

got to keep a cool head, a steady eye, and a still hand. The fly-wheel might gobble me up.

MRS. WHITE. Don't, Herbert. (*She sits in the armchair below the fire.*)

HERBERT (*laughing*). No fear, Mother.

SERGEANT. Ah! you electricians!—Sort o' magicians, you are. Light! says you—and light it is. And, power! says you—and the trams go whizzin'. And, knowledge! says you—and words go 'ummin' to the ends o' the world. It fair beats me—and I've seen a bit in my time, too.

HERBERT (*nudges his father*). Your Indian magic? All a fake, governor. The fakir's fake.

SERGEANT. Fake, you call it? I tell you, I've seen it.

HERBERT (*nudging his father with his foot*). Oh, come, now! such as what? Come, now!

SERGEANT. I've seen a cove with no more clothes on than a babby, (*to MRS. WHITE*) if you know what I mean—take an empty basket—empty, mind!—as empty as—as this here glass—

MR. WHITE. Hand it over, Morris. (*He hands it to HERBERT, who goes quickly behind the table and fills it.*)

SERGEANT. Which was not my intentions, but used for illustration.

HERBERT (*while mixing*). Oh, I've seen the basket trick; and I've read how it was done. Why, I could do it myself, with a bit o' practice. Ladle out something stronger.

(*HERBERT brings him the glass.*)

SERGEANT. Stronger?—what do you say to an old fakir chuckin' a rope up in the air—in the air, mind you!—and swarming up it, same as if it was 'ooked on—and vanishing clean out o' sight?—I've seen that.

(*HERBERT goes to the table, plunges a knife into a bun and offers it to the SERGEANT with exaggerated politeness.*)