

Dale writhed with exquisite scorn, but said nothing.

"D'you like Maud Eden?"

Meyer's bright little eyes flew from right to left and back again. A faint smacking sound came from his humid lips.

"Ah, there's a girl a fellow would like to—I mean she's great, Mr. Champion. All the chaps are keen on her. Look at her figure! Look at her legs! I'm told the shops sell a hundred photos of her to one of any other actress you can mention."

"Mr. Dale here says she's suburban."

Meyer raised his heavy black eyebrows.

"Indeed! I'm sure I beg pardon, Mr. Dale, all my friends think her the first actress we have."

Martin Dale got up abruptly from his chair. As he did so he opened his mouth, kept it open for an instant, then shut it with an audible snap of his white teeth.

"Why was I such a damned fool as to write another play and get it accepted?" he thought.

He went over to one of the two long windows in the room and stared out into the sunlit street. Although the Central Theatre stood in the very heart of London the street looked like a slum. Dale smelt, or imagined he smelt, an odour of vegetables. Surely the warm air was impregnated with cabbage! And so that infernal little Jew boy was called in to—no, it shouldn't be!

He swung round.

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Champion, but my contract gives me the right to exercise supervision over the cast of my play. Miss Maud Eden may appeal to a certain public, but she doesn't appeal to me. I don't admire her as an actress and I must object to her being given the part of Magdalen Smith."

"We can't have Smith!" murmured Leslie Grant, looking at his short nails.

Champion stared for a moment. His crafty eyes gazed out from a face of stone.

"That'll do, Meyer," he then said.

"Right, Mr. Champion. I'll bring——"

"No, I'll ring when we want them."

"Certainly, Mr. Champion."

When the door shut behind Meyer's markedly Jewish back Champion said:

"Very well, Mr. Dale. You refuse to have Miss Eden, one of the biggest draws in London, for the lead. We must