

#### 4 THE BACCHANTE AND THE NUN

"How about Maud Eden, Jack? She's a pretty little thing, and she's got a big following among the matinée girls."

"What would she want?"

"She'd probably ask two hundred a week. . . ."

"Oh, God!"

"And take a hundred and twenty."

"I couldn't accept her," said Dale. "She's hopelessly suburban."

"Suburban! All the better! The suburbs will eat her."

"I couldn't——"

"You don't think we're going to depend on the highbrows of Mayfair and Chelsea for our audiences, do you? They wouldn't give us a week's run."

"I have it in my contract, Mr. Champion, that I'm to approve the cast. Miss Eden has a cockney accent."

"I've never noticed it. Anyhow, she can act."

"That may be. But she's essentially common."

"She's a lovely girl. Look at her legs!"

"Legs! I want brain and emotion. I want a woman who can suggest the pursuit of the ideal."

"What's that?"

Here Grant broke in with:

"Maud Eden can look ideal all right. She's got the longest eyelashes of any actress in London."

"That's nothing to do with it."

"Let's ask Meyer!" suddenly said Champion, as if seized by a happy idea. "Press the bell, Lez, will you?"

The fat thumb went once more to the bell.

"Ask Meyer what?" exclaimed Dale, beginning to perspire.

"You'll see in a minute," said Champion. "Here, Meyer!"

"Shall I bring some more drinks, Mr. Champion?"

"No—yes, you may as well. But stop a minute first."

"Yes, Mr. Champion."

The young Jew paused by the table in a pouncing attitude.

"You get about a good bit, Meyer; one way and another, I suppose you've seen most of the London actresses, eh?"

"I should say, Mr. Champion."

Champion sent a shrewd glance to Grant.

"What d'you think of Miss Mulholland, eh?"

"Cold, Mr. Champion. She doesn't heat you up. No suggestion of sex."

"There you are, Mr. Dale!"