

DISJECTA MEMBRA POETAE

There was a suggestion of a chuckle in his voice which sent Rickman's thoughts flying fearfully to his last I.O.U. The alert mind of Pilkington followed their flight. He was intensely amused. He always was amused when anybody showed a marked distaste for his society.

"Your business, not mine, this time, Rick. I happen to know of a ripping old library for sale down in Devonshire. Shouldn't have thought of it if I hadn't seen you."

"Well?" Rickman's face expressed an utter inability to perceive the connection. Once the iron shutters had closed on Rickman's he felt that he was no more a part of it. Words could not express his abhorrence of the indecent people who insisted on talking shop out of shop hours. And Dicky never had any decorum.

"Well—it's practically on our hands, d'ye see? And if your people care to take over the whole lot, I can let you have it pretty reasonably."

Rickman's face emptied itself of all expression whatever.

"I say, you are a cool young cuss. Is this the way you generally do business?"

"I'll think it over."

"Wouldn't think too long if I were you. It ought to go by auction, and it might; only private contract's preferred."

"Why preferred?"

"Out of respect for the feelin's of the family."

Rickman's eyes were wandering dreamily from the matter in hand. They had alighted on an enormous photograph of Miss Poppy Grace. For an instant thought, like a cloud, obscured the brilliance of Mr. Pilkington's face.

"Anyhow I've given you the straight tip," said Pilkington.

"Thanks. We'll send a fellow down to overhaul the thing."

"He'd better hurry up then. It *may* have to go by auction after all. But if you'd like the refusal of it, now's your chance."

But Rickman betrayed no enthusiasm.

"You'd better see the guv'nor about it."