

## COMMENTAIRE COMPOSÉ DE LITTÉRATURE ANGLAISE

Commentez, **en anglais**, le texte suivant :

### Act 1

*The octagon room at Sir Robert Chiltern's house in Grosvenor Square.*

*[The room is brilliantly lighted and full of guests. At the top of the staircase stands LADY CHILTERN, a woman of grave Greek beauty, about twenty-seven years of age. She receives the guests as they come up. Over the well of the staircase hangs a great chandelier with wax lights, which illumine a large eighteenth-century French tapestry - representing the Triumph of Love, from a design by Boucher - that is stretched on the staircase wall. On the right is the entrance to the music-room. The sound of a string quartette is faintly heard. The entrance on the left leads to other reception-rooms. MRS. MARCHMONT and LADY BASILDON, two very pretty women, are seated together on a Louis Seize sofa. They are types of exquisite fragility. Their affectation of manner has a delicate charm. Watteau would have loved to paint them.]*

MRS. MARCHMONT Going on to the Hartlocks' to-night, Margaret?

LADY BASILDON I suppose so. Are you?

MRS. MARCHMONT Yes. Horribly tedious parties they give, don't they?

LADY BASILDON Horribly tedious! Never know why I go. Never know why I go anywhere.

MRS. MARCHMONT I come here to be educated

LADY BASILDON Ah! I hate being educated!

MRS. MARCHMONT So do I. It puts one almost on a level with the commercial classes, doesn't it? But dear Gertrude Chiltern is always telling me that I should have some serious purpose in life. So I come here to try to find one.

LADY BASILDON *[Looking round through her lorgnette.]* I don't see anybody here to-night whom one could possibly call a serious purpose. The man who took me in to dinner talked to me about his wife the whole time.

MRS. MARCHMONT How very trivial of him!

LADY BASILDON Terribly trivial! What did your man talk about?

MRS. MARCHMONT About myself.

LADY BASILDON *[Languidly.]* And were you interested?

MRS. MARCHMONT *[Shaking her head.]* Not in the smallest degree.

LADY BASILDON What martyrs we are, dear Margaret!

MRS. MARCHMONT *[Rising.]* And how well it becomes us, Olivia!

*[They rise and go towards the music-room. The VICOMTE DE NANJAC, a young attache known for his neckties and his Anglomania, approaches with a low bow, and enters into conversation.]*

MASON *[Announcing guests from the top of the staircase.]* Mr. and Lady Jane Barford. Lord Caversham.

*[Enter LORD CAVERSHAM, an old gentleman of seventy, wearing the riband and star of the Garter. A fine Whig type. Rather like a portrait by Lawrence.]*

LORD CAVERSHAM Good evening, Lady Chiltern! Has my good-for-nothing young son been here?

LADY CHILTERN *[Smiling.]* I don't think Lord Goring has arrived yet.

MABEL CHILTERN [*Coming up to LORD CAVERSHAM.*] Why do you call Lord Goring good-for-nothing?

45 [MABEL CHILTERN is a perfect example of the English type of prettiness, the apple-blossom type. She has all the fragrance and freedom of a flower. There is ripple after ripple of sunlight in her hair, and the little mouth, with its parted lips, is expectant, like the mouth of a child. She has the fascinating tyranny of youth, and the astonishing courage of innocence. To sane people she is not reminiscent of any work of art. But she is really like a Tanagra statuette, and would be rather annoyed if she were told so.]

50 LORD CAVERSHAM Because he leads such an idle life.

MABEL CHILTERN How can you say such a thing? Why, he rides in the Row at ten o'clock in the morning, goes to the Opera three times a week, changes his clothes at least five times a day, and dines out every night of the season. You don't call that leading an idle life, do you?

LORD CAVERSHAM [*Looking at her with a kindly twinkle in his eyes.*] You are a very

55 charming young lady!

MABEL CHILTERN How sweet of you to say that, Lord Caversham! Do come to us more often. You know we are always at home on Wednesdays, and you look so well with your star!

LORD CAVERSHAM Never go anywhere now. Sick of London Society. Shouldn't mind being introduced to my own tailor; he always votes on the right side. But object strongly to

60 being sent down to dinner with my wife's milliner. Never could stand Lady Caversham's bonnets.

MABEL CHILTERN Oh, I love London Society! I think it has immensely improved. It is entirely composed now of beautiful idiots and brilliant lunatics. Just what Society should be.

LORD CAVERSHAM Hum! Which is Goring? Beautiful idiot, or the other thing?

65 MABEL CHILTERN [*Gravely.*] I have been obliged for the present to put Lord Goring into a class quite by himself. But he is developing charmingly!

LORD CAVERSHAM Into what?

MABEL CHILTERN [*With a little curtsy.*] I hope to let you know very soon, Lord Caversham!

70 MASON [*Announcing guests.*] Lady Markby. Mrs. Cheveley.

[*Enter LADY MARKBY and MRS. CHEVELEY. LADY MARKBY is a pleasant, kindly, popular woman, with gray hair à la marquise and good lace. MRS. CHEVELEY, who accompanies her, is tall and rather slight. Lips very thin and highly-coloured, a line of scarlet on a pallid face. Venetian red hair, aquiline nose, and long throat. Rouge accentuates the natural*

75 *paleness of her complexion. Gray-green eyes that move restlessly. She is in heliotrope, with diamonds. She looks rather like an orchid, and makes great demands on one's curiosity. In all her movements she is extremely graceful. A work of art, on the whole, but showing the influence of too many schools.*]

LADY MARKBY Good evening, dear Gertrude! So kind of you to let me bring my friend,

80 Mrs. Cheveley. Two such charming women should know each other!

LADY CHILTERN [*Advances towards MRS. CHEVELEY with a sweet smile. Then suddenly stops, and bows rather distantly.*] I think Mrs. Cheveley and I have met before. I did not know she had married a second time.

LADY MARKBY [*Genially.*] Ah, nowadays people marry as often as they can, don't they? It

85 is most fashionable. [*To DUCHESS OF MARYBOROUGH.*] Dear Duchess, and how is the Duke? Brain still weak, I suppose? Well, that is only to be expected, is it not? His good father was just the same. There is nothing like race, is there?

Oscar Wilde, *An Ideal Husband* (1895)

Tournez la page S.V.P.