

certain it was both dry and good. Perhaps it was he that invented the Green Damnation. If so, he should be what Madame Vaulteasy calls the 'High Priest of the Cult.'

"I rather suspect," said Lord Weggie, "that our cosmopolitan governor, Adam, should have that honor, for undoubtedly the apple which caused so much trouble, when he ate it, was the great primal Green Damnation."

"Weggie," exclaimed Mr. Absinthe, with much emotion, "I fear you are right. If so, I would forswear the Green Damnation forever, I despise Adam. He had the greatest opportunity of any man for being epigrammatic. Nothing had been said before. Yet he seems to have said nothing. He did not even write a book."

"No," said Mrs. Balmoral, "but he did not have a dictionary."

"There, now," exclaimed Madame Vaulteasy, "that has suggested the name—Webster. He was wonderful and so original. So few great men who write stop and explain as they go along in the way he does. And then he was so epigrammatic. I believe everything he wrote had a meaning, even his words of one syllable."

"Ah," sighed Lord Weggie, "one can never hope to equal Webster. But then he lived so long ago. If George Meredith would write a dictionary he might find readers. He is a sad case. His syntax and prosody, they say, are seriously affected. What would you prescribe, Frappe, for such a case?"

A grain of common sense; or, if that proved too powerful, a gramme; or, to commence with, an epigram. Play us something soothing, we are getting excited. Let it dream itself away in half tones, in gray minor chords, and brown transitions."

"I will give you a fugue of Bach's."

"Fugues are too much like rounds—they make one giddy."

"No good," faltered Lord Weggie, passing his fair, shapely hand over his weary white face. "I cannot play tonight. The intense black and white of the keys offend me. Yet I will try, if you will go away. Music should be heard at a distance—the farther off the better. If one is quite out of hearing, more is left to the imagination."

"How far do you wish us to go?" asked Mrs. Balmoral. "The farthest spot from us would, I suppose, be heaven."

"I don't think we should be happy there," said Madame Vaulteasy, with a dry laugh. "Eternity is too long to be epigrammatic. How do you think you would like it, Mr. Absinthe?"

"I expect we shall be used to their ways by the time we are ready to start, for we are adopting their fashions already. There is no marriage there, you know. Divorce is regenerating the world. That is a comforting thought. The shock will be less when we are translated."

"You are not translatable, Frappe," remarked Lord Weggie.

"True genius seldom is," replied Mr. Absinthe. "But death is an unpleasant subject, even in a farce comedy."

"Do you not think it interesting?" inquired Mrs. Balmoral.

"Far from it. I know many writers that are very dead, and no one thinks them interesting. Rider Haggard is one of them, in my opinion. Death suggests disease. Does it not strike you as absurd that a recently-contracted disease is vulgar, but that one which has been in the family for generations as a concomitant of wealth is to be borne with pride and arrogance of spirit?"

"Wealth makes vice even virtuous. Do you not think so, Lord Weggie?" remarked Madame Vaulteasy.

"I know so little about it," he replied. "I live at present on my debts."

"Do you ever expect to be able to pay them?"

"Oh yes. Where there's a will in one's favor there's always a way."

"I never expect to be wealthy," remarked Mr. Absinthe. "I have genius, and genius is not current coin. The rate of exchange is high. I am too liberal. Meanness accumulates riches. Wealth should only be inherited. A self-made man is the meanest of God's crea-

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tions. I dislike the middle-class. Middle-class men have middle class ideas. They are a miserable lot, for they respect the law and take life literally. Happiness knows no law and the law knows no happiness—nor allows any. The middle-class man knows nothing unknown to his forefathers. What he says is what the world says. If anyone can bring himself to say what he thinks he is a genius.

"Frappe," said Lord Weggie, as the two friends strolled toward their club, "I shall certainly write a novel. I will set down what we have said this evening. It will be greater than the greatest modern work, although strictly on the latest lines."

"Are you not afraid," remarked Mr. Absinthe, "that there would be too much plot in it?"

"There may be too much action in our walking to Mrs. Balmoral's and back, but we might strike that out."

"But that would destroy the conversation."

"It might improve the novel."

"What you said about Adam," remarked Mr. Absinthe, "is true. It is exquisitely painful to me to admit the truth of that which I know you mean as a jest. But the thought makes the Green Damnation vulgar. We will swear to have done with it from tonight."

"But, Frappe!" exclaimed Lord Weggie in horrified accents, "we have done away with the Lily, the Sunflower and the Green Carnation. If you deprive us of the Green Damnation, what is left?"

"The Epigram"

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Ukerdek—He is bald as an egg.

Grymes—What of that?

Ukerdek—the cannot advise me to use a hair restorer.

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