

## AN IDEAL HUSBAND AUDITION SIDES

### LADY MARKBY/ ACT 2

LADY CHILTERN. May I give you some tea Lady Markby?

LADY MARKBY. No thanks, dear. The fact is, I have promised to go round for ten minutes to see poor Lady Brancaster, who is in very great trouble. Her daughter, quite a well-brought-up girl, too, has actually become engaged to be married to a curate in Shropshire. It is very sad, very sad indeed. I can't understand this modern mania for curates. In my time we girls saw them, of course, running about the place like rabbits. But we never took any notice of them, I need hardly say. But I am told that nowadays country society is quite honeycombed with them. I think it most irreligious. And then the eldest son has quarrelled with his father, and it is said that when they meet at the club Lord Brancaster always hides himself. You know Lady Brancaster, don't you, dear?

LADY CHILTERN. Just slightly.

LADY MARKBY. Well, like all stout women, she looks the very picture of happiness, as no doubt you noticed. But there are many tragedies in her family, besides this affair of the curate. Her own sister, Mrs. Jekyll, had a most unhappy life; through no fault of her own, I am sorry to say. She ultimately was so broken-hearted that she went into a convent, or onto the operatic stage, I forget which. No; I think it was decorative art needlework she took up. I know she had lost all sense of pleasure in life. And now, Gertrude, I shall leave. Shall I see you to-night?

LADY CHILTERN. Robert and I are dining at home by ourselves tonight, and I don't think I shall go anywhere afterwards.

LADY MARKBY. Dining at home by yourselves? Is that quite prudent? Ah, I forgot, your husband is an exception. Mine is the general rule, and nothing ages a woman so rapidly as having married the general rule.