

CHAPTER I

Lord Loudwater was paying attention neither to his breakfast nor to the cat Melchisidec. Absorbed in a leader in *The Times* newspaper, now and again he tugged at his red-brown beard in order to quicken his comprehension of the weighty phrases of the leader-writer; now and again he made noises, chiefly with his nose, expressive of disgust. Lady Loudwater paid no attention to these noises. She did not even raise her eyes to her husband's face. She ate her breakfast with a thoughtful air, her brow puckered by a faint frown.

She also paid no attention to her favourite, Melchisidec. Melchisidec, unduly excited by the smell of grilled sole, came to Lord Loudwater, rose on his hind legs, laid his paws on his trousers, and stuck some claws into his thigh. It was no more than gentle, arresting pricks; but the tender nobleman sprang from his chair with a short howl, kicked with futile violence a portion of the empty air which Melchisidec had just vacated, staggered, and nearly fell.

Lady Loudwater did not laugh; but she did cough.

Her husband, his face a furious crimson, glared at her with reddish eyes, and swore violently at her and the cat.

Lady Loudwater rose, her face flushed, her lips trembling, picked up Melchisidec, and walked out of the room. Lord Loudwater scowled at the closed door, sat down, and went on with his breakfast.

James Hutchings, the butler, came quietly into the room, took one of the smaller dishes from the sideboard and Lady Loudwater's teapot from the table. He went quietly out of the room, pausing at the door to scowl at his master's back. Lady Loudwater finished her breakfast in the sitting-room of her suite of rooms on the first floor. She was no longer inattentive to Melchisidec.

During her breakfast she put all consideration of her husband's behaviour out of her mind. As she smoked a cigarette after break-

fast she considered it for a little while. She often had to consider it. She came to the conclusion to which she had often come before: that she owed him nothing whatever. She came to the further conclusion that she detested him. She had far too good a brow not to be able to see a fact clearly. She wished more heartily than ever that she had never married him. It had been a grievous mistake; and it seemed likely to last a life-time — her life-time. The last five ancestors of her husband had lived to be eighty. His father would doubtless have lived to be eighty too, had he not broken his neck in the hunting-field at the age of fifty-four. On the other hand, none of the Quaintons, her own family, had reached the age of sixty. Lord Loudwater was thirty-five; she was twenty-two; he would therefore survive her by at least seven years. She would certainly be bowed down all her life under this grievous burden.

It was an odd calculation for a young married woman to make; but Lady Loudwater came of an uncommon family, which had produced more brilliant, irresponsible, and passably unscrupulous men than any other of the leading families in England. Her father had been one of them. She took after him. Moreover, Lord Loudwater would have induced odd reveries in any wife. He had been intolerable since the second week of their honeymoon. Wholly without power of self-restraint, the furious outbursts of his vile temper had been consistently revolting. She once more told herself that something would have to be done about it — not on the instant, however. At the moment there appeared to her to be months to do it in. She dropped her cigarette end into the ash-tray, and with it any further consideration of the manners and disposition of Lord Loudwater.

She lit another cigarette and let her thoughts turn to that far more appealing subject, Colonel Antony Grey. They turned to him readily and wholly. In less than three minutes she was seeing his face and hearing certain tones in his voice with amazing clearness. Once she looked at the clock impatiently. It was half-past ten. She would not see him till three — four and a half hours. It seemed a long while to her. However, she could go on thinking about him. She did.

While she considered her ill-tempered husband her eyes had been hard and almost shallow. While she considered Colonel Grey, they

grew soft and deep. Her lips had been set and almost thin; now they grew most kissable.

Lord Loudwater finished his breakfast, the scowl on his face fading slowly to a frown. He lit a cigar and with a moody air went to his smoking-room. The criminal carelessness of the cat Melchisidec still rankled.

As he entered the room, half office and half smoking-room, Mr. Herbert Manley, his secretary, bade him good morning. Lord Loudwater returned his greeting with a scowl.

Mr. Herbert Manley had one of those faces which begin well and end badly. He had a fine forehead, lofty and broad, a well-cut, gently-curving-nose, a slack, thick-lipped mouth, always a little open, a heavy, animal jaw, and the chin of an eagle. His fine, black hair was thin on the temples. His moustache was thin and straggled. His black eyes were as good as his brow, intelligent, observant, and alert. It was plain that had his lips been thinner and his chin larger he would not have been the secretary of Lord Loudwater — or of any one else. He would have been a masterless man. The success of two one-act plays on the stage of the music-halls had given him the firm hope of one day becoming a masterless man as a successful dramatist. His post gave him the leisure to write plays. But for the fact that it brought him into such frequent contact with the Lord Loudwater it would have been a really pleasant post: the food was excellent; the wine was good; the library was passable; and the servants, with the exception of James Hutchings, liked and respected him. He had the art of making himself valued (at far more than his real worth, said his enemies), and his air of importance continuously impressed them.

With a patient air he began to discuss the morning's letters, and ask for instructions. Lord Loudwater was, as often happened, uncommonly captious about the letters. He had not recovered from the shock the inconsiderate Melchisidec had given his nerves. The instructions he gave were somewhat muddled; and when Mr. Manley tried to get them clearer, his employer swore at him for an idiot. Mr. Manley persisted firmly through much abuse till he did get them clear. He had come to consider his employer's furies an unfortunate weakness which had to be endured by the holder of the post

he found so advantageous. He endured them with what stoicism he might.

Lord Loudwater in a bad temper always produced a strong impression of redness for a man whose colouring was merely red-brown. Owing to the fact that his fierce, protruding blue eyes were red-rimmed and somewhat bloodshot, in moments of emotion they shone with a curious red glint, and his florid face flushed a deeper red. In these moments Mr. Manley had a feeling that he was dealing with a bad-tempered red bull. His employer made very much the same impression on other people, but few of them had the impression of bullness so clear and so complete as did Mr. Manley. Lady Loudwater, on the other hand, felt always, whether her husband was ramping or quiet, that she was dealing with a bad-tempered bull.

Presently they came to the end of the letters. Lord Loudwater lit another cigar, and scowled thoughtfully. Mr. Manley gazed at his scowling face and wondered idly whether he would ever light on another human being whom he would detest so heartily as he detested his employer. He thought it indeed unlikely. Still, when he became a successful dramatist there might be an actor-manager—

Then Lord Loudwater said: "Did you tell Mrs. Truslove that after September her allowance would be reduced to three hundred a year?"

"Yes," said Mr. Manley.

"What did she say?"

Mr. Manley hesitated; then he said diplomatically: "She did not seem to like it."

"What did she *say*?" cried Lord Loudwater in a sudden, startling bellow, and his eyes shone red.

Mr. Manley winced and said quickly: "She said it was just like you."

"Just like me? Hey? And what did she mean by that?" cried Lord Loudwater loudly and angrily.

Mr. Manley expressed utter ignorance by looking blank and shrugging his shoulders.

"The jade! She's had six hundred a year for more than two years. Did she think it would go on for ever?" cried his employer.

"No," said Mr. Manley.

"And why didn't she think it would go on for ever? Hey?" said Lord Loudwater in a challenging tone.

"Because there wasn't an actual deed of settlement," said Mr. Manley.

"The ungrateful jade! I've a good mind to stop it altogether!" cried his employer.

Mr. Manley said nothing. His face was blank; it neither approved nor disapproved the suggestion.

Lord Loudwater scowled at him and said: "I expect she said she wished she'd never had anything to do with me."

"No," said Mr. Manley.

"I'll bet that's what she thinks," growled Lord Loudwater.

Mr. Manley let the suggestion pass without comment. His face was blank.

"And what's she going to do about it?" said Lord Loudwater in a tone of challenge.

"She's going to see you about it."

"I'm damned if she is!" cried Lord Loudwater hastily, in a much less assured tone.

Mr. Manley permitted a faint, sceptical smile to wreath his lips.

"What are you grinning at? If you think she'll gain anything by doing that, she won't," said Lord Loudwater, with a blustering truculence.

Mr. Manley wondered. Helena Truslove was a lady of considerable force of character. He suspected that if Lord Loudwater had ever been afraid of a fellow-creature, he must at times have been afraid

of Helena Truslove. He fancied that now he was not nearly as fearless as he sounded. He did not say so.

His employer was silent, buried in scowling reflection. Mr. Manley gazed at him without any great intentness, and came to the conclusion that he did not merely detest him, he loathed him.

Presently he said: "There's a cheque from Hanbury and Johnson for twelve thousand and forty-six pounds for the rubber shares your lordship sold. It wants endorsing."

He handed the cheque across the table to Lord Loudwater. Lord Loudwater dipped his pen in the ink, transfixed a struggling bluebottle, and drew it out.

"Why the devil don't you see that the ink is fresh?" he roared.

"It is fresh. The bluebottle must have just fallen into it," said Mr. Manley in an unruffled tone.

Lord Loudwater cursed the bluebottle, restored it to the ink-pot, endorsed the cheque, and tossed it across the table to Mr. Manley.

"By the way," said Mr. Manley, with some hesitation, "there's another anonymous letter."

"Why didn't you burn it? I told you to burn 'em all," snapped his employer.

"This one is not about you. It's about Hutchings," said Mr. Manley in an explanatory tone.

"Hutchings? What about Hutchings?"

"You'd better read it," said Mr. Manley, handing him the letter. "It seems to be from some spiteful woman."

The letter was indeed written in female handwriting, and it accused the butler, wordily enough, of having received a commission from Lord Loudwater's wine merchants on a purchase of fifty dozen of champagne which he had bought from them a month before. It further stated that he had received a like commission on many other such purchases.

Lord Loudwater read it, scowling, sprang up from his chair with his eyes protruding further than usual, and cried: "The scoundrel! The blackguard! I'll teach him! I'll gaol him!"

He dashed at the electric bell by the fireplace, set his thumb on it, and kept it there.

Holloway, the second footman, came running. The servants knew their master's ring. They always ran to answer it, after some discussion as to which of them should go.

He entered and said: "Yes, m'lord?"

"Send that scoundrel Hutchings to me! Send him at once!" roared his master.

"Yes, m'lord," said Holloway, and hurried away.

He found James Hutchings in his pantry, told him that their master wanted him, and added that he was in a tearing rage.

Hutchings, who never expected his sanguine and irascible master to be in any other mood, finished the paragraph of the article in the *Daily Telegraph* he was reading, put on his coat, and went to the study. His delay gave Lord Loudwater's wrath full time to mature.

When the butler entered his master shook his fist at him and roared: "You scoundrel! You infernal scoundrel! You've been robbing me! You've been robbing me for years, you blackguard!"

James Hutchings met the charge with complete calm. He shook his head and said in a surly tone: "No; I haven't done anything of the kind, m'lord."

The flat denial infuriated his master yet more. He spluttered and was for a while incoherent. Then he became again articulate and said: "You have, you rogue! You took a commission—a secret commission on that fifty dozen of champagne I bought last month. You've been doing it for years."

James Hutchings' surly face was transformed. It grew malignant; his fierce, protruding, red-rimmed blue eyes sparkled balefully, and he flushed to a redness as deep as that of his master. He knew at once who had betrayed him, and he was furious—at the betrayal. At the same time, he was not greatly alarmed; he had never received a

cheque from the wine merchants; all their payments to him had been in cash, and he had always cherished a warm contempt for his master.

"I haven't," he said fiercely. "And if I had it would be quite regular—only a perquisite."

For the hundredth time Mr. Manley remarked the likeness between Lord Loudwater and his butler. They had the same fierce, protruding, red-rimmed blue eyes, the same narrow, low forehead, the same large ears. Hutchings' hair was a darker brown than Lord Loudwater's, and his lips were thinner. But Mr. Manley was sure that, had he worn a beard instead of whiskers, it would have been difficult for many people to be sure which was Lord Loudwater and which his butler.

Lord Loudwater again spluttered; then he roared: "A perquisite! What about the Corrupt Practices Act? It was passed for rogues like you! I'll show you all about perquisites! You'll find yourself in gaol inside of a month."

"I shan't. There isn't a word of truth in it, or a scrap of evidence," said Hutchings fiercely.

"Evidence? I'll find evidence all right!" cried his master. "And if I don't, I'll, anyhow, discharge you without a character. I'll get you one way or another, my fine fellow! I'll teach you to rob me!"

"I haven't robbed your lordship," said Hutchings in a less surly tone.

He was much more moved by the threat of discharge than the threat of prosecution.

"I tell you you have. And you can clear out of this. I'll wire to town at once for another butler—an honest butler. You'll clear out the moment he comes. Pack up and be ready to go. And when you do go, I'll give you twenty-four hours to clear out of the country before I put the police on your track," cried Lord Loudwater.

Mr. Manley observed that it was exactly like him to take no risk, in spite of his fury, of any loss of comfort from the lack of a butler. The instinct of self-protection was indeed strong in him.

"Not a bit of it. You've told me to go, and I'm going at once — this very day. The police will find me at my father's for the next fortnight," said Hutchings with a sneer. "And when I go to London I'll leave my address."

"A lot of good your going to London will do you. I'll see you never get another place in this country," snarled Lord Loudwater.

Hutchings gave him a look of vindictive malignity so intense that it made Mr. Manley quite uncomfortable, turned, and went out of the room.

Lord Loudwater said: "I'll teach the scoundrel to rob me! Write at once for a new butler."

He took some lumps of sugar from a jar on the mantelpiece, and went through the door which opened into the library.

In the library he stopped and shouted back: "If Morton comes about the timber, I shall be in the stables."

Then he went through one of the long windows of the library into the garden and took his way to the stables. As he drew near them the scowl cleared from his face. But it remained a formidable face; it did not grow pleasant. None the less, he spent a pleasant hour in the stables, petting his horses. He was fond of horses, not of cats, and he never bullied and seldom abused his horses as he abused and bullied his fellow men and women. This was the result of his experience. He had learnt from it that he might bully and abuse his human dependents with impunity. As a boy he had also bullied and abused his horses. But in his eighteenth year he had been savaged by a young horse he had maltreated, and the lesson had stuck in his mind. It was a simple, obtuse mind, but it had formed the theory that he got more out of human beings, more deference and service, by bullying them and more out of horses by treating them kindly. Besides, he liked horses.

Mr. Manley did not set about answering the letters at once. He reflected for a while on the likeness between Hutchings and his master. He thought the physical likeness of little interest. There was a whole clan of Hutchingses in the villages and woods round the castle, the bulk of them gamekeepers; and there had been for generations. Mr. Manley was much more interested in the resemblance in

character between Hutchings and Lord Loudwater. Hutchings, probably under the pressure of circumstances, was much less of a bore than his master, but quite as much of a bully. Also, he was more intelligent, and consequently more dangerous. Mr. Manley would on no account have had him look at him with the intense malignity with which he had looked at his master. Doubtless the butler had far greater self-control than Lord Loudwater; but if ever he did lose it it would be uncommonly bad for Lord Loudwater.

It would be interesting to find in the Loudwater archives the common ancestor to whom they both cast so directly back. He fancied that it must be the third Baron. At any rate, both had his protruding blue eyes, softened in his portrait doubtless by the natural politeness of the fashionable painter. Was it worth his while to look up the record of the third Lord Loudwater? He decided that, if he found himself at sufficient leisure, he would. Then he decided that he was glad that Hutchins was going; the butler had shown him but little civility. Then he set about answering the letters.

When he had finished them he took up the stockbroker's cheque and considered it with a thoughtful frown. He had never before seen a cheque for so large a sum; and it interested him. Then he wrote a short note of instructions to Lord Loudwater's bankers. The ink in his fountain-pen ran out as he came to the end of it, and he signed it with the pen with which Lord Loudwater had endorsed the cheque. He put the cheque into the envelope he had already addressed, put stamps on all the letters, carried them to the post-box on a table in the hall, went through the library out into the garden, and smoked a cigarette with a somewhat languid air. Then he went into the library and took up his task of cataloguing the books at the point at which he had stopped the day before. He often paused to dip at length into a book before entering it in the catalogue. He did not believe in hasty work.

CHAPTER II

Lord Loudwater came to lunch in a better temper than that in which he had left the breakfast-table. He had ridden eight miles round and about his estate, and the ride had soothed that seat of the evil humours—his liver. Lady Loudwater had been careful to shut Melchisidec in her boudoir; James Hutchings had no desire in the world to see his master's florid face or square back, and had instructed Wilkins and Holloway, the first and second footmen, to wait at table. Lord Loudwater therefore could, without any ruffling of his sensibilities, give all his thought to his food, and he did. The cooking at the castle was always excellent. If it was not, he sent for the chef and spoke to him about it.

There was little conversation at lunch. Lady Loudwater never spoke to her husband first, save on rare occasions about a matter of importance. It was not that she perceived any glamour of royalty about him; she did not wish to hear his voice. Besides, she had never found a conversational opening so harmless that he could not contrive, were it his whim, to be offensive about it. Besides, she had at the moment nothing to say to him.

In truth, owing to the fact that she took so many practically silent meals with him, she was becoming rather a gourmet. The food, naturally the most important fact, had become really the most important fact at the meals they took together. She had come to realize this. It was the only advantage she had ever derived from her intercourse with her husband.

At this lunch, however, she did not pay as much attention to the food as usual, not indeed as much as it deserved. Her mind would stray from it to Colonel Grey. She wondered what he would tell her about herself that afternoon. He was always discovering possibilities in her which she had never discovered for herself. She only perceived their existence when he pointed them out to her. Then they became obvious. Also, he was always discovering fresh facts, attractive facts, about her—about her eyes and lips and hair and

figure. He imparted each discovery to her as he made it, without delay, and with the genuine enthusiasm of a discoverer. Of course, he should not have done this. It was, indeed, wrong. But he had assured her that he could not help it, that he was always blurting things out. Since it was a habit of long standing, now probably ingrained, it was useless to reproach him with any great severity for his frankness. She did not do so.

For his part, the Lord Loudwater had but little to say to his wife. She was fond of Melchisidec and indifferent to horses. For the greater part of the meal he was hardly aware that she was at the other end of the table. Immersed in his food and its deglutition, he was hardly sensible of the outside world at all. Once, disturbed by Holloway's removing his empty plate, he told her that he had seen a dog-fox on Windy Ridge; again, when Holloway handed the cheese-straws to him, he told her that Merry Belle's black colt had a cold. Her two replies, "Oh, did you?" and "Has he?" appeared to fall on deaf ears. He did not continue either conversation.

Then Lord Loudwater broke into an eloquent monologue. Wilkins had poured out a glass of port for both of them to drink with their cheese-straws. Lord Loudwater finished his cheese-straws, took a long sip from his glass, rolled it lovingly over his tongue, gulped it down with a hideous grimace, banged down his fist on the table, and roared in a terrible, anguished voice:

"It's corked! It's corked! It's that scoundrel Hutchings! This is his way of taking it out of me for sacking him. He's done it on purpose, the scoundrel! Now I will gaol him! Hanged if I don't!"

"I'll get another bottle, m'lord," said Wilkins, catching up the decanter, and hurrying towards the door.

"Get it! And be quick about it! And tell that scoundrel I'll gaol him!" cried Lord Loudwater.

Wilkins rushed from the room bearing in his hand the decanter of offending port; Holloway followed him to help.

Lady Loudwater sipped a little port from her glass. She was rather inclined to take no one's word for anything which she could herself verify. Then she took another sip.

Then she said; "Are you sure this wine's corked?"

Corked wine at the end of a really good meal is a bitter blow to any man, an exceedingly bitter blow to a man of Lord Loudwater's sensitiveness in such matters.

"Am I sure? Hey? Am I sure? Yes! I am sure, you little fool!" he bellowed. "What do you know about wine? Talk about things you understand!"

Lady Loudwater's face was twisted by a faint spasm of hate which left it flushed. She would never grow used to being bellowed at for a fool. Once more her husband's refusal to let her take her meals apart from him seemed monstrous. Hardly ever did she rise from one at which she had not been abused and insulted. She realized indeed that she had been foolish to ask the question. But why should she sit tongue-tied before the brute?

She took another sip and said quietly: "It isn't corked."

Then she turned cold with fright.

Lord Loudwater could not believe his ears. It could not be that his wife had contradicted him flatly. It—could—*not*—be.

He was still incredulous, breathing heavily, when the door opened and James Hutchings appeared on the threshold. In his right hand he held the decanter of offending port, in his left a sound cork.

He said firmly: "This wine isn't corked, m'lord. Its flavour is perfect. Besides, a cork like this couldn't cork it."

A less sensitive man than Lord Loudwater might have risen to the double emergency. Lord Loudwater could not. He sat perfectly still. But his eyes rolled so horribly that the Lady Loudwater started from her chair, uttered a faint scream, and fairly ran through the long window into the garden.

James Hutchings advanced to the table, thumped the decanter down on it—no way to treat an old vintage port—at Lord Loudwater's right hand, walked out of the room, and shut the door firmly behind him.

In the great hall he smiled a triumphant, malevolent smile. Then he called Wilkins and Holloway, who stood together in the middle of it, cowardly dogs and shirkers, and strode past them to the door to the servants' quarters.

A few moments later Lord Loudwater rose to his feet and staggered dizzily along to the other end of the table. He picked up his wife's half-emptied glass and sipped the port. It was *not* corked. It was incredible! He would never forgive her!

He rang the bell. Both Wilkins and Holloway answered it. He bade them tell Hutchings to pack his belongings and go at once. If he were not out of the castle by four o'clock, they were to kick him out. Then he went, still scowling, to the stables.

Mr. Manley had already finished his lunch. Halfway through his after-lunch pipe he rose, took his hat and stick, and set out to pay a visit to Mrs. Truslove.

As he came out of the park gates he came upon the Rev. George Stebbing, the *locum tenens* in charge of the parish, for the vicar was away on a holiday, enjoying a respite from his perpetual struggle with the patron of the living, Lord Loudwater.

They fell into step and for a while discussed the local weather and local affairs. Then Mr. Manley, who had been gifted by Heaven with a lively imagination wholly untrammelled by any straining passion for exactitude, entertained Mr. Stebbing with a vivid account of his experiences as leader of the first Great Push. Mr. Manley was one of the many rather stout, soft men who in different parts of Great Britain will till their dying days entertain acquaintances with vivid accounts of their experiences as leaders of the Great Pushes. Like that of most of them, his war experience, before his weak heart had procured him his discharge from the army, had consisted wholly of office work in England. His account of his strenuous fighting lacked nothing of fire or picturesqueness on that account. He was too modest to say in so many words that but for his martial qualities there would have been no Great Push at all, and that any success it had had was due to those martial qualities, but that was the impression he left on Mr. Stebbing's simple and rather plastic mind. When therefore they parted at the crossroads, Mr. Manley went on his way in a pleasant content at having once more made himself val-

ued; and Mr. Stebbing went on his way feeling thankful that he had been brought into friendly contact with a really able hero. Both of them were the happier for their chance meeting.

Mr. Manley found Helena Truslove in her drawing-room, and when the door closed behind the maid who had ushered him into it, he embraced her with affectionate warmth. Then he held her out at arm's-length, and for the several hundredth time admired her handsome, clear-skinned, high-coloured, gipsy face, her black, rather wild eyes, and the black hair wreathed round her head in so heavy a mass.

"It has been an awful long time between the kisses," he said.

She sighed a sigh of content and laughed softly. Then she said: "I sometimes think that you must have had a great deal of practice."

"No," said Mr. Manley firmly. "I have never had occasion to be in love before."

He put her back into the chair from which he had lifted her, sat down facing her, and gazed at her with adoring eyes. He was truly very much in love with her.

They were excellent complements the one of the other. If Mr. Manley had the brains for two—indeed, he had the brains for half a dozen—she had the character for two. Her chin was very unlike the chin of an eagle. She was not, indeed, lacking in brains. Her brow forbade the supposition. But hers was rather the practical intelligence, his the creative. That she had the force of character, on occasion the fierceness, which he lacked, was no small source of her attraction for him.

"And how was the hog this morning?" she said, ready to be soothing.

"The hog" was their pet name for Lord Loudwater.

"Beastly. He's an utterly loathsome fellow," said Mr. Manley with conviction.

"Oh, no; not utterly—at any rate, not if you're independent of him," she protested.

"Does he ever come into contact with any one who is not dependent on him?

I believe he shuns them like the pest."

"Not into close contact," she said—"at any rate, nowadays. But I've known him to do good-natured things; and then he's very fond of his horses."

"That makes the way he treats every human being who is in any way dependent on him all the more disgusting," said Mr. Manley firmly.

"Oh, I don't know. It's something to be fond of animals," she said tolerantly.

"This morning he had a devil of a row with Hutchings, the butler, you know, and discharged him."

"That was a silly thing to do. Hutchings is not at all a good person to have a row with," she said quickly. "I should say that he was a far more dangerous brute than Loudwater and much more intelligent. Still, I don't know what he could do. What was the row about?"

"Some woman sent Loudwater an anonymous letter accusing Hutchings of having received commissions from the wine merchants."

"That would be Elizabeth Twitcher's mother. Elizabeth and Hutchings were engaged, and about ten days ago he jilted her," said Mrs. Truslove. "I suppose that when he was in love with her he bragged about these commissions to her and she told her mother."

"Her mother has certainly taken it out of him for jilting her daughter.

But what an unsavoury place the castle is!" said Mr. Manley.

"With such a master—what can you expect?" said Mrs. Truslove. "Did the hog say anything more about halving my allowance?"

Mr. Manley frowned. A few days before he had been greatly surprised to learn from Lord Loudwater that the bulk of Helena Truslove's income was an allowance from him. The matter had