

## Our Betters

the *People's Messenger* to proclaim, day out, day in, the false doctrine that it's the masses, the multitude, the compact majority, that monopolise liberality and morality—and that vice and corruption and all sorts of spiritual uncleanness ooze out of culture. No; it's stupidity, poverty, the ugliness of life, that do the devil's work! In a house that isn't aired and swept every day—in such a house, I say, within two or three years, people lose the power of thinking or acting morally. Lack of oxygen enervates the conscience. And there seems to be precious little oxygen in many and many a house in this town, since the whole compact majority is unscrupulous enough to want to found its future upon a quagmire of lies and fraud." [*The meeting breaks up in uproar.*]

In the last act, poor Doctor Stockmann, his soul a-blaze and his body a-bleed, finds that his independence has cost him his livelihood; his family is on the brink of starvation, and he cries out: "A man should never put on his best trousers when he goes out to battle for truth and freedom." With what a wonderful sense of impartiality does Ibsen hold the scales between the two brothers—the one the utilitarian, the other the idealist! The author sees the weak spot in the great man's armour. He sees also what is worldly-wise in the little man's argument. Great