

"Oh, ain't she beautiful?" said Jack, when the old boy hummed and hawed and began on Mrs. Buckingham, "and so kind! I say, general, isn't her husband rather a bounder?"

"Who told you?" asked the general.

"Oh, — ah, I — I — gathered it," said Jack. He had gathered it from Mrs. Buckingham, who had lost no time in exciting his sympathy for a delicate and much misunderstood woman.

"I suppose a man who makes jam and biscuits may be a gentleman nowadays," said Bigham, "but in my time we didn't think so. It's the amount you make, Jack. If you make 'em in the bakery and put 'em in a tray, you're a tradesman. If you make 'em in tons, you're a gentleman. It's the same with bacon. A few rashers a cad sells, but a million rashers get you a title. Buckingham's father was a baker in the Commercial Row, but Buckingham has a factory and three hundred hands at least. Shops all over the place, too. But Mrs. Buckingham —"

"I'm sorry for her," said Jack. "She ought to have married a gentleman."

Old Bigham growled.

"She's done well enough for herself. Look here, my boy, mind what you're about with her."

Jack stiffened visibly.