

"... THERE IS A RADICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND INSTRUMENTS OF PRODUCTION. THIS DIFFERENCE LIES IN THE FACT THAT WHEREAS INSTRUMENTS OF PRODUCTION PRODUCE MATERIAL WEALTH, LANGUAGE PRODUCES NOTHING OR "PRODUCES" WORDS ONLY. TO PUT IT MORE PLAINLY, PEOPLE POSSESSING INSTRUMENTS OF PRODUCTION CAN PRODUCE MATERIAL WEALTH, BUT THOSE VERY SAME PEOPLE, IF THEY POSSESS A LANGUAGE BUT NOT INSTRUMENTS OF PRODUCTION, CANNOT PRODUCE MATERIAL WEALTH."

fiction #00018

... in the evening, when we returned to the vicar's, and were sitting round the table with our bread and milk, the conversation turned on the joys and sorrows of the world, I could not resist the temptation to inveigh bitterly against ill humour. "Is everything always as wonderful," said I, "as it has been today?" "It's been a pleasant day," observed the vicar's wife. "When I drink," I continued, "I want to say things I should never say." "Then don't say them," said Charlie. "Then what's the use of drinking?" I replied. Freddi listened very attentively: and the young man objected, that we were not masters of ourselves, and still less so of our feelings. "It isn't these," I added. I observed that the good old man inclined his head, and exerted himself to hear our discourse; so I raised my voice, and addressed myself directly to him. "You've only had one," I observed. "Were you embarrassed when we swam?" said he. We all laughed, as did he likewise very cordially, till he fell into a fit of coughing, which interrupted our conversation for a time. Mr. Smith resumed the subject. "No," he remarked, "Should I have been?" "No," I replied. Charlie looked at me with a smile; she observed the emotion with which I spoke: and a tear in the eyes of Freddi stimulated me to proceed. "That's good," I said. "How's the martini?" I exclaimed. At these words the remembrance of a similar scene at which I had been once present fell with full force upon my heart. I buried my face in my handkerchief, and hastened from the room, and was only recalled to my recollection by Charlie's voice, who reminded me that it was time to return home. With what tenderness she chid me on the way for the too eager interest I took in everything! She declared it would do me injury, and that I ought to spare myself. Yes, my angel! I will do so for your sake. ... In about an hour and a half we returned to the town. ... I looked around, and recalled the time when my heart was unoccupied and free. "It's very strong," I said, "but I like it. Did you and Cathy never swim before

like that with anyone?" "I thought perhaps you'd like one of your girls lighter than the other." I looked down, and observed Charlie's little sister, Jean, coming up the steps with a glass of water. ... Her sister, Maria, wished to take it from her. "No. Why should we?" cried the child, with the sweetest expression of face, "I'll get really brown." The affection and simplicity with which this was uttered so charmed me, that I sought to express my feelings by catching up the child and kissing her heartily. She was frightened, and began to cry. "I'm sure you will," said Charlie: I felt perplexed. "Would you rather I was not so deeply brown?" she continued, taking her hand, and leading her down the steps again. We remained for some time silent, when Charlie observed, "You're a nice color," she continued, with a firm but feeling voice, "get that color all over if you like." "You're not my girl," I said, as I took her hand in mine, and my eyes filled with tears. I could say no more. Why, Willy, should she put this question to me, just at the moment when the fear of our cruel separation filled my heart? "I am. I told you before," thus did she express herself; but O Willy! who can do justice to her language? how can cold and passionless words convey the heavenly expressions of the spirit? Al interrupted her gently. "You don't blush anymore." "I got over it when we went bathing," she continued, "I hope I won't now for a long time." I threw myself at her feet, and, seizing her hand, bedewed it with a thousand tears. "You look nice in that cashmere sweater," I exclaimed, "Cathy said we'd both wear them," she said, with a warm pressure of the hand. "You don't dislike me because I told you?" I thought I should have fainted: never had I received praise so flattering. She continued, "I forget what you told me." Everything conspires against me. I met Miss Braun walking today. I could not help joining her; and, when we were at a little distance from her companions, I expressed my sense of her altered manner toward me. "That I love

you," she said, in a tone of emotion. "Don't talk rot," I exclaimed, and endeavoured to conceal my emotion .... "Don't you believe it happens to people like that? The way it happened to me about you two?" said this amiable girl, while her eyes filled with tears. I could scarcely contain myself, and was ready to throw myself at her feet. "You don't fall in love with two people at once," I cried. Tears flowed down her cheeks. I became quite frantic. She wiped them away, without attempting to conceal them. "You don't know," she continued. A canary at the moment flew from a mirror, and settled upon her shoulder. "It's rot," she observed, while she made him perch upon her hand: "it's just a way of talking." She held the bird to her mouth; and he pressed her sweet lips with so much fervour that he seemed to feel the excess of bliss which he enjoyed. "It isn't at all. It's true," she added; and then she held the bird toward me. His little beak moved from her mouth to mine, and the delightful sensation seemed like the forerunner of the sweetest bliss. "You just think it is," I observed, "it's nonsense." "All right. It's nonsense. But I'm here," she continued .... "Yes. You're here," she observed. I endeavoured to conceal the emotion which these words occasioned, but it was of slight avail; for, when she had expressed so truly her opinion of "The Vicar of Wakefield," and of other works, the names of which I omit ...., I could no longer contain myself, but gave full utterance to what I thought of it: and it was not until Charlie had addressed herself to the two other ladies, that I remembered their presence, and observed them sitting mute with astonishment. ... "Hello swimmers. Oh what a shame," said Charlie, "I didn't get to see Mary have her first martini." "This is still it," said I to Charlie. ... "How did it affect her, Dave?" she said, as she gave me her hand for the promenade. ... "Made her talk rot," said Charlie. ... "We'll start with a fresh one. Weren't you good to resuscitate this bar. It's such a sort of tentative bar. We'll get a mirror for it. A bar's no good without a mirror," said the first; "we can get one tomorrow. I'd like to get it," the second; "don't be rich. We'll both get it and then we can all see each other when we talk rot and know how rotty it is. You can't fool a bar mirror," the third; and so on, till Charlie went faster and faster. One made a

mistake, instantly a box on the ear; and, amid the laughter that ensued, came another box; and so on, faster and faster. I myself came in for two. I fancied they were harder than the rest, and felt quite delighted. A general laughter and confusion put an end to the game long before we had counted as far as a thousand. The party broke up into little separate knots: the storm had ceased, and I followed Charlie into the ballroom. On the way she said, "It's when I start looking quizzical in one that I know I've lost." I could make no reply. "You never lose," she continued, "how can you lose with two girls?" We went to the window. ... Charlie leaned forward on her arm; her eyes wandered over the scene; she raised them to the sky, and then turned them upon me; they were moistened with tears; she placed her hand on mine and said, "I tried to tell him," at once I remembered the magnificent ode which was in her thoughts: I felt oppressed with the weight of my sensations, and sank under them. It was more than I could bear. I bent over her hand, kissed it in a stream of delicious tears, and again looked up to her eyes. ... As I never meet her without experiencing a heartfelt pleasure, I stayed and talked to her ... and did not perceive, till after some time, that she seemed a little confused, and ceased to answer me with her usual ease of manner. ... "She's your girl and I'm your girl," I said to myself, "now stop being stuffy and be nice to your girls. Don't you like the way they look? I'm the very fair one you married." I felt annoyed, and was about to withdraw; but I remained, notwithstanding, forming excuses for her conduct, fancying she did not mean it, and still hoping to receive some friendly recognition. The rest of the company now arrived. There was the Baron Fritz ...; the Chancellor Norbert, with his deaf wife; the shabbily dressed Igor .... I conversed with some of my acquaintances, but they answered me laconically. I was engaged in observing Miss Braun, and did not notice that the women were whispering at the end of the room, that the murmur extended by degrees to the men, that Madame Schwarz addressed the count with much warmth (this was all related to me subsequently by Miss Braun); till at length the count came up to me, and took me to the window. "You're darker and fairer than the one I married," he said. "So are you and I

brought you a dark girl for a present," I exclaimed. "Don't you," I added, "like your present?" And I smiled and bowed, to take my leave. He shook me by the hand, in a manner which expressed everything. ... I contemplated the setting sun from the top of the hill, and read that beautiful passage in Homer, where Ulysses is entertained by the hospitable herdsmen. ... I returned home to supper in the evening. ... The good-natured Adolph came in. He laid down his hat when he saw me, approached me, and said in a low tone, "I like my present very much." "How do you like your future?" I exclaimed. "I don't know about my future." "It isn't a dark future is it?" said I. "Very good. She's not only beautiful and rich and healthy and affectionate. She can make jokes. Aren't you pleased with what I brought you?" "I'd rather be a dark present," he added, "than a dark future." The circumstance then began to pain me. I fancied that every one who sat down, and even looked at me, was thinking of this incident; and my heart became embittered. Everything conspires against me. I met Miss Braun walking today. ... "She did it again" she said, in a tone of emotion, "She did it again. Give her a kiss Dave and make her a fair present." "Make a good joke now," I exclaimed, and endeavoured to conceal my emotion. .... "I'm all right. Don't look at me. I'm all right," said this amiable girl, while her eyes filled with tears. I could scarcely contain myself, and was ready to throw myself at her feet. "I'll be all right. Please, I know I'll be all right," I cried. Tears flowed down her cheeks. I became quite frantic. She wiped them away, without attempting to conceal them. "I'm so sorry," she continued. Charlie had written a letter to her husband in the country, where he was detained by business. It commenced, "Let me go please. I have to go." ... I read it, and smiled. She asked the reason. "Well," I exclaimed. She paused, and seemed displeased. I was silent. She has been absent for some days. ... Today I visited her: she rose to receive me, and I kissed her hand most tenderly. A canary at the moment flew from a mirror, and settled upon her shoulder. "You don't need to say it. I'm sorry Dave," she observed, while she made him perch upon her hand. She held the bird to her mouth; and he pressed her sweet lips with so much fervour that he seemed to feel the excess of

bliss which he enjoyed. "She'll be back," she added; and then she held the bird toward me. His little beak moved from her mouth to mine, and the delightful sensation seemed like the forerunner of the sweetest bliss. "You don't think it's all a fake now do you?" I observed. "They were real tears if that's what you mean," she continued ...; and she smiled with all the charm of a being who has allowed an innocent participation of her love. I turned my face away. ... She ought not to excite my imagination with such displays of heavenly innocence and happiness, nor awaken my heart from its slumbers, in which it dreams of the worthlessness of life! And why not? Because she knows how much I love her. Oftentimes I say to myself, "don't be stupid. You aren't stupid." Then I read a passage in an ancient poet, and I seem to understand my own heart. I have so much to endure! Have men before me ever been so wretched? I observed at a distance a man in a tattered coat: he was wandering among the rocks, and seemed to be looking for plants. When I approached, he turned round at the noise; and I saw that he had an interesting countenance in which a settled melancholy, strongly marked by benevolence, formed the principal feature. ... As his garb betokened a person of the lower order, I thought he would not take it ill if I inquired about his business; and I therefore asked what he was seeking. He replied, with a deep sigh, that he was looking for flowers, and could find none. "I kissed her very carefully," I observed, with a smile. "Yes," he answered, as he came nearer to me. "On the mouth." I observed his peculiarity, and therefore asked him, with an air of indifference, what he intended to do with his flowers. ... "Where did you expect me to kiss her?" said I. "You were all right," he replied, "I haven't criticized you." "I'm glad," I continued, "you didn't ask me to kiss her when we were at the beach." "I thought of it," he exclaimed. I asked who she was. "Did you think I was going to?" he added, "I thought you were so I dove in." He raised his swimming eyes to heaven. "Good thing you did," I observed. "Well," was his reply, "we've cheered up." An old woman, who was coming toward us, now called out, "Thank God." "I love you, Devil, and really I didn't kiss her to make all that," I inquired, as I went toward her. "You don't have to tell

me," she said: "I saw you. It was a miserable effort." I asked whether he had been long in this state. She answered, "I wish she'd go away." I interrupted her by asking what period it was in which he boasted of having been so happy. "Don't be heartless," she exclaimed, with a smile of compassion, "and I did encourage her." I was thunderstruck: I placed a piece of money in her hand, and hastened away. "I tried not," I exclaimed, as I returned quickly to the town, "I egged her on about you. I'll go out and find her." God of heaven! and is this the destiny of man? Is he only happy before he has acquired his reason, or after he has lost it? Unfortunate being! And yet I envy your fate: I envy the delusion to which you are a victim. You go forth with joy to gather flowers for your princess—in winter—and grieve when you can find none, and cannot understand why they do not grow. But I wander forth without joy, without hope, without design; and I return as I came. ... Happy mortal, who can ascribe your wretchedness to an earthly cause! ... Charlie rose. It aroused me; but I continued sitting, and held her hand. "No. Wait a little while," she said: "she's too sure of herself." She attempted to withdraw her hand: I held it still. "How can you say that, Dave?" I exclaimed: "You just broke her all up," I continued. "I did not," she answered with a smile. ... Ah! she little thought, when she drew her hand away from mine. They walked down the avenue. I stood gazing after them in the moonlight. I threw myself upon the ground, and wept: I then sprang up, and ran out upon the terrace, and saw, under the shade of the linden trees, her white dress disappearing near the garden gate. I stretched out my arms, and she vanished. As I heartily detest the whole race, I determined upon going away; and only waited till the count had disengaged himself from their impertinent prattle, to take leave, when the agreeable Miss Braun came in. As I never meet her without experiencing a heartfelt pleasure, I stayed and talked to her ... and did not perceive, till after some time, that she seemed a little confused, and ceased to answer me with her usual ease of manner. ... "Well something did," I said to myself, "I'm going to go and get her." I felt annoyed, and was about to withdraw; but I remained, notwithstanding, forming excuses for her conduct, fancying she

did not mean it .... The rest of the company now arrived. There was the Baron Fritz, in an entire suit that dated from the coronation of Francis I; the Chancellor Norbert, with his deaf wife; the shabbily dressed Igor, whose old-fashioned coat bore evidence of modern repairs: this crowned the whole. ... I was engaged in observing Miss Braun, and did not notice that the women were whispering at the end of the room ...; till at length the count came up to me, and took me to the window. "I'm sorry," he said. "I like my present. Did someone take my drink?" "I threw it out," I exclaimed. "Dave will make a new one," I added. And I smiled and bowed, to take my leave. He shook me by the hand, in a manner which expressed everything. ... I contemplated the setting sun from the top of the hill, and read that beautiful passage in Homer, where Ulysses is entertained by the hospitable herdsmen. ... I returned home to supper in the evening. ... The good-natured Adolph came in. He laid down his hat when he saw me, approached me, and said in a low tone, "I hope you still like having two girls. Because I am yours and I'm going to be Cathy's too." "I don't go in for girls," I exclaimed. "Don't you ever?" "I never have," said I. "I can be your girl, if you ever want one, and Dave's too." "Don't you think that's sort of a vast undertaking?" he added. The circumstance then began to pain me. I fancied that every one who sat down, and even looked at me, was thinking of this incident; and my heart became embittered. Everything conspires against me. I met Miss Braun walking today. I could not help joining her; and, when we were at a little distance from her companions, I expressed my sense of her altered manner toward me. "That's why I came here," she said, in a tone of emotion, "I thought that was what you wanted." "I've never had a girl," I exclaimed, and endeavoured to conceal my emotion .... "I'm so stupid. I didn't know. Is it true? You're not making fun of me?" said this amiable girl, while her eyes filled with tears. I could scarcely contain myself, and was ready to throw myself at her feet. "I'm not making fun of you," I cried. Tears flowed down her cheeks. I became quite frantic. She wiped them away, without attempting to conceal them. "I don't know how I could be so stupid," she continued.