

Jack stammered clumsily that he was delighted to come.

"You — you knew it, Mrs. Buckingham."

She knew it well enough.

"I had a headache all the morning and indeed till a few minutes ago," she said. "But it has gone now. Sit down by me and tell me what you have been doing all this time."

She lay back on the sofa.

"I've been thinkin'," said Jack.

"Not about me?" said Mrs. Buckingham. "I sha'n't believe you if you are sweet and say so."

"It's true," said Jack, "I was thinking a lot about you, and about your bein' so kind to me."

"Nonsense, my dear boy," said the kind woman.

"I'm not kind, it's only my selfishness because I like you. You're so different from those I know best. You have ideals, and all the rest think of is money."

She spent every penny she could wheedle and cajole and squeeze out of the biscuit merchant. Buckingham, who was sometimes bitterly humourous, said that she ate half the biscuits and all the jam that he made out of the sweat of other people's brows.

"I love people who want to do things," she sighed. "Why was I a woman? If I had been a