] Where is it—what—what time is it?

MRS. JONES. It's getting on for nine o'clock, sir.

JACK. For nine! Why—what! [Rising, and loosening his tongue; putting hands to his head, and staring hard at Mrs. Jones.] Look

here, you, Mrs.——Mrs. Jones—don't you say you caught me asleep here.

MRS. JONES. No, sir, of course I won't sir.

JACK. It's quite an accident; I don't know how it happened. I must have forgotten to go to bed. It's a queer thing. I 've got a most beastly headache. Mind you don't say anything, Mrs. Jones.

[Goes out and passes MARLOW in the doorway. MARLOW is young and quiet; he is cleanshaven, and his hair is brushed high from his forehead in a coxcomb. Incidentally a butler, he is first a man. He looks at MRS. JONES, and smiles a private smile.]

MARLOW. Not the first time, and won't be the last. Looked a bit dicky, eh, Mrs. Jones?

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MRS. JONES. He did n't look quite himself. Of course I did n't take notice.

MARLOW. You're used to them. How's your old man?

MRS. JONES. [Softly as throughout.] Well, he was very bad last night; he did n't seem to know what he was about. He was very late, and he was most abusive. But now, of course, he's asleep.

MARLOW. That's his way of finding a job, eh?

MRS. JONES. As a rule, Mr. Marlow, he goes out early every morning looking for work, and sometimes he comes in fit to drop—and of course I can't say he does n't try to get it, because he does. Trade's very bad. [She stands quite still, her fan and brush before her, at the beginning and the end of long vistas of experience, traversing them with her impersonal eye.] But he's not a good husband to me—last night he hit me, and he was so dreadfully abusive.

MARLOW. Bank 'oliday, eh! He 's too fond of the "Goat and Bells," that's what's the matter with him. I see him at the corner late every night. He hangs about.

MRS. JONES. He gets to feeling very low walking about all day after work, and being refused so often, and then when he gets a drop in him it goes to his head. But he shouldn't treat his wife as he treats me. Sometimes I 've had to go and walk about at night, when he wouldn't let me stay in the room; but he's sorry for it afterwards. And he hangs about after me, he waits for me in the street; and I don't think he ought to, because I 've always been a good wife to him. And I tell him Mrs. Barthwick wouldn't like him coming about the place. But that only makes him angry, and he says dreadful things about the gentry. Of course it was through me that he first lost his place, through his not treating me right; and that's made him bitter against the gentry. He had a very good place as groom in the country; but it made such a stir, because of course he did n't treat me right.

MARLOW. Got the sack?

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MRS. JONES. Yes; his employer said he couldn't keep him, because there was a great deal of talk; and he said it was such a bad example. But it's very important for me to keep my work here; I have the three children, and I don't want him to come about after me in the streets, and make a disturbance as he sometimes does.

MARLOW. [Holding up the empty decanter.] Not a drain! Next time he hits you get a witness and go down to the court——

MRS. JONES. Yes, I think I 've made up my mind. I think I ought to.

MARLOW. That's right. Where's the ciga——?

[He searches for the silver box; he looks at MRS. JONES, who is sweeping on her hands and knees; he checks himself and stands reflecting. From the tray he picks two half-smoked cigarettes, and reads the name on them.]

Nestor—where the deuce——?

[With a meditative air he looks again at MRS. JONES, and, taking up JACK'S overcoat, he searches in the pockets. WHEELER, with a tray of breakfast things, comes in.]

MARLOW. [Aside to WHEELER.] Have you seen the cigarette-box?

WHEELER. No.

MARLOW. Well, it's gone. I put it on the tray last night. And he's been smoking. [Showing her the ends of cigarettes.] It's not in these pockets. He can't have taken it upstairs this morning! Have a good look in his room when he comes down. Who's been in here?

WHEELER. Only me and Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES. I 've finished here; shall I do the drawing-room now?

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WHEELER. [Looking at her doubtfully.] Have you seen——Better do the boudwower first.

[MRS. JONES goes out with pan and brush. MARLOW and WHEELER look each other in the face.]

MARLOW. It'll turn up.

WHEELER. [Hesitating.] You don't think she—— [Nodding at the door.]

MARLOW. [Stoutly.] I don't——I never believes anything of anybody.

WHEELER. But the master'll have to be told.

MARLOW. You wait a bit, and see if it don't turn up. Suspicion's no business of ours. I set my mind against it.

The curtain falls.

The curtain rises again at once.

SCENE III. The same.

BARTHWICK and MRS. BARTHWICK are seated at the breakfast table. He is a man between fifty and sixty; quietly important, with a bald forehead, and pince-nez, and the "Times" in his hand. She is a lady of nearly fifty, well dressed, with greyish hair, good features, and a decided manner. They face each other.

BARTHWICK. [From behind his paper.] The Labour man has got in at the by-election for Barnside, my dear.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Another Labour? I can't think what on earth the country is about.

BARTHWICK. I predicted it. It's not a matter of vast importance.

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MRS. BARTHWICK. Not? How can you take it so calmly, John? To me it's simply outrageous. And there you sit, you Liberals, and pretend to encourage these people!

BARTHWICK. [Frowning.] The representation of all parties is necessary for any proper reform, for any proper social policy.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I've no patience with your talk of reform—all that nonsense about social policy. We know perfectly well what it is they want; they want things for themselves. Those Socialists and Labour men are an absolutely selfish set of people. They have no sense of patriotism, like the upper classes; they simply want what we've got.

BARTHWICK. Want what we've got! [He stares into space.] My dear, what are you talking about? [With a contortion.] I 'm no alarmist.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Cream? Quite uneducated men! Wait until they begin to tax our investments. I 'm convinced that when they once get a chance they will tax everything—they 've no feeling for the country. You Liberals and Conservatives, you 're all alike; you don't see an inch before your noses. You've no imagination, not a scrap of imagination between you. You ought to join hands and nip it in the bud.

BARTHWICK. You 're talking nonsense! How is it possible for Liberals and Conservatives to join hands, as you call it? That shows how absurd it is for women——Why, the very essence of a Liberal is to trust in the people!

MRS. BARTHWICK. Now, John, eat your breakfast. As if there were any real difference between you and the Conservatives. All the upper classes have the same interests to protect, and the same principles. [Calmly.] Oh! you're sitting upon a volcano, John.

BARTHWICK. What!

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MRS. BARTHWICK. I read a letter in the paper yesterday. I forget the man's name, but it made the whole thing perfectly clear. You don't look things in the face.

BARTHWICK. Indeed! [Heavily.] I am a Liberal! Drop the subject, please!

MRS. BARTHWICK. Toast? I quite agree with what this man says: Education is simply ruining the lower classes. It unsettles them, and that's the worst thing for us all. I see an enormous difference in the manner of servants.

BARTHWICK, [With suspicious emphasis.] I welcome any change that will lead to something better. [He opens a letter.] H'm! This is that affair of Master Jack's again. "High Street, Oxford. Sir, We have received Mr. John Barthwick, Senior's, draft for forty pounds!" Oh! the letter's to him! "We now enclose the cheque you cashed with us, which, as we stated in our previous letter, was not met on presentation at your bank. We are, Sir, yours obediently, Moss and Sons, Tailors." H 'm! [Staring at the cheque.] A pretty business altogether! The boy might have been prosecuted.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Come, John, you know Jack did n't mean anything; he only thought he was overdrawing. I still think his bank ought to have cashed that cheque. They must know your position.

BARTHWICK. [Replacing in the envelope the letter and the cheque.] Much good that would have done him in a court of law.

[He stops as JACK comes in, fastening his waistcoat and staunching a razor cut upon his chin.]

JACK. [Sitting down between them, and speaking with an artificial joviality.] Sorry I 'm late. [He looks lugubriously at the dishes.] Tea, please, mother. Any letters for me? [BARTHWICK hands the letter to him.] But look here, I say, this has been opened! I do wish you would n't——

BARTHWICK. [Touching the envelope.] I suppose I 'm entitled to this name.

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JACK. [Sulkily.] Well, I can't help having your name, father! [He reads the letter, and mutters.] Brutes!

BARTHWICK. [Eyeing him.] You don't deserve to be so well out of that.

JACK. Haven't you ragged me enough, dad?

MRS. BARTHWICK. Yes, John, let Jack have his breakfast.

BARTHWICK. If you hadn't had me to come to, where would you have been? It's the merest accident—suppose you had been the son of a poor man or a clerk. Obtaining money with a cheque you knew your bank could not meet. It might have ruined you for life. I can't see what's to become of you if these are your principles. I never did anything of the sort myself.

JACK. I expect you always had lots of money. If you've got plenty of money, of course——

BARTHWICK. On the contrary, I had not your advantages. My father kept me very short of money.

JACK. How much had you, dad?

BARTHWICK. It's not material. The question is, do you feel the gravity of what you did?

JACK. I don't know about the gravity. Of course, I 'm very sorry if you think it was wrong. Have n't I said so! I should never have done it at all if I had n't been so jolly hard up.

BARTHWICK. How much of that forty pounds have you got left, Jack?

JACK. [Hesitating.] I don't know—not much.

BARTHWICK. How much?

JACK. [Desperately.] I have n't got any.

BARTHWICK. What?

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JACK. I know I 've got the most beastly headache.

[He leans his head on his hand.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. Headache? My dear boy! Can't you eat any breakfast?

JACK. [Drawing in his breath.] Too jolly bad!

MRS. BARTHWICK. I'm so sorry. Come with me; dear; I'll give you something that will take it away at once.

[They leave the room; and BARTHWICK, tearing up the letter, goes to the fireplace and puts the pieces in the fire. While he is doing this MARLOW comes in, and looking round him, is about quietly to withdraw.]

BARTHWICK. What's that? What d 'you want?

MARLOW. I was looking for Mr. John, sir.

BARTHWICK. What d' you want Mr. John for?

MARLOW. [With hesitation.] I thought I should find him here, sir.

BARTHWICK. [Suspiciously.] Yes, but what do you want him for?

MARLOW. [Offhandedly.] There's a lady called—asked to speak to him for a minute, sir.

BARTHWICK. A lady, at this time in the morning. What sort of a lady?

MARLOW. [Without expression in his voice.] I can't tell, sir; no particular sort. She might be after charity. She might be a Sister of Mercy, I should think, sir.

BARTHWICK. Is she dressed like one?

MARLOW. No, sir, she's in plain clothes, sir.

BARTHWICK. Did n't she say what she wanted?

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MARLOW. No sir.

BARTHWICK. Where did you leave her?

MARLOW. In the hall, sir.

BARTHWICK. In the hall? How do you know she's not a thief—not got designs on the house?

MARLOW. No, sir, I don't fancy so, sir.

BARTHWICK. Well, show her in here; I'll see her myself.

[MARLOW goes out with a private gesture of dismay. He soon returns, ushering in a young pale lady with dark eyes and pretty figure, in a modish, black, but rather shabby dress, a black and white trimmed hat with a bunch of Parma violets wrongly placed, and fuzzy-spotted veil. At the Sight of MR. BARTHWICK she exhibits every sign of nervousness. MARLOW goes out.]

UNKNOWN LADY. Oh! but—I beg pardon there's some mistake—I [She turns to fly.]

BARTHWICK. Whom did you want to see, madam?

UNKNOWN. [Stopping and looking back.] It was Mr. John Barthwick I wanted to see.

BARTHWICK. I am John Barthwick, madam. What can I have the pleasure of doing for you?

UNKNOWN. Oh! I—I don't [She drops her eyes. BARTHWICK scrutinises her, and purses his lips.]

BARTHWICK. It was my son, perhaps, you wished to see?

UNKNOWN. [Quickly.] Yes, of course, it's your son.

BARTHWICK. May I ask whom I have the pleasure of speaking to?

UNKNOWN. [Appeal and hardiness upon her face.] My name is——oh! it does n't matter—I don't want to make any fuss. I

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just want to see your son for a minute. [Boldly.] In fact, I must see him.

BARTHWICK. [Controlling his uneasiness.] My son is not very well. If necessary, no doubt I could attend to the matter; be so kind as to let me know——

UNKNOWN. Oh! but I must see him—I 've come on purpose—[She bursts out nervously.] I don't want to make any fuss, but the

fact is, last—last night your son took away—he took away my [She stops.]

BARTHWICK. [Severely.] Yes, madam, what?

UNKNOWN. He took away my—my reticule.

BARTHWICK. Your reti——?

UNKNOWN. I don't care about the reticule; it's not that I want—I 'm sure I don't want to make any fuss—[her face is quivering]—but —but—all my money was in it!

BARTHWICK. In what—in what?

UNKNOWN. In my purse, in the reticule. It was a crimson silk purse. Really, I wouldn't have come—I don't want to make any fuss. But I must get my money back—mustn't I?

BARTHWICK. Do you tell me that my son——?

UNKNOWN. Oh! well, you see, he was n't quite I mean he was [She smiles mesmerically.]

BARTHWICK. I beg your pardon.

UNKNOWN. [Stamping her foot.] Oh! don't you see—tipsy! We had a quarrel.

BARTHWICK. [Scandalised.] How? Where?

UNKNOWN. [Defiantly.] At my place. We'd had supper at the—— and your son——

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BARTHWICK. [Pressing the bell.] May I ask how you knew this house? Did he give you his name and address?

UNKNOWN. [Glancing sidelong.] I got it out of his overcoat.

BARTHWICK. [Sardonically.] Oh! you got it out of his overcoat. And may I ask if my son will know you by daylight?

UNKNOWN. Know me? I should jolly—I mean, of course he will! [MARLOW comes in.]

BARTHWICK. Ask Mr. John to come down.

[MARLOW goes out, and BARTHWICK walks uneasily about.]

And how long have you enjoyed his acquaintanceship?

UNKNOWN. Only since—only since Good Friday.

BARTHWICK. I am at a loss—I repeat I am at a——

[He glances at this unknown lady, who stands with eyes cast down, twisting her hands And suddenly Jack appears. He stops on seeing who is here, and the unknown lady hysterically giggles. There is a silence.]

BARTHWICK. [Portentously.] This young—er—lady says that last night—I think you said last night madam—you took away——

UNKNOWN. [Impulsively.] My reticule, and all my money was in a crimson silk purse.

JACK. Reticule. [Looking round for any chance to get away.] I don't know anything about it.

BARTHWICK. [Sharply.] Come, do you deny seeing this young lady last night?

JACK. Deny? No, of course. [Whispering.] Why did you give me away like this? What on earth did you come here for?

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UNKNOWN. [Tearfully.] I'm sure I didn't want to—it's not likely, is it? You snatched it out of my hand—you know you did—and the purse had all my money in it. I did n't follow you last night because I did n't want to make a fuss and it was so late, and you were so——

BARTHWICK. Come, sir, don't turn your back on me—explain!

JACK. [Desperately.] I don't remember anything about it. [In a low voice to his friend.] Why on earth could n't you have written?

UNKNOWN. [Sullenly.] I want it now; I must have, it—I 've got to pay my rent to-day. [She looks at BARTHWICK.] They're only too glad to jump on people who are not—not well off.

JACK. I don't remember anything about it, really. I don't remember anything about last night at all. [He puts his hand up to his head.] It's all—cloudy, and I 've got such a beastly headache.

UNKNOWN. But you took it; you know you did. You said you'd score me off.

JACK. Well, then, it must be here. I remember now—I remember something. Why did I take the beastly thing?

BARTHWICK. Yes, why did you take the beastly——[He turns abruptly to the window.]

UNKNOWN. [With her mesmeric smile.] You were n't quite were you?

JACK. [Smiling pallidly.] I'm awfully sorry. If there's anything I can do——

BARTHWICK. Do? You can restore this property, I suppose.

JACK. I'll go and have a look, but I really don't think I 've got it.

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[He goes out hurriedly. And BARTHWICK, placing a chair, motions to the visitor to sit; then, with pursed lips, he stands and eyes her fixedly. She sits, and steals a look at him; then turns away, and, drawing up her veil, stealthily wipes her eyes. And Jack comes back.]

JACK. [Ruefully holding out the empty reticule.] Is that the thing? I 've looked all over—I can't find the purse anywhere. Are you sure it was there?

UNKNOWN. [Tearfully.] Sure? Of course I'm sure. A crimson silk purse. It was all the money I had.

JACK. I really am awfully sorry—my head's so jolly bad. I 've asked the butler, but he has n't seen it.

UNKNOWN. I must have my money——

JACK. Oh! Of course—that'll be all right; I'll see that that's all right. How much?

UNKNOWN. [Sullenly.] Seven pounds-twelve—it's all I 've got in the world.

JACK. That'll be all right; I'll—send you a cheque.

UNKNOWN. [Eagerly.] No; now, please. Give me what was in my purse; I've got to pay my rent this morning. They won't' give me another day; I'm a fortnight behind already.

JACK. [Blankly.] I'm awfully sorry; I really have n't a penny in my pocket.

[He glances stealthily at BARTHWICK.]

UNKNOWN. [Excitedly.] Come I say you must—it's my money, and you took it. I 'm not going away without it. They 'll turn me out of my place.

JACK. [Clasping his head.] But I can't give you what I have n't got. Don't I tell you I have n't a beastly cent.

UNKNOWN. [Tearing at her handkerchief.] Oh! do give it me! [She puts her hands together in appeal; then, with sudden

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fierceness.] If you don't I'll summons you. It's stealing, that's what it is!

BARTHWICK. [Uneasily.] One moment, please. As a matter of—-er —principle, I shall settle this claim. [He produces money.] Here is eight pounds; the extra will cover the value of the purse and your cab fares. I need make no comment—no thanks are necessary.

[Touching the bell, he holds the door ajar in silence. The unknown lady stores the money in her reticule, she looks from JACK to BARTHWICK, and her face is quivering faintly with a smile. She hides it with her hand, and steals away. Behind her BARTHWICK shuts the door.]

BARTHWICK. [With solemnity.] H'm! This is nice thing to happen!

JACK. [Impersonally.] What awful luck!

BARTHWICK. So this is the way that forty pounds has gone! One thing after another! Once more I should like to know where you 'd have been if it had n't been for me! You don't seem to have any principles. You—you're one of those who are a nuisance to society; you—you're dangerous! What your mother would say I don't know. Your conduct, as far as I can see, is absolutely unjustifiable. It's—it's criminal. Why, a poor man who behaved as you've done —d' you think he'd have any mercy shown him? What you want is a good lesson. You and your sort are—[he speaks with feeling]—a nuisance to the community. Don't ask me to help you next time. You're not fit to be helped.

JACK. [Turning upon his sire, with unexpected fierceness.] All right, I won't then, and see how you like it. You would n't have helped me this time, I know, if you had n't been scared the thing would get into the papers. Where are the cigarettes?

BARTHWICK. [Regarding him uneasily.] Well I 'll say no more about it. [He rings the bell.] I 'll pass it over for this once, but—— [MARLOW Comes in.] You can clear away.

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[He hides his face behind the "Times."]

JACK. [Brightening.] I say, Marlow, where are the cigarettes?

MARLOW. I put the box out with the whisky last night, sir, but this morning I can't find it anywhere.

JACK. Did you look in my room?

MARLOW. Yes, sir; I've looked all over the house. I found two Nestor ends in the tray this morning, so you must have been smokin' last night, sir. [Hesitating.] I 'm really afraid some one's purloined the box.

JACK. [Uneasily.] Stolen it!

BARTHWICK. What's that? The cigarette-box! Is anything else missing?

MARLOW. No, sir; I 've been through the plate.

BARTHWICK. Was the house all right this morning? None of the windows open?

MARLOW. No, sir. [Quietly to JACK.] You left your latch-key in the door last night, sir.

[He hands it back, unseen by BARTHWICK]

JACK. Tst!

BARTHWICK. Who's been in the room this morning?

MARLOW. Me and Wheeler, and Mrs. Jones is all, sir, as far as I know.

BARTHWICK. Have you asked Mrs. Barthwick?

[To JACK.] Go and ask your mother if she's had it; ask her to look and see if she's missed anything else.

[JACK goes upon this mission.]

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Nothing is more disquieting than losing things like this.

MARLOW. No, sir.

BARTHWICK. Have you any suspicions?

MARLOW, No, sir.

BARTHWICK. This Mrs. Jones—how long has she been working here?

MARLOW. Only this last month, sir.

BARTHWICK. What sort of person?

MARLOW. I don't know much about her, sir; seems a very quiet, respectable woman.

BARTHWICK. Who did the room this morning?

MARLOW. Wheeler and Mrs. Jones, Sir.

BARTHWICK. [With his forefinger upraised.] Now, was this Mrs. Jones in the room alone at any time?

MARLOW. [Expressionless.] Yes, Sir.

BARTHWICK. How do you know that?

MARLOW. [Reluctantly.] I found her here, sir.

BARTHWICK. And has Wheeler been in the room alone?

MARLOW. No, sir, she's not, sir. I should say, sir, that Mrs. Jones seems a very honest——

BARTHWICK. [Holding up his hand.] I want to know this: Has this Mrs. Jones been here the whole morning?

MARLOW. Yes, sir—no, sir—she stepped over to the greengrocer's for cook.

BARTHWICK. H'm! Is she in the house now?

MARLOW. Yes, Sir.

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BARTHWICK. Very good. I shall make a point of clearing this up. On principle I shall make a point of fixing the responsibility; it goes to the foundations of security. In all your interests——

MARLOW. Yes, Sir.

BARTHWICK. What sort of circumstances is this Mrs. Jones in? Is her husband in work?

MARLOW. I believe not, sir.

BARTHWICK. Very well. Say nothing about it to any one. Tell Wheeler not to speak of it, and ask Mrs. Jones to step up here.

MARLOW. Very good, sir.

[MARLOW goes out, his face concerned; and BARTHWICK stays, his face judicial and a little pleased, as befits a man conducting an inquiry. MRS. BARTHWICK and hey son come in.]

BARTHWICK. Well, my dear, you've not seen it, I suppose?

MRS. BARTHWICK. No. But what an extraordinary thing, John! Marlow, of course, is out of the question. I 'm certain none of the maids as for cook!

BARTHWICK. Oh, cook!

MRS. BARTHWICK. Of course! It's perfectly detestable to me to suspect anybody.

BARTHWICK. It is not a question of one's feelings. It's a question of justice. On principle——

MRS. BARTHWICK. I should n't be a bit surprised if the charwoman knew something about it. It was Laura who recommended her.

BARTHWICK. [Judicially.] I am going to have Mrs. Jones up. Leave it to me; and—er—remember that nobody is guilty until they're proved so. I shall be careful. I have no intention

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of frightening her; I shall give her every chance. I hear she's in poor circumstances. If we are not able to do much for them we are bound to have the greatest sympathy with the poor. [MRS. JONES comes in.] [Pleasantly.] Oh! good morning, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES. [Soft, and even, unemphatic.] Good morning, sir! Good morning, ma'am!

BARTHWICK. About your husband—he's not in work, I hear?

MRS. JONES. No, sir; of course he's not in work just now.

BARTHWICK. Then I suppose he's earning nothing.

MRS. JONES. No, sir, he's not earning anything just now, sir.

BARTHWICK. And how many children have you?

MRS. JONES. Three children; but of course they don't eat very much sir. [A little silence.]

BARTHWICK. And how old is the eldest?

MRS. JONES. Nine years old, sir.

BARTHWICK. Do they go to school?

MRS. JONES, Yes, sir, they all three go to school every day.

BARTHWICK. [Severely.] And what about their food when you're out at work?

MRS. JONES. Well, Sir, I have to give them their dinner to take with them. Of course I 'm not always able to give them anything; sometimes I have to send them without; but my husband is very good about the children when he's in work. But when he's not in work of course he's a very difficult man.

BARTHWICK. He drinks, I suppose?

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MRS. JONES. Yes, Sir. Of course I can't say he does n't drink, because he does.

BARTHWICK. And I suppose he takes all your money?

MRS. JONES. No, sir, he's very good about my money, except when he's not himself, and then, of course, he treats me very badly.

BARTHWICK. Now what is he—your husband?

MRS. JONES. By profession, sir, of course he's a groom.

BARTHWICK. A groom! How came he to lose his place?

MRS. JONES. He lost his place a long time ago, sir, and he's never had a very long job since; and now, of course, the motor-cars are against him.

BARTHWICK. When were you married to him, Mrs. Jones?

MRS. JONES. Eight years ago, sir that was in——

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Sharply.] Eight? You said the eldest child was nine.

MRS. JONES. Yes, ma'am; of course that was why he lost his place. He did n't treat me rightly, and of course his employer said he couldn't keep him because of the example.

BARTHWICK. You mean he—ahem——

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir; and of course after he lost his place he married me.

MRS. BARTHWICK. You actually mean to say you—you were——

BARTHWICK. My dear——

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Indignantly.] How disgraceful!

BARTHWICK. [Hurriedly.] And where are you living now, Mrs. Jones?

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MRS. JONES. We've not got a home, sir. Of course we've been obliged to put away most of our things.

BARTHWICK. Put your things away! You mean to—to—er—to pawn them?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, to put them away. We're living in Merthyr Street—that is close by here, sir—at No. 34. We just have the one room.

BARTHWICK. And what do you pay a week?

MRS. JONES. We pay six shillings a week, sir, for a furnished room.

BARTHWICK. And I suppose you're behind in the rent?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, we're a little behind in the rent.

BARTHWICK. But you're in good work, aren't you?

MRS. JONES. Well, Sir, I have a day in Stamford Place Thursdays. And Mondays and Wednesdays and Fridays I come here. But to-day, of course, is a half-day, because of yesterday's Bank Holiday.

BARTHWICK. I see; four days a week, and you get half a crown a day, is that it?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, and my dinner; but sometimes it's only half a day, and that's eighteen pence.

BARTHWICK. And when your husband earns anything he spends it in drink, I suppose?

MRS. JONES. Sometimes he does, sir, and sometimes he gives it to me for the children. Of course he would work if he could get it, sir, but it seems there are a great many people out of work.

BARTHWICK. Ah! Yes. We—er—won't go into that. [Sympathetically.] And how about your work here? Do you find it hard?

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MRS. JONES. Oh! no, sir, not very hard, sir; except of course, when I don't get my sleep at night.

BARTHWICK. Ah! And you help do all the rooms? And sometimes, I suppose, you go out for cook?

MRS. JONES. Yes, Sir.

BARTHWICK. And you 've been out this morning?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, of course I had to go to the greengrocer's.

BARTHWICK. Exactly. So your husband earns nothing? And he's a bad character.

MRS. JONES. No, Sir, I don't say that, sir. I think there's a great deal of good in him; though he does treat me very bad sometimes. And of course I don't like to leave him, but I think I ought to, because really I hardly know how to stay with him. He often raises his hand to me. Not long ago he gave me a blow here [touches her breast] and I can feel it now. So I think I ought to leave him, don't you, sir?

BARTHWICK. Ah! I can't help you there. It's a very serious thing to leave your husband. Very serious thing.

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, of course I 'm afraid of what he might do to me if I were to leave him; he can be so very violent.

BARTHWICK. H'm! Well, that I can't pretend to say anything about. It's the bad principle I'm speaking of——

MRS. JONES. Yes, Sir; I know nobody can help me. I know I must decide for myself, and of course I know that he has a very hard life. And he's fond of the children, and its very hard for him to see them going without food.

BARTHWICK. [Hastily.] Well—er—thank you, I just wanted to hear about you. I don't think I need detain you any longer, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES. No, sir, thank you, sir.

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BARTHWICK. Good morning, then.

MRS. JONES. Good morning, sir; good morning, ma'am.

BARTHWICK. [Exchanging glances with his wife.] By the way, Mrs. Jones—I think it is only fair to tell you, a silver cigarette-box —er—is missing.

MRS. JONES. [Looking from one face to the other.] I am very sorry, sir.

BARTHWICK. Yes; you have not seen it, I suppose?

MRS. JONES. [Realising that suspicion is upon her; with an uneasy movement.] Where was it, sir; if you please, sir?

BARTHWICK. [Evasively.] Where did Marlow say? Er—in this room, yes, in this room.

MRS. JONES. No, Sir, I have n't seen it—of course if I 'd seen it I should have noticed it.

BARTHWICK. [Giving hey a rapid glance.] You—you are sure of that?

MRS. JONES. [Impassively.] Yes, Sir. [With a slow nodding of her head.] I have not seen it, and of course I don't know where it is.

[She turns and goes quietly out.]

BARTHWICK. H'm!

[The three BARTHWICKS avoid each other's glances.]

The curtain falls.

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ACT II

SCENE I. The Jones's lodgings, Merthyr Street.

The JONES's lodgings, Merthyr Street, at half-past two o'clock. The bare room, with tattered oilcloth and damp, distempered walls, has an air of tidy wretchedness. On the bed lies JONES, half-dressed; his coat is thrown across his feet, and muddy boots are lying on the floor close by. He is asleep. The door is opened and MRS. JONES comes in, dressed in a pinched black jacket and old black sailor hat; she carries a parcel wrapped up in the "Times." She puts her parcel down, unwraps an apron, half a loaf, two onions, three potatoes, and a tiny piece of bacon. Taking a teapot from the cupboard, she rinses it, shakes into it some powdered tea out of a screw of paper, puts it on the hearth, and sitting in a wooden chair quietly begins to cry.

JONES. [Stirring and yawning.] That you? What's the time?

MRS. JONES. [Drying her eyes, and in her usual voice.] Half-past two.

JONES. What you back so soon for?

MRS. JONES. I only had the half day to-day, Jem.

JONES. [On his back, and in a drowsy voice.] Got anything for dinner?

MRS. JONES. Mrs. BARTHWICK's cook gave me a little bit of bacon. I'm going to make a stew. [She prepares for cooking.] There's fourteen shillings owing for rent, James, and of course I 've only got two and fourpence. They'll be coming for it to-day.

JONES. [Turning towards her on his elbow.] Let 'em come and find my surprise packet. I've had enough o' this tryin' for work. Why should I go round and round after a job like a bloomin' squirrel in a cage. "Give us a job, sir"—"Take a man on"—"Got a wife and three children." Sick of it I am! I 'd

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sooner lie here and rot. "Jones, you come and join the demonstration; come and 'old a flag, and listen to the ruddy orators, and go 'ome as empty as you came." There's some that seems to like that—the sheep! When I go seekin' for a job now, and see the brutes lookin' me up an' down, it's like a thousand serpents in me. I 'm not arskin' for any treat. A man wants to sweat hisself silly and not allowed that's a rum start, ain't it? A man wants to sweat his soul out to keep the breath in him and ain't allowed—that's justice that's freedom and all the rest of it! [He turns his face towards the wall.] You're so milky mild; you don't know what goes on inside o' me. I'm done with the silly game. If they want me, let 'em come for me!

[MRS. JONES stops cooking and stands unmoving at the table.]

I've tried and done with it, I tell you. I've never been afraid of what 's before me. You mark my words—if you think they've broke my spirit, you're mistook. I 'll lie and rot sooner than arsk 'em again. What makes you stand like that—you long-sufferin', Gawd-forsaken image—that's why I can't keep my hands off you. So now you know. Work! You can work, but you have n't the spirit of a louse!

MRS. JONES. [Quietly.] You talk more wild sometimes when you're yourself, James, than when you 're not. If you don't get work, how are we to go on? They won't let us stay here; they're looking to their money to-day, I know.

JONES. I see this BARTHWICK o' yours every day goin' down to Pawlyment snug and comfortable to talk his silly soul out; an' I see that young calf, his son, swellin' it about, and goin' on the razzle-dazzle. Wot 'ave they done that makes 'em any better than wot I am? They never did a day's work in their lives. I see 'em day after day.

MRS. JONES. And I wish you wouldn't come after me like that, and hang about the house. You don't seem able to keep away at all, and whatever you do it for I can't think, because of course they notice it.

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JONES. I suppose I may go where I like. Where may I go? The other day I went to a place in the Edgware Road. "Gov'nor," I says to the boss, "take me on," I says. "I 'aven't done a stroke o' work not these two months; it takes the heart out of a man," I says; "I 'm one to work; I 'm not afraid of anything you can give me!" "My good man," 'e says, "I 've had thirty of you here this morning. I took the

first two," he says, "and that's all I want." "Thank you, then rot the world!" I says. "Blasphemin'," he says, "is not the way to get a job. Out you go, my lad!" [He laughs sardonically.] Don't you raise your voice because you're starvin'; don't yer even think of it; take it lyin' down! Take it like a sensible man, carn't you? And a little way down the street a lady says to me: [Pinching his voice] "D' you want to earn a few pence, my man?" and gives me her dog to 'old outside a shop-fat as a butler 'e was—tons o' meat had gone to the makin' of him. It did 'er good, it did, made 'er feel 'erself that charitable, but I see 'er lookin' at the copper standin' alongside o' me, for fear I should make off with 'er bloomin' fat dog. [He sits on the edge of the bed and puts a boot on. Then looking up.] What's in that head o' yours? [Almost pathetically.] Carn't you speak for once?

[There is a knock, and MRS. SEDDON, the landlady, appears, an anxious, harassed, shabby woman in working clothes.]

MRS. SEDDON. I thought I 'eard you come in, Mrs. Jones. I 've spoke to my 'usband, but he says he really can't afford to wait another day.

JONES. [With scowling jocularity.] Never you mind what your 'usband says, you go your own way like a proper independent woman. Here, jenny, chuck her that.

[Producing a sovereign from his trousers pocket, he throws it to his wife, who catches it in her apron with a gasp. JONES resumes the lacing of his boots.]

MRS. JONES. [Rubbing the sovereign stealthily.] I'm very sorry we're so late with it, and of course it's fourteen shillings, so if you've got six that will be right.

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[MRS. SEDDON takes the sovereign and fumbles for the change.]

JONES. [With his eyes fixed on his boots.] Bit of a surprise for yer, ain't it?

MRS. SEDDON. Thank you, and I'm sure I'm very much obliged. [She does indeed appear surprised.] I 'll bring you the change.

JONES. [Mockingly.] Don't mention it.

MRS. SEDDON. Thank you, and I'm sure I'm very much obliged. [She slides away.]

[MRS. JONES gazes at JONES who is still lacing up his boots.]

JONES. I 've had a bit of luck. [Pulling out the crimson purse and some loose coins.] Picked up a purse—seven pound and more.

MRS. JONES. Oh, James!

JONES. Oh, James! What about Oh, James! I picked it up I tell you. This is lost property, this is!

MRS. JONES. But is n't there a name in it, or something?

JONES. Name? No, there ain't no name. This don't belong to such as 'ave visitin' cards. This belongs to a perfec' lidy. Tike an' smell it. [He pitches her the purse, which she puts gently to her nose.] Now, you tell me what I ought to have done. You tell me that. You can always tell me what I ought to ha' done, can't yer?

MRS. JONES. [Laying down the purse.] I can't say what you ought to have done, James. Of course the money was n't yours; you've taken somebody else's money.

JONES. Finding's keeping. I 'll take it as wages for the time I 've gone about the streets asking for what's my rights. I'll take it for what's overdue, d' ye hear? [With strange triumph.] I've got money in my pocket, my girl.

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[MRS. JONES goes on again with the preparation of the meal, JONES looking at her furtively.]

Money in my pocket! And I 'm not goin' to waste it. With this 'ere money I'm goin' to Canada. I'll let you have a pound.

[A silence.]

You've often talked of leavin' me. You 've often told me I treat you badly—well I 'ope you 'll be glad when I 'm gone.

MRS. JONES. [Impassively.] You have, treated me very badly, James, and of course I can't prevent your going; but I can't tell whether I shall be glad when you're gone.

JONES. It'll change my luck. I 've 'ad nothing but bad luck since I first took up with you. [More softly.] And you've 'ad no bloomin' picnic.

MRS. JONES. Of course it would have been better for us if we had never met. We were n't meant for each other. But you're set against me, that's what you are, and you have been for a long time. And you treat me so badly, James, going after that Rosie and all. You don't ever seem to think of the children that I 've had to bring into the world, and of all the trouble I 've had to keep them, and what 'll become of them when you're gone.

JONES. [Crossing the room gloomily.] If you think I want to leave the little beggars you're bloomin' well mistaken.

MRS. JONES. Of course I know you're fond of them.

JONES. [Fingering the purse, half angrily.] Well, then, you stow it, old girl. The kids 'll get along better with you than when I 'm here. If I 'd ha' known as much as I do now, I 'd never ha' had one o' them. What's the use o' bringin' 'em into a state o' things like this? It's a crime, that's what it is; but you find it out too late; that's what's the matter with this 'ere world.

[He puts the purse back in his pocket.]

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MRS. JONES. Of course it would have been better for them, poor little things; but they're your own children, and I wonder at you talkin' like that. I should miss them dreadfully if I was to lose them.

JONES. [Sullenly.] An' you ain't the only one. If I make money out there—[Looking up, he sees her shaking out his coat—in a changed voice.] Leave that coat alone!

[The silver box drops from the pocket, scattering the cigarettes upon the bed. Taking up the box she stares at it; he rushes at her and snatches the box away.]

MRS. JONES. [Cowering back against the bed.] Oh, Jem! oh, Jem!

JONES. [Dropping the box onto the table.] You mind what you're sayin'! When I go out I 'll take and chuck it in the water along with that there purse. I 'ad it when I was in liquor, and for what you do when you 're in liquor you're not responsible-and that's Gawd's truth as you ought to know. I don't want the thing—I won't have it. I took it out o' spite. I 'm no thief, I tell you; and don't you call me one, or it'll be the worse for you.

MRS. JONES. [Twisting her apron strings.] It's Mr. Barthwick's! You've taken away my reputation. Oh, Jem, whatever made you?

JONES. What d' you mean?

MRS. JONES. It's been missed; they think it's me. Oh! whatever made you do it, Jem?

JONES. I tell you I was in liquor. I don't want it; what's the good of it to me? If I were to pawn it they'd only nab me. I 'm no thief. I 'm no worse than wot that young Barthwick is; he brought 'ome that purse that I picked up—a lady's purse—'ad it off 'er in a row, kept

sayin' 'e 'd scored 'er off. Well, I scored 'im off. Tight as an owl 'e was! And d' you think anything'll happen to him?

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MRS. JONES. [As though speaking to herself.] Oh, Jem! it's the bread out of our mouths!

JONES. Is it then? I'll make it hot for 'em yet. What about that purse? What about young BARTHWICK?

[MRS. JONES comes forward to the table and tries to take the box; JONES prevents her.] What do you want with that? You drop it, I say!

MRS. JONES. I 'll take it back and tell them all about it. [She attempts to wrest the box from him.]

JONES. Ah, would yer?

[He drops the box, and rushes on her with a snarl. She slips back past the bed. He follows; a chair is overturned. The door is opened; Snow comes in, a detective in plain clothes and bowler hat, with clipped moustaches. JONES drops his arms, MRS. JONES stands by the window gasping; SNOW, advancing swiftly to the table, puts his hand on the silver box.]

SNOW. Doin' a bit o' skylarkin'? Fancy this is what I 'm after. J. B., the very same. [He gets back to the door, scrutinising the crest and cypher on the box. To MRS. JONES.] I'm a police officer. Are you Mrs. Jones?

MRS. JONES. Yes, Sir.

SNOW. My instructions are to take you on a charge of stealing this box from J. BARTHWICK, Esquire, M.P., of 6, Rockingham Gate. Anything you say may be used against you. Well, Missis?

MRS. JONES. [In her quiet voice, still out of breath, her hand upon her breast.] Of course I did not take it, sir. I never have taken

anything that did n't belong to me; and of course I know nothing about it.

SNOW. You were at the house this morning; you did the room in which the box was left; you were alone in the room. I find the box 'ere. You say you did n't take it?

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MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, of course I say I did not take it, because I did not.

SNOW. Then how does the box come to be here?

MRS. JONES. I would rather not say anything about it.

SNOW. Is this your husband?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, this is my husband, sir.

SNOW. Do you wish to say anything before I take her?

[JONES remains silent, with his head bend down.]

Well then, Missis. I 'll just trouble you to come along with me quietly.

MRS. JONES. [Twisting her hands.] Of course I would n't say I had n't taken it if I had—and I did n't take it, indeed I did n't. Of course I know appearances are against me, and I can't tell you what really happened: But my children are at school, and they'll be coming home—and I don't know what they'll do without me.

SNOW. Your 'usband'll see to them, don't you worry. [He takes the woman gently by the arm.]

JONES. You drop it—she's all right! [Sullenly.] I took the thing myself.

SNOW. [Eyeing him] There, there, it does you credit. Come along, Missis.

JONES. [Passionately.] Drop it, I say, you blooming teck. She's my wife; she 's a respectable woman. Take her if you dare!

SNOW. Now, now. What's the good of this? Keep a civil tongue, and it'll be the better for all of us.

[He puts his whistle in his mouth and draws the woman to the door.]

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JONES. [With a rush.] Drop her, and put up your 'ands, or I 'll soon make yer. You leave her alone, will yer! Don't I tell yer, I took the thing myself.

SNOW. [Blowing his whistle.] Drop your hands, or I 'll take you too. Ah, would you?

[JONES, closing, deals him a blow. A Policeman in uniform appears; there is a short struggle and JONES is overpowered. MRS. JONES raises her hands avid drops her face on them.]

The curtain falls.

SCENE II. John Barthwick's dining-room.

The BARTHWICKS' dining-room the same evening. The BARTHWICKS are seated at dessert.

MRS. BARTHWICK. John! [A silence broken by the cracking of nuts.] John!

BARTHWICK. I wish you'd speak about the nuts they're uneatable. [He puts one in his mouth.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. It's not the season for them. I called on the Holyroods.

[BARTHWICK fills his glass with port.]

JACK. Crackers, please, Dad.

[BARTHWICK passes the crackers. His demeanour is reflective.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. Lady Holyrood has got very stout. I 've noticed it coming for a long time.

BARTHWICK. [Gloomily.] Stout? [He takes up the crackers—with transparent airiness.] The Holyroods had some trouble with their servants, had n't they?

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JACK. Crackers, please, Dad.

BARTHWICK. [Passing the crackers.] It got into the papers. The cook, was n't it?

MRS. BARTHWICK. No, the lady's maid. I was talking it over with Lady Holyrood. The girl used to have her young man to see her.

BARTHWICK. [Uneasily.] I'm not sure they were wise——

MRS. BARTHWICK. My dear John, what are you talking about? How could there be any alternative? Think of the effect on the other servants!

BARTHWICK. Of course in principle—I wasn't thinking of that.

JACK. [Maliciously.] Crackers, please, Dad.

[BARTHWICK is compelled to pass the crackers.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. Lady Holyrood told me: "I had her up," she said; "I said to her, 'You'll leave my house at once; I think your conduct disgraceful. I can't tell, I don't know, and I don't wish to know, what you were doing. I send you away on principle; you need not come to me for a character.' And the girl said: 'If you don't give me my notice, my lady, I want a month's wages. I'm perfectly respectable. I've done nothing.'"—Done nothing!

BARTHWICK. H'm!

MRS. BARTHWICK. Servants have too much license. They hang together so terribly you never can tell what they're really thinking; it's as if they were all in a conspiracy to keep you in the dark. Even with Marlow, you feel that he never lets you know what's really in

his mind. I hate that secretiveness; it destroys all confidence. I feel sometimes I should like to shake him.

JACK. Marlow's a most decent chap. It's simply beastly every one knowing your affairs.

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BARTHWICK. The less you say about that the better!

MRS. BARTHWICK. It goes all through the lower classes. You can not tell when they are speaking the truth. To-day when I was shopping after leaving the Holyroods, one of these unemployed came up and spoke to me. I suppose I only had twenty yards or so to walk to the carnage, but he seemed to spring up in the street.

BARTHWICK. Ah! You must be very careful whom you speak to in these days.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I did n't answer him, of course. But I could see at once that he wasn't telling the truth.

BARTHWICK. [Cracking a nut.] There's one very good rule—look at their eyes.

JACK. Crackers, please, Dad.

BARTHWICK. [Passing the crackers.] If their eyes are straight-forward I sometimes give them sixpence. It 's against my principles, but it's most difficult to refuse. If you see that they're desperate, and dull, and shifty-looking, as so many of them are, it's certain to mean drink, or crime, or something unsatisfactory.

MRS. BARTHWICK. This man had dreadful eyes. He looked as if he could commit a murder. "I 've 'ad nothing to eat to-day," he said. Just like that.

BARTHWICK. What was William about? He ought to have been waiting.

JACK. [Raising his wine-glass to his nose.] Is this the '63, Dad?

[BARTHWICK, holding his wine-glass to his eye, lowers it and passes it before his nose.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. I hate people that can't speak the truth. [Father and son exchange a look behind their port.] It 's just as easy to speak the truth as not. I've always found it easy

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enough. It makes it impossible to tell what is genuine; one feels as if one were continually being taken in.

BARTHWICK. [Sententiously.] The lower classes are their own enemies. If they would only trust us, they would get on so much better.

MRS. BARTHWICK. But even then it's so often their own fault. Look at that Mrs. Jones this morning.

BARTHWICK. I only want to do what's right in that matter. I had occasion to see Roper this afternoon. I mentioned it to him. He's coming in this evening. It all depends on what the detective says. I've had my doubts. I've been thinking it over.

MRS. BARTHWICK. The woman impressed me most unfavourably. She seemed to have no shame. That affair she was talking about—she and the man when they were young, so immoral! And before you and Jack! I could have put her out of the room!

BARTHWICK. Oh! I don't want to excuse them, but in looking at these matters one must consider——

MRS. BARTHWICK. Perhaps you'll say the man's employer was wrong in dismissing him?

BARTHWICK. Of course not. It's not there that I feel doubt. What I ask myself is——

JACK. Port, please, Dad.

BARTHWICK. [Circulating the decanter in religious imitation of the rising and setting of the sun.] I ask myself whether we are sufficiently careful in making inquiries about people before we engage them, especially as regards moral conduct.

JACK. Pass the-port, please, Mother!

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Passing it.] My dear boy, are n't you drinking too much?

[JACK fills his glass.]

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MARLOW. [Entering.] Detective Snow to see you, Sir.

BARTHWICK. [Uneasily.] Ah! say I'll be with him in a minute.

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Without turning.] Let him come in here, Marlow.

[SNOW enters in an overcoat, his bowler hat in hand.]

BARTHWICK. [Half-rising.] Oh! Good evening!

SNOW. Good evening, sir; good evening, ma'am. I 've called round to report what I 've done, rather late, I 'm afraid—another case took me away. [He takes the silver box out o f his pocket, causing a sensation in the BARTHWICK family.] This is the identical article, I believe.

BARTHWICK. Certainly, certainly.

SNOW. Havin' your crest and cypher, as you described to me, sir, I 'd no hesitation in the matter.

BARTHWICK. Excellent. Will you have a glass of [he glances at the waning port]—er—sherry-[pours out sherry]. Jack, just give Mr. Snow this.

[JACK rises and gives the glass to SNOW; then, lolling in his chair, regards him indolently.]

SNOW. [Drinking off wine and putting down the glass.] After seeing you I went round to this woman's lodgings, sir. It's a low neighborhood, and I thought it as well to place a constable below —and not without 'e was wanted, as things turned out.

BARTHWICK. Indeed!

SNOW. Yes, Sir, I 'ad some trouble. I asked her to account for the presence of the article. She could give me no answer, except to deny the theft; so I took her into custody; then her husband came for me, so I was obliged to take him, too, for assault. He was very violent on the way to the station—very

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violent—threatened you and your son, and altogether he was a handful, I can till you.

MRS. BARTHWICK. What a ruffian he must be!

SNOW. Yes, ma'am, a rough customer.

JACK. [Sipping his mine, bemused.] Punch the beggar's head.

SNOW. Given to drink, as I understand, sir.

MRS. BARTHWICK. It's to be hoped he will get a severe punishment.

SNOW. The odd thing is, sir, that he persists in sayin' he took the box himself.

BARTHWICK. Took the box himself! [He smiles.] What does he think to gain by that?

SNOW. He says the young gentleman was intoxicated last night

[JACK stops the cracking of a nut, and looks at SNOW.] [BARTHWICK, losing his smile, has put his wine-glass down; there is a silence—SNOW, looking from face to face, remarks]

—took him into the house and gave him whisky; and under the influence of an empty stomach the man says he took the box.

MRS. BARTHWICK. The impudent wretch!

BARTHWICK. D' you mean that he—er—intends to put this forward to-morrow?

SNOW. That'll be his line, sir; but whether he's endeavouring to shield his wife, or whether [he looks at JACK] there's something in it, will be for the magistrate to say.

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MRS. BARTHWICK. [Haughtily.] Something in what? I don't understand you. As if my son would bring a man like that into the house!

BARTHWICK. [From the fireplace, with an effort to be calm.] My son can speak for himself, no doubt. Well, Jack, what do you say?

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Sharply.] What does he say? Why, of course, he says the whole story's stuff!

JACK. [Embarrassed.] Well, of course, I—of course, I don't know anything about it.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I should think not, indeed! [To Snow.] The man is an audacious ruffian!

BARTHWICK. [Suppressing jumps.] But in view of my son's saying there's nothing in this—this fable—will it be necessary to proceed against the man under the circumstances?

SNOW. We shall have to charge him with the assault, sir. It would be as well for your son to come down to the Court. There'll be a remand, no doubt. The queer thing is there was quite a sum of money found on him, and a crimson silk purse.

[BARTHWICK starts; JACK rises and sits dozen again.]

I suppose the lady has n't missed her purse?

BARTHWICK. [Hastily.] Oh, no! Oh! No!

JACK. No!

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Dreamily.] No! [To SNOW.] I 've been inquiring of the servants. This man does hang about the house. I shall feel much safer if he gets a good long sentence; I do think we ought to be protected against such ruffians.

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BARTHWICK. Yes, yes, of course, on principle but in this case we have a number of things to think of. [To SNOW.] I suppose, as you say, the man must be charged, eh?

SNOW. No question about that, sir.

BARTHWICK. [Staring gloomily at JACK.] This prosecution goes very much against the grain with me. I have great sympathy with the poor. In my position I 'm bound to recognise the distress there is amongst them. The condition of the people leaves much to be desired. D' you follow me? I wish I could see my way to drop it.

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Sharply.] John! it's simply not fair to other people. It's putting property at the mercy of any one who likes to take it.

BARTHWICK. [Trying to make signs to her aside.] I 'm not defending him, not at all. I'm trying to look at the matter broadly.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Nonsense, John, there's a time for everything.

SNOW. [Rather sardonically.] I might point out, sir, that to withdraw the charge of stealing would not make much difference, because the facts must come out [he looks significantly at JACK] in reference to the assault; and as I said that charge will have to go forward.

BARTHWICK. [Hastily.] Yes, oh! exactly! It's entirely on the woman's account—entirely a matter of my own private feelings.

SNOW. If I were you, sir, I should let things take their course. It's not likely there'll be much difficulty. These things are very quick settled.

BARTHWICK. [Doubtfully.] You think so—you think so?

JACK. [Rousing himself.] I say, what shall I have to swear to?

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SNOW. That's best known to yourself, sir. [Retreating to the door.] Better employ a solicitor, sir, in case anything should arise. We shall have the butler to prove the loss of the article. You'll excuse me going, I 'm rather pressed to-night. The case may come on any time after eleven. Good evening, sir; good evening, ma'am. I shall have to produce the box in court to-morrow, so if you'll excuse me, sir, I may as well take it with me.

[He takes the silver box and leaves them with a little bow.] [BARTHWICK makes a move to follow him, then dashing his hands beneath his coat tails, speaks with desperation.]

BARTHWICK. I do wish you'd leave me to manage things myself. You will put your nose into matters you know nothing of. A pretty mess you've made of this!

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Coldly.] I don't in the least know what you're talking about. If you can't stand up for your rights, I can. I 've no patience with your principles, it's such nonsense.

BARTHWICK. Principles! Good Heavens! What have principles to do with it for goodness sake? Don't you know that Jack was drunk last night!

JACK. Dad!

MRS. BARTHWICK. [In horror rising.] Jack!

JACK. Look here, Mother—I had supper. Everybody does. I mean to say—you know what I mean—it's absurd to call it being drunk. At Oxford everybody gets a bit "on" sometimes——

MRS. BARTHWICK. Well, I think it's most dreadful! If that is really what you do at Oxford?

JACK. [Angrily.] Well, why did you send me there? One must do as other fellows do. It's such nonsense, I mean, to call it being drunk. Of course I 'm awfully sorry. I 've had such a beastly headache all day.

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BARTHWICK. Tcha! If you'd only had the common decency to remember what happened when you came in. Then we should know what truth there was in what this fellow says—as it is, it's all the most confounded darkness.

JACK. [Staring as though at half-formed visions.] I just get a— and then—it 's gone——

MRS. BARTHWICK. Oh, Jack! do you mean to say you were so tipsy you can't even remember——

JACK. Look here, Mother! Of course I remember I came—I must have come——

BARTHWICK. [Unguardedly, and walking up and down.] Tcha!—and that infernal purse! Good Heavens! It'll get into the papers. Who on earth could have foreseen a thing like this? Better to have lost a dozen cigarette-boxes, and said nothing about it. [To his wife.] It's all your doing. I told you so from the first. I wish to goodness Roper would come!

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Sharply.] I don't know what you're talking about, John.

BARTHWICK. [Turning on her.] No, you—you—you don't know anything! [Sharply.] Where the devil is Roper? If he can see a way out of this he's a better man than I take him for. I defy any one to see a way out of it. I can't.

JACK. Look here, don't excite Dad—I can simply say I was too beastly tired, and don't remember anything except that I came in and [in a dying voice] went to bed the same as usual.

BARTHWICK. Went to bed? Who knows where you went—I 've lost all confidence. For all I know you slept on the floor.

JACK. [Indignantly.] I did n't, I slept on the——

BARTHWICK. [Sitting on the sofa.] Who cares where you slept; what does it matter if he mentions the—the—a perfect disgrace?

MRS. BARTHWICK. What? [A silence.] I insist on knowing.

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JACK. Oh! nothing.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Nothing? What do you mean by nothing, Jack? There's your father in such a state about it!

JACK. It's only my purse.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Your purse! You know perfectly well you have n't got one.

JACK. Well, it was somebody else's—it was all a joke—I did n't want the beastly thing.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Do you mean that you had another person's purse, and that this man took it too?

BARTHWICK. Tcha! Of course he took it too! A man like that Jones will make the most of it. It'll get into the papers.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I don't understand. What on earth is all the fuss about? [Bending over JACK, and softly.] Jack now, tell me dear! Don't be afraid. What is it? Come!

JACK. Oh, don't Mother!

MRS. BARTHWICK. But don't what, dear?

JACK. It was pure sport. I don't know how I got the thing. Of course I 'd had a bit of a row—I did n't know what I was doing—I was—I Was—well, you know—I suppose I must have pulled the bag out of her hand.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Out of her hand? Whose hand? What bag—whose bag?

JACK. Oh! I don't know—her bag—it belonged to—[in a desperate and rising voice] a woman.

MRS. BARTHWICK. A woman? Oh! Jack! No!

JACK. [Jumping up.] You would have it. I did n't want to tell you. It's not my fault.

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[The door opens and MARLOW ushers in a man of middle age, inclined to corpulence, in evening dress. He has a ruddy, thin moustache, and dark, quick-moving little eyes. His eyebrows aye Chinese.]

MARLOW. Mr. Roper, Sir. [He leaves the room.]

ROPER. [With a quick look round.] How do you do?

[But neither JACK nor MRS. BARTHWICK make a sign.]

BARTHWICK. [Hurrying.] Thank goodness you've come, Roper. You remember what I told you this afternoon; we've just had the detective here.

ROPER. Got the box?

BARTHWICK. Yes, yes, but look here—it was n't the charwoman at all; her drunken loafer of a husband took the things—he says that fellow there [he waves his hand at JACK, who with his

shoulder raised, seems trying to ward off a blow] let him into the house last night. Can you imagine such a thing.

[Roper laughs.]

BARTHWICK. [With excited emphasis.]. It's no laughing matter, Roper. I told you about that business of Jack's too—don't you see the brute took both the things—took that infernal purse. It'll get into the papers.

ROPER. [Raising his eyebrows.] H'm! The purse! Depravity in high life! What does your son say?

BARTHWICK. He remembers nothing. D—n! Did you ever see such a mess? It 'll get into the papers.

MRS. BARTHWICK. [With her hand across hey eyes.] Oh! it's not that——

[BARTHWICK and ROPER turn and look at her.]

BARTHWICK. It's the idea of that woman—she's just heard——

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[ROPER nods. And MRS. BARTHWICK, setting her lips, gives a slow look at JACK, and sits down at the table.]

What on earth's to be done, Roper? A ruffian like this Jones will make all the capital he can out of that purse.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I don't believe that Jack took that purse.

BARTHWICK. What—when the woman came here for it this morning?

MRS. BARTHWICK. Here? She had the impudence? Why was n't I told?

[She looks round from face to face—no one answers hey, there is a pause.]

BARTHWICK. [Suddenly.] What's to be done, Roper?

ROPER. [Quietly to JACK.] I suppose you did n't leave your latch-key in the door?

JACK. [Sullenly.] Yes, I did.

BARTHWICK. Good heavens! What next?

MRS. BARTHWICK. I 'm certain you never let that man into the house, Jack, it's a wild invention. I'm sure there's not a word of truth in it, Mr. Roper.

ROPER. [Very suddenly.] Where did you sleep last night?

JACK. [Promptly.] On the sofa, there—[hesitating]—that is—I——

BARTHWICK. On the sofa? D' you mean to say you did n't go to bed?

JACK.[Sullenly.] No.

BARTHWICK. If you don't remember anything, how can you remember that?

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JACK. Because I woke up there in the morning.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Oh, Jack!

BARTHWICK. Good Gracious!

JACK. And Mrs. Jones saw me. I wish you would n't bait me so.

ROPER. Do you remember giving any one a drink?

JACK. By Jove, I do seem to remember a fellow with—a fellow with [He looks at Roper.] I say, d' you want me——?

ROPER. [Quick as lightning.] With a dirty face?

JACK. [With illumination.] I do—I distinctly remember his——

[BARTHWICK moves abruptly; MRS. BARTHWICK looks at ROPER angrily, and touches her son's arm.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. You don't remember, it's ridiculous! I don't believe the man was ever here at all.

BARTHWICK. You must speak the truth, if it is the truth. But if you do remember such a dirty business, I shall wash my hands of you altogether.

JACK. [Glaring at them.] Well, what the devil——

MRS. BARTHWICK. Jack!

JACK. Well, Mother, I—I don't know what you do want.

MRS. BARTHWICK. We want you to speak the truth and say you never let this low man into the house.

BARTHWICK. Of course if you think that you really gave this man whisky in that disgraceful way, and let him see what you'd been doing, and were in such a disgusting condition that you don't remember a word of it——

ROPER. [Quick.] I've no memory myself—never had.

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BARTHWICK. [Desperately.] I don't know what you're to say.

ROPER. [To JACK.] Say nothing at all! Don't put yourself in a false position. The man stole the things or the woman stole the things, you had nothing to do with it. You were asleep on the sofa.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Your leaving the latch-key in the door was quite bad enough, there's no need to mention anything else. [Touching his forehead softly.] My dear, how hot your head is!

JACK. But I want to know what I 'm to do. [Passionately.] I won't be badgered like this.

[MRS. BARTHWICK recoils from him.]

ROPER. [Very quickly.] You forget all about it. You were asleep.

JACK. Must I go down to the Court to-morrow?

ROPER. [Shaking his head.] No.

BARTHWICK. [In a relieved voice.] Is that so?

ROPER. Yes.

BARTHWICK. But you'll go, Roper.

ROPER. Yes.

JACK. [With wan cheerfulness.] Thanks, awfully! So long as I don't have to go. [Putting his hand up to his head.] I think if you'll excuse me—I've had a most beastly day. [He looks from his father to his mother.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Turning quickly.] Goodnight, my boy.

JACK. Good-night, Mother.

[He goes out. MRS. BARTHWICK heaves a sigh. There is a silence.]

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BARTHWICK. He gets off too easily. But for my money that woman would have prosecuted him.

ROPER. You find money useful.

BARTHWICK. I've my doubts whether we ought to hide the truth——

ROPER. There'll be a remand.

BARTHWICK. What! D' you mean he'll have to appear on the remand.

ROPER. Yes.

BARTHWICK. H'm, I thought you'd be able to——Look here, Roper, you must keep that purse out of the papers.

[ROPER fixes his little eyes on him and nods.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. Mr. Roper, don't you think the magistrate ought to be told what sort of people these Jones's are; I mean about their immorality before they were married. I don't know if John told you.

ROPER. Afraid it's not material.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Not material?

ROPER. Purely private life! May have happened to the magistrate.

BARTHWICK. [With a movement as if to shift a burden.] Then you'll take the thing into your hands?

ROPER. If the gods are kind. [He holds his hand out.]

BARTHWICK. [Shaking it dubiously.] Kind eh? What? You going?

ROPER. Yes. I've another case, something like yours—most unexpected.

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[He bows to MRS. BARTHWICK, and goes out, followed by BARTHWICK, talking to the last. MRS. BARTHWICK at the table bursts into smothered sobs. BARTHWICK returns.]

BARTHWICK. [To himself.] There'll be a scandal!

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Disguising her grief at once.] I simply can't imagine what Roper means by making a joke of a thing like that!

BARTHWICK. [Staring strangely.] You! You can't imagine anything! You've no more imagination than a fly!

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Angrily.] You dare to tell me that I have no imagination.

BARTHWICK. [Flustered.] I—I 'm upset. From beginning to end, the whole thing has been utterly against my principles.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Rubbish! You have n't any! Your principles are nothing in the world but sheer fright!

BARTHWICK. [Walking to the window.] I've never been frightened in my life. You heard what Roper said. It's enough to upset one when a thing like this happens. Everything one says and does seems to turn in one's mouth—it's—it's uncanny. It's not the sort of thing I've been accustomed to. [As though stifling, he throws the window open. The faint sobbing of a child comes in.] What's that?

[They listen.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Sharply.] I can't stand that crying. I must send Marlow to stop it. My nerves are all on edge. [She rings the bell.]

BARTHWICK. I'll shut the window; you'll hear nothing. [He shuts the window. There is silence.]

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Sharply.] That's no good! It's on my nerves. Nothing upsets me like a child's crying.

[MARLOW comes in.]

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What's that noise of crying, Marlow? It sounds like a child.

BARTHWICK. It is a child. I can see it against the railings.

MARLOW. [Opening the window, and looking out quietly.] It's Mrs. Jones's little boy, ma'am; he came here after his mother.

MRS. BARTHWICK. [Moving quickly to the window.] Poor little chap! John, we ought n't to go on with this!

BARTHWICK. [Sitting heavily in a chair.] Ah! but it's out of our hands!

[MRS. BARTHWICK turns her back to the window. There is an expression of distress on hey face. She stands motionless, compressing her lips. The crying begins again. BARTHWICK coveys his ears with his hands, and MARLOW shuts the window. The crying ceases.]

The curtain falls.

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ACT III. A London police court.

Eight days have passed, and the scene is a London Police Court at one o'clock. A canopied seat of Justice is surmounted by the lion and unicorn. Before the fire a worn-looking MAGISTRATE is warming his coat-tails, and staring at two little girls in faded blue

and orange rags, who are placed before the dock. Close to the witness-box is a RELIEVING OFFICER in an overcoat, and a short brown beard. Beside the little girls stands a bald POLICE CONSTABLE. On the front bench are sitting BARTHWICK and ROPER, and behind them JACK. In the railed enclosure are seedy-looking men and women. Some prosperous constables sit or stand about.

MAGISTRATE. [In his paternal and ferocious voice, hissing his s's.] Now let us dispose of these young ladies.

USHER. Theresa Livens, Maud Livens.

[The bald CONSTABLE indicates the little girls, who remain silent, disillusioned, inattentive.]

Relieving Officer!

[The RELIEVING OFFICER Steps into the witness-box.]

USHER. The evidence you give to the Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God! Kiss the book!

[The book is kissed.]

RELIEVING OFFICER. [In a monotone, pausing slightly at each sentence end, that his evidence may be inscribed.] About ten o'clock this morning, your Worship, I found these two little girls in Blue Street, Fulham, crying outside a public-house. Asked where their home was, they said they had no home. Mother had gone away. Asked about their father. Their father had no work. Asked where they slept last night. At their aunt's. I 've made inquiries, your Worship. The wife has broken up the home and gone on the streets. The husband is out of work and living in common

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lodging-houses. The husband's sister has eight children of her own, and says she can't afford to keep these little girls any longer.

MAGISTRATE. [Returning to his seat beneath the canopy of justice.] Now, let me see. You say the mother is on the streets; what evidence have you of that?

RELIEVING OFFICER. I have the husband here, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. Very well; then let us see him.

[There are cries of "LIVENS." The MAGISTRATE leans forward, and stares with hard compassion at the little girls. LIVENS comes in. He is quiet, with grizzled hair, and a muffler for a collar. He stands beside the witness-box.]

And you, are their father? Now, why don't you keep your little girls at home. How is it you leave them to wander about the streets like this?

LIVENS. I've got no home, your Worship. I'm living from 'and to mouth. I 've got no work; and nothin' to keep them on.

MAGISTRATE. How is that?

LIVENS. [Ashamedly.] My wife, she broke my 'ome up, and pawned the things.

MAGISTRATE. But what made you let her?

LEVINS. Your Worship, I'd no chance to stop 'er, she did it when I was out lookin' for work.

MAGISTRATE. Did you ill-treat her?

LIVENS. [Emphatically.] I never raised my 'and to her in my life, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. Then what was it—did she drink?

LIVENS. Yes, your Worship.

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MAGISTRATE. Was she loose in her behaviour?

LIVENS. [In a low voice.] Yes, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. And where is she now?

LIVENS. I don't know your Worship. She went off with a man, and after that I——

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes. Who knows anything of her? [To the bald CONSTABLE.] Is she known here?

RELIEVING OFFICER. Not in this district, your Worship; but I have ascertained that she is well known——

MAGISTRATE. Yes—yes; we'll stop at that. Now [To the Father] you say that she has broken up your home, and left these little girls. What provision can you make for them? You look a strong man.

LIVENS. So I am, your Worship. I'm willin' enough to work, but for the life of me I can't get anything to do.

MAGISTRATE. But have you tried?

LIVENS. I've tried everything, your Worship—I 've tried my 'ardest.

MAGISTRATE. Well, well—— [There is a silence.]

RELIEVING OFFICER. If your Worship thinks it's a case, my people are willing to take them.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes, I know; but I've no evidence that this man is not the proper guardian for his children.

[He rises oval goes back to the fire.]

RELIEVING OFFICER. The mother, your Worship, is able to get access to them.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes; the mother, of course, is an improper person to have anything to do with them. [To the Father.] Well, now what do you say?

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LIVENS. Your Worship, I can only say that if I could get work I should be only too willing to provide for them. But what can I do, your Worship? Here I am obliged to live from 'and to mouth in these 'ere common lodging-houses. I 'm a strong man—I'm willing to work —I'm half as alive again as some of 'em—but you see, your Worship, my 'airs' turned a bit, owing to the fever—[Touches his hair]—and that's against me; and I don't seem to get a chance anyhow.

MAGISTRATE. Yes-yes. [Slowly.] Well, I think it 's a case. [Staring his hardest at the little girls.] Now, are you willing that these little girls should be sent to a home.

LIVENS. Yes, your Worship, I should be very willing.

MAGISTRATE. Well, I'll remand them for a week. Bring them again to-day week; if I see no reason against it then, I 'll make an order.

RELIEVING OFFICER. To-day week, your Worship.

[The bald CONSTABLE takes the little girls out by the shoulders. The father follows them. The MAGISTRATE, returning to his seat, bends over and talks to his CLERK inaudibly.]

BARTHWICK. [Speaking behind his hand.] A painful case, Roper; very distressing state of things.

ROPER. Hundreds like this in the Police Courts.

BARTHWICK. Most distressing! The more I see of it, the more important this question of the condition of the people seems to become. I shall certainly make a point of taking up the cudgels in the House. I shall move——

[The MAGISTRATE ceases talking to his CLERK.]

CLERK. Remands!

[BARTHWICK stops abruptly. There is a stir and MRS. JONES comes in by the public door; JONES, ushered by policemen, comes from the prisoner's door. They file into the dock.]

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CLERK. James Jones, Jane Jones.

USHER. Jane Jones!

BARTHWICK. [In a whisper.] The purse—the purse must be kept out of it, Roper. Whatever happens you must keep that out of the papers.

[ROPER nods.]

BALD CONSTABLE. Hush!

[MRS. JONES, dressed in hey thin, black, wispy dress, and black straw hat, stands motionless with hands crossed on the front rail of the dock. JONES leans against the back rail of the dock, and keeps half turning, glancing defiantly about him. He is haggard and unshaven.]

CLERK. [Consulting with his papers.] This is the case remanded from last Wednesday, Sir. Theft of a silver cigarette-box and assault on the police; the two charges were taken together. Jane Jones! James Jones!

MAGISTRATE. [Staring.] Yes, yes; I remember.

CLERK. Jane Jones.

MRS. JONES. Yes, Sir.

CLERK. Do you admit stealing a silver cigarette-box valued at five pounds, ten shillings, from the house of John BARTHWICK, M.P., between the hours of 11 p.m. on Easter Monday and 8.45 a.m. on Easter Tuesday last? Yes, or no?

MRS. JONES. [In a logy voice.] No, Sir, I do not, sir.

CLERK. James Jones? Do you admit stealing a silver cigarette-box valued at five pounds, ten shillings, from the house of John BARTHWICK, M.P., between the hours of 11 p.m. on Easter Monday and 8.45 A.M. on Easter Tuesday last. And further making an assault on the police when in the execution of their duty at 3 p.m. on Easter Tuesday? Yes or no?

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JONES. [Sullenly.] Yes, but I've got a lot to say about it.

MAGISTRATE. [To the CLERK.] Yes—yes. But how comes it that these two people are charged with the same offence? Are they husband and wife?

CLERK. Yes, Sir. You remember you ordered a remand for further evidence as to the story of the male prisoner.

MAGISTRATE. Have they been in custody since?

CLERK. You released the woman on her own recognisances, sir.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes, this is the case of the silver box; I remember now. Well?

CLERK. Thomas Marlow.

[The cry of "THOMAS MARLOW" is repeated MARLOW comes in, and steps into the witness-box.]

USHER. The evidence you give to the court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God. Kiss the book.

[The book is kissed. The silver box is handed up, and placed on the rail.]

CLERK. [Reading from his papers.] Your name is Thomas Marlow? Are you, butler to John BARTHWICK, M.P., of 6, Rockingham Gate?

MARLOW. Yes, Sir.

CLERK. Is that the box?

MARLOW. Yes Sir.

CLERK. And did you miss the same at 8.45 on the following morning, on going to remove the tray?

MARLOW. Yes, Sir.

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CLERK. Is the female prisoner known to you?

[MARLOW nods.]

Is she the charwoman employed at 6, Rockingham Gate?

[Again MARLOW nods.]

Did you at the time of your missing the box find her in the room alone?

MARLOW. Yes, Sir.

CLERK. Did you afterwards communicate the loss to your employer, and did he send you to the police station?

MARLOW. Yes, Sir.

CLERK. [To MRS. JONES.] Have you anything to ask him?

MRS. JONES. No, sir, nothing, thank you, sir.

CLERK. [To JONES.] James Jones, have you anything to ask this witness?

JONES. I don't know 'im.

MAGISTRATE. Are you sure you put the box in the place you say at the time you say?

MARLOW. Yes, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. Very well; then now let us have the officer.

[MARLOW leaves the box, and Snow goes into it.]

USHER. The evidence you give to the court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God. [The book is kissed.]

CLERK. [Reading from his papers.] Your name is Robert Allow? You are a detective in the X. B. division of the Metropolitan police force? According to instructions received did you on Easter Tuesday last proceed to the prisoner's

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lodgings at 34, Merthyr Street, St. Soames's? And did you on entering see the box produced, lying on the table?

SNOW. Yes, Sir.

CLERK. Is that the box?

Snow. [Fingering the box.] Yes, Sir.

CLERK. And did you thereupon take possession of it, and charge the female prisoner with theft of the box from 6, Rockingham Gate? And did she deny the same?

SNOW. Yes, Sir.

CLERK. Did you take her into custody?

Snow. Yes, Sir.

MAGISTRATE. What was her behaviour?

SNOW. Perfectly quiet, your Worship. She persisted in the denial. That's all.

MAGISTRATE. DO you know her?

SNOW. No, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. Is she known here?

BALD CONSTABLE. No, your Worship, they're neither of them known, we 've nothing against them at all.

CLERK. [To MRS. JONES.] Have you anything to ask the officer?

MRS. JONES. No, sir, thank you, I 've nothing to ask him.

MAGISTRATE. Very well then—go on.

CLERK. [Reading from his papers.] And while you were taking the female prisoner did the male prisoner interpose, and endeavour to

hinder you in the execution of your duty, and did he strike you a blow?

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SNOW. Yes, Sir.

CLERK. And did he say, "You, let her go, I took the box myself"?

SNOW. He did.

CLERK. And did you blow your whistle and obtain the assistance of another constable, and take him into custody?

SNOW. I did.

CLERK. Was he violent on the way to the station, and did he use bad language, and did he several times repeat that he had taken the box himself?

[Snow nods.]

Did you thereupon ask him in what manner he had stolen the box? And did you understand him to say he had entered the house at the invitation of young Mr. BARTHWICK

[BARTHWICK, turning in his seat, frowns at ROPER.]

after midnight on Easter Monday, and partaken of whisky, and that under the influence of the whisky he had taken the box?

SNOW. I did, sir.

CLERK. And was his demeanour throughout very violent?

SNOW. It was very violent.

JONES. [Breaking in.] Violent—-of course it was! You put your 'ands on my wife when I kept tellin' you I took the thing myself.

MAGISTRATE. [Hissing, with protruded neck.] Now—you will have your chance of saying what you want to say presently. Have you anything to ask the officer?

JONES. [Sullenly.] No.

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MAGISTRATE. Very well then. Now let us hear what the female prisoner has to say first.

MRS. JONES. Well, your Worship, of course I can only say what I 've said all along, that I did n't take the box.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, but did you know that it was taken?

MRS. JONES. No, your Worship. And, of course, to what my husband says, your Worship, I can't speak of my own knowledge. Of course, I know that he came home very late on the Monday night. It was past one o'clock when he came in, and he was not himself at all.

MAGISTRATE. Had he been drinking?

MRS. JONES. Yes, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. And was he drunk?

MRS. JONES. Yes, your Worship, he was almost quite drunk.

MAGISTRATE. And did he say anything to you?

MRS. JONES. No, your Worship, only to call me names. And of course in the morning when I got up and went to work he was asleep. And I don't know anything more about it until I came home again. Except that Mr. BARTHWICK—that 's my employer, your Worship—told me the box was missing.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes.

MRS. JONES. But of course when I was shaking out my husband's coat the cigarette-box fell out and all the cigarettes were scattered on the bed.

MAGISTRATE. You say all the cigarettes were scattered on the bed? [To SNOW.] Did you see the cigarettes scattered on the bed?

SNOW. No, your Worship, I did not.

MAGISTRATE. You see he says he did n't see them.

JONES. Well, they were there for all that.

SNOW. I can't say, your Worship, that I had the opportunity of going round the room; I had all my work cut out with the male prisoner.

MAGISTRATE. [To MRS. JONES.] Well, what more have you to say?

MRS. JONES. Of course when I saw the box, your Worship, I was dreadfully upset, and I could n't think why he had done such a thing; when the officer came we were having words about it, because it is ruin to me, your Worship, in my profession, and I have three little children dependent on me.

MAGISTRATE. [Protruding his neck]. Yes—yes—but what did he say to you?

MRS. JONES. I asked him whatever came over him to do such a thing —and he said it was the drink. He said he had had too much to drink, and something came over him. And of course, your Worship, he had had very little to eat all day, and the drink does go to the head when you have not had enough to eat. Your Worship may not know, but it is the truth. And I would like to say that all through his married life, I have never known him to do such a thing before, though we have passed through great hardships and [speaking with soft emphasis] I am quite sure he would not have done it if he had been himself at the time.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes. But don't you know that that is no excuse?

MRS. JONES. Yes, your Worship. I know that it is no excuse.

[The MAGISTRATE leans over and parleys with his CLERK.]

JACK. [Leaning over from his seat behind.] I say, Dad——

BARTHWICK. Tsst! [Sheltering his mouth he speaks to ROPER.] Roper, you had better get up now and say that

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considering the circumstances and the poverty of the prisoners, we have no wish to proceed any further, and if the magistrate would deal with the case as one of disorder only on the part of——

BALD CONSTABLE. HSSShh!

[ROPER shakes his head.]

MAGISTRATE. Now, supposing what you say and what your husband says is true, what I have to consider is—how did he obtain access to this house, and were you in any way a party to his obtaining access? You are the charwoman employed at the house?

MRS. JONES. Yes, your Worship, and of course if I had let him into the house it would have been very wrong of me; and I have never done such a thing in any of the houses where I have been employed.

MAGISTRATE. Well—so you say. Now let us hear what story the male prisoner makes of it.

JONES. [Who leans with his arms on the dock behind, speaks in a slow, sullen voice.] Wot I say is wot my wife says. I 've never been 'ad up in a police court before, an' I can prove I took it when in liquor. I told her, and she can tell you the same, that I was goin' to throw the thing into the water sooner then 'ave it on my mind.

MAGISTRATE. But how did you get into the HOUSE?

JONES. I was passin'. I was goin' 'ome from the "Goat and Bells."

MAGISTRATE. The "Goat and Bells,"—what is that? A public-house?

JONES. Yes, at the corner. It was Bank 'oliday, an' I'd 'ad a drop to drink. I see this young Mr. BARTHWICK tryin' to find the keyhole on the wrong side of the door.

MAGISTRATE. Well?

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JONES. [Slowly and with many pauses.] Well—-I 'elped 'im to find it—drunk as a lord 'e was. He goes on, an' comes back again, and says, I 've got nothin' for you, 'e says, but come in an' 'ave a drink. So I went in just as you might 'ave done yourself. We 'ad a drink o' whisky just as you might have 'ad, 'nd young Mr. BARTHWICK says to me, "Take a drink 'nd a smoke. Take anything you like, 'e says." And then he went to sleep on the sofa. I 'ad some more whisky—an' I 'ad a smoke—and I 'ad some more whisky—an' I carn't tell yer what 'appened after that.

MAGISTRATE. Do you mean to say that you were so drunk that you can remember nothing?

JACK. [Softly to his father.] I say, that's exactly what——

BARTHWICK. TSSh!

JONES. That's what I do mean.

MAGISTRATE. And yet you say you stole the box?

JONES. I never stole the box. I took it.

MAGISTRATE. [Hissing with protruded neck.] You did not steal it— you took it. Did it belong to you—what is that but stealing?

JONES. I took it.

MAGISTRATE. You took it—you took it away from their house and you took it to your house——

JONES. [Sullenly breaking in.] I ain't got a house.

MAGISTRATE. Very well, let us hear what this young man Mr.—Mr. BARTHWICK has to say to your story.

[SNOW leaves the witness-box. The BALD CONSTABLE beckons JACK, who, clutching his hat, goes into the witness-box. ROPER moves to the table set apart for his profession.]

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SWEARING CLERK. The evidence you give to the court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God. Kiss the book.

[The book is kissed.]

ROPER. [Examining.] What is your name?

JACK. [In a low voice.] John BARTHWICK, Junior.

[The CLERK writes it down.]

ROPER. Where do you live?

JACK. At 6, Rockingham Gate.

[All his answers are recorded by the Clerk.]

ROPER. You are the son of the owner?

JACK. [In a very low voice.] Yes.

ROPER. Speak up, please. Do you know the prisoners?

JACK. [Looking at the JONESES, in a low voice.] I 've seen Mrs. Jones. I [in a loud voice] don't know the man.

JONES. Well, I know you!

BALD CONSTABLE. HSSh!

ROPER. Now, did you come in late on the night of Easter Monday?

JACK. Yes.

ROPER. And did you by mistake leave your latch key in the door?

JACK. Yes.

MAGISTRATE. Oh! You left your latch-key in the door?

ROPER. And is that all you can remember about your coming in?

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JACK. [In a loud voice.] Yes, it is.

MAGISTRATE. Now, you have heard the male prisoner's story, what do you say to that?

JACK. [Turning to the MAGISTRATE, speaks suddenly in a confident, straight-forward voice.] The fact of the matter is, sir, that I 'd been out to the theatre that night, and had supper afterwards, and I came in late.

MAGISTRATE. Do you remember this man being outside when you came in?

JACK. No, Sir. [He hesitates.] I don't think I do.

MAGISTRATE. [Somewhat puzzled.] Well, did he help you to open the door, as he says? Did any one help you to open the door?

JACK. No, sir—I don't think so, sir—I don't know.

MAGISTRATE. You don't know? But you must know. It is n't a usual thing for you to have the door opened for you, is it?

JACK. [With a shamefaced smile.] No.

MAGISTRATE. Very well, then——

JACK. [Desperately.] The fact of the matter is, sir, I'm afraid I'd had too much champagne that night.

MAGISTRATE. [Smiling.] Oh! you'd had too much champagne?

JONES. May I ask the gentleman a question?

MAGISTRATE. Yes—yes—you may ask him what questions you like.

JONES. Don't you remember you said you was a Liberal, same as your father, and you asked me wot I was?

JACK. [With his hand against his brow.] I seem to remember——

JONES. And I said to you, "I'm a bloomin' Conservative," I said; an' you said to me, "You look more like one of these 'ere Socialists. Take wotever you like," you said.

JACK. [With sudden resolution.] No, I don't. I don't remember anything of the sort.

JONES. Well, I do, an' my word's as good as yours. I 've never been had up in a police court before. Look 'ere, don't you remember you had a sky-blue bag in your 'and [BARTHWICK jumps.]

ROPER. I submit to your worship that these questions are hardly to the point, the prisoner having admitted that he himself does not remember anything. [There is a smile on the face of Justice.] It is a case of the blind leading the blind.

JONES. [Violently.] I've done no more than wot he 'as. I'm a poor man; I've got no money an' no friends—he 's a toff—he can do wot I can't.

MAGISTRATE: Now, now? All this won't help you—you must be quiet. You say you took this box? Now, what made you take it? Were you pressed for money?

JONES. I'm always pressed for money.

MAGISTRATE. Was that the reason you took it?

JONES. No.

MAGISTRATE. [To SNOW.] Was anything found on him?

SNOW. Yes, your worship. There was six pounds twelve shillin's found on him, and this purse.

[The red silk purse is handed to the MAGISTRATE. BARTHWICK rises his seat, but hastily sits down again.]

MAGISTRATE. [Staring at the purse.] Yes, yes—let me see [There is a silence.] No, no, I 've nothing before me as to the purse. How did you come by all that money?

JONES. [After a long pause, suddenly.] I declines to say.

MAGISTRATE. But if you had all that money, what made you take this box?

JONES. I took it out of spite.

MAGISTRATE. [Hissing, with protruded neck.] You took it out of spite? Well now, that's something! But do you imagine you can go about the town taking things out of spite?

JONES. If you had my life, if you'd been out of work——

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes; I know—because you're out of work you think it's an excuse for everything.

JONES. [Pointing at JACK.] You ask 'im wot made 'im take the——

ROPER. [Quietly.] Does your Worship require this witness in the box any longer?

MAGISTRATE. [Ironically.] I think not; he is hardly profitable.

[JACK leaves the witness-box, and hanging his head, resumes his seat.]

JONES. You ask 'im wot made 'im take the lady's——

[But the BALD CONSTABLE catches him by the sleeve.]

BALD CONSTABLE. SSSh!

MAGISTRATE. [Emphatically.] Now listen to me.

I 've nothing to do with what he may or may not have taken. Why did you resist the police in the execution of their duty?

JONES. It war n't their duty to take my wife, a respectable woman, that 'ad n't done nothing.

MAGISTRATE. But I say it was. What made you strike the officer a blow?

JONES. Any man would a struck 'im a blow. I'd strike 'im again, I would.

MAGISTRATE. You are not making your case any better by violence. How do you suppose we could get on if everybody behaved like you?

JONES. [Leaning forward, earnestly.] Well, wot, about 'er; who's to make up to 'er for this? Who's to give 'er back 'er good name?

MRS. JONES. Your Worship, it's the children that's preying on his mind, because of course I 've lost my work. And I've had to find another room owing to the scandal.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes, I know—but if he had n't acted like this nobody would have suffered.

JONES. [Glaring round at JACK.] I 've done no worse than wot 'e 'as. Wot I want to know is wot 's goin' to be done to 'im.

[The BALD CONSTABLE again says "HSSh"]

ROPER. Mr. BARTHWICK wishes it known, your Worship, that considering the poverty of the prisoners, he does not press the charge as to the box. Perhaps your Worship would deal with the case as one of disorder.

JONES. I don't want it smothered up, I want it all dealt with fair —I want my rights——

MAGISTRATE. [Rapping his desk.] Now you have said all you have to say, and you will be quiet.

[There is a silence; the MAGISTRATE bends over and parleys with his CLERK.]

Yes, I think I may discharge the woman. [In a kindly voice he addresses MRS. JONES, who stands unmoving with her hands crossed on the rail.] It is very unfortunate for you

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that this man has behaved as he has. It is not the consequences to him but the consequences to you. You have been brought here twice, you have lost your work— [He glares at JONES]—and this is what always happens. Now you may go away, and I am very sorry it was necessary to bring you here at all.

MRS. JONES. [Softly.] Thank you very much, your Worship.

[She leaves the dock, and looking back at JONES, twists her fingers and is still.]

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes, but I can't pass it over. Go away, there's a good woman.

[MRS. JONES stands back. The MAGISTRATE leans his head on his hand; then raising it he speaks to JONES.]

Now, listen to me. Do you wish the case to be settled here, or do you wish it to go before a jury?

JONES. [Muttering.] I don't want no jury.

MAGISTRATE. Very well then, I will deal with it here. [After a pause.] You have pleaded guilty to stealing this box——

JONES. Not to stealin'——

BALD CONSTABLE. HSSShh!

MAGISTRATE. And to assaulting the police——

JONES. Any man as was a man——

MAGISTRATE. Your conduct here has been most improper. You give the excuse that you were drunk when you stole the box. I tell you that is no excuse. If you choose to get drunk and break the law afterwards you must take the consequences. And let me tell you

that men like you, who get drunk and give way to your spite or whatever it is that's in you, are—are—a nuisance to the community.

JACK. [Leaning from his seat.] Dad! that's what you said to me!

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BARTHWICK. TSSt!

[There is a silence, while the MAGISTRATE consults his CLERK; JONES leans forward waiting.]

MAGISTRATE. This is your first offence, and I am going to give you a light sentence. [Speaking sharply, but without expression.] One month with hard labour.

[He bends, and parleys with his CLERK. The BALD CONSTABLE and another help JONES from the dock.]

JONES. [Stopping and twisting round.] Call this justice? What about 'im? 'E got drunk! 'E took the purse—'e took the purse but [in a muffled shout] it's 'is money got 'im off—JUSTICE!

[The prisoner's door is shut on JONES, and from the seedy-looking men and women comes a hoarse and whispering groan.]

MAGISTRATE. We will now adjourn for lunch! [He rises from his seat.]

[The Court is in a stir. ROPER gets up and speaks to the reporter. JACK, throwing up his head, walks with a swagger to the corridor; BARTHWICK follows.]

MRS. JONES. [Turning to him zenith a humble gesture.] Oh! sir!

[BARTHWICK hesitates, then yielding to his nerves, he makes a shame-faced gesture of refusal, and hurries out of court. MRS. JONES stands looking after him.]

The curtain falls.

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