

mockery directed against Lady Oakley. She did not seem to mind. She was a very handsome woman of about forty-five, with thick, dark red hair and a good skin where rose, white and yellow had blended in a pleasant, uniform colour. She was growing rather stout, but hers was a jovial stoutness; the suspicion of mockery did not dull the sherry-bright vivacity of her brown eyes, or stale the good curves of her rather thick lips. Still, she felt impelled to decisive assertions.

"It's all very well your making jokes about it, Hugh. This isn't a joking matter. When the country's come to such a pass, when it needs the services of every able-bodied man and woman, we can't afford to allow examples like the one Cradoc is giving all those young men who've nothing better to do than sit in the King's Arms."

"I thought Cradoc was a teetotaler," said Monica.

"That makes it worse," said Lady Oakley, with much severity and little relevance. "This is not the time for cranks."

"Like the King," said Monica, slewing her grey eyes towards her father. "You know he took the pledge in March, while poor Cradoc . . ."

"Now, Monica," said Lady Oakley, "don't be irritating. Even if the King and Mr. Cradoc *do* do the same thing, it's different. The beef's overdone. Burnt to a cinder. And I don't know what Mrs. Marsden's doing; we never seem to get any fish here."

"One doesn't at the seaside," said Louise; "at least nobody catches anything except the Londoners. We've got a poor little blind Cockney at the hospital; he spends most of his day by the harbour, and he catches as many fish as the Pied Piper caught rats. Poor chap! he was at Gallipoli."

"Ah, yes, Gallipoli," said Sir Hugh Emily.