

DISJECTA MEMBRA POETAE

He looked at his watch. He could still get to Hampstead by eight o'clock, if he took a cab—say, —twenty minutes. He could spare him another ten. The Junior Journalists were coming back from their dinner and the room would soon be crowded. He took his disciple's arm in a protecting manner and steered him into a near recess. He felt that the ten minutes he was about to give him would be decisive in the young man's career.

"You've still got to find your formula. Not to have found your formula," he said solemnly, "is not to have found yourself."

"Perhaps I haven't been looking in very likely places," said Rickman, nobly touched, as he always was by the more personal utterances of the master.

"The Jubilee Variety Theatre, for instance. Do you go there to find the ideal, or in pursuit of the fugitive actuality?"

"Whichever you like to call it. Its name on the programme is Miss Poppy Grace."

"Look here, Rickman," said Jewdwine, gently; "when are you going to give up this business?"

"Which business?"

"Well, at the moment I referred to your situation in the Gin Palace of Art——"

"I can't chuck it just yet. There's my father, you see. It would spoil all his pleasure in that new plate-glass and mahogany devilry. He's excited about it; wants to make it a big thing——"

"So he puts a big man into it?"

"Oh, well, I must see him started."

He spoke simply, as of a thing self-evident and indisputable. Jewdwine admired.

"You're quite right. You *are* handicapped. Heavily handicapped. So, for Goodness' sake, don't weight yourself any more. If you can't drop the Gin Palace, drop Miss Poppy Grace."

"Poppy Grace? She weighs about as much as a feather."

"Drop her, drop her, all the same."

"I can't. She wouldn't drop. She'd float."

"Don't float with her."