



# THE LAND

A PLAY OF CHARACTER

IN ONE ACT WITH FIVE SCENES

BY

ANDREW MACPHAIL

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE  
MONTREAL  
1914

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*Car. Macphail Andrews*

THE LAND



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MACPHAIL, A.

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## PERSONS OF THE PLAY

BENJAMIN HASZARD.....A Speculative Financier  
JOHN MORAY.....Professor of Economics  
MILICENT.....His Wife  
HUGO MORAY .....His Son  
GAVIN MORAY.....His Father  
LYDIA DRYSDALE .....A Nurse  
ARTHUR MOSTYN .....A Doctor  
GEORGE TAPPAN .....Office Manager for Mr. Haszard  
HENRY PELHAM .....Stock Broker's Clerk  
RICHARD SWABEY .....A Manservant

PLACE—Montreal

TIME—9.30 A.M. March, 1914

# THE LAND

## SCENE 1

*A large room in Mr. HASZARD'S house, which is called the library. It is the room of a rich man who has himself no taste but has sense enough to employ men who have, when taste is required. The room was designed by one expert, built by men who gave value in their work, and furnished by another who was guided, probably against his will, by the principle of durability and use. A single rug covers the floor. Low book-cases of mahogany wood are built against the three walls which are adorned with green cloth. The book-cases are provided with glass doors of small lozenge-shaped panes, showing the backs of elaborately bound "sets" of books. At the centre of the back is a cumbersome fireplace in marble, brilliant with brass; above it a capacious shelf with over-mantel and mirror. The middle of the room is occupied by a piece of furniture which has the appearance of an office desk rather than of a library table. A low couch stands in front, a chair behind, and another at the right. All these articles of furniture are finished in dark leather. Beside the fireplace is a white screen and a small table covered with a white cloth, such as may be found in an invalid's room. On the mantel shelf is a "ticker" and a telephone; and above it a practicable clock. Traditional busts in marble and bronze are on the book-case; and on the*

walls steel engravings in black frames of "eminent statesmen and captains of industry." The room is lighted by three long windows in the right wall, which break the line of the book-case, and all are heavily curtained in dark red, with green blinds, half drawn, showing between the curtains. A crystal chandelier faintly lighted is over the desk. A door opens at the right of the fireplace into a hall, and another in the left wall at the back into the more private apartments of the house. The desk has on it an electric bell, and is strewn with papers. The room has the appearance of being left as it came from the hands of the decorators and furnishers a long time ago. It retains few of the characteristics of a library, and resembles rather an office. Indeed there is a small safe at one window and a very modern cabinet for letters at another. There is no fire in the grate, but there is a suggestion of steam heat in the atmosphere. The room is in dull light.

BENJAMIN HASZARD, as the curtain rises, is half sitting, half reclining on a couch which is obviously provided with rollers, and is a compromise between a bed and a chair. It is placed at the left of the desk. The patient is a man of seventy years of age with a large head and frail body. On his head is a black skull cap from which wisps of grey hair escape and mingle with an unkempt beard. He is clad in night clothes and an elaborately flowered blue dressing gown, with carpet slippers on his feet; a rich camel's hair shawl is over his knees and a white pillow at his back.

LYDIA DRYSDALE is sitting at the left end of the couch. She is a nurse in white uniform, a young woman

*with large hands, winsome features, slight, but by no means meagre, figure. She appears quite capable and alert, as if she had just come "on duty."*

HASZARD [*awaking*]. What time is it, nurse?

NURSE [*rising and looking at the clock*]. Half past nine. Did you sleep well?

HASZARD. My legs slept. Lift me up.

NURSE. But you can't walk.

HASZARD. I lift me up, I say. If I were on my feet, I could walk as well as you can.

NURSE. I shall try. Then you will be convinced. [*Attempts to raise him with much gentleness.*]

HASZARD. There, there. Let be. I am dead from the waist down. [*After an ominous pause.*—Yes-s.

NURSE. Are you comfortable again?

HASZARD. If I am uncomfortable, it is not your fault.

NURSE. It is the best I can do. I would gladly do more.

HASZARD. I am not blaming you. I have not had so much human kindness since I was a child. You are like a mother,—no task too high, none too menial.

NURSE. I am doing nothing more than my duty.

HASZARD. There you are again, talking about duty. When a man talks about his duty I know he is going to do something he wants to do.

NURSE [*sitting down*]. But I am a woman.

HASZARD. You are not a woman. You are a nurse.

NURSE. A man knows very little about a nurse or a woman either.



HASZARD. I understand all about women. My own daughter has lived in this house these forty years.

NURSE. But your daughter is only one woman.

HASZARD. All women are one woman. There are no proper women any more. Not these thirty years have I seen one,—not since her mother died.

NURSE. For every man there is only one proper woman. She closes his eyes to the merits of all others, and makes him see only their faults.

HASZARD [*vehemently*]. The faults in my daughter are as clear to me as her merits.

MRS. MORAY *enters from the left.*

MILICENT MORAY, daughter of BENJAMIN HASZARD, and wife of PROFESSOR MORAY, is older than she seems to be. She has been extraordinarily well preserved by the professional restorers. A bedroom wrapper, elaborately designed, obscures her strong, squat figure.

MILICENT. What are you saying about me, father? Scolding again? [*She kisses him.*] You may go, for a little, Miss Drysdale; my father never did like strangers when he was ill. [*She opens the door brusquely.*]

HASZARD. Let Miss Drysdale stay where she is. And I am saying your conduct leaves much to be desired.

MILICENT. That is what you always say to every one who contradicts you.

HASZARD. You have no right to contradict me. That is one of your defects.

MILICENT. But you know, father, you are not faultless yourself.

HASZARD. I have no defects. Even if I had, it is not your place to observe them. Your mother never did.

MILICENT. Then my mother must have been a very foolish woman.

NURSE [*fearing an outburst*]. Or a very wise one.

HASZARD [*to MRS. MORAY*]. Which comes to the same thing. At any rate, your mother was good to me. You are not.

MILICENT. No woman can be good to more than one man; and I have my boy and my husband to think of.

HASZARD. You are good to nobody—not to your husband, not even to Miss Drysdale.

NURSE [*to avoid retort*]. To other women no woman can be good. She knows them too well.

MILICENT [*to NURSE*]. So that is the result of allowing you to become too familiar with me.

HASZARD. You try to be good to yourself alone. All your unhappiness arises from that. At least that is my opinion on my dying bed.

MILICENT. O father! You always talk about your dying bed when you can't have your own way.

HASZARD. I am tired of this talk, tired of everything. Ease my pillow. [*To MRS. MORAY, who comes to his relief.*] Let be. I am speaking to the nurse.

MILICENT. Oh, well, if you prefer a hired nurse to your own daughter, I might as well go back to bed. [*She goes out, much relieved.*]

NURSE [*attending to her business*]. There. I would be as kind as any woman can.

HASZARD. You would make a fine wife for a man.

NURSE. Thanks. I never marry my patients. It is easier to find a fine wife than a good husband.

HASZARD. Is that the reason why you became a nurse?

NURSE. I became a nurse because I had not the luck to become a parasite, or minister to one man's pleasure rather than to the needs of those who suffer.

HASZARD. Give me a drink. There; what a lovely mother you would make. [*She puts the glass to his lips.*]

NURSE. Thanks again. The men I see no longer desire that their wives shall be mothers; and I do not choose to be something less.

HASZARD. It was not so in my time.

NURSE. But you were brought up on the land.

HASZARD. And all these years I have been like a grown tree transplanted. Neither I nor my daughter have taken root in this arid soil.

NURSE. There is yet time for you to go back to the land.

HASZARD. Yes-s. To the earth you mean.

NURSE. But you are feeling better?

HASZARD. If you think so, telephone to the office to have the notary come. I have some writing to do.

NURSE. I should like to speak to the doctor first. He will be here presently.

HASZARD [*irritably*]. This is none of his affair. I am going to change my will.

NURSE [*temporizing*]. So that the money you leave will do as little harm as possible.

HASZARD. I am yet its master.

NURSE. And you are afraid to turn it out upon the world to ravage like a wild beast unchecked.

HASZARD. It will complete the ruin of my daughter. It is to her I have willed it.

NURSE. Well, give it to charity. Then it is only upon the poor it will bring ruin; and you do not care for them.

HASZARD. It is all I have to show for my life's work. It is hard to see it go to strangers.

NURSE. There is your son-in-law.

HASZARD. He is a Professor, and of Economics too; he might know what was best to be done.

NURSE. And he is not a stranger. [*Sits down.*]

HASZARD. I must choose for her between industry and idleness.

NURSE. Mrs. Moray might yet find happiness in occupation.

HASZARD. You are quite right. The existence of women depends upon their usefulness in the world.

NURSE. That is true of men also.

HASZARD. I always led a life of hardship and self-denial.

NURSE. You denied yourself the things you had no taste for, and worked because you knew no better.

HASZARD. And as a result my daughter has had to deny herself nothing.

NURSE. The fault then is yours. You have been an adventurer; she has been your female companion; and both of you a burden upon the men who work.

HASZARD. Nurse, you speak too plain.

NURSE. I speak in defence of Mrs. Moray. [*She moves about the room.*]

HASZARD. There is no excuse for her restlessness and discontent.

NURSE. Her vagaries and weariness are merely a blind striving for a place in the fictitious life which you created.

HASZARD. I provided her with every pleasure.

NURSE. With every pleasure but work; and she knows that as a creature of pleasure she is bound to perish.

HASZARD. I did my best. I provided a husband for her. In my time that was the sovereign remedy against the vapours in women.

NURSE. Was that quite fair to Professor Moray?

HASZARD. I will make amends to him as soon as I recover. For her the only refuge is obedience and the way of religion. She cannot find it in these vicious surroundings. She will go back to the land where she belongs, if my money has any authority.

NURSE. It is a way for women—for those who find it.

HASZARD. In it they and we find forgiveness of our sins. God forgive us all.

NURSE. It is so much easier to sin and be forgiven than not to sin at all.

HASZARD. Do you make any profession of religion?

NURSE. This is my profession of religion: the profession of a nurse.

HASZARD. You ought to make an open profession, the way I did.

NURSE. What way was that?

HASZARD. I took over the mortgage on the church, and closed it up.

NURSE. I should say that was a profession of irreligion.

HASZARD. I have always been a religious man; they were hypocrites; they disagreed with me.

NURSE. Is that profession now a comfort to you?

HASZARD. This is no time for destroying my faith. I am weary. I wish John were here.

NURSE. Professor Moray is expected any moment. I telegraphed for him.

HASZARD. You had no right to destroy his holiday on my account.

NURSE. He has been away for two weeks. This was the day for his return.

SWABEY *enters.*

SWABEY. Mr. Moray is here.

HASZARD. Tell him to come in.

SWABEY. At least, he says he is Mr. Moray.

HASZARD. Do what you are told, and don't contradict me.

SWABEY. Yes, sir; but you will see for yourself. [*Goes out.*]

HASZARD. That man wants cooling down. This is my daughter's doing—having a man in the house to do the work of a girl. He ought to be following the plough.

SWABEY *enters.*

SWABEY [*with impudent irony*]. Mr. Moray, sir. [*Goes out.*]

GAVIN MORAY *enters from the back.*

GAVIN MORAY *is a little, old man with the easy attitude which comes from standing habitually on one's own land, and the excellent manners which are governed by an observant mind and a good heart.*

HASZARD. He appears to have aged a good deal in two weeks.

NURSE [*regarding the stranger*]. I am afraid there is some mistake, sir.

G. MORAY. It is no mistake of mine. I came to see my son.

HASZARD. It's his father, my old friend. How are you, Gavin? I am not very well myself. [*They shake hands with some restraint.*]

G. MORAY. I am sorry to see you in this condition.

HASZARD. It is nothing but weakness. I had an accident yesterday. The doctors pretend I am sick. It is their way.

NURSE. I am sorry, sir; but the doctor's orders are that Mr. Haszard is not to see visitors.

G. MORAY. And who is this young woman?

HASZARD. This is Miss Drysdale, the nurse.

G. MORAY. Good morning, ma'am. I did not know that you required a nurse in the family after all these years. She seems a healthy young woman. Has she been unfortunate?

HASZARD. No, no. Not that kind.

G. MORAY. Surely Miss Drysdale will excuse me. I meant no disrespect, Miss.

NURSE. On the contrary, you do me too much honour; and if you have finished discussing my private affairs, I am afraid I must remind you of the doctor's orders.

G. MORAY. The woman is right, Benjamin, I will go.

HASZARD. Stay where you are. No doctor will give me orders against seeing the only friend I have left in the world.

SWABEY enters.

SWABEY. Dr. Mostyn has come, Miss.

HASZARD. Let him wait. Sit down, Gavin. I will have liberty in my own house. [*MISS DRYSDALE and*

SWABEY *go out.* GAVIN MORAY *sits down on the arm of the couch with some embarrassment.*] How are they at home?

G. MORAY. I have no home. The woman makes the home; and she has been taken away from me.

HASZARD. I understand you first rate. I had the same experience. It was the worst piece of business I ever had anything to do with. When did it happen, and why did you not let us know?

G. MORAY. It was very sudden. I did write to John, but it seems he has been away. I see my letter on the desk.

HASZARD. He is expected at any moment, and in the meantime you will have some breakfast.

G. MORAY. I had my morning meal at the railway station.

HASZARD. You should have come here as soon as you arrived.

G. MORAY. It suited me best as it was. You take your breakfast when you ought to be taking your dinner, and your dinner when you ought to be going to bed.

HASZARD. I can't help it. That's the system. But I will break free as soon as I am well.

G. MORAY. This morning I got everything I didn't want, and paid a high price for worse food than ever I gave away for nothing. I told the young woman so.

HASZARD. That is only one example of many. It makes me long to end my days where I began them.

G. MORAY. I cannot see how you endure to live amongst people who are so stupid that the places they design and build for the purpose of eating in are the last places in the world where a man can eat in comfort, and



with no provision whatever for making one's morning worship of God.

HASZARD. I never felt that need myself, and I will soon be done with the world—town and country of it.

G. MORAY. Is my son content?

HASZARD. Certainly my daughter is not. She suffers and does not know why.

G. MORAY. Then they must both be unhappy. Can we not save them? It is for that reason I am here. I am alone and I want my son.

HASZARD. I was debating the matter in my mind when you came in. Will you sell back the old place?—my father's place.

G. MORAY. No, but I will give it to them. Will they come to live on it?

HASZARD. I will see to that. I will make it a condition; and I may tell you, Gavin, you will be no loser, nor they either. There is enough for all.

MISS DRYSDALE *enters*.

NURSE. Your room is ready, Mr. Moray. Shall I show you the way?

G. MORAY. Good-bye, Benjamin. We must do as we are told. But if the young woman will allow me, I will go first to the railway station for my bag. [*Goes out.*]

DR. MOSTYN *enters from the back*.

DR. MOSTYN *is a young man, with an impassive, shaven face, quite non-committal, ready to meet any whim of any patient as part of his business; but definite when decision is required. He is devoid of the usual wiles of the family physician, depends on knowledge rather than on effusive sympathy; he is serene and good humoured; and in his morning dress, which is extremely*

*well-cut from dark-blue, heavy serge, he shows confidence and competency.*

DOCTOR. How are you this morning, Mr. Haszard?

HASZARD. It is your business to find out how I am. Then I can check your statements by my own feelings.

DOCTOR. Well, let us begin by feeling the pulse.

HASZARD. I have had the pulse felt these twenty years and never could ascertain that it did any good. It is not the pulse that is troubling me; it is the breathing.

DOCTOR. Let us go through the form and see what information it will yield. [*Feels the pulse at the wrist.*]

HASZARD. It must be more than a matter of form. I want the facts. Well, how is it?

DOCTOR. It is not very good.

HASZARD. Is it worse than it was last night?

DOCTOR. I think it is.

HASZARD. Make sure. Look on the woman's paper. She has the record for every three-hour period.

NURSE [*reads*]. Ninety; ninety-six; a hundred; a hundred and four; a hundred and twelve.

HASZARD. And what is the quotation now?

DOCTOR. A hundred and twenty.

HASZARD. There is a market to trade in. Let me up.

DOCTOR. But you are very ill.

HASZARD. Well, am I getting better?

DOCTOR. No, I do not think you are.

HASZARD. Then a man might as well be up and about as lying here with loss of his time, and in such a market, too,—thirty points over night. Nurse, get my clothes.

DOCTOR. You are too ill.

HASZARD. I am not sick. If it were not for this weakness and shortness of breath I would be as well as ever I was.

DOCTOR. We will do all that can be done to remedy the conditions.

HASZARD. What are you doing?

DOCTOR. We are giving you medicine and trying to keep you still.

HASZARD. And yet according to your own statement I am growing worse.

DOCTOR. We are doing our best.

HASZARD. Yes; and I suppose the young man who brought me home in the ambulance after I fell on the floor of the Exchange was doing his best. He ruined my business—did more mischief in a minute than I can repair in the rest of my life-time.

DOCTOR. That was the best thing, the only thing to be done.

HASZARD. Many a man is in gaol for doing what he thought best. You are all doing what you think best; and that is the reason why I am reduced to this condition.

DOCTOR. Now, let me listen to the heart.

HASZARD. I tell you it is not the heart, it is the legs.

DOCTOR. Let us see what we can do to bring them to life again.

HASZARD. Let be. They partake of the nature of the earth already.—Yes-s. Do what you can for the upper part of the body.

DOCTOR. Turn over a little, and let me listen to the chest.

HASZARD. I cannot turn over. I am like a ship at sea. I must lie on an even keel. If I were to turn over by four inches I should founder entirely.

SWABEY *enters from the back.*

SWABEY. Professor Moray wishes to know if he may come in.

HASZARD. He is not more anxious to see me than I am to see him. He has been away for two weeks. What time is it?

NURSE. It is now nine fifty.

HASZARD. And the market opens in ten minutes. I must be off. Come in.

SWABEY *goes out.*

DOCTOR. If you insist on talking business, I will give you a little stimulant. [*Nurse brings a hypodermic needle.*]

HASZARD. No, no. I have seen too many men taking stimulants whilst they were talking business. A mouthful of brandy, perhaps, in a case of sickness; but not the little needle. I am not of the mind to have my constitution ruined. Give me the dish. [*Nurse administers stimulant.*]

PROFESSOR MORAY *enters from the back.*

PROFESSOR MORAY *is a middle-aged man, and, though a professor, is free from any suggestion of futility. His rugged face, sturdy, though stooping, figure, are well set out by the clothes of heavy tweed which he wears.*

MORAY. You are up. You must be better.

HASZARD. That is a mere market statement to create confidence.

DOCTOR. He ought to be in bed.

HASZARD. It is not your fault if I am not.

MORAY. But you are better?

HASZARD. That is the doctor's business. Ask him.

DOCTOR. No, he is not.

HASZARD. Well, am I worse?

DOCTOR. I am afraid you are.

HASZARD. Afraid? There is nothing to be afraid of.

DOCTOR. Well, you are worse.

HASZARD. I know I am. I want to sleep. Doctor, does the heart ever go to sleep?

DOCTOR. No.

HASZARD. There you are wrong again. This one soon will. [*To MORAY*]. Come near me. It was very good of you to break your holiday for the sake of seeing me. How did you enjoy it? How is the boy? I wish I could advise that he be taken into the business. But he would be of no use,—too upright, too honourable. He might make a farmer, with his strong body. His mother would make an excellent farmer's wife.

MORAY. I should not like to be the one to propose that she return to the land.

HASZARD. I would propose it fast enough if I were stronger,—and compel it too.

MORAY. Shall I ask Milicent to come in?

HASZARD [*excitedly*]. No, no. There might be some difference of opinion, and a man likes to die in peace.

MORAY [*with tactfulness*]. Hugo is a good, strong boy.

HASZARD. Goodness won't help him much in the Street. Where would I have been any time these fifty years if that was all I had to depend upon?

MORAY. You have always been good to your own.

HASZARD. I am talking of the market. The doctor tells me it is strong. Reach me the tape.

DOCTOR. You must not try to read.

HASZARD. Let me feel it then.

NURSE [*handing him the end of the "tape" from the silent "ticker" which he makes no attempt to read*]. Here is your comfort.

HASZARD. The market is running away so fast I could not get out quick enough to lose even if I were on the floor of the Exchange.

MORAY. The market must take care of itself.

HASZARD. A rising market is good for dying on. The only question I am debating in my own mind is whether I should not wait over to put those scoundrels on the street, who tried to squeeze me yesterday.

MORAY. We may well leave them to the chance of the game; you often said those who sell short make for stability in the economy of finance.

HASZARD. There is a difference between the man who has a boil and the man who is squeezing it.

MORAY. But in the end pain comes to all.

HASZARD. My pain is nearly over. Do the best you can. You were better to me than a son. But you are a fool. I was a fool, too. Look how I managed my daughter; how you managed your wife. I thought I could help you both; and now it is too late.

MORAY. You were always kind.

HASZARD. That is mere sentiment. Now go at once and make arrangements in advance, so that there

will be no confusion when the end comes and no unnecessary expense.—Yes-s.

MORAY. This is sudden and most unexpected.

DOCTOR. I told them yesterday that he should not have gone to the office.

MORAY. And when I left two weeks ago he was looking so strong.

DOCTOR. Nurse, go and fetch Mrs. Moray.

NURSE *leaves. The "ticker" sounds ominously until she returns with MRS. MORAY from left.*

MILICENT. Why did you not call me earlier?

NURSE [*with elaborate untruthfulness*]. I did not wish to awaken you. You were late last night.

MILICENT. He is not very ill, is he?—And me not by his side.

HASZARD. Nurse, lift my head.

NURSE. Is that better?

HASZARD. This is it.—Yes-s. [NURSE *places white screen quickly.*]

MILICENT [*in front of screen*]. Oh, John. You are always away when there is trouble.

MORAY [*standing opposite to her*]. You mean, there is always trouble when I am away.

MILICENT. Yes; and when you are at home, too. It is upon me the burden falls.

MORAY. I will do what I can to ease you.

MILICENT. This new tenderness is very suspicious.

MORAY. Will you not accept kindness when it is offered?

MILICENT. That depends on the motive which prompts it.

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MORAY. How could I not be sorry?

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MILICENT. You offer me now the attention which once you lavished on my rich father. I discern the motive. I reject the advance.

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MORAY. This occasion is fitting for more worthy thoughts. Death exacts silence at least.

MILICENT. He cannot be dying.

DOCTOR [*as he and the nurse emerge from opposite sides of screen*]. He is dead.

## THE CURTAIN FALLS

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## SCENE 2

*The appurtenances of the sick room have been removed. PROFESSOR MORAY is seated at the desk. GEORGE TAPPAN enters from the back.*

GEORGE TAPPAN *is a man fifty-five years of age, heavy of frame and face, with carefully parted whiskers. On his arm he carries an overcoat, and in his hand a silk hat. His "frock coat" is worn easily, not put on for the occasion, as if he were a tradesman going to church. He is much bewildered.*

TAPPAN. How is Mr. Haszard this morning?

MORAY. He is dead.

TAPPAN. He assured me yesterday he was going to die.

MORAY. Well, he usually kept his word, didn't he?

TAPPAN. Yes,—when it suited him; and it suited him mighty well on this occasion, if all accounts are true.

MORAY. I know nothing about his accounts. Besides, I have just come to town.

TAPPAN. And I know little either, although I was his office manager.

MORAY. His accountant would surely know.

TAPPAN. Mr. Haszard had his own views of book-keeping.

MORAY. And of book-keepers too.

TAPPAN. He never trusted even his own staff.

MORAY. Can you blame him?

TAPPAN. You must trust some one in business.

MORAY. But his was a game, not a business. At least that is how it appears to the eye of a political economist.

TAPPAN. But he played it honestly.

MORAY. A crooked game has crooked rules. A speculative financier is as helpless as a carpenter working on a job with a crooked straight-edge.

TAPPAN. You appear to know something of the theory at any rate.

MORAY. It is my business to know about the practice as well as the theory of all industrial phenomena.

TAPPAN. You had a good instructor in Mr. Hazard. I hope you profited by his lessons.

MORAY. He taught me many things: that a man should not buy what he cannot pay for, nor sell what he does not own; that, in short, he should not speculate.

TAPPAN. And by speculating he meant buying at the top of the market and selling at the bottom.

MORAY. To sell at the top and buy at the bottom he always described as good business; and I am inclined by independent calculation to agree with him.

TAPPAN [*bitterly*]. It would have been well for him if he had followed his own judicious advice.

MORAY. What difference does it make to him now which way he played?

TAPPAN. It will make a difference to us, to Mrs. Moray, to your son, to me, to you.

MORAY [*carelessly*]. I hope so, at least so far as I am concerned. But do you mean to say that his affairs are involved? He had the repute of being a rich man.

TAPPAN. Involved? Yes. Have you not read the rumours in the morning paper? [*Places his hat and coat on the cabinet, and sits down at the right side of the desk.*]

MORAY. I tell you I have just come back from the woods in response to a telegram that Mr. Haszard had a sudden seizure on the floor of the Exchange. Beyond that I know nothing.

TAPPAN. Did you not hear that "Agricultural Common," his specialty, had fallen off thirty points during the afternoon, and that the end is not yet?

MORAY. I did not even know that "Agricultural Common" was his especial concern.

TAPPAN. He has been supporting it all winter. His whole fortune was in it.

MORAY. And has he lost it?

TAPPAN. No one can say how much till the market opens. It is now just ten o'clock; and [*arising to read the "tape" from the "ticker" which has begun to sound fitfully*] London is coming weak.

MORAY. I hope you were not involved in his affairs.

TAPPAN. I always did a little business for myself on the side, following his lead.

MORAY. This is an amazing state of things. It is not so abstract as I supposed.

TAPPAN [*continuing to read the "tape"*]. "Agricultural Common" is coming out like a flood. Yes, he is ruined, and I am ruined, too. [*Resumes his seat in dejection.*]

MORAY. Is it so bad as that? I am sorry, Tappan.

TAPPAN. It was not much; but it was all I had. I am sorry for his family, for you.

MORAY. How did it all happen?

TAPPAN. Some one with inside information sold out on us. The selling began at noon yesterday, and went on all day. Just at the close, as we had weathered the storm, Mr. Haszard was stricken down.

MORAY. And that would not help matters any.

TAPPAN. And the selling is still going on. Some one played us false.

MORAY. It is poor sportsmanship, railing at the winner. He may be a very old friend of ours,—and especially a friend of mine, if he should turn out to be the means of extricating me from this environment. [*Surveys the scene.*]

TAPPAN. Whoever he is, he has freed Mr. Haszard from all care.

MORAY. Not for the dead do I ever mourn. I mourn for the living.

TAPPAN. And me, too. I am sorry for myself. This is all I have to show for thirty years in the Street.

MORAY. We can do nothing else but be sorry. Miss Drysdale is performing her last offices for him.

TAPPAN. Well, let us talk of other things.

MORAY [*raising the window blinds and flooding the room with light*]. The day is clearing. [*Stretches at full length on the couch.*]

TAPPAN. I should like to know who played us false. [*Sits down on the safe.*]

MORAY. Falsity and honesty demand a standard. That standard is expressed on the tape; and yet you will insist upon importing moral considerations into a problem which is as abstract as mathematics.

TAPPAN. It is refreshing to think we were too honest. I hope the official assignee and the Committee of the Exchange will take that view of the case.

MORAY. They will certainly convict you of stupidity. You have already confessed by failure the worst of crimes.

TAPPAN. I hope there is nothing worse than failure. But Mr. Haszard had his own way of doing business. He always kept more in his head than he put on the books.

MORAY. What he has in his head or in his books does not affect him now.

TAPPAN. But think of his good name.

MORAY. He will be judged by his own fraternity; and having committed the great crime of failure the methods by which he achieved it will seem very unimportant.

TAPPAN. To think that he, with all his astuteness, should have been landed and left gasping; he was an honest man too.

MORAY. There may be something left in that safe.

TAPPAN. No. We cleared it out yesterday. [*Kicks the safe with his heel.*]

MORAY. With your views of astuteness and honesty you were bound to be landed late or soon.

TAPPAN. I hope I have some principle left.

MORAY. It is your principles which have ruined you. I might as well expect the professor of mathematics to import his own personal predilections into a demonstration of the integral calculus.

TAPPAN. I am in no situation this morning to contradict you. You may be right; but I have proved myself wrong.

MORAY [*as if he were addressing a class of students*]. And you went wrong just because you were not content to solve the problem in its own terms. You assume that the third of six is three, and then proceed by the ordinary rules of arithmetic, in utter forgetfulness of your false

assumption. The only honesty in this business is intellectual, that is, to be logical.

TAPPAN. I never yet knew a bystander at this game who was without a theory, without a system. There are men walking the streets to-day just because they had a theory and a system.

MORAY. And one man at least lies dead because he had none.

TAPPAN. I have tried systems too; but they broke down as often as they succeeded and left me where I was.

MORAY. That is because you cannot see things in the abstract. The desire for gain is an enemy of simple-mindedness. Mr. Haszard once transferred to me at Christmas a hundred shares of "Agricultural Common," and it almost destroyed my reason. I barely refrained from selling too soon.

TAPPAN. I hope you have profited by your intelligence.

MORAY. By my simplicity, you mean.

TAPPAN. And what is this simple theory of yours?

MORAY. There speaks the ancient gambler.

TAPPAN. Is it then a secret?

MORAY. Yes, from you. Your mind is dark. You lack education.

TAPPAN. This is a new rôle for a professor.

MORAY. Not new. It is merely a department of human knowledge. To judge the future of industrial securities is as simple as to infer the conic section from a portion of the curve.

TAPPAN. How then did you not infer the future of "Agricultural Common"?

MORAY. I did; and for a year past I tried to convince Mr. Haszard that he was running contrary to the psychology of the farmer.

TAPPAN. What a pity you did not put your theory to the test.

MORAY. Indeed, I did make a small experiment.

TAPPAN. And how did it turn out?

MORAY. That I cannot say till I examine the records.

TAPPAN. But what is this psychology of the farmer?

MORAY [*springing to his feet*]. I have made the discovery that the point of efficiency in the use of machinery is passed, and that the farmer has begun to realize it.

TAPPAN. You mean that the farmer has discovered that he can perform his operations more economically with his primitive tools than with the complicated contraptions which we sell to him?

MORAY. Precisely; that is my discovery.

TAPPAN [*seated dejectedly*]. A professor in a world of gamblers is a strange figure.

MORAY. Intelligence is your danger; but a man who is intelligent enough to succeed is too intelligent to care for your queer trade.

TAPPAN. The subject is full of interest. For the moment it made me forget that things are going from bad to worse. I can hear the bankers calling his loans. [*The "ticker" is sounding fast.*]

MORAY. I suppose they have securities they think adequate.

TAPPAN. They must have thought so at one time; but Mr. Haszard always despised the intelligence of bankers.

MORAY. When they declined his request for loans?

TAPPAN. On the contrary; when they accepted them.

MORAY. And now he has proved himself to have been right.

TAPPAN. At the expense of his life.

MORAY. No, at the expense of the bankers. He wins both ways.

*SWABEY enters from the back.*

SWABEY. Mr. Pelham to see you, sir.

MORAY. Who is Mr. Pelham?

SWABEY. He did not say.

MORAY. Did you not explain that I could see no one to-day?

SWABEY. Yes, sir, but he said you would surely see him, if you knew his business.

TAPPAN [*preparing to leave*]. An undertaker I suppose. May I go inside, just for a moment? Perhaps I could help.

MORAY. But say nothing of these difficulties to the women.

TAPPAN. They will find out soon enough, and feel them too.

*GEORGE TAPPAN goes out at left.*

MORAY. Do you think I should see the gentleman? Is he an undertaker?

SWABEY. He looks too cheerful, sir; and he is not in plain clothes.

MORAY. Then ask him to come in. [*Sits at desk.*]

SWABEY. Mr. Pelham, sir.



HENRY PELHAM *has the alertness of a young man who is in the habit of handling money which is not his own, and the resolution not to be imposed upon by those who are temporarily in possession of it. He is gaily dressed, and is the one touch of colour in the sombre scene.*

MORAY [*gazing at a pile of letters*]. Good-morning, Mr. Pelham.

PELHAM. Good-morning, Professor.

MORAY. Your business must be of a very special nature to bring you here at a time like this. Besides, all the arrangements will be made through the sexton. Perhaps you had better see him.

PELHAM. We do not deal with dead ones in our office. I am from Gillespie and Company. Our principal thought it best that I should call and explain the situation.

MORAY [*rising quickly*]. Oh, yes,— about fluctuations in the price of Agricultural Securities, which I am studying with his assistance?

PELHAM. Well, sir; you may put it that way if you like.

MORAY. The matter could wait. I have other things to think of to-day.

PELHAM. Yes, I know; but few of our customers take things so coolly in such a market as this.

MORAY [*unmoved*]. The matter is very simple. I telegraphed you yesterday morning from the country to sell a hundred shares of "Agricultural Common" at the market, and additional hundreds at every five points decline.

PELHAM. Thousands you said, sir.

MORAY. Thousands! You must be mad.

PELHAM. Here is the telegram. [*Reads*]: "Sell one thousand shares 'Agricultural Common' at the market, and additional thousands at every five points decline. Cover all when market rises three points from lowest; and buy, in addition, shares equal to half the number dealt in."

MORAY. Thousands! I must have been mad, or the operator an incompetent fool.

PELHAM. Did you write the telegram in French or in English?

MORAY. In French, of course: the operator could understand no other language.

PELHAM. You forget that an operator does not require to know the language in which a message is written; he sends by letters not by words. That is so like a professor.

MORAY. Could I possibly have written "mille" for "cent"? But how do matters stand now? Little did I expect to be caught in this infernal machinery. My reputation as an economist is ruined.

PELHAM. But you have acquired quite a reputation as a financier.

MORAY. As a speculator, you mean.

PELHAM. You ordered us to sell at the top, to cover, and buy in again at the bottom of the market. That is not speculation; it is the highest kind of finance, —if the deal comes off. How did you do it?

MORAY. I relied on the psychology of the farmer.

PELHAM [*with a touch of malice*]. We thought at the office you relied on the psychology of Mr. Haszard.

MORAY. Do I hold any shares at the moment?

PELHAM. Of course you do. That is why I am here,—to receive your further orders.

MORAY. Then sell them at once for whatever they will bring.

PELHAM. Put that in writing. No; better not. Where is your telephone?

MORAY. Use this one.

GEORGE TAPPAN *enters.*

PELHAM [*at telephone*]. 2472 Main—Pelham speaking. Sell all Professor Moray's "Agricultural Common" at the market.

MORAY. And let me have a statement here by telephone. Just the bare amount.

PELHAM. And let him have a statement by telephone. Just the bare amount.

TAPPAN. I am sorry to hear that you were caught too. This is no game for amateurs. I hope it was not much.

MORAY. It is more than I supposed it would be.

TAPPAN. It always is.

PELHAM [*reading the "tape"*]. The sales are coming again. We can let you have a full statement in an hour.

MORAY. But the amount by telephone.

PELHAM. Yes, in a few minutes. It is only a matter of addition.

MORAY. Thanks. Good-bye.

HENRY PELHAM *goes out.*

TAPPAN. I wish I could help you; but as it is I am badly crippled myself. Good-bye.

NURSE *enters.*

NURSE. Oh, Mr. Tappan, would you come in again for a moment? Your advice is needed.

TAPPAN. Of course, Miss Drysdale; anything I can do. [*Takes a final glance at the "tape."*] The market has recovered amazingly, but it is too late. However, you may have got out at the top.

NURSE and GEORGE TAPPAN go out together, talking.

MORAY [*doggedly*]. I never had any money, so I am none the poorer. If I win, let those bear the loss who were base enough to believe that I was one of two—an accomplice or a traitor.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

SCENE 3

PROFESSOR MORAY *is looking out at the window.* MRS. MORAY *enters, supported by the NURSE.* DR. MOSTYN *follows.* MRS. MORAY *is dressed in a fashionable gown, not obviously made for mourning.* DR. MOSTYN *carries his hat and coat, as if about to depart.*

NURSE. Will you lie on the sofa ?

MILICENT. No; I feel better. I wish to speak to Mr. Moray. You need not wait. At a time like this a wife will wish to be alone with her husband.

NURSE. I think I can understand your wishes. But please call me if there is anything you need.

MILICENT. Certainly I will. And good-bye, doctor.

DOCTOR. Good-bye, Mrs. Moray. This is all I can do. I shall come back presently.

MILICENT. I am not blaming you. I suppose you did your best for him.

DR. MOSTYN *and NURSE go out by different ways.*

MILICENT. What were you and Mr. Tappan talking about?

MORAY [*coming to meet her*]. About business.

MILICENT. Which means my father's affairs.

MORAY. Yes; in their relation to all concerned.

MILICENT. Then, I think it an impertinence to discuss with his employé affairs which are now mine.

MORAY. They are not yours alone. They concern him as well. Mr. Tappan has his own future to think of.

MILICENT. But how can you discuss business of any kind at a time like this?

MORAY. Well, we will leave business aside and talk of your sorrow.

MILICENT. It ought to be your sorrow also, after all my father has done for you.

MORAY [*reflecting*]. There is no sorrow when there is bread in the house.

MILICENT. You are always thinking of your bread.

MORAY. It is of yours I am thinking, and of the boy's.

MILICENT. You need not concern yourself about the boy or about me either. I will let him know whom he is dependent on. Perhaps I will succeed in securing some of his affection, as at one time I secured yours.

MORAY. Milicent, dear, let us have peace. There is nothing which a man craves so much.

MILICENT. If it is peace you want, you shall have it on my terms not on yours.

MORAY [*wearily*]. This is really resuming the conversation you received me with when we met this morning for the first time in two weeks.

MILICENT. It was you who began it.

MORAY. I did think your father's death would have given me some respite.

MILICENT. No doubt you think your situation will be improved in various ways by that sad event.

MORAY [*with asperity*]. It would be an improvement if you ceased your constant bickering.

MILICENT. So you always describe my attempts to tell you the truth.

MORAY [*evasively*]. Let us be friends at least while this sorrow lasts.

MILICENT. That is so like you,—wishing to be friendly with those who have something you want.

MORAY [*with yearning*]. Can we not always be friends, even until our own time comes?

MILICENT. I know you wish to see me, too, lying dead; but I have no intention of allowing you that gratification.

MORAY. You are overwrought, dear. Forgive me, and go to your rest.

MILICENT. This is merely one of your evasions, a poor attempt to avoid anything which is unpleasant to yourself.

MORAY. Very well. I admit it, if only my admission will spare you unpleasantness.

MILICENT. I have no intention of resting. I have been waiting all my life for this opportunity and do not now propose to let it slip.

MORAY [*irritably*]. I beg of you not to make this disaster the occasion for a fresh controversy.

MILICENT. A disaster for you, yes. It will materially alter your status in this house.

MORAY. In this house I never had any status excepting that which came from your father's friendship for me,—from my love for you.

MILICENT. And from the fact that you happened to be my husband.

MORAY. And the father of our boy, loving him very dearly, and feeling my responsibility for him.

MILICENT. Your status in future, and his too, will be precisely what I choose to allow.

MORAY [*with precision*]. And your status will depend somewhat, I fancy, upon the value of your father's property as well as upon his disposition of it.

MILICENT. Is it not enough that you have lived all your life upon his bounty without depending upon it for the future also?

MORAY [*untouched by the taunt*]. I merely suggested that the value of his estate, as well as the terms of his will, might have some bearing on your case too.

MILICENT. It is too early for you to be seeking discomfort for me in my father's will.

MORAY. I have given no indication that I had anticipated its terms.

MILICENT [*with rising voice*]. But I do anticipate its terms. My father always said he had no intention that his hard earned savings should go to strangers; and I am his only child.

MORAY. I always supposed so.

MILICENT. And you acted on your knowledge when you married me.

MORAY. I married you because I loved you; and I love you still—after a fashion.

MILICENT. I did not come in this morning to talk of love. I am in the mood for talking business.

MORAY [*evasively*]. But I agree with what you said in the outset, that this is not the best time for talking business.

MILICENT. The time has come for you and me to arrive at a conclusion.



MORAY. I thought you had arrived at the conclusion that you were the most unhappy woman in the world, and that I was the cause of it.

MILICENT [*quite calm again*]. I am not blaming you, John. You merely do not understand me.

MORAY. That is just the trouble. I understand you too well.

MILICENT. But you do not realize how great an obstacle you are to my happiness.

MORAY. Anything is an obstacle which prevents you from having your own way.

MILICENT. My life has been full of obstacles; first my father; then you; then both of you.

MORAY. But Providence seems at last to be attending to your case. One at least of those obstacles has mercifully been removed.

MILICENT. Oh, John, how can you be so heartless, and poor father not yet cold in death?

MORAY. I think it was you who introduced the subject.

MILICENT [*with breaking voice*]. I cannot argue. My heart is too sore, and my sorrow too recent.

MORAY. Then please desist. I am afraid I underestimate your sensitiveness.

MILICENT [*with rising voice*]. You must have a poor defence when you take refuge in uncouthness.

MORAY. Taking refuge in tears is not more creditable.

MILICENT. And you are too insensible to see how cruel you are, how you exasperate me.

MORAY. And you are too feeble to keep your exasperation to yourself.

MILICENT. If you are bound to quarrel, it is as well to have done with it at once and for all time. You are too vulgar to understand how tiresome this bickering is.

MORAY. This is not a quarrel. It is an exercise in dialectics, and I find it rather interesting.

MILICENT. But I do not choose to allow myself any longer to be the victim of your malicious sport.

MORAY. Why then do you bring it upon yourself?—and immediately cry out because you are hurt.

MILICENT. Am I to keep my mouth shut in my own house merely because you choose to be brutal?

MORAY [*taking advantage of her passion*]. That is a measure which I have always counselled you to adopt.

MILICENT. I am only a woman, and an orphan at that. If my father were living you would not venture to speak to me as you do. You think me helpless; but I have other weapons, and I will use them. I will use the power of money to free myself. [*Screams, and casts herself upon the couch.*]

SWABEY *enters from back*, NURSE and  
GEORGE TAPPAN *from left hurriedly*.

MORAY. There, there, poor child; do not distress yourself.

SWABEY. Did you ring, sir?

MORAY. No, I did not.

SWABEY. Very good, sir. [*Goes out.*]

NURSE. I am afraid Mrs. Moray has overdone herself. Had she not better come and lie down in her room?

MILICENT. Go back to your business, and attend to it till I require you.

NURSE *goes out in studied silence.*

MORAY. Do wait Tappan, please. My wife will insist on talking business. Perhaps there is some information you can give her.

MILICENT. Oh, Mr. Tappan, I have no one to advise me but you, or rather to inform my husband of what he will not believe.

TAPPAN. It is all quite true.

MILICENT. I knew my father would leave his property to me.

TAPPAN. That also is quite true. I was witness to his will; but this information would come more properly through the legal advisers to the firm.

MORAY. I assure you I expressed no interest whatever in Mr. Haszard's private affairs.

MILICENT. They are my affairs now, and likely to be of great importance to you in the future.

TAPPAN. The life interest in his property goes to Mrs. Moray and the reversion of it to Mr. Hugo; but all depends upon the present value of his estate.

MILICENT. He always said his hard earned savings would not go to strangers, and he has kept his word. Good, dear father! [*Sits up.*]

MORAY. I was aware of that; so there is no strangeness or surprise in the present situation.

MILICENT. The surprise is to come. I am now prepared to demand a formal separation. [*Stands in front of couch.*]

TAPPAN. On what grounds, Mrs. Moray? I always supposed the Professor was a faithful husband; but probably professors are human like the rest of men.

MILICENT [*fiercely*]. Do you consider it inhuman to be faithful to a wife like me?

TAPPAN. I must decline to be drawn into a controversy over the morals of men or of professors either.

MORAY. You speak with the caution of a business man, my dear Tappan.

TAPPAN. I am sure, Mrs. Moray, no one would suspect you of being—human.

MILICENT. All the world knows my record and character.

TAPPAN. Then on what grounds do you propose to proceed?

MILICENT. This is not an affair of morality; it is an affair of business.

MORAY. But there are other elements than business in the life of a family.

MILICENT. Let us settle one thing at a time. I must have the freedom my position entitles me to.

MORAY. Freedom would not bring you happiness; a woman's happiness lies in self-control.

MILICENT. I prefer to be unhappy in my own way rather than happy in yours. I must have liberty.

TAPPAN. Well, Mrs. Moray, you are free to make the experiment. For the present, at least, this house is yours. But this is no affair of mine. [*Escapes in confusion.*]

MILICENT. Then I shall order out of this house every living creature. If they return it shall be on my terms, not on theirs.

MORAY [*quite definitely*]. You understand that any proposals respecting Hugo are to be given to me. They will be executed, or not, just as I see fit.

MILICENT. You threaten me through my son, and attack a woman under cover of a child.

MORAY. But you can see, Milicent, when Hugo and I leave you, that you will not find happiness in solitude.

MILICENT. At least I shall be free, free to live my own life, the life of a free born creature; and no longer find an excuse for existence merely in giving pleasure to another,—a pleasure, too, for which I am not paid, and, thanks now to my father, for which I do not require to take payment from him or from you either.

MORAY. If the reason for your existence lies alone in the pleasure you give to me, then your life hangs by a precarious thread.

MILICENT. My son needs me. He will be my happiness.

MORAY. In that you confess the weakness and strength of a woman. There is no other way than service.

MILICENT. There is comradeship.

MORAY. But if I cannot be a comrade to you, he might find the position equally irksome.

MILICENT. Then I shall ask him. [*Rings the bell.*]

SWABEY *enters.*

SWABEY. Did you ring, sir?

MILICENT. No, I rang.

SWABEY. Yes, ma'am.

MILICENT. Ask Mr. Hugo to come in.

MORAY [*in answer to look of inquiry*]. Yes, ask Mr. Hugo to come in.

SWABEY. Very good, sir.

MILICENT. Even my own servants are in the conspiracy against me. They decline to take my orders until they receive permission from one who has no more authority than themselves.

Hugo  
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SWABEY. I never was your servant, ma'am.

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MILICENT. Then you will take your wages, and I shall engage servants who will be my servants.

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SWABEY. I am waiting for my wages, ma'am. It is not much; but little and all as it is, I hope there will be that much left.

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GEORGE TAPPAN, *looking for his coat and hat, enters as SWABEY goes out.*

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ice.

MILICENT. John, how could you stand there and see me insulted, and my father traduced?

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MORAY. I understood you had taken the management of affairs into your own hands.

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MILICENT. Mr. Tappan, what did the man mean?

TAPPAN. He probably meant that Mr. Haszard's estate might not turn out so valuable, as at one time it was supposed to be. There usually is a shrinkage on sudden realization.

MORAY [*with reminiscence*]. And he always said his hard earned savings would not go to strangers!

MILICENT. You knew his intention. You have no ground for complaint; and in future you will be a stranger to me.

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MRS. MORAY *curtsies. She intends to be very impressive, and goes out at left with dignity.* PROFESSOR MORAY *is quite oblivious of the performance.*

TAPPAN. Mrs. Moray feels her father's death very keenly.

MORAY. Yes, she is quite herself; I mean, quite beside herself with grief.

TAPPAN. She will be much better when she learns the truth.

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MORAY. I am afraid not. Her sense of loss will be too great.

HUGO *enters in gloom.*

HUGO MORAY is a large, strong youth of sixteen. His dulness appears to be not congenital but acquired in the process of education. The pallor of the school is on his face, and work in an indoor gymnasium shows itself in his large muscles. A coat heavily padded at the shoulders makes his appearance still more grotesque.

HUGO. Mother sent for me. Is she here?

MORAY. No, she has gone to her room.

HUGO. I guess I know what that means.

MORAY. Hugo. Things have happened—things which will affect you, my boy.

HUGO. I hope so. Nothing could be worse than this—not even school.

MORAY. Or work?

HUGO. I did real work when I was away with you, and I never enjoyed myself before.

MORAY. But you were not obliged to do it.

HUGO. I made myself believe it was something more than fooling.

MORAY. Real work is quite a different thing.

HUGO. That is why I should like it. To make believe was harder than the work itself, and when the make-believe broke down all pleasure went.

MORAY. Is that the reason why you threw away the money I gave you?

HUGO. When I thought of it, I became weak and tired. I knew I was only a play-boy.

MORAY [*with new hope.*] We had a good holiday together; it may be that we will take a longer one,

whether we like it or not. Now go to your mother and see how she is. You need not come back to tell me. [HUGO goes out reluctantly]. The boy is right. He makes the situation easier to bear.

TAPPAN. Easier to talk about, you mean; but I will go to the office and enquire how things are. They will know the worst by this time; but it is all written on the tape. [Reads].

MORAY. You won't be long?

TAPPAN. No; but there is no use going to the office. The wolves will have been there long ago.

MORAY. Then, Tappan, we had better clear away the wreckage in this house.

TAPPAN. It is as well for Mrs. Moray to know the worst, now that we know it ourselves. Shall I send for her?

MORAY. Just ask Miss Drysdale to come. She will know if it is wise. [Goes to window.]

GEORGE TAPPAN goes out at left.

NURSE [without]. Do try and calm yourself, and return to your room.

MRS. MORAY rushes in. MISS DRYSDALE endeavours to restrain her.

GEORGE TAPPAN follows with much reluctance.

MILICENT. I will finish what I have begun. He shall evade the conclusion no longer.

TAPPAN. But, my dear Mrs. Moray, the Professor is as anxious as you are to have all the facts put before you. Indeed, he sent me to ask if you would be so good as to come and continue the conversation, that is, if you are feeling strong enough.



MILICENT. He sent for me? I am pretty feeble. Can you blame me?—overwhelmed with sorrow, and no one to love me or pity me, no one even to sympathize. [*Falls on couch.*]

MORAY [*coming over very kindly*]. You magnify your evils. I am sorry for you.

MILICENT. I do not want you to pity me. I want you to love me.

MORAY. You will have need of all the love I can give you; but you must win it, must deserve it.

*Angry female voices without, SWABEY  
coaxing and threatening.*

NURSE. Mr. Tappan, the servants are in rebellion. You must assure them that they will be paid.

TAPPAN. How can I give them an assurance I do not possess.

MILICENT. This is too tiresome. Miss Drysdale, bring me my cheque-book. I should think that I might be allowed to indulge in the luxury of grief without the intrusion of these sordid cares.

*MISS DRYSDALE takes the cheque-book  
from a drawer.*

NURSE. But you know, Mrs. Moray, you have nothing at your credit in the bank. You were so informed yesterday.

MILICENT. Give me a cheque, and let the bank charge the amount to me.

TAPPAN. But a savings-bank account cannot be overdrawn.

MILICENT. That is a mere pretext. These tradesmen in money will see the day when they will be glad of my business.

TAPPAN. It is not a pretext, Mrs. Moray; it is a fact.

MILICENT. Do you mean to tell me that I, the sole heir of Benjamin Haszard, cannot lay my hands on ready money enough to stop the mouths of these ungrateful servants?

TAPPAN. That is about the way it looks to me.

MILICENT [*with much confidence*]. I suppose it does take some time to prove the will, and I must be patient. But, please, Mr. Tappan, telephone to the lawyers to have the transfer made without delay, and get an interim order from the court.

MORAY [*with unconcern*]. These phrases are intended to be very impressive, Milicent; but they are quite meaningless. They are disjointed from the facts.

MILICENT [*graciously*]. There you two men stand talking and leave all the business to an inexperienced woman. But I suppose wealth has its obligations.

TAPPAN. What you are asking me to do, Mrs. Moray, is to advance to you money to pay your servants, when I have no money to pay my own.

MILICENT. I have no desire to search into your private affairs. I am speaking to my husband.

MORAY. But you know, Milicent, I never had a bank account. You have always received my salary.

MILICENT. Well, where is all the money father gave you?

MORAY. You know very well that, whilst he paid your accounts, he never gave you any money. He did not wish to lessen his authority over you; and he never gave me any money lest my authority over you might be increased.

NURSE. It appears to me that you are all in the same situation.

MILICENT. Your advice, Miss Drysdale, is not being sought.

NURSE. My experience might be of value. My father once had more money than yours ever had, and he lost it.

MILICENT. Do you mean to say that, if your father was dishonest and lost his money, my father was dishonest and lost his too?

NURSE. It is not always the dishonest men who lose their money, though sometimes they do.

*The servants' clamour is renewed.*

MORAY. Come, Miss Drysdale.

PROFESSOR MORAY *and* NURSE *go out talking.*

MILICENT. Where have those two gone?—and what do they mean?—and what are they doing?

TAPPAN. They seem to have appeased the servants at any rate.

MILICENT. Go and tell Miss Drysdale I want her.

GEORGE TAPPAN *goes out as* PROFESSOR MORAY *enters.*

MORAY. Miss Drysdale does not understand that she is your nurse. I suppose she considers her engagement at an end.

MILICENT. Then why does she not leave the house?

MORAY. It may be that she too is waiting to be paid.

MILICENT. This is too degrading. I have been to you a faithful wife, and now you band yourself against me with those ungrateful and mercenary servants.

MORAY. No one, I hope, is charging you with any lack of faithfulness. Fidelity is an excellent virtue; but it is not in itself sufficient warrant for the commission of all other sins of the heart.

MILICENT. And this my reward for my virtue.

MORAY. Yes, your reward is that you will be supported for the rest of your days as well as a professor's wife can be supported.

MILICENT [*with an attempt at irony, still failing to understand*]. And live in College Street; and give dinner parties to other professors and their wives, and wear an Assouan scarf to the opera, as a substitute for evening dress!

MORAY. To live exactly as other professors' wives do;—that, at least, I can promise you.

MILICENT. And you think the only sound investment my father ever made was the purchase of you for me at the cost of a professor's chair?

MORAY. It was a pretty shrewd investment, because he secured me for your support, and allowed the University to pay my salary.

MILICENT. If I remember aright, you were at one time satisfied with the bargain.

MORAY. I am satisfied still. I had in return a mess of grape-fruit for breakfast, a folded napkin at every meal, a fat fool to stand behind my chair, and leisure to work out a most interesting experiment in economics.

MILICENT. And do I not count for something?

MORAY. I have by no means exhausted the category of my advantages. You possess a great interest for me. You are a woman of spirit, and I have hopes that with my assistance you will yet become a woman of sense.

MILICENT [*in derision*]. You have omitted to mention that I am the mother of your boy.

MORAY [*with real enthusiasm*]. But I have not neglected to remember it. He is a great joy to me. He will be a joy to us both, and in this common joy we may yet find happiness.

MILICENT. This rhapsody is too absurd; and yet it makes me think more kindly of you.

MORAY. That is all I ask—kindness, peace.

MILICENT. It resolves me to deal more generously with you than I had intended.

MORAY. Generosity in love is all I ask.

MILICENT. Yes, and in money too. I am not mean.

MORAY. Can you not understand, Milicent, that you have no money? The servants proved that to you.

MILICENT [*unmoved*]. This is a mere temporary embarrassment, such as any one may suffer. I am my father's sole heir.

MORAY. Can you not understand, after all Tappan has said, that you inherit nothing, that your father failed? Surely you know what that word implies,—disastrously, hopelessly, irrevocably.

MILICENT [*in loud protest*]. I do not so understand. I will not believe till I read it in public print. [*Rings the bell.*]

SWABEY *enters.*

SWABEY. Did you ring, sir?

MORAY. Fetch me a newspaper.

SWABEY. Which newspaper, sir?

MORAY. Any newspaper.

SWABEY. Will this one do, sir? It is an Extra. I was just reading it, sir. I am afraid I covered too

soon, and I should have bought in again at the bottom, but there appeared to be no bottom to it.

MORAY. Look, Millicent. It is all in the headlines: DISASTROUS FAILURE AND SUDDEN DEATH OF BENJAMIN HASZARD. [MRS. MORAY falls on the couch in a panic.]

MORAY. Miss Drysdale. Come quick. Mrs. Moray has fainted or has gone mad.

NURSE enters promptly.

NURSE. Has she heard the news?

MORAY. It will destroy her reason; and I told her in so brutal a fashion.

NURSE. When one has a thing to do the best way is to do it thoroughly. At any rate she seems to be convinced.

MORAY. For once in my life I have succeeded. Now I am afraid of my success.

NURSE. You leave Mrs. Moray to me. She will come to herself.

MORAY. I am afraid she will,—more thoroughly than I suspect.

NURSE. I will call you in good time. You have been in this dead-house all the morning. Had you not better take the air?

MORAY. Yes, and perhaps a smoke.

NURSE. And possibly something to drink as well.

MRS. MORAY is supported from the room in silence by the nurse. The telephone rings.

MORAY. That is probably Mr. Pelham. He has just had time to get to the office. Now I shall know the worst. [Takes down the receiver and listens]. Yes, Mr.

Pelham. Of course. Come at once. Two hundred and seventy dollars loss. [*Much relieved*]. Two hundred and seventy dollars profit. Two hundred and seventy thousand dollars profit! [*Hangs up the receiver and stands in stolid amazement, as he lights a cigarette*]. Mr. Haszard's money did not go to strangers after all.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

SCENE 4

MRS. MORAY *is prostrate on the couch;*  
MISS DRYSDALE *is attending.*

NURSE. What a feeble creature a man is. He cannot manage his own foolish wife. Now begins my labour again.

MILICENT [*reviving*]. Is that you Miss Drysdale? Give me something to take. Send for the doctor. Did you hear the dreadful news?

NURSE. It is not the only time I heard news of this kind. I heard it when my own father failed and died.

MILICENT. But I am a woman, and you are a nurse.

NURSE. I was not a nurse at the time; and even if you are a woman you need not be a fool.

MILICENT [*sitting up*]. But I am without a penny in the world.

NURSE. This is not the first time a woman has found herself penniless.

MILICENT. It is the first time for me.

NURSE. And that is an additional reason why you should return to your senses.

MILICENT. Has it come to this, that I must really be as other women are?

NURSE. It will make for your own happiness, and for the happiness of those who are compelled to live with you.

MILICENT. It is a miserable existence, obliged to think of other people's wishes.



NURSE. And have you been so very happy, thinking only of your own ?

MILICENT [*arising*]. Is this the way you have been trained to show sympathy ?

NURSE. In the hospital, no. In the world, yes.

MILICENT. I always supposed it was a nurse's business to smooth the uneasy pillow, to wipe away the bitter tear, to comfort and not to reproach.

NURSE. You must have heard that sweet song at some graduation performance.

MILICENT. Yes; Dr. Mostyn spoke so beautifully; and father was on the platform.

NURSE. That was the year he gave the new sterilizer for the operating room. I was there too.

MILICENT. I wish Dr. Mostyn were here. He would so sympathize with me, and you do not.

NURSE. I always sympathize at the rate of three dollars a day.

MILICENT. But doctors are paid as well as nurses.

NURSE. A doctor's fee for ten minutes comes to more than a nurse's wages for a whole day. Besides, doctors find it more difficult to get work than we do.

MILICENT. Dr. Mostyn always has plenty of patients, but he would leave them to come to me.

NURSE. That is what he told you. At the moment he is probably comforting some other patient by lying to her.

MILICENT. And yet I prefer his ministrations to yours in my present suffering.

NURSE. Which is due to a lack of hearing the truth. A woman hears the truth only from a woman. A man never hears it at all.

MILICENT. My husband did on many occasions, and from me, too.

NURSE. It is not what you told him, but what he told you, that matters.

MILICENT. At times, when I had sufficiently angered him, he spoke in plain terms.

NURSE. But you did not believe him.

MILICENT. Why should I when he was so unjust?

NURSE. And how much did it profit either of you? Truth is not a woman's weapon, unless, indeed, it is directed towards another woman.

MILICENT. I could bear it if it would help to clear my path.

NURSE. You are in a fair way of hearing it, now that no one has any motive to deceive you.

MILICENT. Was any woman's situation ever worse than mine?—face to face with the truth. [*Sits herself at desk.*]

NURSE. Yes; mine was.

MILICENT. And how did you bear it?

NURSE. I did bear it. That is enough for you to know; but do not ask me how.

MILICENT. Could I begin a new life of work?

NURSE. That depends upon the greatness of your necessity and the strength of your desire.

MILICENT. I suppose I could make up my mind to it.

NURSE. It would be very difficult. You would be looking back continually.

MILICENT. My life has really been a very comfortable one.

NURSE. You can do nothing till you have utterly broken with the past.

MILICENT. It rises up before me. My father was good and my husband was kind. [*Bows her head upon her arms.*]

NURSE. You are turning back already from the weary way.

MILICENT. But you enjoy your work. Do not others enjoy theirs?

NURSE. Yes, when we lean on it, when it is our only support, lest a worse thing befall. Then we love it as a woman loves her husband who provides her living.

MILICENT [*with tear-stained face*]. Is work very hard?

NURSE. Make the experiment. Let me go to bed, and you be my nurse. I think I could search your spirit and try your resolution.

MILICENT. But do not many nurses endure for love of the profession?

NURSE. They will tell you so; but such paragons do not go very far. The common motive is a dislike for the position of housemaid or stenographer.

*The telephone rings.* MISS DRYSDALE  
*answers it.*

NURSE [*at telephone*]. Yes—O, yes, Dr. Mostyn. I am free now, or will be this afternoon. Yes—surely. I was there before. I have the address. [*Hangs up the receiver.*]

MILICENT. Free! Would that I were free to live my own life!

NURSE. An idle woman talking of freedom is like a dog who would be a wolf. Did you notice that any of the nurses you have had were especially free?

MILICENT [*with new resolution*]. Could I be a nurse?

NURSE. Could you endure such indignities as, for example, you have inflicted on the nurses you have had?

MILICENT. I do not know. I am asking you. Perhaps all patients are not so tiresome.

NURSE. You might in time acquire an armour of professional insensibility if you were really aware that a display of temper would lead to your expulsion from the hospital, or dismissal from a case.

MILICENT. The price of freedom comes high. I am not sure that I desire it.

NURSE. Or that you would like it when it was found.

MILICENT. The world appears to be a much more difficult place than I had supposed it to be.

NURSE [*with marked kindness*]. You have not yet begun to suspect what a complicated concern it really is.

MILICENT. How utterly hopeless the outlook is!

NURSE. And yet there are certain advantages in your favour. You would not continually be expecting some man to marry you. It is that prospect which keeps women from taking their work seriously.

MILICENT. There seems to be a conspiracy against women who work.

NURSE. The traitor hides in our own hearts. We are tempted continually to abandon our tasks.

MILICENT. And woman's work is so ill paid.

NURSE. We are ill paid because we are uncertain and inefficient.

MILICENT [*with reviving interest*]. And I have heard there are temptations also, which are less honourable than marriage.

NURSE. From these I should think you, at your time of life, would be free.

MILICENT. You assume too much. I have been assured that I am very good looking.

NURSE. Every woman—especially every one who works for her living—is told so; and we never entirely disbelieve it, although we understand quite well the motive which prompts the seduction. No woman ever told you so.

MILICENT. Yes, my milliner did.

NURSE. As a milliner she praised you: not as a woman.

MILICENT. Can you give me no advice?

NURSE. It is very difficult. There is nothing you can do, and you are too old to learn.

MILICENT. I wonder if Mr. Tappan has gone. He might help me. My father always said he was a good business man.

NURSE. We can ask. [*Rings the bell.*]

SWABEY *enters.*

SWABEY [*deliberately avoiding Mrs. MORAY*]. Yes, Miss Drysdale.

NURSE. Mrs. Moray wishes to speak to Mr. Tappan. Is he still here?

SWABEY. I shall enquire, Miss. [*Goes out at left.*]

MILICENT [*going to mirror*]. Yes, I am an old woman.

GEORGE TAPPAN *enters; he is very irritable, and goes at once towards the cabinet where his hat and coat are lying.*

TAPPAN. So it is here they are, and I have been looking all over the house.

MILICENT. O, Mr. Tappan, I want your advice.

TAPPAN [*stopping suddenly*]. Advice is all I'm giving to-day.

MILICENT. Have you no sympathy either?

TAPPAN. Yes,—for myself, for my own wife and family.

MILICENT. Are you in trouble, too?

TAPPAN. We are all in the same hole. To think of digging out at my time of life,—it makes me sick.

NURSE. Mrs. Moray intends to earn her own living,—to live a life of freedom. What do you think?

TAPPAN. I see no objection.

MILICENT. That is the first word of encouragement. Now tell me what I can do.

TAPPAN. You might become a cook. Cooks have great freedom, and theirs is the only business that does not require to be learned. They always confer diplomas on themselves.

MILICENT. I know how incompetent mine is.

TAPPAN. Or rather was, because you have none. She is packing up her things.

MILICENT [*seeking refuge on the couch*]. You make a jest of my necessity.

TAPPAN. I am showing you the only way for an untrained, elderly woman.

MILICENT. Think of the wretched wages.

TAPPAN. But a cook need never starve.

MILICENT. Is any one ever hungry?

TAPPAN. All untrained, working women are always hungry.

MILICENT [*from the couch with her head in her hands*]. Am I face to face with that?

TAPPAN. Hunger and poverty are the two spectres you propose to call up.

MILICENT. Could I not engage in charitable work?

TAPPAN [*sitting down beside her*]. The places are all filled. Charity organizations are conducted for the officials as well as for the other poor who frequent them.

MILICENT. Is it then so hard to break into the ranks of labour? It is no wonder so many women go astray.

TAPPAN. To break into the ranks of the vicious with any success is harder still. Each woman guards jealously her own preserve.

MILICENT [*arising*]. In spite of what you say, there must be some vocation for a gentlewoman.

TAPPAN [*carelessly*]. What evidence have you to offer that you belong to this class?

MILICENT. Every one knows my father; and they would help me on his account.

TAPPAN. So you have abandoned the idea of work and, with a husband to support you, propose to appeal to charity.

MILICENT. To seek work is not to ask for charity.

TAPPAN. Yes; if one is incompetent; and now that your cook is gone, spend a day in the kitchen to prove how incompetent you are.

MILICENT. I never did more in the kitchen than find fault with the cook. It is a great relief of a morning.

NURSE. Finding fault with your mistress would be a salutary change.

MILICENT. A mistress over me! How long do you think I would endure the kitchen, or the hospital either?

TAPPAN [*arising*]. Not one moment after you remembered that you had a husband and an overgrown boy, who could be compelled by law to support you.

MILICENT. Such scepticism would be fatal to my new career. That is the end of my dream. What now do you advise?

TAPPAN. My advice to you is to give up dreaming. Make your peace with your husband, and persuade him, if you can, that you may render him service in return for his support; or, if you are going to remain a parasite, that at least you will not be a disagreeable one.

MILICENT. The last way is closed to me.

TAPPAN. I wish my wife's way was as easy. But I must be off. She and the children will be waiting for me.

MILICENT. She will need all the comfort you can give her.

TAPPAN. It's me who needs comfort. That's why I'm going home. Good-bye, Mrs. Moray. Your husband is easy if you take him right. [*Seizes his hat and coat, and goes out at back.*]

MILICENT. He goes to his wife for comfort. I have given [not a single thought to my husband. He does not come to me for comfort; and yet I have borne him a child, if only a single one.



NURSE. Professor Moray might as well put forward a similar plea if he were charged with inefficiency in his duties; but I am afraid it would not be considered a justification for failure in all other departments of life.

MILICENT. Is not a woman's whole duty performed in the bearing of children?

NURSE. That is only an incident in her career. She must make herself useful as men are useful, if she would be free.

MILICENT. Is it nothing that we maintain the morality of the world?

NURSE. You mean that we conform to the standards which men impose upon us.

MILICENT. Which God imposes upon us.

NURSE. The same thing. Men are our gods.

MILICENT. No man was ever my god.

NURSE. For that reason you are without God or man either.

MILICENT. True, I am alone in the world.

NURSE. Then accept the situation as you find it, or by labour create a world of your own as men do, as I have done.

MILICENT. And move freely in it?

NURSE. Whilst we exist merely for the convenience of the individual we must obey his will. When we work for the good of the community then only are we free.

MILICENT. Free from the restrictions of morality even?

NURSE. Free from the restrictions imposed upon us by an alien hand; bound only by the law of our own nature.

MILICENT. But we are indispensable. Otherwise the community would soon come to an end.

NURSE. That is an affair of the future; and men care only for the present. The propagation of the community is their penalty, our reward.

MILICENT. Then the situation of a woman is really a precarious one.

NURSE. Yes, so soon as men discover that a woman is a luxury they can learn to do without.

MILICENT. And I am a necessity to no one.

NURSE. Then you have lost your life.

MILICENT. I shall try to regain it—to be good.

NURSE. No. Let what nature remains to you have free play. Goodness in a woman is a mark of shallow instincts.

MILICENT. If not by goodness, how then does a woman achieve her end?

NURSE. By having a self, and being it.

SWABEY *enters, and MRS. MORAY takes her place at the desk.*

SWABEY. Professor Moray was asking for his letters, ma'am, against the time he would return from his walk. Are they here?

MILICENT [*taking a bundle of letters from the desk, and sorting them over quickly*]. They have been here for a fortnight. This one must be from his father. I am afraid it contains bad news,—he writes so rarely. [*To Swabey*]. Here are the letters.

SWABEY. Yes, ma'am. [*Goes out.*]

NURSE. Professor Moray's mother was not very well.

MILICENT. He did not tell me. I never knew her. His father came to see us once; but he and I did not agree.

NURSE. I should suppose not. Oh, I forgot to mention that he was here again this morning; but I had so many things in mind.

MILICENT. To think of his coming at this time.

NURSE. This may be just the time when it was best that he should come.

*HUGO enters from the back.*

MILICENT. My poor boy! It is upon you the loss will fall.

HUGO. I have my own father. You have none. I am sorry.

MILICENT. You do not know the worst.

HUGO. I know he is dead, and he was always kind in spite of himself.

MILICENT. How can I tell you!

HUGO. I know without being told. I can read the paper for myself.

MILICENT. Isn't it dreadful?

HUGO. No, I'm very glad, that is, for myself. My other grandfather is here, and I am going to ask him to take me to the country with him—if I am allowed.

MILICENT. Would you go away, and leave me?

HUGO. Perhaps father will allow you to come too. If I can find them, I will ask. [*Goes out at back.*]

MILICENT. Allow me! I am afraid of that boy: my own son. He is a man. Can we not be on equal terms with them?

NURSE. Equal in usefulness, yes. Do you believe that all men are equal in any other way? Is Swabey there "equal" to Professor Moray?

MILICENT. In some things he is better.

NURSE. That's what I say. In some respects a fish is better than a dog. A woman has more hair than a man, but a man has bigger feet.

MILICENT. In striving for equality according to the same standard, I have become merely a rival of my husband.

NURSE. And you got the worst of it.

MILICENT. Not always.

NURSE. And when you succeeded your success was worse than failure.

MILICENT. Yet there was some satisfaction in it.

NURSE. A mean victory. When the one is the complement, and not the rival, of the other, both achieve the common end.

MILICENT. Is this the only way of peace?

NURSE. Only then there will be no difference of opinion.

MILICENT. There is bound to be a clash of natures; and there is something degrading in obedience.

NURSE. The essence of marriage is, for a woman, not obedience but the spirit to obey the law of her being, which in turn begets in her husband the desire to cherish. A woman is not compelled to marry who is not content with that.

MILICENT [*walking about restlessly*]. I was a blind fool. My eyes are opened. I am afraid.

NURSE. Of your husband?

MILICENT. Yes; and I used to despise him.

NURSE. That is a favourable sign. Fear of her husband is the beginning of wisdom for a woman. When she loses fear she herself is lost.

MILICENT. Will you not speak to Professor Moray, so that the way may be easier for me ?

NURSE. Yes; I am not afraid of him. I am like all women. They think another woman's husband is a fool.

MILICENT. I see him now as his students see him, as a power I do not understand, as one who controls their fate.

*The sound of footsteps is heard at back.*

NURSE. Professor Moray is coming. This is a matter you must settle between yourselves.

MILICENT. Not yet. It is a changed world, and I cannot see my way. Come with me.

*MRS. MORAY and NURSE go out quickly  
as PROFESSOR MORAY enters with  
unopened letters in his hand.*

MORAY. The air did me good. I wonder how things are in this troubled house. Poor Milicent. Everything gone at one stroke, father and money. I wish he were here. He would enjoy the irony of it. But she need not suffer. I shall do my part. [*Turns over the letters, and selecting one with a black border proceeds to open it*]. From my father. There must be trouble. He is never himself when he writes. In mourning, too.

*SWABEY enters.*

SWABEY. The young man has called again, sir; Mr. Pelham, the nimble fellow who was here this morning. He has a bag in his hand.

MORAY [*laying the letter aside*]. Ask him to come in.

HENRY PELHAM *enters.*

PELHAM. Good-morning again, Professor. I see you are alone. I know you will excuse my coming when I tell you that the firm thought it best to pay over your winnings in currency rather than by cheque.

MORAY. That is very considerate; but why not in the usual way?

PELHAM. A cheque must go through a bank, and bankers sometimes think even when they do not talk.

MORAY. What could they say?

PELHAM. They might not say anything; but they would think it too strange for coincidence that you should have made this master stroke at the very moment of Mr. Haszard's failure and death.

MORAY. The situation is perfectly clear. I was on a holiday and had not seen, or heard from, Mr. Haszard for two weeks. From purely theoretical considerations I concluded that the psychology of the farmer was against Industrial Securities which are based upon agricultural machinery. To test the soundness of my reasoning I ordered by telegraph a short sale—

PELHAM. Yes, I know all that; and the order came to us in terms of thousands. We carried it out to the letter; and the net profit to you is two hundred and seventy thousand dollars.

MORAY. Which proves the correctness of my theory. The intelligence of the professor is vindicated once more.

PELHAM. To make the vindication complete we should require an investigation into the psychology

of the telegraph operator, of yourself, and of Mr. Haszard as well.

MORAY. Do you then suggest that doubt would be cast upon the value of abstract reasoning?

PELHAM. To put it plainly: you could convince no one that you were not acting for your father-in-law. For that reason I have brought your profits in currency, in United States gold certificates, denomination of five thousand dollars each, fifty-four of them.

MORAY. Well, if there is going to be trouble, it may as well come whilst I have the money in my pocket.

HENRY PELHAM *counts the money.*

PROFESSOR MORAY *takes it and signs the receipt.*

PELHAM. There can be no trouble. All is perfectly regular. The thing happens ever day.

MORAY. What did the firm think of the transaction?

PELHAM. We were not concerned about the source of your information. We considered it correct and are much obliged to you for the "tip".

MORAY. I thought it strange that you should have executed so large an order for a mere private person like myself.

PELHAM. We knew you had good backing, and we did some business on the short side for ourselves. We have retained our commission and the deal is closed. Good-morning, Professor. We are always yours to command.

MORAY. Good-morning, Mr. Pelham. [HENRY PELHAM *goes out.*] Even they think I am a crook. Truly this is no game for an amateur of sensitive spirit.

SWABEY *enters.*

SWABEY. The gentleman is here again, sir.

MORAY. What gentleman?

SWABEY. The man who was here this morning before you arrived.

MORAY. I know nothing of that. Why did you not tell me?

SWABEY. I thought that was Miss Drysdale's business. She seems to be running the family affairs in this house.

MORAY. Before to-day, was the man ever here?

SWABEY. Not that I saw, and I am here nine years. Yes, sir, I came just after the panic.

MORAY. And you are likely to leave after a panic, too.

SWABEY. A panic works both ways, sir. I am always inclined for the short side myself, being of a gloomy nature, sir. It is very comforting being on the short side, sir, when things are going right. I mean, going wrong, sir.

MORAY. But had you not better show the man in even if we do not know who he is?

SWABEY. He is the gentleman who said he was you, sir.

MORAY. Which of you is mad—you or he?

SWABEY. He said he was Mr. Moray.

MORAY. Surely it cannot be my father. He must have forgotten the events of his previous visit.

SWABEY. I cannot say, sir. That would have been before my time.

MORAY. I was not speaking to you. Ask the gentleman to come in. And Swabey—



SWABEY. Yes, sir.

MORAY. See that you keep a civil tongue in your head. It is not me you will be talking to.

SWABEY. No fear of that, sir. He is a friendly gentleman, but of a very enquiring mind. [*Goes out.*]

MORAY. How true it is that money answers all things! An hour ago the prospect of a visitor would have filled me with apprehension. But a man with two hundred and seventy thousand dollars in his pocket can meet the devil face to face. Now I know the difference between "money" and "cash". [*Remembers the letter, takes it up, and reads*]. Poor mother! Poor father! More than a week ago; and I did not know it. Mother dead!

GAVIN MORAY *enters from back.*

MORAY. It is you, father. I have just heard this moment. I was away.

G. MORAY. Yes; they told me. I did miss you.

MORAY. I am so sorry.

G. MORAY. I know. The thing I greatly feared has come upon me.

MORAY. It is a heavy change.

G. MORAY. So heavy, we may well leave weak words at one side. [*Sits down and resumes quite cheerfully, to signify that the subject is closed*]. I am afraid I have come at an inconvenient time. You have sorrow in this house too.

MORAY. Not very much; but there is trouble.

G. MORAY. I would willingly share in it. Sorrow is a sweetener of life.

MORAY [*in deference to his father's reticence about matters of the heart*]. You must be worn out. It is a long journey—thirty hours.

G. MORAY. It was not the journey that destroyed me: it was the hardship of the landing.

MORAY. I am afraid your impressions of this town are not of the best.

G. MORAY. It does partake somewhat of the nature of a dunghill.

MORAY. This is spring-time: the snow is going; and, besides, we are in a state of transition.

G. MORAY. From what I have seen this morning you appear to be in a state of siege.

MORAY. It is merely a phase in the development of a young country.

G. MORAY. But this squalor will outlast your life-time. It is worse than it was ten years ago when I was here.

MORAY. That is merely because the city is growing.

G. MORAY. In the meantime you are in peril of your lives from pestilence when you have any water, and of the destruction of your houses by fire when you have none.

MORAY. But living in a large city has certain advantages.

G. MORAY. All cities in a new country are of the same size. Those which present an appearance of largeness are merely made up of a number of towns lying side by side.

MORAY. They yield us certain comforts, however.

G. MORAY. Discomforts you mean; you are so much like slaves and savages that you do not know how miserable and helpless you are.

MORAY. We think it is here that we observe the amenities of life.

G. MORAY. All gentlemen live on their own land.

MORAY. My impression is that I have seen many men who owned their farms, and yet scarcely deserved the designation.

G. MORAY. A gentleman is a man who is free. Here you are all servants or servants of servants, from the boy who carries my bag to the man who manages the railway he does not own,—all my servants, because I pay them what the law allows for assisting me.

MORAY. If you lived among us I think you would find more independence than you suspect.

G. MORAY. Insolence you mean,—and just because you are all servants; since servants are uncivil to each other as a relief from servility to their masters.

MORAY. I suppose we do suffer some inconveniences which do not seem so because we are accustomed to them.

G. MORAY. That is true wherever one is. But there are only two places fit for a man to live in; one which is done growing; and one which has not yet begun to grow.

MORAY. I often yearn for such a place.

G. MORAY. You ought to come back. The country needs you in its struggle against the town.

MORAY. I have lost the habit of labour.

G. MORAY. It is not muscle we require: it is mind.

MORAY. Then things must have changed since my time.

G. MORAY. The land is waiting to be fructified by science. A farm is a laboratory; and a farmer is a professor,—and a doer also.

MORAY. This is a great change which you propose.

G. MORAY. And a hard one; there are the allurements of this house to leave.

MORAY. This house is not mine.

G. MORAY. It is a poor business living in a hired house. It must cost you a pretty penny to keep it a-going.

MORAY. I do not even pay rent for it. It belonged to Mr. Haszard.

G. MORAY. That is worse still. A man should own his house, else he cannot be master in it. A woman cannot serve two masters, her father and her husband. The chances are that she will be master of both.

MORAY. Your surmise is not far wide of the mark.

G. MORAY. Now that he is gone your situation is hopeless. I am sorry.

MORAY. It is not quite so bad as that. A new circumstance has come into the case.

G. MORAY. I would not enquire too particularly into your private affairs. When a man or a woman has money they are hard to drive, hard to lead. I have some myself; and I know.

MORAY. My wife is not rich.

G. MORAY. But this is a rich man's house. Did he make your boy his heir? That would be still worse. He told me he was going to do something different, but he must have been pressed for time.

MORAY. He had nothing to leave. He went out of the world as naked as he entered it.

G. MORAY. Death is the last justice. It balances all accounts.

MORAY. His death solves many difficulties for me.

G. MORAY. You can now begin where your mother and I began.

MORAY. But you had youth on your side.

G. MORAY. Your boy is young, and you may find a way for him.

MORAY. I am not much enamoured of the academic life for him or for myself.

G. MORAY. A professor's life must be an easy and attractive one if it is lived reasonably.

MORAY. It used to be, but now a university is like a factory, striving to meet competition by what they call efficiency.

G. MORAY. You who live in cities must be earning a great deal of money to atone for all you endure.

MORAY. We live in hopes of acquiring the earnings of others.

G. MORAY. Like those gamblers we see at the fair?

MORAY. No man of us earns more than he spends.

G. MORAY. Then you are no better than a jackass on a treadmill.

MORAY. To tread the mill is his trade.

G. MORAY. If you are without the desire to be free, I can only lament. If it is that you are without the means, I can help.

MORAY. By a stroke of luck I have the means. I always had the desire, but never knew in which direction freedom lay.

G. MORAY [*arising*]. Then come back to the land with me. You will buy the River Place. It adjoins our own, and looks out upon the sea. When my time comes you will have both.

MORAY. And does the stream still run through the woods ?

G. MORAY. Streams, and the hills, and the sea—these endure forever.

MORAY. And is there yet freedom in the world ?

G. MORAY. Those who extract their living from the soil, from the sea, from the earth,—these alone have human liberty.

MORAY. It would be as easy for you to become a professor of economics as for me to become a farmer, a fisherman, or a miner.

G. MORAY. I could without a moment's preparation teach your young men the true economy of life, that all our social evils are due to the profligate waste of those who do not work with their hands as well as with their brains.

MORAY [*arising*]. I think I will gather up the spoil of these Egyptians and return with you.

G. MORAY. To your own. Dust we are; but it is the dust of the place wherein we were born. In that dust a man shall find his final rest.

MORAY. I will speak to Mrs. Moray about it. The man will show you to your room, and we will bring all to a conclusion before the morning is done.

GAVIN MORAY *goes out*, PROFESSOR MORAY *sits at desk*, MISS DRYSDALE *enters*.

NURSE. Good-bye Professor Moray; and before I go just a word about Mrs. Moray.

MORAY. But first a word from me. You have been very kind, and there is money owing to you.

NURSE. Not much.

MORAY. Make a note of it on this paper.

*As she writes, he draws the sheaf of bills from his pocket, and unconsciously exposes them to her sight, as he turns them over looking for change. He recollects suddenly. They look at each other with meaning.*

NURSE. Mr. Haszard always said his money would not go to strangers.

MORAY. If it did, they did not keep this much of it very long.

NURSE [*looking at safe*]. I hope there is no danger.

MORAY. You are wrong. I have been—in business too.

NURSE. Wherever the money came from it is better with you than with her.

MILICENT *enters unobserved.*

MORAY. And sign this receipt please. [NURSE *signs, takes her money, and turns to go*].

MILICENT. This is as it should be.

MORAY. Ask Mrs. Moray to come in.

NURSE. Mrs. Moray is here.

MILICENT. You sent for me, John.

MORAY [*arising to meet her*]. Milicent, dear, I agree with you that the time has come for you and me to arrive at an understanding.

MILICENT. You understand me only too well; and I think now that I understand myself.

MORAY [*with amused toleration*]. Do not go, Miss Drysdale. You have been in this house often and long. There are no secrets from you except, perhaps, the latest, that my wife says we cannot continue to live together even as friends.

NURSE. No man and woman ever can. Such a relationship is always silly. Sometimes it is dangerous.

MILICENT. How then is it possible between two men?

NURSE. Because the language of friendship is words. A man and a woman communicate by a series of acts.

MORAY. There are acts of friendship, too.

NURSE. Merely on the surface. When they are fundamental the friendship ends.

MILICENT. But how do you determine what those fundamental actions are?

NURSE. The giving of money, as Professor Moray gave to me, will serve as an example.

MILICENT. In money lay the beginning of our trouble.

MORAY. But a friend may give money to a friend.

NURSE. Yes, as a loan: but even then the relation of borrower and lender supersedes the relation of friendship.

MORAY. Not as a gift?

NURSE. No, for the man who gives has converted his friend into an enemy. The recipient has betrayed his infirmity, and henceforth his desire is to destroy the witness of his weakness.

MILICENT. But a woman may take money from a man.

NURSE. Only if she is able to pay in coin or willing to pay in kind. In the one case she sunders friendship: in the other she loses virtue. If she is not willing to pay in one medium or the other, she is a beggar, and a swindler too.



MORAY. How then can a man have any financial transactions with his wife without loss of mutual respect ?

NURSE. He cannot.

MORAY. If she gives money to him, he loses her respect and his own too.

MILICENT. But a man may give money to his wife ?

NURSE. Yes; but she must pay in kind,—with herself.

MILICENT. What then becomes of her self-respect ?

NURSE. In losing it as a woman she instantly regains it as wife.

MORAY. Let us be partners on equal terms, both giving of our best and each drawing so much as is required from the common store.

NURSE. That would be a strange form of partnership. One or other of the partners would end up in gaol. You cannot deal with marriage in terms of business.

MORAY. But marriage is a contract.

NURSE. Only in the relations between a man and a woman who is not his wife is a contract implied.

MORAY. In marriage there is a mutual surrender in a common partnership.

NURSE. Two persons don't surrender at the same time. It must be one or the other. In marriage it must be the wife; and she must remain surrendered—*[with final emphasis]* in appearance at least.

MILICENT. But how does it happen that you know all about these things? You are not married.

NURSE. It is the heart that judges. Besides, we are not discussing my affairs.

MISS DRYSDALE goes out.

MILICENT. I always suspected that woman of knowing more than was good for her.

MORAY. Is her knowledge good for us?—that is the question.

MILICENT. Can you still care for my good after all my misbehaviour?

MORAY. It was not your fault. It is the fault of this new society in which we live.

MILICENT. I blame no one but myself.

MORAY. New riches divorced from women's old duty of keeping the fabric of society together means merely idleness.

MILICENT. But in future there will be occupation enough for me in caring for you and the boy.

MORAY. And we shall be as poor as professors.

MILICENT. Riches were our ruin. The day I leave this house will be the happiest day in my life but one, the day I married you.

MORAY. The position was untenable. We should never have come to live in these surroundings.

MILICENT. And yet it seemed so feasible: father alone: a convenient house.

MORAY. Economically a sound arrangement.

MILICENT. If we could only get rid of the town and the house at one stroke!

MORAY. Could you endure hard contact with the land?

MILICENT. The easy way is always the dangerous way. It led us to a precipice. Let us choose the hard.

MORAY. But can you endure it?

MILICENT. That depends on your willingness: on my ability to change my point of view, to consider you master in your own house, and my master too.

MORAY. But Milicent this is a most primitive condition,—master and subdued.

MILICENT. Nothing in the world is more primitive than the relation between a man and a woman.

MORAY. Is it then too late for us to begin this normal way of living?

MILICENT. I am afraid so. I am an old woman. I have aged much in the last two hours. There is nothing I have to give which you would consider worth the struggle for mastery.

MORAY. But I do not forget your first surrender, and our boy.

MILICENT. Out of that an enduring relationship may yet arise.

MORAY. Shall I begin by—? [*Raises a finger.*]

MILICENT. Yes. If only you are strong enough to go through with the task.

MORAY. Well, there is a beginning. [*Pats her on the face*]. It may be, after all, that to us will be granted the prayer of Tobias:—That we shall grow old together.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

SCENE 5

PROFESSOR MORAY and MRS. MORAY  
*are standing in front of the couch;*  
GAVIN MORAY *enters from back,*  
and NURSE *from left, bearing white*  
*flowers.*

NURSE. All is ready. Should you like to come in?

MORAY. You remember Milicent, father?

G. MORAY. Yes, I remember her first rate. [*To*  
MRS. MORAY]. You appear to have aged considerable  
since I saw you last.

MILICENT. And if I have grown older, I hope also  
that I have gained sense.

G. MORAY. I hope so, too, ma'am.

MILICENT. I did not know you were here; else  
I should have come sooner. Will you not excuse me?

G. MORAY. At a time like this you must have  
many cares. I will excuse any woman for attending  
to her proper business.

MILICENT. If this were our own house we would  
give you good welcome. John has told you of our  
troubles?

MORAY. Yes, dear; and father thinks—and I  
think too—that with the end of the old life a better  
has begun for us all.

G. MORAY. But where is the boy? It would be  
a miracle if he agreed, too.

HUGO MORAY *enters.*

HUGO. Father, it is very tiresome here. Am I to  
go back to school?

G. MORAY. What a dreadful existence, when a boy desires so dreadful an escape.

MILICENT. It is hard to bring up a boy in the city.

G. MORAY. It is a joyless existence. That is the source of all debauchery.

HUGO. But I was on a holiday with my father, and I did lots of work. I want to go with you to the country.

G. MORAY. You call it a holiday merely because it was an escape from the tedium of the town.

MILICENT. But he takes a great deal of exercise.

G. MORAY. Which is only a form of useless labour, little better than idleness. Would you not like to do some useful work?

HUGO. Nothing would please me better.

G. MORAY. There is a recruit for the land.

MORAY [*to Mrs. Moray*]. Suppose we all go back to the land?

MILICENT. Where you go I will go, if you will take me.

DR. MOSTYN *enters*.

DOCTOR. Oh, Mrs. Moray, I just called in passing to enquire how you are.

MORAY. Dr. Mostyn, this is my father; and Mrs. Moray is entirely well.

DOCTOR. I suspect, sir, that you are her new adviser. I congratulate you upon your success.

G. MORAY. Mrs. Moray has had advice from many quarters, and a most unexpected, if painful, remedy.

MILICENT. No more visits. You should be glad. They must have been very tiresome to you.

DOCTOR. They served a useful purpose. I shall miss them.

MORAY. We have changed our minds: now we are about to change our skies.

DOCTOR. This appears to be a happy company. I wish I were of it.

MILICENT. Why, Dr. Mostyn, I thought you were the one man who was content?

DOCTOR. Content with what? Spending my life so that a patient may die in April rather than in March.

MORAY. Of which year?—this or last?

DOCTOR. Sometimes the one: sometimes the other.

MILICENT. But you relieve much suffering.

DOCTOR. Imaginary suffering with imaginary remedies,—and tedium by the infliction of unnecessary pain.

G. MORAY. Will you come too, sir? We will do our best to make you happy in a better way of life.

DOCTOR. I am afraid not. I am wedded to my idols, or rather, bound to the wheel. But what of you, Miss Drysdale? Have you too repented?

NURSE. It is long since I made my repentance.

G. MORAY. And now you lead a life of charity.

NURSE. That is the very thing I repented of. Now I mind my own business and make a good, honest living.

DOCTOR. If charity betters the fate of the poor it makes them more sensible of suffering, and dulls the desire to escape from their lot.

NURSE. Every elevation has its own degree of suffering. Even the opulence of this house conferred no security. Life on the land itself is not immune.

G. MORAY. But it yields most compensation. It offers freedom.

MORAY. And peace for restlessness.

G. MORAY. I do not promise happiness. That is an affair of the mind, a state of spontaneous gratitude, of unconscious prayer to the earth.

*Two assistants enter, bearing masses of funeral flowers which they distribute about the room.*

MILICENT. That will be a new life indeed.

G. MORAY. And a better life: as truth is better than lying, to create better than to destroy.

MILICENT. I always had a liking for the innocent creatures of the farm: suddenly I fear the beast which lurks in the city.

G. MORAY. Do not deceive yourself. Where there is a cow there will be a woman: where there is a woman there will be life: whilst there is life there will be trouble.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE END