

"Several. Ah, here we are. Don't you seem to recognise your own voice? 'Any one who makes a stand for vital and humane concentration is set down as a mere laggard or reactionary, whereas he may find himself, rather, a pioneer and leader of a forlorn hope—not all forlorn. . . . The revival of broad, vigorous, masculine distinctions between art and art alone can save us from the confusions that have crept into modern life and literature, and which I trace to two main sources—emotional unrestraint and pseudo-science. . . . To set colour above design, illusion above informing purpose, suggestion above symmetry, is to set the feminine virtues above the masculine—and that has been the chief cause of the corruption of art and literature in the past century.' "

An indictment so sweeping roused Mona, fresh from her Oxford triumphs. "But, Mr. Macnair, I call that heresy!" she protested; and Keith smiled indulgently at her unusual warmth.

"Heresy, my dear young lady, is, after all, only the truth as seen by the fellow in the opposite camp. And there still remain certain unregenerates in the other camp who are praying for the rediscovery of Man."

"Or a German invasion!" murmured Lady Forsyth. "With apologies to Mona, I'm afraid nothing milder will save us from the petticoat peril."

At that Ralph looked up from his mayonnaise. In a wilderness of abstractions, here was something he could understand.

"I say, Lady Forsyth! Rather a costly form of salvation, don't you think?"

"Salvation is always costly, Ralph," she answered him gravely. "And it is always worth the price paid."

Here Mona struck in again; and the argument, as Keith had intended, carried them well through lunch.