him. She wondered if he had seen the "Yellow Peacock"; the odds were enormously in favour of the supposition that he had not. The girl had finished her tea and would shortly be going back to her work; when the boy was alone it would be quite easy for Jocantha to say: "My husband has made other arrangements for me this evening; would you care to make use of this ticket, which would otherwise be wasted?" Then she could come there again one afternoon for tea, and, if she saw him, ask him how he liked the play. If he was a nice boy and improved on acquaintance he could be given more theatre tickets, and perhaps asked to come one Sunday to tea at Chelsea. Jocantha made up her mind that he would improve on acquaintance, and that Gregory would like him, and that the Fairy Godmother business would prove far more entertaining than she had originally anticipated. The boy was distinctly presentable; he knew how to brush his hair, which was possibly an imitative faculty; he knew what colour of tie suited him, which might be intuition; he was exactly the type that Jocantha admired, which of course was accident. Altogether she was rather pleased when the girl looked at the clock and bade a friendly but hurried farewell to her companion. Bertie nodded "good-bye,"

The **Philanthropist** and the Happy Cat

Saki (H H Munro)

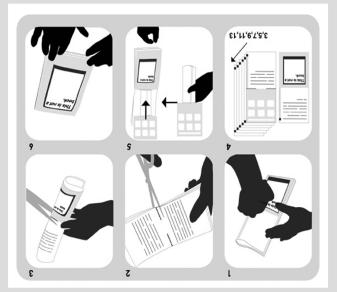
comfortable. Jocantha felt extremely sorry for most of the things that made life attractive or pounds, shillings, and pence, and a dearth of his own, dominated by a chronic scarcity of humdrum thraldom in due course for a home of spent his evenings. He would exchange that who always wanted to know how and where he in a rather narrow circle, with a tiresome mother engagement. Jocantha pictured the boy's home, probably they were drifting towards a formal friendly intimacy with the girl he was talking to, the Latin or Semite. He was obviously on terms of the Anglo-Saxon, not the blatant complacency of good looks, but with the shy self-consciousness of weeks in the year. He was aware, of course, of his salary, and commanding a holiday of about two amusing himself as best he might on a tiny in some wholesale warehouse, existing and guessed him to be a well-mannered young clerk fact, than any of the young men of her set. She looking than Gregory, rather better looking, in years younger than herself, very much better the new-comer; he was in appearance a few seat in a chair facing her. Jocantha looked hard at "Hullo, Bertie," came up to her table and took his man, whom she greeted with an affectionate cheeks, and she looked almost pretty. A young

on, he goes out into the garden with a red glint in sleep and let sleep; and then, as evening draws in his composition, a dreamer whose philosophy is soft and silky and velvety, without a sharp edge comfort. He seems the incarnation of everything limbs now and then in an ecstasy of cushioned lies there, purring and dreaming, shifting his considerable ease in a corner of the divan. "He the large tabby-marked cat that lay in perhaps Attab," she continued, glancing towards observed Jocantha in allusion to herself; "except personality is to be found in all Chelsea," "I don't suppose a more thoroughly contented

dressmaker.

suspected herself of having a first-rate making him a very charming wife, and more than husband. Jocantha rather suspected herself of way, and Gregory was, in his way, an excellent coffee and cigarettes. Both were excellent in their one, and there was just time to do justice to the in the little snuggery; the lunch had been a good home for a hurried lunch and a smoke afterwards pleasantest aspects. Gregory had managed to get pleasant place, and it was wearing one of its serenely and graciously happy. Her world was a Jocantha Bessbury was in the mood to be

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his eyes and slays a drowsy sparrow."

"As every pair of sparrows hatches out ten or more young ones in the year, while their food supply remains stationary, it is just as well that the Attabs of the community should have that idea of how to pass an amusing afternoon," said Gregory. Having delivered himself of this sage comment he lit another cigarette, bade Jocantha a playfully affectionate good-bye, and departed into the outer world.

"Remember, dinner's a wee bit earlier to-night, as we're going to the Haymarket," she called after him.

Left to herself, Jocantha continued the process of looking at her life with placid, introspective eyes. If she had not everything she wanted in this world, at least she was very well pleased with what she had got. She was very well pleased, for instance, with the snuggery, which contrived somehow to be cosy and dainty and expensive all at once. The porcelain was rare and beautiful, the Chinese enamels took on wonderful tints in the firelight, the rugs and hangings led the eye through sumptuous harmonies of colouring. It was a room in which one might have suitably entertained an ambassador or an archbishop, but

of desultory shopping; it would be rather a when she started forth on an afternoon campaign Jocantha's mind was still dwelling on this theme

restaurant, still less a shilling for a theatre the price of a cup of coffee and a sandwich in a dreary bedrooms because they could not afford after a long day's work, had to sit alone in chill, sad to think that there were young people who, specially within the range of her sympathy. It was nor the leisured freedom of the rich, came neither the happy-go-lucky freedom of the poor shop assistants and so forth, the class that have dull, cheap, pleasureless, and empty. Work girls, around her whose lives and circumstances were denerously commiserating for those thousands with her lot she passed to the phase of being From being in a mood of simmering satisfaction

contented women in Chelsea. really had good reason for being one of the most the other departments of Jocantha's life; she rest of the house, and as with the house, so with one's litter. And as with the snuggery, so with the was scandalising the deities of the place with bictures for a scrap-book without feeling that one it was also a room in which one could cut out

6

Hindostan, amid deserted bungalows, seething bazaars, and riotous barrack squares, listening to the throbbing of tom-toms and the distant rattle of musketry.

Jocantha went back to her house in Chelsea, which struck her for the first time as looking dull and over-furnished. She had a resentful conviction that Gregory would be uninteresting at dinner, and that the play would be stupid after dinner. On the whole her frame of mind showed a marked divergence from the purring complacency of Attab, who was again curled up in his corner of the divan with a great peace radiating from every curve of his body.

But then he had killed his sparrow.

Transcribed from the 1914 John Lane, The Bodley Head edition by David Price, ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

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something, on the spur of the moment, to bring a gleam of pleasure and interest into the life of even one or two wistful-hearted, empty-pocketed workers; it would add a good deal to her sense of enjoyment at the theatre that night. She would get two upper circle tickets for a popular play, make her way into some cheap tea-shop, and present the tickets to the first couple of interesting work girls with whom she could casually drop into conversation. She could explain matters by saying that she was unable to use the tickets herself and did not want them to be wasted, and, on the other hand, did not want the trouble of sending them back. On further reflection she decided that it might be better to get only one ticket and give it to some lonely-looking girl sitting eating her frugal meal by herself; the girl might scrape acquaintance

comforting thing, she told herself, if she could do

With the Fairy Godmother impulse strong upon her, Jocantha marched into a ticket agency and selected with immense care an upper circle seat for the "Yellow Peacock," a play that was attracting a considerable amount of discussion

with her next-seat neighbour at the theatre and

lay the foundations of a lasting friendship.

thousands of miles away in the baking plains of beautifully-brushed hair, who was some the attention of the boy with the attention, but never for a moment did she attract daintily. Altogether she attracted a good deal of a last resort she upset a milk-jug and swore at it brilliant insincerity to the tea-shop kitten, and as impossibly remote suburb, she talked with plaintive inquiries about the tube service to some altogether blameless muffin, she made loud and waitress concerning alleged defects in an and rather high-pitched discussion with the Jocsufus set to work hopefully; she had a long the table, and can be made to stand on end. the printed menu is generally nearly as large as your own table; this is not difficult to manage, as you have a large and well-filled sugar basin on to you, having previously concealed the fact that peffer if you can ask to have a sugar basin passed having first caught the stranger's eye. It is even should offer theatre tickets to a stranger without The laws of tea-shop etiquette forbid that you

Sahib, a tale of the great Mutiny." paper-covered book, bearing the title "Sepoy and produced from his overcoat pocket a gulped down a mouthful of tea, and then

bleasure, her eyes sparkled, a flush came into her moment the girl's face lit up with sudden with a view to catching her eye. At that precise then turned a friendly scrutiny on her neighbour Jocantha ordered some tea and a muffin, and

in haphazard benefaction. excellent material for Jocantha's first experiment the "Yellow Peacock"; obviously she supplied favour of the supposition that she had never seen exact moment. The odds were enormously in continuing their teas in London tea-shops at that of other girls who were finishing, or beginning, or was not very different in her way from thousands finishing a modest meal of tea and scone, and she hair was pretty, and her complexion bad; she was material, but aimed at being in the fashion, her uncomplaining forlornness. Her dress was of poor with tired, listless eyes, and a general air of was sitting a young girl, rather plain of feature, herself, impelled by the fact that at the next table unoccupied table, whereat she promptly installed In a corner of an A.B.C. shop she found an garden with a mind attuned to sparrow stalking. the same time that Attab sauntered into the tea-shop and philanthropic adventure, at about and criticism. Then she went forth in search of a