NOVELS
AND
FAIRY TALES
OF
OSCAR WILDE

H.S. NICHOLS
NEW YORK
DECORATIONS AND TYPES
SPECIALY DESIGNED
BY
FREDERIC W. GOUDY

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THE ARTIST’S PREFACE

URING the Spring of 1884 Oscar Wilde was often in the studio. One of my sitters was a young gentleman of such peculiar beauty that his friends had nicknamed him “The Radiant Youth.” Each afternoon Wilde watched the work advance, enchanting us, meanwhile, with brilliant talk, until, at last, the portrait was finished and its original had gone his ways—rejoicing, without doubt, to be at liberty.

Now, the beauty of “Dorian” was of that kind which depends on colour and expression for its charm. His hair was bright and wavy; the ruddiness of health suffused his cheeks; his eyes sparkled with wholesome fun, good humour, and high thoughts. He was the sort of boy who makes the world seem jolly even when the east wind blows. Goodness and merriment radiated from him visibly; the darkest room appeared to glow and brighten when he entered it.

“What a pity such a glorious creature should ever grow old,” sighed Wilde.

“Yes, it is indeed,” said I. “How delightful it would be if ‘Dorian’ could remain exactly as he is, while the portrait aged and withered in his stead. I wish it might be so!”

And that was all. I occupied myself with the
picture for perhaps a quarter of an hour, during which Wilde smoked reflectively, but uttered not one word. He arose, presently, and sauntered to the door, merely nodding as he left the room.

Family affairs called me, by-and-by, from London. I saw no more of either Wilde or "Gray."

One day, years afterward, this book fell into my hands, I cannot remember where or how, although it startled me to find the germ, sown carelessly in idle talk, expanded by the writer's art into "The Picture of Dorian Gray." Wilde must have brooded long upon the theme. "The Radiant Youth" was, to be sure, the very opposite of Wilde's bad hero; but such was the author's love of paradox that this antithesis of character was just the thing to fascinate his poet's mind, from which the following pages grew.

Basil Hallward.
THE PREFACE

The artist is the creator of beautiful things. To reveal art and conceal the artist is his aim.

The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things.

The highest, as the lowest, form of criticism is a mode of autobiography. Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things corrupt without being charming. This is a fact.

Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope. They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty.

There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.

Nineteenth century dislike of Realism is the of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass.

The nineteenth century dislike of Romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass.

The moral life of man forms part of the subject-matter of the artist, but the morality of
art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium. No artist desires to prove anything. Even things that are true can be proved.

No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style.

No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything.

Thought and language are to the artist instruments of an art.

Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art.

From the point of view of form, the type of all the arts is the art of the musician. From the point of view of feeling, the actor's craft is the type.

All art is at once surface and symbol.

Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.

Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.

It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.

Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex, and vital.

When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself.

We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.

All art is quite useless.

Oscar Wilde.
THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

CHAPTER I

The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind, red amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the cistus, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-vering thorn.

From the corner of the divan of Persian saddles on which he was lying, smoking, as was his wont, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flame-like as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, inducing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, making him think of those pallid jade-faced priests of Tokio who, through the medium of an
art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey sense of swiftness and motion. The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the dusty gilt horns of the sighing woodbine, seemed to make the stillness oppressive. The dim roar of London was like a bourdon note of a distant organ.

In the centre of the room, clamped to an upright easel, stood the full-length portrait of a young of extraordinary personal beauty, and in front of it, some little distance away, was sitting the sitter himself, Basil Hallward, whose sudden disappearance some years ago caused, at the time, such public excitement, and gave rise to so many strange conjectures.

As the painter looked at the gracious and comform he had so skilfully mirrored in his art, a sense of pleasure passed across his face, and seemed about to linger there. But he suddenly started and, closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon his lids, as though he sought to imprison within his brain some curious dream from which he feared he might awake.

"It is your best work, Basil, the best thing I have ever done," said Lord Henry, languidly. "You must certainly send it next year to Grosvenor. The Academy is too large and too gar. Whenever I have gone there, there have been either so many people that I have not been able to see the pictures, which was dreadful, or so many pictures that I have not been able to see the
ple, which was worse. The Grosvenor is really the only place.”

“I don’t think I shall send it anywhere,” he answered, tossing his head back in that odd way that used to make his friends laugh at him at Oxford. “No: I won’t send it anywhere.”

Lord Henry elevated his eyebrows, and looked at him in amazement through the thin blue wreaths of smoke that curled up in such fanciful whorls from his heavy opium-tainted cigarette. “Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow, why? Have you any reason? What odd chaps you painters are! You do anything in the world to gain a reputation. As soon as you have one, you seem to want to throw it away. It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about. A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion.”

“I know you will laugh at me,” he replied, “but I really can’t exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it.”

Lord Henry stretched himself out on the divan and laughed.

“Yes, I knew you would; but it is quite true, all the same.”

“Too much of yourself in it! Upon my word, Basil, I didn’t know you were so vain; and I really can’t see any resemblance between you, with your rugged strong face and your coal-black hair, and
this young Adonis, who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose-leaves. Why, my dear Basil, he is a Narcissus, and you—well, of course you have an intellectual expression, and all that. But beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are! Except, of course, in the Church. But then in the Church they don’t think. A bishop keeps on saying at the age of eighty what he was told to say when he was a boy of eighteen, and as a natural consequence he always looks absolutely delightful. Your mysterious young friend, whose name you have never told me, but whose picture really fascinates me, never thinks. I feel quite sure of that. He is some brainless, beautiful creature, who should be always here in winter when we have no flowers to look at, and always here in summer when we want something to chill our intelligence. Don’t flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him.”

“You don’t understand me, Harry,” answered the artist. “Of course I am not like him. I know that perfectly well. Indeed, I should be sorry to look like him. You shrug your shoulders? I am telling you the truth. There is a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction, the sort of fatality that seems to dog through history the
faltering steps of kings. It is better not to be different from one's fellows. The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They can sit at their ease and gape at the play. If they know nothing of victory, they are at least spared the knowledge of defeat. They live as we all should live, undisturbed, indifferent, and without disquiet. They neither bring ruin upon others, nor ever receive it from alien hands. Your rank and wealth, Harry; my brains, such as they are—my art, whatever it may be worth; Dorian Gray's good looks—we shall all suffer for what the gods have given us, suffer terribly."

"Dorian Gray? Is that his name?" asked Lord Henry, walking across the studio towards Basil Hallward.

"Yes, that is his name. I didn't intend to tell it to you."

"But why not?"

"Oh, I can't explain. When I like people immensely I never tell their names to anyone. It is like surrendering a part of them. I have grown to love secrecy. It seems to be the one thing that can make modern life mysterious or marvellous to us. The commonest thing is delightful if one only hides it. When I leave town now I never tell my people where I am going. If I did, I would lose all my pleasure. It is a silly habit, I daresay, but somehow it seems to bring a great deal of romance into one's life. I suppose you think me awfully foolish about it?"

"Not at all," answered Lord Henry, "not at all,
my dear Basil. You seem to forget that I am married, and the one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties. I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing. When we meet—we do meet occasionally, when we dine out together, or go down to the Duke’s—we tell each other the most absurd stories with the most serious faces. My wife is very good at it—much better, in fact, than I am. She never gets confused over her dates, and I always do. But when she does find me out, she makes no row at all. I sometimes wish she would; but she merely laughs at me.”

“I hate the way you talk about your married life, Harry,” said Basil Hallward, strolling toward the door that led into the garden. “I believe that you are really a very good husband, but that you are thoroughly ashamed of your own virtues. You are an extraordinary fellow. You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose.”

“Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know,” cried Lord Henry, laughing; and the two young men went out into the garden together, and ensconced themselves on a long bamboo seat that stood in the shade of a tall laurel bush. The sunlight slipped over the polished leaves. In the grass, white daisies were tremulous.

After a pause, Lord Henry pulled out his watch. “I am afraid I must be going, Basil,” he mumbled, “and before I go, I insist on your answering a question I put to you some time ago.”
"What is that?" said the painter, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground.
"You know quite well."
"I do not, Harry."
"Well, I will tell you what it is. I want you to explain to me why you won't exhibit Dorian Gray's picture. I want the real reason."
"I told you the real reason."
"No, you did not. You said it was because there was too much of yourself in it. Now, that is childish."
"Harry," said Basil Hallward, looking him straight in the face, "every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul."
Lord Henry laughed. "And what is that?" he asked.
"I will tell you," said Hallward; but an expression of perplexity came over his face.
"I am all expectation, Basil," continued his companion, glancing at him.
"Oh, there is really very little to tell, Harry," answered the painter; "and I am afraid you will hardly understand it. Perhaps you will hardly believe it."
Lord Henry smiled, and, leaning down, plucked a pink-petalled daisy from the grass, and examined
it. "I am quite sure I shall understand it," he replied, gazing intently at the little golden white-feathered disk, "and as for believing things, I can believe anything, provided that it is quite incredible."

The wind shook some blossoms from the trees, and the heavy lilac-blooms, with their clustering stars, moved to and fro in the languid air. A grasshopper began to chirrup by the wall, and like a blue thread a long thin dragon-fly floated past on its brown gauze wings. Lord Henry felt as if he could hear Basil Hallward's heart beating, and wondered what was coming.

"The story is simply this," said the painter after some time. "Two months ago I went to a crush at Lady Brandon's. You know we poor artists have to show ourselves in society from time to time, just to remind the public that we are not savages. With an evening coat and a white tie, as you told me once, anybody, even a stockbroker, can gain a reputation for being civilised. Well, after I had been in the room about ten minutes, talking to huge overdressed dowagers and tedious Academicians, I suddenly became conscious that someone was looking at me. I turned halfway round, and saw Dorian Gray for the first time. When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with someone whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. I did not want any
external influence in my life. You know yourself, Harry, how independent I am by nature. I have always been my own master; had at least always been so, till I met Dorian Gray. Then—but I don't know how to explain it to you. Something seemed to tell me that I was on the verge of a terrible crisis in my life. I had a strange feeling that Fate had in store for me exquisite joys and exquisite sorrows. I grew afraid, and turned to quit the room. It was not conscience that made me do so; it was a sort of cowardice. I take no credit to myself for trying to escape."

"Conscience and cowardice are really the same things, Basil. Conscience is the trade-name of the firm. That is all."

"I don't believe that, Harry, and I don't believe you do either. However, whatever was my motive—and it may have been pride, for I used to be very proud—I certainly struggled to the door. There, of course, I stumbled against Lady Brandon. 'You are not going to run away so soon, Mr. Hallward?' she screamed out. You know her curiously shrill voice?"

"Yes; she is a peacock in everything but beauty," said Lord Henry, pulling the daisy to bits with his long, nervous fingers.

"I could not get rid of her. She brought me up to Royalties, and people with Stars and Garters, and elderly ladies with gigantic tiaras and parrot noses. She spoke of me as her dearest friend. I had only met her once before, but she took it into her head to lionise me. I believe some picture of
mine had made a great success at the time, at least had been chattered about in the penny newspapers which is the nineteenth-century standard of immortality. Suddenly I found myself face to face with the young man whose personality had strangely stirred me. We were quite close, almost touching. Our eyes met again. It was reckless of me, but I asked Lady Brandon to introduce me to him. Perhaps it was not so reckless, after all. It was simply inevitable. We would have spoken to each other without any introduction. I am sure of that. Dorian told me so afterward. He, too, felt that we were destined to know each other."

"And how did Lady Brandon describe this wonderful young man?" asked his companion. I thought I knew she goes in for giving a rapid précis² of all her guests. I remember her bringing me up to a truculent and red-faced old gentleman covered all over with orders and ribbons, and hissing into my ear in a tragic whisper which must have been perfectly audible to everybody in the room, the most astounding details. I simply fled. I like to find out people for myself. But Lady Brandon treated her guests exactly as an auctioneer treats his goods. She either explains them entirely away, or tells one everything about them except what one wants to know."

"Poor Lady Brandon! You are hard on her, Harry!" said Hallward, listlessly.

"My dear fellow, she tried to found a salon,³ a only succeeded in opening a restaurant. H
could I admire her? But tell me, what did she say about Mr. Dorian Gray?"

"Oh, something like, 'Charming boy—poor dear mother and I absolutely inseparable. Quite forget what he does—afraid he doesn't do anything—oh, yes, plays the piano—or is it the violin, dear Mr. Gray?' Neither of us could help laughing, and we became friends at once."

"Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is far the best ending for one," said the young lord, plucking another daisy.

Hallward shook his head. "You don't understand what friendship is, Harry," he murmured—"or what enmity is, for that matter. You like everyone; that is to say, you are indifferent to everyone."

"How horribly unjust of you!" cried Lord Henry, tilting his hat back, and looking up at the little clouds that, like ravelled skeins of glossy white silk, were drifting across the hollowed turquoise of the summer sky. "Yes; horribly unjust of you. I make a great difference between people. I choose my friends for their good looks, my acquaintances for their good characters, and my enemies for their good intellects. A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies. I have not got one who is a fool. They are all men of some intellectual power, and consequently they all appreciate me. Is that very vain of me? I think it is rather vain."

"I should think it was, Harry. But according to your category, I must be merely an acquaintance."
"My dear old Basil, you are much more than a
acquaintance."

"And much less than a friend. A sort of brother, I suppose?"

"Oh, brothers! I don't care for brothers. My elder brother won't die, and my younger brother seems never to do anything else."

"Harry!" exclaimed Hallward, frowning.

"My dear fellow, I am not quite serious. But I can't help detesting my relations. I suppose it comes from the fact that none of us can stand other people having the same faults as ourselves. I quite sympathise with the rage of the English democrats against what they call the vices of the upper orders. The masses feel that drunkenness, stupidity, and immorality should be their own special property, and that if anyone of us makes an ass of himself he is poaching on their preserves. When poor Southwark got into the Divorce Court, their indignation was quite magnificent. And yet I don't suppose that ten per cent. of the proletariat live correctly."

"I don't agree with a single word that you have said, and, what is more, Harry, I feel sure you don't either."

Lord Henry stroked his pointed brown beard and tapped the toe of his patent-leather boot with a tasselled ebony cane. "How English you are, Basil! That is the second time you have made that observation. If one puts forward an idea to a true Englishman—always a rash thing to do—he never dreams of considering whether the idea is
right or wrong. The only thing he considers of any importance is whether one believes it oneself. Now, the value of an idea has nothing whatsoever to do with the sincerity of the man who expresses it. Indeed, the probabilities are that the more insincere the man is, the more purely intellectual will the idea be, as in that case it will not be coloured by either his wants, his desires, or his prejudices. However, I don’t propose to discuss politics, sociology, or metaphysics with you. I like persons better than principles, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world. Tell me more about Mr. Dorian Gray. How often do you see him?”

“Every day. I couldn’t be happy if I didn’t see him every day. He is absolutely necessary to me.”

“How extraordinary! I thought you would never care for anything but your art.”

“He is all my art to me now,” said the painter, gravely. “I sometimes think, Harry, that there are only two eras of any importance in the world’s history. The first is the appearance of a new medium for art, and the second is the appearance of a new personality for art also. What the invention of oil-painting was to the Venetians, the face of Antinous was to late Greek sculpture, and the face of Dorian Gray will some day be to me. It is not merely that I paint from him, draw from him, sketch from him. Of course I have done all that. But he is much more to me than a model or a sitter. I won’t tell you that I am dissatisfied with what I have done of him, or that his beauty is such that
Art cannot express it. There is nothing that I cannot express, and I know that the work I have done, since I met Dorian Gray, is good work, is my best work of my life. But in some curious way, I wonder will you understand me?—his personality has suggested to me an entirely new manner in which I can recreate life in a way that was hidden from me before. 'A dream of form in days of thought; who is it who says that? I forget; but it is what Dorian Gray has been to me. The merely visible presence of this lad—for he seems to me little more than a lad, though he is really over twenty—merely visible presence—ah! I wonder can you realise all that that means? Unconsciously defines for me the lines of a fresh school, a school that is to have in it all the passion of the romantic spirit, all the perfection of the spirit that is Greek. The harmony of soul and body—how much that We in our madness have separated the two, have invented a realism that is vulgar, an ideal that is void. Harry! if you only knew what Dorian Gray is to me! You remember that landscape of mine, for which Agnew offered me such a huge price, but which I would not part with? It was one of the best things I have ever done. And why? Because, while I was painting it, Dorian Gray sat beside me. Some subtle influence passed from him to me, and for the first time in my life I saw in the plain woodland the wonder I had always looked for, and always missed.'
“Basil, this is extraordinary! I must see Dorian Gray.”

Hallward got up from the seat, and walked up and down the garden. After some time he came back. “Harry,” he said, “Dorian Gray is to me simply a motive in art. You might see nothing in him. I see everything in him. He is never more present in my work than when no image of him is there. He is a suggestion, as I have said, of a new manner. I find him in the curves of certain lines, in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colours. That is all.”

“Then why won’t you exhibit his portrait?” asked Lord Henry.

“Because, without intending it, I have put into it some expression of all this curious artistic idolatry, of which, of course, I have never cared to speak to him. He knows nothing about it. He shall never know anything about it. But the world might guess it; and I will not bare my soul to their shallow prying eyes. My heart shall never be put under their microscope. There is too much of myself in the thing, Harry—too much of myself!”

“Poets are not so scrupulous as you are. They know how useful passion is for publication. Nowadays a broken heart will run to many editions.”

“I hate them for it,” cried Hallward. “An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. We live in an age when men treat art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography. We have lost the
abstract sense of beauty. Some day I will show the world what it is; and for that reason the world shall never see my portrait of Dorian Gray."

"I think you are wrong, Basil, but I won't argue with you. It is only the intellectually lost who ever argue. Tell me, is Dorian Gray very fond of you?"

The painter considered for a few moments.

"He likes me," he answered, after a pause; 'I know he likes me. Of course I flatter him dreafully. I find a strange pleasure in saying things to him that I know I shall be sorry for having said. As a rule, he is charming to me, and we sit in the studio and talk of a thousand things. Now and then, however, he is horribly thoughtless, and seems to take a real delight in giving me pain. Then I feel, Harry, that I have given away a whole soul to someone who treats it as if it were a flower to put in his coat, a bit of decoration to charm his vanity, an ornament for a summer day."

"Days in summer, Basil, are apt to linger," murmured Lord Henry. "Perhaps you will tire sooner than he will. It is a sad thing to think of, but there is no doubt that Genius lasts longer than Beauty. That accounts for the fact that we take such pains to over-educate ourselves. In the wild struggle for existence, we want to have something that endures, and so we fill our minds with rubbish and facts, in the silly hope of keeping our place. The thoroughly well-informed man—is this the modern ideal. And the mind of the th
roughly well-informed man is a dreadful thing. It is like a bric-à-brac shop, all monsters and dust, with everything priced above its proper value. I think you will tire first, all the same. Some day you will look at your friend, and he will seem to you to be a little out of drawing, or you won’t like his tone of colour, or something. You will bitterly reproach him in your own heart, and seriously think that he has behaved very badly to you. The next time he calls, you will be perfectly cold and indifferent. It will be a great pity, for it will alter you. What you have told me is quite a romance, a romance of art one might call it, and the worst of having a romance of any kind is that it leaves one so unromantic."

"Harry, don’t talk like that. As long as I live, the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate me. You can’t feel what I feel. You change too often."

"Ah, my dear Basil, that is exactly why I can feel it. Those who are faithful know only the trival side of love: it is the faithless who know love’s tragedies." And Lord Henry struck a light on a dainty silver case, and began to smoke a cigarette with a self-conscious and satisfied air, as if he had summed up the world in a phrase. There was a rustle of chirruping sparrows in the green lacquer leaves of the ivy, and the blue cloud-shadows chased themselves across the grass like swallows. How pleasant it was in the garden! And how delightful other people’s emotions were!—much more delightful than their ideas, it seemed to him. One’s own soul, and the passions of one’s friends—
those were the fascinating things in life. He pictured to himself with silent amusement the tedious luncheon that he had missed by staying so long with Basil Hallward. Had he gone to his aunt's he would have been sure to have met Lord Goodbody there, and the whole conversation would have been about the feeding of the poor, and the necessity for model lodging-houses. Each class would have preached the importance of those virtues, for whose exercise there was no necessity in their own lives. The rich would have spoken on the value of thrift, and the idle grown eloquent over the dignity of labour. It was charming to have escaped all that! As he thought of his aunt, an idea seemed to strike him. He turned to Hallward, and said: "My dear fellow, I have just remembered."

"Remembered what, Harry?"

"Where I heard the name of Dorian Gray."

"Where was it?" asked Hallward, with a slight frown.

"Don't look so angry, Basil. It was at my aunt, Lady Agatha's. She told me she had discovered a wonderful young man, who was going to help her in the East End, and that his name was Dorian Gray. I am bound to state that she never told me—he was good-looking. Women have no appreciation of good looks; at least, good women have not. She said that he was very earnest, and had a beautiful nature. I at once pictured to myself a creature with spectacles and lank hair, horribly freckled, and tramping about on huge feet. I wish I had known it was your friend."
“I am very glad you didn’t, Harry.”

“Why?”

“I don’t want you to meet him.”

“You don’t want me to meet him?”

“No.”

“Mr. Dorian Gray is in the studio, sir,” said the butler, coming into the garden.

“You must introduce me now,” cried Lord Henry, laughing.

The painter turned to his servant, who stood blinking in the sunlight. “Ask Mr. Gray to wait, Parker: I shall be in in a few moments.” The man bowed, and went up the walk.

Then he looked at Lord Henry. “Dorian Gray is my dearest friend,” he said. “He has a simple and a beautiful nature. Your aunt was quite right in what she said of him. Don’t spoil him. Don’t try to influence him. Your influence would be bad. The world is wide, and has many marvellous people in it. Don’t take away from me the one person who gives to my art whatever charm it possesses; my life as an artist depends on him. Mind, Harry, I trust you.” He spoke very slowly, and the words seemed wrung out of him almost against his will.

“What nonsense you talk!” said Lord Henry, smiling, and, taking Hallward by the arm, he almost led him into the house.
CHAPTER II

As they entered they saw Dorian Gray. He was seated at the piano, with his back to them, turning over the pages of a volume of Schumann’s “Forest Scenes.” “You must lend me these, Basil,” he cried. “I want to learn them. They are perfectly charming.”

“That entirely depends on how you sit to-day, Dorian.”

“Oh, I am tired of sitting, and I don’t want this life-sized portrait of myself,” answered the latter, swinging round on the music-stool, in a wilful, petulant manner. When he caught sight of Lord Henry, a faint blush coloured his cheeks for a moment, and he started up. “I beg your pardon, Basil, but I didn’t know you had anyone with you.”

“This is Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian, an old Oxford friend of mine. I have just been telling him what a capital sitter you were, and now you have spoiled everything.”

“You have not spoiled my pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Gray,” said Lord Henry, stepping forward and extending his hand. “My aunt has often spoken to me about you. You are one of her favourites, and, I am afraid, one of her victims also.”
"I am in Lady Agatha's black books at present," answered Dorian, with a funny look of penitence. "I promised to go to a club in Whitechapel with her last Tuesday, and I really forgot all about it. We were to have played a duet together—three duets, I believe. I don't know what she will say to me. I am far too frightened to call."

"Oh, I will make your peace with my aunt. She is quite devoted to you. And I don't think it really matters about your not being there. The audience probably thought it was a duet. When Aunt Agatha sits down to the piano she makes quite enough noise for two people."

"That is very horrid to her, and not very nice to me," answered Dorian, laughing.

Lord Henry looked at him. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair. There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour of youth was there, as well as all youth's passionate purity. One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world. No wonder Basil Hallward worshipped him.

"You are too charming to go in for philanthropy, Mr. Gray—far too charming." And Lord Henry flung himself down on the divan, and opened his cigarette-case.

The painter had been busy mixing his colours and getting his brushes ready. He was looking worried, and when he heard Lord Henry's last remark he glanced at him, hesitated for a moment,
and then said: "Harry, I want to finish this picture to-day. Would you think it awfully rude of me if I asked you to go away?"

Lord Henry smiled, and looked at Dorian Gray.

"Am I to go, Mr. Gray?" he asked.

"Oh, please don't, Lord Henry. I see that Basil is in one of his sulky moods; and I can't bear him when he sulks. Besides, I want you to tell me why I should not go in for philanthropy."

"I don't know that I shall tell you that, Mr. Gray. It is so tedious a subject that one would have to talk seriously about it. But I certainly shall not run away, now that you have asked me to stop. You don't really mind, Basil, do you? You have often told me that you liked your sitter to have someone to chat to."

Hallward bit his lip. "If Dorian wishes it, of course you must stay. Dorian's whims are laws to everybody, except himself."

Lord Henry took up his hat and gloves. "You are very pressing, Basil, but I am afraid I must go. I have promised to meet a man at the Orleans. Good-bye, Mr. Gray. Come and see me some afternoon in Curzon Street. I am nearly always at home at five o'clock. Write to me when you are coming. I should be sorry to miss you."

"Basil," cried Dorian Gray, "if Lord Henry Wotton goes I shall go too. You never open your lips while you are painting, and it is horribly dull standing on a platform and trying to look pleasant. Ask him to stay. I insist upon it."

"Stay, Harry, to oblige Dorian, and to oblige
e," said Hallward, gazing intently at his picture. It is quite true, I never talk when I am working, and never listen either, and it must be dreadfully tedious for my unfortunate sitters. I beg you to lay."

"But what about my man at the Orleans?"

The painter laughed. "I don't think there will be any difficulty about that. Sit down again, Harry. And now, Dorian, get up on the platform, and don't move about too much, or pay any attention to what Lord Henry says. He has a very bad influence over all his friends, with the single exception of myself."

Dorian Gray stepped up on the dais, with the air of a young Greek martyr, and made a little moue of discontent to Lord Henry, to whom he had rather taken a fancy. He was so unlike Basil. They made a delightful contrast. And he had such a beautiful voice. After a few moments he said to him: "Have you really a very bad influence, Lord Henry? As bad as Basil says?"

"There is no such thing as a good influence, Mr. Gray. All influence is immoral—immoral from the scientific point of view."

"Why?"

"Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of someone else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him. The aim of life
is self-development. To realise one's nature perfectly—that is what each of us is here for. People are afraid of themselves, nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty one owes to one's self. Of course they are charitable. They feed the hungry, and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked. Courage has gone out of our race. Perhaps never really had it. The terror of society, which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion—these are the two things that govern us. And yet—"

"Just turn your head a little more to the right, Dorian, like a good boy," said the painter, deep in his work, and conscious only that a look had come into the lad's face that he had never seen before.

"And yet," continued Lord Henry, in his low musical voice, and with that graceful wave of the hand that was always so characteristic of him, and that he had even in his Eton days, believe that if one man were to live out his life fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream—I believe that the world would get such a fresh impulse of joy that we would forget the maladies of mediævalism, and return to the Hellenic ideal—to something finer, richer, than the Hellenic ideal, it may be. But the brave man amongst us is afraid of himself. The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives. We are punish
for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us. The body sins once, and has done with its sin, for action is a mode of purification. Nothing remains then but the recollection of a pleasure, or the luxury of a regret. The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful. It has been said that the great events of the world take place in the brain. It is in the brain, and the brain only, that the great sins of the world take place also. You, Mr. Gray, you yourself, with your rose-red youth and your rose-white boyhood, you have had passions that have made you afraid, thoughts that have filled you with terror, daydreams and sleeping dreams whose mere memory might stain your cheek with shame——"

"Stop!" faltered Dorian Gray, "stop! you bewilder me. I don't know what to say. There is some answer to you, but I cannot find it. Don't speak. Let me think. Or, rather, let me try not to think."

For nearly ten minutes he stood there, motionless, with parted lips, and eyes strangely bright. He was dimly conscious that entirely fresh influences were at work within him. Yet they seemed to him to have come really from himself. The few words that Basil's friend had said to him—words spoken by chance, no doubt, and with willful paradox in them—had touched some secret chord that
had never been touched before, but that he felt was now vibrating and throbbing to curious pulses.

Music had stirred him like that. Music had troubled him many times. But music was no articulate. It was not a new world, but rather another chaos, that it created in us. Words! Mere words! How terrible they were! How clear and vivid, and cruel! One could not escape from them. And yet what a subtle magic there was in them! They seemed to be able to give a plasti form to formless things, and to have a music of their own as sweet as that of viol or of lute. Men words! Was there anything so real as words?

Yes; there had been things in his boyhood that he had not understood. He understood them now. Life suddenly became fiery-coloured to him. It seemed to him that he had been walking in fire. Why had he not known it?

With his subtle smile, Lord Henry watched him. He knew the precise psychological moment when to say nothing. He felt intensely interested. He was amazed at the sudden impression that his words had produced, and, remembering a book that he had read when he was sixteen, a book which had revealed to him much that he had not known before, he wondered whether Dorian Gray was passing through a similar experience. He had merely shot an arrow into the air. Had it hit the mark? How fascinating the lad was!

Hallward painted away with that marvellous bold touch of his, that had the true refinement and
perfect delicacy that in art, at any rate, comes only from strength. He was unconscious of the silence.

"Basil, I am tired of standing," cried Dorian Gray, suddenly. "I must go out and sit in the garden. The air is stifling here."

"My dear fellow, I am so sorry. When I am painting, I can't think of anything else. But you never sat better. You were perfectly still. And I have caught the effect I wanted—the half-parted lips, and the bright look in the eyes. I don't know what Harry has been saying to you, but he has certainly made you have the most wonderful expression. I suppose he has been paying you compliments. You mustn't believe a word that he says."

"He has certainly not been paying me compliments. Perhaps that is the reason that I don't believe anything he has told me."

"You know you believe it all," said Lord Henry, looking at him with his dreamy, languorous eyes. "I will go out to the garden with you. It is horribly hot in the studio. Basil, let us have something to drink, something with strawberries in it."

"Certainly, Harry. Just touch the bell, and when Parker comes I will tell him what you want. I have got to work up this background, so I will join you later on. Don't keep Dorian too long. I have never been in better form for painting than I am to-day. This is going to be my masterpiece. It is my masterpiece as it stands."

Lord Henry went out to the garden, and found Dorian Gray burying his face in the great cool
lilac-blossoms, feverishly drinking in their perfume as if it had been wine. He came close to him, put his hand upon his shoulder. "You are quite right to do that," he murmured. "Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul."

The lad started and drew back. He was bewildered, and the leaves had tossed his rebellious curls and tangled all their gilded threads. There was a look of fear in his eyes, such as people have when they are suddenly awakened. His finely chiselled nostrils quivered, and some hidden nerves shook the scarlet of his lips and left them trembling.

"Yes," continued Lord Henry, "that is one of the great secrets of life—to cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul. You are a wonderful creation. You know more than you think you know, just as you know more than you want to know."

Dorian Gray frowned and turned his head away. He could not help liking the tall, graceful young man who was standing by him. His Roman olive-coloured face and worn expression interested him. There was something in his low, lang voice that was absolutely fascinating. His cold white, flower-like hands, even, had a curious charm. They moved, as he spoke, like music, and seemed to have a language of their own. But he felt afraid of him, and ashamed of being afraid. Why had it been left for a stranger to reveal him to himself? He had known Basil Hallward
onths, but the friendship between them had
never altered him. Suddenly there had come
someone across his life who seemed to have dis-
used to him life's mystery. And, yet, what was
there to be afraid of? He was not a schoolboy or a
id. It was absurd to be frightened.
"Let us go and sit in the shade," said Lord
Henry. "Parker has brought out the drinks, and
if you stay any longer in this glare you will be
quite spoiled, and Basil will never paint you again.
You really must not allow yourself to become sun-
burnt. It would be unbecoming."
"What can it matter?" cried Dorian Gray,
sighing, as he sat down on the seat at the end of
the garden.
"It should matter everything to you, Mr.
Gray."
"Why?"
"Because you have the most marvellous youth,
and youth is the one thing worth having."
"I don't feel that, Lord Henry."
"No, you don't feel it now. Some day, when
you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought
has seared your forehead with its lines, and passion
has blunted your lips with its hideous fires, you will
feel it, you will feel it terribly. Now, wherever you
are, you charm the world. Will it always be so?
... You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr.
Gray. Don't frown. You have. And Beauty is a
form of Genius—is higher, indeed, than Genius, as
needs no explanation. It is of the great facts of
the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the
reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we see the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty. It makes princes of those who have it. You smile? Ah! when you have lost it you won't smile. . . . People sometimes that Beauty is only superficial. This may be so. But at least it is not so superficial. Thought is. To me, Beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible. . . . Yet, Mr. Gray, the gods have been good to you. But what the gods give they quickly take away. You have only a few years in which to live really, perfectly, and fully. When your youth goes, your beauty will go with it, and then you will suddenly discover that there are no triumphs left for you, but have to content yourself with those mean triumphs that the memory of your past will make more bitter than defeats. Every month as it wanes brings you nearer to something dreadful. Time is jealous of you, and wars against your lilies and your rose. You will become sallow, and hollow-cheeked, and dull-eyed. You will suffer horribly. . . . An realise your youth while you have it. Do not squander the gold of your days, listening to the tedious, trying to improve the hopeless failure, giving away your life to the ignorant, the common and the vulgar. These are the sickly aims, the false ideals, of our age. Live! Live the wonder life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always searching for new sensations. Be afi
f nothing. . . . A new Hedonism—that is what
century wants. You might be its visible sym-
ol. With your personality there is nothing you
uld not do. The world belongs to you for a
cason. . . . The moment I met you I saw that
you were quite unconscious of what you really are,
if what you really might be. There was so much
n you that charmed me that I felt I must tell you
omething about yourself. I thought how tragic
would be if you were wasted. For there is such
little time that your youth will last—such a
little time. The common hill-flowers wither, but
they blossom again. The laburnum will be as
ellow next June as it is now. In a month there
ill be purple stars on the clematis, and year after
ear the green night of its leaves will hold its
purple stars. But we never get back our youth.
The pulse of joy that beats in us at twenty, be-
comes sluggish. Our limbs fail, our senses rot.
We degenerate into hideous puppets, haunted by
the memory of the passions of which we were too
uch afraid, and the exquisite temptations that
he had not the courage to yield to. Youth!
Youth! There is absolutely nothing in the world
but youth!”

Dorian Gray listened, open-eyed and wondering.
The spray of lilac fell from his hand upon the
avel. A furry bee came and buzzed round it for
moment. Then it began to scramble all over the
al stellated globe of the tiny blossoms. He
atched it with that strange interest in trivial
ings that we try to develop when things of high
import make us afraid, or when we are stirred by some new emotion for which we cannot find expression, or when some thought that terrifies lays sudden siege to the brain and calls on us to yield. After a time the bee flew away. He saw creeping into the stained trumpet of a Tyri convolvulus. The flower seemed to quiver, and then swayed gently to and fro.

Suddenly the painter appeared at the door of the studio, and made staccato signs for them to come in. They turned to each other, and smiled.

"I am waiting," he cried. "Do come in. The light is quite perfect, and you can bring your drinks."

They rose up, and sauntered down the walk together. Two green-and-white butterflies fluttered past them, and in the pear-tree at the corner of the garden a thrush began to sing.

"You are glad you have met me, Mr. Gray," said Lord Henry, looking at him.

"Yes, I am glad now. I wonder shall I always be glad?"

"Always! That is a dreadful word. It makes me shudder when I hear it. Women are so fond of using it. They spoil every romance by trying to make it last for ever. It is a meaningless word, too. The only difference between a caprice and a lifelong passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer."

As they entered the studio, Dorian Gray put his hand upon Lord Henry's arm. "In that case, let our friendship be a caprice," he murmured, flush-
g at his own boldness, then stepped up on the platform and resumed his pose.

Lord Henry flung himself into a large wicker arm-chair, and watched him. The sweep and dash of the brush on the canvas made the only sound that broke the stillness, except when, now and then, Hallward stepped back to look at his work from a distance. In the slanting beams that streamed through the open doorway the dust danced and was golden. The heavy scent of the paeonies seemed to brood over everything.

After about a quarter of an hour Hallward topped painting, looked for a long time at Dorian Gray, and then for a long time at the picture, biting the end of one of his huge brushes, and frowning. “It is quite finished,” he cried at last, and stooping down he wrote his name in long vermilion letters on the left-hand corner of the canvas.

Lord Henry came over and examined the picture. It was certainly a wonderful work of art, and a wonderful likeness as well.

“My dear fellow, I congratulate you most warmly,” he said. “It is the finest portrait of modern times. Mr. Gray, come over and look at yourself.”

The lad started, as if awakened from some dream. “Is it really finished?” he murmured, stepping down from the platform.

“Quite finished,” said the painter. “And you have sat splendidly to-day. I am awfully obliged to you.”
"That is entirely due to me," broke in Lord Henry. "Isn't it, Mr. Gray?"

Dorian made no answer, but passed listlessly in front of his picture, and turned towards it. When he saw it he drew back, and his cheeks flushed for a moment with pleasure. A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognised himself for the first time. He stood there motionless and in wonder dimly conscious that Hallward was speaking to him, but not catching the meaning of his words. The sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation. He had never felt it before. But Hallward's compliments had seemed to him to be merely the charming exaggerations of friendship. He had listened to them, laughed at them, forgotten them. They had not influenced his nature. Then had come Lord Henry Wotton with his strange panegyric on youth, his terrible warning of its brevity. That had stirred him at the time, and now, as he stood gazing at the shadow of his own loveliness, the full reality of the description flashed across him. Yes, there would be a day when his face would be wrinkled and wizen, his eyes dull and colourless, the grace of his figure broken and deformed. The scarlet would pass away from his lips, and the gold steal from his hair. The life that was to make his soul would mar his body. He would become dreadful, hideous, and uncouth.

As he thought of it, a sharp pang of pain stooped through him like a knife, and made each delicate fibre of his nature quiver. His eyes deepened into amethyst, and across them came a mist of tears.
He felt as if a hand of ice had been laid heart.

"Don't you like it?" cried Hallward at last, tugging a little by the lad's silence, not understanding what it meant.

"Of course he likes it," said Lord Henry. "Who wouldn't like it? It is one of the greatest things in modern art. I will give you anything you like to ask for it. I must have it."

"It is not my property, Harry."

"Whose property is it?"

"Dorian's, of course," answered the painter.

"He is a very lucky fellow."

"How sad it is!" murmured Dorian Gray, with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June. . . . If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that—for that—I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!"

"You would hardly care for such an arrangement, Basil," cried Lord Henry, laughing. "It would be rather hard lines on your work."

"I should object very strongly, Harry," said Hallward.

Dorian Gray turned and looked at him. "I believe you would, Basil. You like your art better than your friends. I am no more to you than a
green bronze figure. Hardly as much, I dare say."

The painter stared in amazement. It was so unlike Dorian to speak like that. What had happened? He seemed quite angry. His face was flushed and his cheeks burning.

"Yes," he continued, "I am less to you than your ivory Hermes or your silver Faun. You will like them always. How long will you like me? Till I have my first wrinkle, I suppose. I know, now, that when one loses one's good looks, whatever they may be, one loses everything. Your picture has taught me that. Lord Henry Wotton is perfectly right. Youth is the only thing worth having. When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself."

Hallward turned pale, and caught his hand. "Dorian! Dorian!" he cried, "don't talk like that. I have never had such a friend as you, and I shall never have such another. You are not jealous of material things, are you?—you who are finer than any of them!"

"I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes takes something from me, and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way! If the picture could change, and I could be always what I am now! Why did you paint it? It will mock me some day—mock me horribly!" The hot tears welled into his eyes; he tore his hand away, and, flinging himself on the
divan, he buried his face in the cushions, as though he was praying.

"This is your doing, Harry," said the painter, bitterly.

Lord Henry shrugged his shoulders. "It is the real Dorian Gray—that is all."

"It is not."

"If it is not, what have I to do with it?"

"You should have gone away when I asked you," he muttered.

"I stayed when you asked me," was Lord Henry’s answer.

"Harry, I can’t quarrel with my two best friends at once, but between you both you have made me hate the finest piece of work I have ever done, and I will destroy it. What is it but canvas and colour? I will not let it come across our three lives and mar them."

Dorian Gray lifted his golden head from the pillow, and with pallid face and tear-stained eyes looked at him, as he walked over to the deal painting-table that was set beneath the high curtained window. What was he doing there? His fingers were straying about among the litter of tin tubes and dry brushes, seeking for something. Yes, it was for the long palette-knife, with its thin blade of lath steel. He had found it at last. He was going to rip up the canvas.

With a stifled sob the lad leaped from the couch, and, rushing over to Hallward, tore the knife out of his hand, and flung it to the end of the studio.
"Don't, Basil, don't!" he cried. "It would murder!"

"I am glad you appreciate my work at la Dorian," said the painter, coldly, when he had recovered from his surprise. "I never thought you would."

"Appreciate it? I am in love with it, Basil. It is part of myself. I feel that."

"Well, as soon as you are dry, you shall be vanished, and framed, and sent home. Then you can do what you like with yourself." And he walked across the room and rang the bell for tea. "You will have tea, of course, Dorian? And so will you, Harry? Or do you object to such simple pleasures?"

"I adore simple pleasures," said Lord Henry. "They are the last refuge of the complex. But I don't like scenes, except on the stage. What absurd fellows you are, both of you! I wonder who was defined man as a rational animal. It was the most premature definition ever given. Man is many things, but he is not rational. I am glad he is not, after all: though I wish you chaps would not squabble over the picture. You had much better let me have it, Basil. This silly boy doesn't really want it, and I really do."

"If you let anyone have it but me, Basil, I shall never forgive you!" cried Dorian Gray; "and don't allow people to call me a silly boy."

"You know the picture is yours, Dorian. I gave it to you before it existed."

"And you know you have been a little silly, Mi
ray, and that you don't really object to being minded that you are extremely young."
"I should have objected very strongly this morning, Lord Henry."
"Ah! this morning! You have lived since then."

There came a knock at the door, and the butler entered with a laden tea-tray and set it down upon a small Japanese table. There was a rattle of cups and saucers and the hissing of a fluted Georgian urn. Two globe-shaped china dishes were brought by a page. Dorian Gray went over and poured out the tea. The two men sauntered languidly to the table, and examined what was under the covers.

"Let us go to the theatre to-night," said Lord Henry. "There is sure to be something on, somewhere. I have promised to dine at White's, but it only with an old friend, so I can send him a wire to say that I am ill, or that I am prevented from coming in consequence of a subsequent engagement. I think that would be a rather nice excuse: would have all the surprise of candour."

"It is such a bore putting on one's dress-cothes," muttered Hallward. "And, when one is them on, they are so horrid."

"Yes," answered Lord Henry, dreamily, "the costume of the nineteenth century is detestable. is so sombre, so depressing. Sin is the only real flour-element left in modern life."

"You really must not say things like that before orian, Harry."
"Before which Dorian? The one who is pouring out tea for us, or the one in the picture?"
"Before either."
"I should like to come to the theatre with you, Lord Henry," said the lad.
"Then you shall come; and you will come too, Basil, won't you?"
"I can't really. I would sooner not. I have a lot of work to do."
"Well, then, you and I will go alone, Mr. Gray."
"I should like that awfully."
The painter bit his lip and walked over, cup in hand, to the picture. "I shall stay with the real Dorian," he said, sadly.
"Is it the real Dorian?" cried the original of the portrait, strolling across to him. "Am I really like that?"
"Yes; you are just like that."
"How wonderful, Basil!"
"At least you are like it in appearance. But it will never alter," sighed Hallward. "That is something."
"What a fuss people make about fidelity!" exclaimed Lord Henry. "Why, even in love it is purely a question for physiology. It has nothing to do with our own will. Young men want to be faithful, and are not; old men want to be faithless, and cannot: that is all one can say."
"Don't go to the theatre to-night, Dorian," said Hallward. "Stop and dine with me."
"I can't, Basil."
"Why?"
"Because I have promised Lord Henry Wotton to go with him."

"He won't like you the better for keeping your promises. He always breaks his own. I beg you not to go."

Dorian Gray laughed and shook his head.

"I entreat you."

The lad hesitated, and looked over at Lord Henry, who was watching them from the tea-table with an amused smile.

"I must go, Basil," he answered.

"Very well," said Hallward; and he went over and laid down his cup on the tray. "It is rather late, and, as you have to dress, you had better lose no time. Good-bye, Harry. Good-bye, Dorian. Come and see me soon. Come to-morrow."

"Certainly."

"You won't forget?"

"No, of course not," cried Dorian.

"And . . . Harry!"

"Yes, Basil?"

"Remember what I asked you, when we were in the garden this morning."

"I have forgotten it."

"I trust you."

"I wish I could trust myself," said Lord Henry, laughing. "Come, Mr. Gray, my hansom is outside, and I can drop you at your own place. Good-bye, Basil. It has been a most interesting afternoon."

As the door closed behind them, the painter sank himself down on a sofa, and a look of pain came into his face.
CHAPTER III

At half-past twelve next day Lord Henry Wotton strolled from Curzon Street over to the Albany to call on his uncle, Lord Fermor, a genial if somewhat rough-mannered old bachelor, whom the outside world called selfish because it derived no particular benefit from him, but who was considered generous by Society as he fed the people who amused him. His father had been our ambassador at Madrid when Isabella was young, and Prim unthought of, but had retired from the Diplomatic Service in a capricious moment of annoyance at not being offered the Embassy at Paris, a post to which he considered that he was fully entitled by reason of his birth, his indolence, the good English of his despatches, and his inordinate passion for pleasure. The son, who had been his father’s secretary, had resigned along with his chief, somewhat foolishly as was thought at the time, and on succeeding some months later to the title, had set himself to the serious study of the great aristocratic art of doing absolutely nothing. He had two large town houses, but preferred to live in chambers, as it was less trouble, and took most of his meals at his club. He paid some attention to the management of his collieries in the Midland counties, excusing himself for this taint of industry.
them for being a pack of Radicals. He swore to his valet, who bullied him, and a most of his relations, whom he bullied in only England could have produced him, always said that the country was going to His principles were out of date, but as a good deal to be said for his prejudices. Lord Henry entered the room, he found sitting in a rough shooting coat, smokeroot, and grumbling over "The Times." "Harry," said the old gentleman, "what you out so early? I thought you dandies start up till two, and were not visible till five." family affection, I assure you, Uncle I want to get something out of you." money, I suppose," said Lord Fermor, making ce. "Well, sit down and tell me all about the people, nowadays, imagine that money thing."
murmured Lord Henry, settling his butt in his coat; "and when they grow older or it. But I don't want money. It is only
me. What I want is information; not useful information, of course; useless information."

"Well, I can tell you anything that is in an English Blue-book, Harry, although those fellows nowadays write a lot of nonsense. When I was in the Diplomatic, things were much better. But I hear they let them in now by examination. What can you expect? Examinations, sir, are pure humbug from beginning to end. If a man is a gentleman, he knows quite enough, and if he is not a gentleman, whatever he knows is bad for him."

"Mr. Dorian Gray does not belong to Blue-books, Uncle George," said Lord Henry, languidly.

"Mr. Dorian Gray? Who is he?" asked Lord Fermor, knitting his bushy white eyebrows.

"That is what I have come to learn, Uncle George. Or rather, I know who he is. He is the last Lord Kelso’s grandson. His mother was a Devereux; Lady Margaret Devereux. I want you to tell me about his mother. What was she like? Whom did she marry? You have known nearly everybody in your time, so you might have known her. I am very much interested in Mr. Gray at present. I have only just met him."

"Kelso’s grandson!" echoed the old gentleman.

—"Kelso’s grandson! ... Of course.... I knew his mother intimately. I believe I was at her christening. She was an extraordinarily beautiful girl, Margaret Devereux; and made all the men frantic by running away with a penniless young fellow; a mere nobody, sir, a subaltern in a foot regiment, or something of that kind. Certainly.
member the whole thing as if it happened yes-
ay. The poor chap was killed in a duel at Spa, w months after the marriage. There was an
story about it. They said Kelso got some-
ally adventurer, some Belgian brute, to insult
on-in-law in public; paid him, sir, to do it, paid
; and that the fellow spitted his man as if he
been a pigeon. The thing was hushed up, but,
, Kelso ate his chop alone at the club for some
afterwards. He brought his daughter back
him, I was told, and she never spoke to him
. Oh, yes; it was a bad business. The girl
too; died within a year. So she left a son, did
I had forgotten that. What sort of boy is
If he is like his mother he must be a good-
ing chap.”
He is very good-looking,” assented Lord
ry.
I hope he will fall into proper hands,” contin-
the old man. “He should have a pot of money
ing for him if Kelso did the right thing by him.
mother had money too. All the Selby property
e to her, through her grandfather. Her grand-
er hated Kelso, thought him a mean dog. He
too. Came to Madrid once when I was there.
d, I was ashamed of him. “The Queen used to
me about the English noble who was always
relling with the cabmen about their fares.
y made quite a story of it. I didn’t dare to
my face at Court for a month. I hope he
ted his grandson better than he did the
ies.”
“I don’t know,” answered Lord Henry. fancy that the boy will be well off. He is not age yet. He has Selby, I know. He told me. And . . . his mother was very beautiful?"

“Margaret Devereux was one of the loveliest creatures I ever saw, Harry. What on earth induced her to behave as she did, I never could understand. She could have married anybody she chose. Carlington was mad after her. She was romantic, though. All the women of that family were. The men were a poor lot, but, egad! the women were wonderful. Carlington went on his knees to her. Told me so himself. She laughed at him, and there wasn’t a girl in London at the time who wasn’t after him. And by the way, Harry, talking about silly marriages, what is that humbug your father tells me about Dartmoor wanting to marry an American? Ain’t English girls good enough for him?”

“It is rather fashionable to marry America just now, Uncle George.”

“I’ll back English women against the worst Harry,” said Lord Fermor, striking the table with his fist.

“The betting is on the Americans.”

“They don’t last, I am told,” muttered the uncle.

“A long engagement exhausts them, but the are capital at a steeplechase. They take this flying. I don’t think Dartmoor has a chance.”

“Who are her people?” grumbled the old gent man. “Has she got any?”
Lord Henry shook his head. "American girls are as clever at concealing their parents as English women are at concealing their past," he said, rising to go.

"They are pork-packers, I suppose?"

"I hope so, Uncle George, for Dartmoor's sake. I am told that pork-packing is the most lucrative profession in America, after politics."

"Is she pretty?"

"She behaves as if she was beautiful. Most American women do. It is the secret of their charm."

"Why can't these American women stay in their own country? They are always telling us that it is the Paradise for women."

"It is. That is the reason why, like Eve, they are so excessively anxious to get out of it," said Lord Henry. "Good-bye, Uncle George. I shall be late for lunch, if I stop any longer. Thanks for giving me the information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is her latest protégé."

"Humph! tell your Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with her charity appeals. I am sick of them. Why, the good woman thinks that I have nothing to do but to write cheques for her silly fads."

"All right, Uncle George, I'll tell her, but it won't have any effect. Philanthropic people lose
all sense of humanity. It is their distinguishing characteristic."

The old gentleman growled approvingly, and rang the bell for his servant. Lord Henry passed up the low arcade into Burlington Street, and turned his steps in the direction of Berkeley Square.

So that was the story of Dorian Gray's parentage. Crudely as it had been told to him, it had yet stirred him by its suggestion of a strange, almost modern romance. A beautiful woman risking everything for a mad passion. A few wild weeks of happiness cut short by a hideous, treacherous crime. Months of voiceless agony, and then a child born in pain. The mother snatched away by death, the boy left to solitude and the tyranny of an old and loveless man. Yes; it was an interesting background. It posed the lad, made him more perfect as it were. Behind every exquisite thing that existed, there was something tragic. Worlds had to be in travail, that the meanest flower might blow. . . . And how charming he had been at dinner the night before, as, with startled eyes and lips parted in frightened pleasure, he had sat opposite to him at the club, the red candleshades staining to a richer rose the wakening wonder of his face. Talking to him was like playing upon an exquisite violin. He answered to every touch and thrill of the bow. . . . There was something terribly entralling in the exercise of influence. No other activity was like it. To project one's soul into some gracious form, and let it tarry there for a
moment; to hear one's own intellectual views choed back to one with all the added music of passion and youth; to convey one's temperament into another as though it were a subtle fluid or a strange perfume; there was a real joy in that—perhaps the most satisfying joy left to us in an age so limited and vulgar as our own, an age grossly carnal in its pleasures, and grossly common in its aims. . . . He was a marvellous type, too, this lad, whom by so curious a chance he had met in Basil's studio; or could be fashioned into a marvellous type, at any rate. Grace was his, and the white purity of boyhood, and beauty such as old Greek marbles kept for us. There was nothing that one could not do with him. He could be made a Titan or a toy. What a pity it was that such beauty was destined to fade! . . . And Basil? From a psychological point of view, how interesting he was! The new manner in art, the fresh mode of looking at life, suggested so strangely by the merely visible presence of one who was unconscious of it all; the silent spirit that dwelt in dim woodland, and walked unseen in an open field, suddenly showing herself, Dryad-like and not afraid, because in his soul who sought for her there had been wakened that wonderful vision to which alone are wonderful things revealed; the mere shapes and patterns of things becoming, as it were, refined, and gaining a kind of symbolical value, as though they were themselves patterns of some other and more perfect form whose shadow they made real: how strange it all was! He remembered
something like it in history. Was it not Plato that artist in thought, who had first analysed it? Was it not Buonarotti who had carved it in the coloured marbles of a sonnet-sequenace? But in our own century it was strange: . . . Yes; he would try to be to Dorian Gray what, without knowing it, the lad was to the painter who had fashioned the wonderful portrait. He would seek to dominate him—had already, indeed, half done so. He would make that wonderful spirit his own. There was something fascinating in this son of Love and Death.

Suddenly he stopped, and glanced up at the houses. He found that he had passed his aunt's some distance, and, smiling to himself, turned back. When he entered the somewhat sombre hall the butler told him that they had gone in to lunch. He gave one of the footmen his hat and stick, and passed into the dining-room.

"Late as usual, Harry," cried his aunt, shaking her head at him.

He invented a facile excuse, and having taken the vacant seat next to her, looked round to see who was there. Dorian bowed to him shyly from the end of the table, a flush of pleasure stealing into his cheek. Opposite was the Duchess of Harley; a lady of admirable good-nature and good temper, much liked by everyone who knew her, and of those ample architectural proportions that in women who are not Duchesses are described by contemporary historians as stoutness. Next to
er sat, on her right, Sir Thomas Burdon, a Radical member of Parliament, who followed his leader in public life, and in private life followed the best books, dining with the Tories, and thinking with the Liberals, in accordance with a wise and well-known rule. The post on her left was occupied by Mr. Erskine of Treadley, an old gentleman of considerable charm and culture, who had fallen, however, into bad habits of silence, having, as he explained once to Lady Agatha, said everything that he had to say before he was thirty. His own neighbour was Mrs. Vandeleur, one of his aunt’s oldest friends, a perfect saint amongst women, but so dreadfully dowdy that she reminded one of a badly bound hymn-book. Fortunately for him she had on the other side Lord Faudel, a most intelligent middle-aged mediocrity, as bald as a Ministerial statement in the House of Commons, with whom she was conversing in that intensely earnest manner which is the one unpardonable error, as he remarked once himself, that all really good people fall into, and from which none of them ever quite escape.

“We are talking about poor Dartmoor, Lord Henry,” cried the Duchess, nodding pleasantly to him across the table. “Do you think he will really marry this fascinating young person?”

“I believe she has made up her mind to propose to him, Duchess.”

“How dreadful!” exclaimed Lady Agatha. “Really, someone should interfere.”

“I am told, on excellent authority, that her
father keeps an American dry-goods store," said Sir Thomas Burdon, looking supercilious.

"My uncle has already suggested pork-packing, Sir Thomas."

"Dry-goods! What are American dry-goods?" asked the Duchess, raising her large hands in wonder, and accentuating the verb.

"American novels," answered Lord Henry, helping himself to some quail.

The Duchess looked puzzled.

"Don't mind him, my dear," whispered Lady Agatha. "He never means anything that he says."

"When America was discovered," said the Radical member, and he began to give some wearisome facts. Like all people who try to exhaust a subject, he exhausted his listeners. The Duchess sighed, and exercised her privilege of interruption.

"I wish to goodness it never had been discovered at all!" she exclaimed. "Really, our girls have no chance nowadays. It is most unfair."

"Perhaps, after all, America never has been discovered," said Mr. Erskine. "I myself would say that it had merely been detected."

"Oh! but I have seen specimens of the inhabitants," answered the Duchess, vaguely. "I must confess that most of them are extremely pretty. And they dress well, too. They get all their dresses in Paris. I wish I could afford to do the same."

"They say that when good Americans die they go to Paris," chuckled Sir Thomas, who had a large wardrobe of Humour's cast-off clothes.
"Really! And where do bad Americans go to when they die?" inquired the Duchess.

"They go to America," murmured Lord Henry. Sir Thomas frowned. "I am afraid that your nephew is prejudiced against that great country," he said to Lady Agatha. "I have travelled all over it, in cars provided by the directors, who, in such matters, are extremely civil. I assure you that it is an education to visit it."

"But must we really see Chicago in order to be educated?" asked Mr. Erskine, plaintively. "I don't feel up to the journey."

Sir Thomas waved his hand. "Mr. Erskine of Treadley has the world on his shelves. We practical men like to see things, not to read about them. The Americans are an extremely interesting people. They are absolutely reasonable. I think that is their distinguishing characteristic. Yes, Mr. Erskine, an absolutely reasonable people. I assure you there is no nonsense about the Americans."

"How dreadful!" cried Lord Henry. "I can stand brute force, but brute reason is quite unbearable. There is something unfair about its use. It is hitting below the intellect."

"I do not understand you," said Sir Thomas, growing rather red.

"I do, Lord Henry," murmured Mr. Erskine, with a smile.

"Paradoxes are all very well in their way. . . ." rejoined the Baronet.

"Was that a paradox?" asked Mr. Erskine. "I did not think so. Perhaps it was. Well, the
way of paradoxes is the way of truth. To test Reality we must see it on the tight-rope. When the Verities become acrobats we can judge them."

"Dear me!" said Lady Agatha, "how you men argue! I am sure I never can make out what you are talking about. Oh! Harry, I am quite vexed with you. Why do you try to persuade our noble Mr. Dorian Gray to give up the East End? I assure you he would be quite invaluable. They would love his playing."

"I want him to play to me," cried Lord Henry, smiling, and he looked down the table and caught a bright answering glance.

"But they are so unhappy in Whitechapel," continued Lady Agatha.

"I can sympathise with everything, except suffering," said Lord Henry, shrugging his shoulders. "I cannot sympathise with that. It is too ugly, too horrible, too distressing. There is something terribly morbid in the modern sympathy with pain. One should sympathise with the colour, the beauty, the joy of life. The less said about life's sores the better."

"Still, the East End is a very important problem," remarked Sir Thomas, with a grave shake of the head.

"Quite so," answered the young lord. "It is the problem of slavery, and we try to solve it by amusing the slaves."

The politician looked at him keenly. "What change do you propose, then?" he asked.
Lord Henry laughed. "I don't desire to change anything in England except the weather," he answered. "I am quite content with philosophic contemplation. But, as the nineteenth century has gone bankrupt through an over-expenditure of sympathy, I would suggest that we should appeal to Science to put us straight. The advantage of the emotions is that they lead us astray, and the advantage of Science is that it is not emotional."

"But we have such grave responsibilities," ventured Mrs. Vandeleur, timidly.

"Terribly grave," echoed Lady Agatha.

Lord Henry looked over at Mr. Erskine. "Humanity takes itself too seriously. It is the world's original sin. If the caveman had known how to laugh, History would have been different."

"You are really very comforting," warbled the Duchess. "I have always felt rather guilty when I came to see your dear aunt, for I take no interest at all in the East End. For the future I shall be able to look her in the face without a blush."

"A blush is very becoming, Duchess," remarked Lord Henry.

"Only when one is young," she answered. "When an old woman like myself blushes, it is a very bad sign. Ah! Lord Henry, I wish you would tell me how to become young again."

He thought for a moment. "Can you remember any great error that you committed in your early days, Duchess?" he asked, looking at her across the table.

"A great many, I fear," she cried.
"Then commit them over again," he said gravely. "To get back one's youth, one merely to repeat one's follies."

"A delightful theory!" she exclaimed. "I shall put it into practice."

"A dangerous theory!" came from Sir Thomas. Lady Agatha shook her head, could not help being amused. Mr. Erskine listened.

"Yes," he continued, "that is one of the greatest secrets of life. Nowadays most people die of a case of creeping common sense, and discover when it is too late that the only things one never regrets are one's mistakes."

A laugh ran round the table.

He played with the idea, and grew willful; tossed it into the air and transformed it; let it escape; recaptured it; made it iridescent with fancy, and winged it with paradox. The praise of folly, as went on, soared into a philosophy, and Philosophy herself became young, and catching the mad madness of Pleasure, wearing, one might fancy, her white stained robe and wreath of ivy, danced like a Bacchante over the hills of life, and mocked the spirit of Silenus for being sober. Facts fled before her; frightened forest things. Her white feet trod the huge press at which wise Omar sits, till the sweet grape-juice rose round her bare limbs in waves of purple bubbles, or crawled in red foam over the vat's black, dripping, sloping sides. It was an extraordinary improvisation. He felt that the eyes of Dorian Gray were fixed on him, and the c
viousness that amongst his audience there was one
whose temperament he wished to fascinate, seemed
to give his wit keenness, and to lend colour to his
imagination. He was brilliant, fantastic, irrespon-
sible. He charmed his listeners out of them-
 selves, and they followed his pipe laughing. Dor-
ian Gray never took his gaze off him, but sat like
me under a spell, smiles chasing each other over
his lips, and wonder growing grave in his darkening
pre.
"At last, liveried in the costume of the age, Real-
y entered the room in the shape of a servant to
tell the Duchess that her carriage was waiting.
She wrung her hands in mock despair. "How
annoying!" she cried. "I must go. I have to call
for my husband at the club, to take him to some
absurd meeting at Willis's Rooms, where he is
going to be in the chair. If I am late, he is sure to
be furious, and I couldn't have a scene in this
bonnet. It is far too fragile. A harsh word would
ruin it. No, I must go, dear Agatha. Good-bye,
Lord Henry, you are quite delightful, and dread-
fully demoralising. I am sure I don't know what
to say about your views. You must come and dine
with us some night. Tuesday? Are you disen-
egaged Tuesday?"
"For you I would throw over anybody, Duch-
ess," said Lord Henry, with a bow.
"Ah! that is very nice, and very wrong of you,"
he cried; "so mind you come;" and she swept
out of the room, followed by Lady Agatha and
the other ladies.
When Lord Henry had sat down again, Mr. Erskine moved round, and taking a chair close to him, placed his hand upon his arm.

"You talk books away," he said; "why don't you write one?"

"I am too fond of reading books to care to write them, Mr. Erskine. I should like to write a novel certainly; a novel that would be as lovely as a Persian carpet, and as unreal. But there is no literary public in England for anything except newspapers, primers, and encyclopædias. Of all people in the world the English have the least sense of the beauty of literature."

"I fear you are right," answered Mr. Erskine. "I myself used to have literary ambitions, but I gave them up long ago. And now, my dear young friend, if you will allow me to call you so, may I ask if you really meant all that you said to us at lunch?"

"I quite forget what I said," smiled Lord Henry. "Was it all very bad?"

"Very bad indeed. In fact I consider you extremely dangerous, and if anything happens to our good Duchess we shall all look on you as being primarily responsible. But I should like to talk to you about life. The generation into which I was born was tedious. Some day, when you are tired of London, come down to Treadley, and expound to me your philosophy of pleasure over some admirable Burgundy I am fortunate enough to possess."

"I shall be charmed. A visit to Treadley would
be a great privilege. It has a perfect host, and a perfect library."

"You will complete it," answered the old gentleman, with a courteous bow. "And now I must bid good-bye to your excellent aunt. I am due at the Athenæum. It is the hour when we sleep there."

"All of you, Mr. Erskine?"

"Forty of us, in forty arm-chairs. We are practicing for an English Academy of Letters."

Lord Henry laughed, and rose. "I am going to the Park," he cried.

As he was passing out of the door Dorian Gray touched him on the arm. "Let me come with you," he murmured.

"But I thought you had promised Basil Hallward to go and see him," answered Lord Henry. "I would sooner come with you; yes, I feel I must come with you. Do let me. And you will promise to talk to me all the time? No one talks so wonderfully as you do."

"Ah! I have talked quite enough for to-day," said Lord Henry, smiling. "All I want now is to look at life. You may come and look at it with me, if you care to."
CHAPTER IV

ONE afternoon, a month later, Dorian Gray was reclining in a luxurious arm-chair, in the little library of Lord Henry's house in Mayfair. It was, in its way, a very charming room, with its high-panelled wainscoting of olive-stained oak, its cream-coloured frieze and ceiling of raised plasterwork, and its brickdust felt carpet strewn with silk long-fringed Persian rugs. On a tiny satinwood table stood a statuette by Clodion, and beside it lay a copy of "Les Cent Nouvelles," bound for Margaret of Valois by Clovis Eve, and powdered with the gilt daisies that Queen had selected for her device. Some large blue china jars and parrot-tulips were ranged on the mantelshelf, and through the small leaded panels of the window streamed the apricot-coloured light of a summer day in London.

Lord Henry had not yet come in. He was always late on principle, his principle being that punctuality is the thief of time. So the lad was looking rather sulky, as with listless fingers he turned over the pages of an elaborately-illustrated edition of "Manon Lescaut," that he had found in one of the bookcases. The formal monotonous ticking of the Louis Quatorze clock annoyed him. Once or twice he thought of going away.
At last he heard a step outside, and the door opened. "How late you are, Harry!" he murmured.

"I am afraid it is not Harry, Mr. Gray," answered a shrill voice.

He glanced quickly round, and rose to his feet. "I beg your pardon. I thought——"

"You thought it was my husband. It is only his wife. You must let me introduce myself. I know you quite well by your photographs. I think my husband has got seventeen of them."

"Not seventeen, Lady Henry?"

"Well, eighteen, then. And I saw you with him the other night at the Opera." She laughed nervously as she spoke, and watched him with her vague forget-me-not eyes. She was a curious woman, whose dresses always looked as if they had been designed in a rage and put on in a tempest. She was usually in love with somebody, and, as her passion was never returned, she had kept all her illusions. She tried to look picturesque, but only succeeded in being untidy. Her name was Victoria, and she had a perfect mania for going to church.

"That was at 'Lohengrin,' Lady Henry, I think?"

"Yes; it was at dear 'Lohengrin.' I like Wagner's music better than anybody's. It is so loud that one can talk the whole time without other people hearing what one says. That is a great advantage: don't you think so, Mr. Gray?"

The same nervous staccato laugh broke from
her thin lips, and her fingers began to play with a long tortoise-shell paper-knife.

Dorian smiled, and shook his head: "I am afraid I don't think so, Lady Henry. I never talk during music, at least, during good music. If one hears bad music, it is one's duty to drown it in conversation."

"Ah! that is one of Harry's views, isn't it, Mr. Gray? I always hear Harry's views from his friends. It is the only way I get to know of them. But you must not think I don't like good music. I adore it, but I am afraid of it. It makes me too romantic. I have simply worshipped pianists—two at a time, sometimes, Harry tells me. I don't know what it is about them. Perhaps it is that they are foreigners. They all are, ain't they? Even those that are born in England become foreigners after a time, don't they? It is so clever of them, and such a compliment to art. Makes it quite cosmopolitan, doesn't it? You have never been to any of my parties, have you, Mr. Gray? You must come. I can't afford orchids, but I spare no expense in foreigners. They make one's rooms look so picturesque. But here is Harry!—Harry, I came in to look for you, to ask you something—I forget what it was—and I found Mr. Gray here. We have had such a pleasant chat about music. We have quite the same ideas. No; I think our ideas are quite different. But he has been most pleasant. I am so glad I've seen him."

"I am charmed, my love, quite charmed," said Lord Henry, elevating his dark crescent-shaped
eyebrows and looking at them both with an amused smile. "So sorry I am late, Dorian. I went to look after a piece of old brocade in Wardour Street, and had to bargain for hours for it. Nowadays people know the price of everything, and the value of nothing."

"I am afraid I must be going," exclaimed Lady Henry, breaking an awkward silence with her silly sudden laugh. "I have promised to drive with the Duchess. Good-bye, Mr. Gray. Good-bye, Harry. You are dining out, I suppose? So am I. Perhaps I shall see you at Lady Thornbury's."

"I daresay, my dear," said Lord Henry, shutting the door behind her, as, looking like a bird of paradise that had been out all night in the rain, she flitted out of the room, leaving a faint odour of frangipanni. Then he lit a cigarette, and flung himself down on the sofa.

"Never marry a woman with straw-coloured hair, Dorian," he said, after a few puffs. "Why, Harry?"

"Because they are so sentimental."

"But I like sentimental people."

"Never marry at all, Dorian. Men marry because they are tired; women, because they are curious; both are disappointed."

"I don't think I am likely to marry, Henry. I am too much in love. That is one of your aphorisms. I am putting it into practice, as I do everything that you say."

"Who are you in love with?" asked Lord Henry, after a pause.

“You would not say so if you saw her, Harry.”

“Who is she?”

“Her name is Sibyl Vane.”

“Never heard of her.”

“No one has. People will some day, however. She is a genius.”

“My dear boy, no woman is a genius. Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly. Women represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals.”

“Harry, how can you?”

“My dear Dorian, it is quite true. I am analysing women at the present, so I ought to know. The subject is not so abstruse as I thought it was. I find that, ultimately, there are only two kinds of women, the plain and the coloured. The plain women are very useful. If you want to gain a reputation for respectability, you have merely to take them down to supper. The other women are very charming. They commit one mistake, however. They paint in order to try and look young. Our grandmothers painted in order to try and talk brilliantly. Rouge and esprit used to go together. That is all over now. As long as a woman can look ten years younger than her own daughter, she is perfectly satisfied. As for conversation, there are only five women in London worth talking to, and two of these can’t be admitted into
"It society. However, tell me about your is. How long have you known her?"

"Ah! Harry, your views terrify me."

Never mind that. How long have you known

"About three weeks."

"And where did you come across her?"

"I will tell you, Harry; but you mustn't be unsympathetic about it. After all, it never would happened if I had not met you. You filled me a wild desire to know everything about life. days after I met you, something seemed to
in my veins. As I lounged in the Park, or ed down Piccadilly, I used to look at every who passed me, and wonder, with a mad sity, what sort of lives they led. Some of fascinated me. Others filled me with terror.

I was an exquisite poison in the air. I had a on for sensations. . . . Well, one evening t seven o'clock, I determined to go out in h of some adventure. I felt that this grey, trous London of ours, with its myriads of e, its sordid sinners, and its splendid sins, as once phrased it, must have something in store e. I fancied a thousand things. The mere er gave me a sense of delight. I remem- what you had said to me on that wonderful ng when we first dined together, about the h for beauty being the real secret of life. t know what I expected, but I went out and ered eastward, soon losing my way in a laby- of grimy streets and black, grassless squares.
About half-past eight I passed by an absurd little theatre, with great flaring gas-jets and gaudy playbills. A hideous Jew, in the most amazing waistcoat I ever beheld in my life, was standing at the entrance, smoking a vile cigar. He had greasy ringlets, and an enormous diamond blazed in the centre of a soiled shirt. 'Have a box, my Lord?' he said, when he saw me, and he took off his hat with an air of gorgeous servility. There was something about him, Harry, that amused me. He was such a monster. You will laugh at me, I know, but I really went in and paid a whole guinea for the stage-box. To the present day I can't make out why I did so; and yet if I hadn't—my dear Harry, if I hadn't, I should have missed the greatest romance of my life. I see you are laughing. It is horrid of you!"

"I am not laughing, Dorian; at least I am not laughing at you. But you should not say the greatest romance of your life. You should say the first romance of your life. You will always be loved, and you will always be in love with love. A grande passion is the privilege of people who have nothing to do. That is the one use of the idle classes of a country. Don't be afraid. There are exquisite things in store for you: This is merely the beginning."

"Do you think my nature so shallow?" crie Dorian Gray, angrily.

"No; I think your nature so deep."

"How do you mean?"

"My dear boy, the people who love only once
their lives are really the shallow people. What they call their loyalty, and their fidelity, I call either the lethargy of custom or their lack of imagination. Faithfulness is to the emotional life what consistency is to the life of the intellect—simply a confession of failures. Faithfulness! I must analyse it some day. The passion for property is in it. There are many things that we would throw away if we were not afraid that others might pick them up. But I don’t want to interrupt you. Go on with your story.”

“Well, I found myself seated in a horrid little private box, with a vulgar drop-scene staring me in the face. I looked out from behind the curtain, and surveyed the house. It was a tawdry affair, all Cupids and cornucopias, like a third-rate wedding cake. The gallery and pit were fairly full, but the two rows of dingy stalls were quite empty, and there was hardly a person in what I suppose they called the dress-circle. Women went about with oranges and ginger-beer, and there was a terrible consumption of nuts going on.”

“It must have been just like the palmy days of the British Drama.”

“Just like, I should fancy, and very depressing. I began to wonder what on earth I should do, when I caught sight of the play-bill. What do you think the play was, Harry?”

“I should think, ‘The Idiot Boy, or Dumb but Innocent.’ Our fathers used to like that sort of piece, I believe. The longer I live, Dorian, the more keenly I feel that whatever was good enough
for our fathers is not good enough for us. In art, as in politics, *les grandspères ont toujours tort.*"

"This play was good enough for us, Harry. It was 'Romeo and Juliet.' I must admit that I was rather annoyed at the idea of seeing Shakespeare done in such a wretched hole of a place. Still, I felt interested, in a sort of way. At any rate, I determined to wait for the first act. There was a dreadful orchestra, presided over by a young Hebrew who sat at a cracked piano, that nearly drove me away, but at last the drop-scene was drawn up, and the play began. Romeo was a stout elderly gentleman, with corked eyebrows, a husky tragedy voice, and a figure like a beer-barrel. Mercutio was almost as bad. He was played by the low-comedian, who had introduced gags of his own and was on most friendly terms with the pit. They were both as grotesque as the scenery, and that looked as if it had come out of a country-booth. But Juliet! Harry, imagine a girl, hardly seventeen years of age, with a little flower-like face, a small Greek head with plaited coils of dark-brown hair, eyes that were violet wells of passion, lips that were like the petals of a rose. She was the loveliest thing I had ever seen in my life. You said to me once that pathos left you unmoved, but that beauty, mere beauty, could fill your eyes with tears. I tell you, Harry, I could hardly see this girl for the mist of tears that came across me. And her voice—I never heard such a voice. It was very low at first, with deep mellow notes, that seemed to fall singly upon one's ear. Then it became a little
louder, and sounded like a flute or a distant hautbois. In the garden-scene it had all the tremulous ecstasy that one hears just before dawn when nightingales are singing. There were moments, later on, when it had the wild passion of violins. You know how a voice can stir one. Your voice and the voice of Sibyl Vane are two things that I shall never forget. When I close my eyes, I hear them, and each of them says something different. I don't know which to follow. Why should I not love her? Harry, I do love her. She is everything to me in life. Night after night I go to see her play. One evening she is Rosalind, and the next evening she is Imogen. I have seen her die in the gloom of an Italian tomb, sucking the poison from her lover's lips. I have watched her wandering through the forest of Arden, disguised as a pretty boy in hose and doublet and dainty cap. She has been mad, and has come into the presence of a guilty king, and given him rue to wear, and bitter herbs to taste of. She has been innocent, and the black hands of jealousy have crushed her reed-like throat. I have seen her in every age and in every costume. Ordinary women never appeal to one's imagination. They are limited to their century. No glamour ever transfigures them. One knows their minds as easily as one knows their bonnets. One can always find them. There is no mystery in any of them. They ride in the Park in the morning, and chatter at tea-parties in the afternoon. They have their stereotyped smile, and their fashionable manner. They are quite obvious.
But an actress! How different an actress is! Harry! why didn’t you tell me that the only thing worth loving is an actress?"

"Because I have loved so many of them, Dorian."

"Oh, yes, horrid people with dyed hair and painted faces."

"Don’t run down dyed hair and painted faces. There is an extraordinary charm in them, sometimes," said Lord Henry.

"I wish now I had not told you about Sibyl Vane."

"You could not have helped telling me, Dorian. All through your life you will tell me everything you do."

"Yes, Harry, I believe that is true. I cannot help telling you things. You have a curious influence over me. If I ever did a crime, I would come and confess it to you. You would understand me."

"People like you—the willful sunbeams of life—don’t commit crimes, Dorian. But I am much obliged for the compliment, all the same. And now tell me—reach me the matches, like a good boy: thanks—what are your actual relations with Sibyl Vane?"

Dorian Gray leaped to his feet, with flushed cheeks and burning eyes. "Harry! Sibyl Vane is sacred!"

"It is only the sacred things that are worth touching, Dorian," said Lord Henry, with a strange touch of pathos in his voice. "But why should you be annoyed? I suppose she will belong
to you some day. When one is in love, one always begins by deceiving one's self, and one always ends by deceiving others. That is what the world calls a romance. You know her, at any rate, I suppose?"

"Of course I know her. On the first night I was at the theatre, the horrid old Jew came round to the box after the performance was over, and offered to take me behind the scenes and introduce me to her. I was furious with him, and told him that Juliet had been dead for hundreds of years, and that her body was lying in a marble tomb in Verona. I think, from his blank look of amazement, that he was under the impression that I had taken too much champagne, or something."

"I am not surprised."

"Then he asked me if I wrote for any of the newspapers. I told him I never even read them. He seemed terribly disappointed at that, and confided to me that all the dramatic critics were in a conspiracy against him, and that they were every one of them to be bought."

"I should not wonder if he was quite right there. But, on the other hand, judging from their appearance, most of them cannot be at all expensive."

"Well, he seemed to think they were beyond his means," laughed Dorian. "By this time, however, the lights were being put out in the theatre, and I had to go. He wanted me to try some cigars that he strongly recommended. I declined. The next night, of course, I arrived at the place again.
When he saw me he made me a low bow, and assured me that I was a munificent patron of art. He was a most offensive brute, though he had an extraordinary passion for Shakespeare. He told me once, with an air of pride, that his five bankruptcies were entirely due to 'The Bard,' as he insisted on calling him. He seemed to think it a distinction."

"It was a distinction, my dear Dorian—a great distinction. Most people become bankrupt through having invested too heavily in the prose of life. To have ruined one's self over poetry is an honour. But when did you first speak to Miss Sibyl Vane?"

"The third night. She had been playing Rosalind. I could not help going round. I had thrown her some flowers, and she had looked at me; at least I fancied that she had. The old Jew was persistent. He seemed determined to take me behind, so I consented. It was curious my not wanting to know her, wasn't it?"

"No; I don't think so."

"My dear Harry, why?"

"I will tell you some other time. Now I want to know about the girl."

"Sibyl? Oh, she was so shy, and so gentle. There is something of a child about her. Her eyes opened wide in exquisite wonder when I told her what I thought of her performance, and she seemed quite unconscious of her power. I think we were both rather nervous. The old Jew stood grinning at the doorway of the dusty greenroom, making elaborate speeches about us both, while we..."
d looking at each other like children. He
ld insist on calling me 'My Lord,' so I had to
re Sibyl that I was not anything of the kind.
said quite simply to me, 'You look more like a
cce. I must call you Prince Charming.' "
Upon my word, Dorian, Miss Sibyl knows how
tay compliments."
You don't understand her, Harry. She re-
ed me merely as a person in a play. She
ws nothing of life. She lives with her mother,
ed tired woman who played Lady Capulet in
ort of magenta dressing-wrapper on the first
at, and looks as if she had seen better days."
I know that look. It depresses me," murr-
ed Lord Henry, examining his rings.
The Jew wanted to tell me her history, but I
it did not interest me."
You were quite right. There is always some-
g infinitely mean about other people's trage-
Sibyl is the only thing I care about. What is
to me where she came from? From her little
d to her little feet, she is absolutely and en-
dy divine. Every night of my life I go to
her act, and every night she is more mar-
ous."
That is the reason, I suppose, that you never
with me now. I thought you must have some-
ous romance on hand. You have; but it is not
be what I expected."'
My dear Harry, we either lunch or sup to-
er every day, and I have been to the Opera.
with you several times,” said Dorian, opening his blue eyes in wonder.

“‘You always come dreadfully late.’

‘Well, I can’t help going to see Sibyl play,’ I cried, ‘even if it is only for a single act. I get hungry for her presence; and when I think of the wonderful soul that is hidden away in that little ivory body, I am filled with awe.’

‘You can dine with me to-night, Dorian, can you?’

He shook his head. ‘To-night she is Imogen,’ he answered, ‘and to-morrow night she will be Juliet.’

‘When is she Sibyl Vane?’

‘Never.’

‘I congratulate you.’

‘How horrid you are! She is all the great heroines of the world in one. She is more than an individual. You laugh, but I tell you she has genius. I love her, and I must make her love me. You, who know all the secrets of life, tell me how to charm Sibyl Vane to love me! I want to make Romeo jealous. I want the dead lovers of the world to hear our laughter, and grow sad. I want a breath of our passion to stir their dust into consciousness, to wake their ashes into pain. My God, Harry, how I worship her!’ He was walking up and down the room as he spoke. Hectic spots of red burned on his cheeks. He was terribly excited.

Lord Henry watched him with a subtle sense of pleasure. How different he was now from the shy
frightened boy he had met in Basil Hallward’s studio! His nature had developed like a flower, had borne blossoms of scarlet flame. Out of its secret hiding-place had crept his Soul, and Desire had come to meet it on the way.

“And what do you propose to do?” said Lord Henry, at last.

“I want you and Basil to come with me some night and see her act. I have not the slightest fear of the result. You are certain to acknowledge her genius. Then we must get her out of the Jew’s hands. She is bound to him for three years—at least for two years and eight months—from the present time. I shall have to pay him something, of course. When all that is settled, I shall take a West End theatre and bring her out properly. She will make the world as mad as she has made me.”

“That would be impossible, my dear boy.”

“Yes, she will. She has not merely art, consummate art-instinct, in her, but she has personality also; and you have often told me that it is personalities, not principles, that move the age.”

“Well, what night shall we go?”

“Let me see. To-day is Tuesday. Let us fix to-morrow. She plays Juliet to-morrow.”

“All right. The Bristol at eight o’clock; and I will get Basil.”

“Not eight, Harry, please. Half-past six. We must be there before the curtain rises. You must see her in the first act, where she meets Romeo.”

“Half-past six! What an hour! It will be like
having a meat-tea, or reading an English novel. must be seven. No gentleman dines before seven. Shall you see Basil between this and then? I shall I write to him?"

"Dear Basil! I have not laid eyes on him for a week. It is rather horrid of me, as he has sent me my portrait in the most wonderful frame, specially designed by himself, and, though I am a little jealous of the picture for being a whole month younger than I am, I must admit that I delight in it. Perhaps you had better write to him. I don't want to see him alone. He says things that annoy me. He gives me good advice."

Lord Henry smiled. "People are very fond of giving away what they need most themselves. That is what I call the depth of generosity."

"Oh, Basil is the best of fellows, but he seems to me to be just a bit of a Philistine. Since I have known you, Harry, I have discovered that."

"Basil, my dear boy, puts everything that is charming in him into his work. The consequence is that he has nothing left for life but his prejudices, his principles, and his common-sense. The only artists I have ever known, who are personally delightful, are bad artists. Good artists exist simply in what they make, and consequently are perfectly uninteresting in what they are. A great poet, a really great poet, is the most unpoetical of all creatures. But inferior poets are absolutely fascinating. The worse their rhymes are, the more picturesque they look. The mere fact of having published a book of second-rate sonne
makes a man quite irresistible. He lives the poetry that he cannot write. The others write the poetry that they dare not realise."

"I wonder is that really so, Harry?" said Dorian Gray, putting some perfume on his handkerchief out of a large gold-topped bottle that stood on the table. "It must be, if you say it. And now I am off. Imogen is waiting for me. Don't forget about to-morrow. Good-bye."

As he left the room, Lord Henry's heavy eyelids drooped, and he began to think. Certainly few people had ever interested him so much as Dorian Gray, and yet the lad's mad adoration of some one else caused him not the slightest pang of annoyance or jealousy. He was pleased by it. It made him a more interesting study. He had been always enthralled by the methods of natural science, but the ordinary subject-matter of that science had seemed to him trivial and of no import. And so he had begun by vivisecting himself, as he had ended by vivisecting others. Human life—that appeared to him the one thing worth investigating. Compared to it there was nothing else of any value. It was true that as one watched life in its curious crucible of pain and pleasure, one could not wear over one's face a mask of glass, nor keep the sulphurous fumes from troubling the brain, and making the imagination turbid with monstrous fancies and misshapen dreams. There were poisons so subtle that to know their properties one had to sicken of them. There were maladies so strange that one had to pass through them if one sought to
understand their nature. And, yet, what a grand reward one received! How wonderful thewhole world became to one! To note the curious harmony of passion, and the emotional coloured lifewith the intellect—to observe where they met, and where they separated, at what point they were in unison, and at what point they were at discord, there was a delight in that! What matter what the cost was? One could never pay too high a price for any sensation.

He was conscious—and the thought brought a gleam of pleasure into his brown agate eyes—that it was through certain words of his, musical words, said with musical utterance, that Dorian Gray's soul had turned to this white girl and bowed in worship before her. To a large extent the lad was his own creation. He had made him premature. That was something. Ordinary people waited for life disclosed to them its secrets, but to the few, the elect, the mysteries of life were revealed before the veil was drawn away. Sometimes this was the effect of art, and chiefly of the art of literature which dealt immediately with the passions and the intellect. But now and then a complex personality took the place and assumed the office of art; while, indeed, in its way, a real work of art, Life having its elaborate masterpieces, just as poetry has, sculpture, or painting.

Yes, the lad was premature. He had gathered his harvest while it was yet spring. The pulse of passion of youth were in him, but he was become self-conscious. It was delightful to watch him
With his beautiful face, and his beautiful soul, he was a thing to wonder at. It was no matter how it all ended, or was destined to end. He was like one of those gracious figures in a pageant or a play, whose joys seem to be remote from one, but whose sorrows stir one's sense of beauty, and whose wounds are like red roses.

Soul and body, body and soul—how mysterious they were! There was animalism in the soul, and the body had its moments of spirituality. The senses could refine, and the intellect could degrade. Who could say where the fleshly impulse ceased, or the physical impulse began? How shallow were the arbitrary definitions of ordinary psychologists! And yet how difficult to decide between the claims of the various schools! Was the soul a shadow seated in the house of sin? Or was the body really in the soul, as Giordano Bruno thought? The separation of spirit from matter was a mystery, and the union of spirit with matter was a mystery also.

He began to wonder whether we could ever make psychology so absolute a science that each little spring of life would be revealed to us. As it was, we always misunderstood ourselves, and rarely understood others. Experience was of no ethical value. It was merely the name men gave to their mistakes. Moralists had, as a rule, regarded it as a mode of warning, had claimed for it a certain ethical efficacy in the formation of character, had praised it as something that taught us what to follow and showed us what to avoid. But there
was no motive power in experience. It was a little of an active cause as conscience itself. Also, that it really demonstrated was that our future would be the same as our past, and that the sins we had done once, and with loathing, we would do many times, and with joy.

It was clear to him that the experimental method was the only method by which one could arrive at any scientific analysis of the passions, and certainly Dorian Gray was a subject made to his hand, and seemed to promise rich and fruitful results. His sudden mad love for Sibyl Vane was a psychological phenomenon of no small interest. There was no doubt that curiosity had much to do with it, curiosity and the desire for new experiences; yet it was not a simple but rather a very complex passion. What there was in it of the purely sensuous instinct of boyhood had been transformed by the workings of the imagination into something that seemed to the last himself to be remote from sense, and was for that very reason all the more dangerous. It was the passions about whose origin we deceived ourselves that tyrannised most strongly over us. Our weakest motives were those of whose nature we were conscious. It often happened that when we thought we were experimenting on others we were really experimenting on ourselves.

While Lord Henry sat dreaming on these things a knock came to the door, and his valet entered and reminded him it was time to dress for dinner. He got up and looked out into the street. The
sunset had smitten into scarlet gold the upper windows of the houses opposite. The panes glowed like plates of heated metal. The sky above was like a faded rose. He thought of his friend’s young fiery-coloured life, and wondered how it was all going to end.

When he arrived home, about half-past twelve o’clock, he saw a telegram lying on the hall table. He opened it, and found it was from Dorian Gray. It was to tell him that he was engaged to be married to Sibyl Vane.
CHAPTER V

"MOTHER, mother, I am so happy!" whispered the girl, burying her face in the lap of the faded, tired-looking woman who, with back turned to the shrill intrusive light, was sitting in the one armchair that their dingy sitting-room contained. "I am so happy!" she repeated, "and you must be happy too!"

Mrs. Vane winced, and put her thin bismuth-whitened hands on her daughter's head. "Happy!" she echoed, "I am only happy, Sibyl, when I see you act. You must not think of anything but your acting. Mr. Isaacs has been very good to us, and we owe him money."

The girl looked up and pouted. "Money, mother?" she cried, "what does money matter? Love is more than money."

"Mr. Isaacs has advanced us fifty pounds to pay off our debts, and to get a proper outfit for James. You must not forget that, Sibyl. Fifty pounds is a very large sum. Mr. Isaacs has been most considerate."

"He is not a gentleman, mother, and I hate the way he talks to me," said the girl, rising to her feet, and going over to the window.

"I don't know how we could manage without him," answered the elder woman, querulously.
Sibyl Vane tossed her head and laughed. "We don't want him any more, mother. Prince Charming rules life for us now." Then she paused. A bee shook in her blood, and shadowed her cheeks. Quick breath parted the petals of her lips. Theyumbled. Some southern wind of passion swept over her, and stirred the dainty folds of her dress. I love him," she said, simply.

"Foolish child! foolish child!" was the parrot-flunge flung in answer. The waving of crooked, lace-jewelled fingers gave grotesqueness to the words.

The girl laughed again. The joy of a caged bird was in her voice. Her eyes caught the elody, and echoed it in radiance; then closed a moment, as though to hide their secret. Then they opened, the mist of a dream had passed across them.

Thin-lipped wisdom spoke at her from the worn hair, hinted at prudence, quoted from that book of cowardice whose author apes the name of common sense. She did not listen. She was free in her prison of passion. Her prince, Prince Charming, was with her. She had called on Memory to re-take him. She had sent her soul to search for him, and it had brought him back. His kiss burned again upon her mouth. Her eyelids were warm with his breath.

Then Wisdom altered its method and spoke of spiritual and discovery. This young man might be rich. If so, marriage should be thought of. Against the shell of her ear broke the waves of
worldly cunning. The arrows of craft shot by her. She saw the thin lips moving, and smiled.

Suddenly she felt the need to speak. The wordy silence troubled her. “Mother, mother,” she cried, “why does he love me so much? I know why I love him. I love him because he is like what Love himself should be. But what does he see in me? I am not worthy of him. And yet—why, I cannot tell—though I feel so much beneath him, I don’t feel humble. I feel proud, terribly proud. Mother, did you love my father as I love Prince Charming?”

The elder woman grew pale beneath the coarse powder that daubed her cheeks, and her dry lips twitched with a spasm of pain. Sibyl rushed to her, flung her arms round her neck, and kissed her. “Forgive me, mother. I know it pains you to talk about our father. But it only pains you because you loved him so much. Don’t look so sad. I am as happy to-day as you were twenty years ago. Ah! let me be happy for ever!”

“My child, you are far too young to think of falling in love. Besides, what do you know of this young man? You don’t even know his name. The whole thing is most inconvenient, and really, when James is going away to Australia, and I have so much to think of, I must say that you should have shown more consideration. However, as I said before, if he is rich. . . .”

“Ah! Mother, mother, let me be happy!”

Mrs. Vane glanced at her, and with one of those false theatrical gestures that so often become a
mode of second nature to a stage-player, clasped her in her arms. At this moment the door opened, and a young lad with rough brown hair came into the room. He was thick-set of figure, and his hands and feet were large, and somewhat clumsy in movement. He was not so finely bred as his sister. He would hardly have guessed the close relationship that existed between them. Mrs. Vane fixed her eyes on him, and intensified the smile. She mentally elevated her son to the dignity of an audience. She felt sure that the tableau was interesting.

"You might keep some of your kisses for me, Sibyl, I think," said the lad, with a good-naturedumble.

"Ah! but you don’t like being kissed, Jim," she lied. "You are a dreadful old bear." And she ran across the room and hugged him.

James Vane looked into his sister’s face with tenderness. "I want you to come out with me for a walk, Sibyl. I don’t suppose I shall ever see his horrid London again. I am sure I don’t want to."

"My son, don’t say such dreadful things," murmured Mrs. Vane, taking up a tawdry theatrical dress, with a sigh, and beginning to patch it. She felt a little disappointed that he had not joined the group. It would have increased the theatrical picturesqueness of the situation.

"Why not, mother? I mean it."

"You pain me, my son. I trust you will return from Australia in a position of affluence. I believe
there is no society of any kind in the Colonies; nothing that I would call society; so when you have made your fortune you must come back and assert yourself in London."

"Society!" muttered the lad. "I don't want to know anything about that. I should like to make some money to take you and Sibyl off the stage. I hate it."

"Oh, Jim!" said Sibyl, laughing, "how unkind of you! But are you really going for a walk with me? That will be nice! I was afraid you were going to say goodbye to some of your friends—Tom Hardy, who gave you that hideous pipe, or Ned Langton, who makes fun of you for smoking it. It is very sweet of you to let me have your last afternoon. Where shall we go? Let us go to the Park."

"I am too shabby," he answered, frowning, "Only swell people go to the Park."

"Nonsense, Jim," she whispered, stroking the sleeve of his coat.

He hesitated for a moment. "Very well," he said at last, "but don't be too long dressing." She danced out of the door. One could hear her singing as she ran upstairs. Her little feet pattered overhead.

He walked up and down the room two or three times. Then he turned to the still figure in the chair. "Mother, are my things ready?" he asked.

"Quite ready, James," she answered, keeping her eyes on her work. For some months past she had felt ill at ease when she was alone with this
igh, stern son of hers. Her shallow secret nature is troubled when their eyes met. She used to wonder if he suspected anything. The silence, for made no other observation, became intolerable her. She began to complain. Women defend themselves by attacking, just as they attack by den and strange surrenders. "I hope you will contented, James, with your sea-faring life," he said. "You must remember that it is your own vice. You might have entered a solicitor's ice. Solicitors are a very respectable class, d in the country often dine with the best milies."

"I hate offices, and I hate clerks," he replied. but you are quite right. I have chosen my own a. All I say is, watch over Sibyl. Don't let her me to any harm. Mother, you must watch over r."

"James, you really talk very strangely. Ofurse I watch over Sibyl."

"I hear a gentleman comes every night to the atre, and goes behind to talk to her. Is that mh? What about that?"

"You are speaking about things you don't derstand, James. In the profession we are customed to receive a great deal of most gratify- atention. I myself used to receive many bou-ets at one time. That was when acting was lly understood. As for Sibyl, I do not know at sent whether her attachment is serious or not. there is no doubt that the young man in ques- u is a perfect gentleman. He is always most
polite to me. Besides, he has the appearance of being rich, and the flowers he sends are lovely.

"You don’t know his name, though," said the lad, harshly.

"No," answered his mother, with a placid expression in her face. "He has not yet revealed his real name. I think it is quite romantic of him. He is probably a member of the aristocracy."

James Vane bit his lip. "Watch over Sibyl mother," he cried, "watch over her."

"My son, you distress me very much. Sibyl is always under my special care. Of course, if the gentleman is wealthy, there is no reason why we should not contract an alliance with him. I trust he is one of the aristocracy. He has all the appearance of it, I must say. It might be a most brilliant marriage for Sibyl. They would make a charming couple. His good looks are really quite remarkable; everybody notices them."

The lad muttered something to himself, and drummed on the window-pane with his coarse fingers. He had just turned round to say something when the door opened, and Sibyl ran in.

"How serious you both are!" she cried. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing," he answered. "I suppose one must be serious sometimes. Goodbye, mother; I must have my dinner at five o’clock. Everything is packed, except my shirts, so you need not trouble."

"Goodbye, my son," she answered, with a boat of strained stateliness.
he was extremely annoyed at the tone he had adopted with her, and there was something in his glance that had made her feel afraid.

Kiss me, mother," said the girl. Her flower-lips touched the withered cheek, and warmed rest.

My child! my child!" cried Mrs. Vane, look-up to the ceiling in search of an imaginary tear.

Come, Sibyl," said her brother, impatiently. I hated his mother's affectations.

They went out into the flickering wind-blown light, and strolled down the dreary Euston road. The passers-by glanced in wonder at the man, heavy youth, who, in coarse, ill-fitting vest, was in the company of such a graceful, red-looking girl. He was like a common laborer walking with a rose.

In frowned from time to time when he caught inquisitive glance of some stranger. He had dislike of being stared at which comes on uses late in life, and never leaves the common.

Sibyl, however, was quite unconscious of effect she was producing. Her love was trem- in laughter on her lips. She was thinking of the charming, and, that she might think of all the more, she did not talk of him but prato about the ship in which Jim was going to, about the gold he was certain to find, about wonderf ul heiress whose life he was to save the wicked, red-shirted bushrangers. For he not to remain a sailor, or a super-cargo, or
whatever he was going to be. Oh, no! A sailor's existence was dreadful. Fancy being cooped up, trying to get in, and a black wind blowing the masts down, and tearing the sails into long screaming ribands! He was to leave the vessel at Melbourne, bid a polite goodbye to the captain, and go off at once to the gold-fields. Before a week was over he was to come across a large nugget of pure gold, the largest nugget that had ever been discovered, and bring it down to the coast in a wagon guarded by six mounted policemen. The bushrangers were to attack them three times, and be defeated with immense slaughter. Or, no. He was not to go to the gold-fields at all. They were horrid places, where men got intoxicated, and shot each other in bar-rooms, and used bad language. He was to be a nice sheep-farmer, and one evening, as he was riding home, he was to see the beautiful heiress being carried off by a robber on a black horse, and give chase, and rescue her. Of course she would fall in love with him, and he with her, and they would get married, and come home, and live in an immense house in London. Yes, there were delightful things in store for him. But he must be very good, and not lose his temper, or spend his money foolishly. She was only a year older than he was, but she knew so much more of life. He must be sure, also, to write to her by every mail, and to say his prayers each night before he went to sleep. God was very good, and would watch over him. She would pray for him.
and in a few years he would come back quite rich and happy.

The lad listened sulkily to her, and made no answer. He was heart-sick at leaving home.

Yet it was not this alone that made him gloomy and morose. Inexperienced though he was, he had felt a strong sense of the danger of Sibyl's position. This young dandy who was making love to her could mean her no good. He was a gentleman, and he hated him for that, hated him through some curious race-instinct for which he could not account, and which for that reason was all the more dominant within him. He was conscious also of his shallowness and vanity of his mother's nature, and in that saw infinite peril for Sibyl and Sibyl's happiness. Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them; sometimes they forgive them.

His mother! He had something on his mind to ask of her, something that he had brooded on for many months of silence. A chance phrase that he had heard at the theatre, a whispered sneer that had reached his ears one night as he waited at the stage-door, had set loose a train of horrible thoughts. He remembered it as if it had been the ash of a hunting-crop across his face. His brows knit together into a wedge-like furrow, and with a witch of pain he bit his under-lip.

"You are not listening to a word I am saying, Jim," cried Sibyl, "and I am making the most delightful plans for your future. Do say something."

"What do you want me to say?"
“Oh! that you will be a good boy, and not us,” she answered, smiling at him.

He shrugged his shoulders. “You are likely to forget me, than I am to forget you,”

She flushed. “What do you mean, Jim asked.

“You have a new friend, I hear. Why have you not told me about him? He you no good.”

“Stop, Jim!” she exclaimed. “You must say anything against him. I love him.”

“Why, you don’t even know his name swered the lad. “Who is he? I have a ri know.”

“He is called Prince Charming. Don’t you the name? Oh! you silly boy! you should forget it. If you only saw him, you would him the most wonderful person in the world. day you will meet him: when you come back Australia. You will like him so much. Ever likes him, and I . . . . love him. I wish you come to the theatre to-night. He is going there, and I am to play Juliet. Oh! how I play it! Fancy, Jim, to be in love and play. To have him sitting there! To play for his der. I am afraid I may frighten the company, or enthrall them. To be in love is to surpass self. Poor dreadful Mr. Isaacs will be show ‘genius’ to his loafers at the bar. He has presented me as a dogma; to-night he will announce my revelation. I feel it. And it is all his, his Prince Charming, my wonderful lover, my
faces. But I am poor beside him. Poor? What does that matter? When poverty creeps in at the door, love flies in through the window. Our proofs want re-writing. They were made in winter, and it is summer now; spring-time for me, I think, very dance of blossoms in blue skies."

"He is a gentleman," said the lad, sullenly.

"A Prince!" she cried, musically. "What more do you want?"

"He wants to enslave you."

"I shudder at the thought of being free."

"I want you to beware of him."

"To see him is to worship him, to know him is to trust him."

"Sibyl, you are mad about him."

She laughed, and took his arm. "You dear old man, you talk as if you were a hundred. Some day you will be in love yourself. Then you will know what it is. Don't look so sulky. Surely you could be glad to think that, though you are going away, you leave me happier than I have ever been before. Life has been hard for us both, terribly hard and difficult. But it will be different now. You are going to a new world, and I have found it. Here are two chairs; let us sit down and see how smart people go by."

They took their seats amidst a crowd of watchers. The tulip-beds across the road flamed like robbing rings of fire. A white dust, tremulous and of orris-root it seemed, hung in the panting air. The brightly-coloured parasols danced and sped like monstrous butterflies.
She made her brother talk of himself, his hopes, his prospects. He spoke slowly and with effort. They passed words to each other as players at a game pass counters. Sibyl felt oppressed. She could not communicate her joy. A faint smile curving that sullen mouth was all the echo she could win. After some time she became silent. Suddenly she caught a glimpse of golden hair and laughing lips, and in an open carriage with two ladies Dorian Gray drove past.

She started to her feet. "There he is!" she cried.

"Who?" said Jim Vane.

"Prince Charming," she answered, looking after the victoria.

He jumped up, and seized her roughly by the arm. "Show him to me. Which is he? Point him out. I must see him!" he exclaimed; but at that moment the Duke of Berwick's four-in-hand came between, and when it had left the space clear, the carriage had swept out of the Park.

"He is gone," murmured Sibyl, sadly. "I wish you had seen him."

"I wish I had, for as sure as there is a God in heaven, if he ever does you any wrong I shall kill him."

She looked at him in horror. He repeated his words. They cut the air like a dagger. The people round began to gape. A lady standing close to him tittered.

"Come away, Jim; come away," she whispered. He followed her doggedly, as she passed through the crowd. He felt glad at what he had said.
When they reached the Achilles Statue she bent round. There was pity in her eyes that came laughter on her lips. She shook her head at him. "You are foolish, Jim, utterly foolish; a d-tempered boy, that is all. How can you say such horrible things? You don't know what you are talking about. You are simply jealous and unkind. Ah! I wish you would fall in love. Love makes people good, and what you said was wicked."

"I am sixteen," he answered, "and I know what I am about. Mother is no help to you. She doesn't understand how to look after you. I wish now that I was not going to Australia at all. I have a great mind to chuck the whole thing up. I would, if my articles hadn't been signed."

"Oh, don't be so serious, Jim. You are like one of the heroes of those silly melodramas mother used to be so fond of acting in. I am not going to quarrel with you. I have seen him, and oh! to see him is perfect happiness. We won't quarrel. I hope you would never harm anyone I love, would you?"

"Not as long as you love him, I suppose," was the sullen answer.

"I shall love him for ever!" she cried.

"And he?"

"For ever, too!"

"He had better."

She shrank from him. Then she laughed and took her hand on his arm. He was merely a boy.

At the Marble Arch they hailed an omnibus,
which left them close to their shabby home in Euston Road. It was after five o'clock, and he had to lie down for a couple of hours before Jim insisted that she should do so. He said he would sooner part with her when their father was not present. She would be sure to have a scene, and he detested scenes of every kind.

In Sibyl's own room they parted. The jealousy in the lad's heart, and a fierce, mutual hatred of the stranger who, as it seemed, had come between them. Yet, when he was flung round his neck, and her fingers through his hair, he softened, and kissed her with real affection. There were tears in his eyes when he went downstairs.

His mother was waiting for him below. He grumbled at his unpunctuality, as he entered. He made no answer, but sat down to his meal. The flies buzzed round the table, and crawled over the stained cloth. Through the rumble of omnibuses, and the clatter of cabs, he could hear the droning voice of each minute that was left to him.

After some time, he thrust away his plate, put his head in his hands. He felt that he right to know. It should have been told before, if it was as he suspected. Leaden with his mother watched him. Words dropped mechanically from her lips. A tattered lace handkerchief twitched in her fingers. When the clock struck six, he got up, and went to the door. To turned back, and looked at her. Their eyes
hers he saw a wild appeal for mercy. It eng
ed him.
“Mother, I have something to ask you,” he said.
her eyes wandered vaguely about the room. She
made no answer. “Tell me the truth. I have a
right to know. Were you married to my father?”
She heaved a deep sigh. It was a sigh of relief.
In the terrible moment, the moment that night and
day, for weeks and months, she had dreaded, had
me at last, and yet she felt no terror. Indeed in
the measure it was a disappointment to her. The
directness of the question called for a direct
answer. The situation had not been gradually led
to. It was crude. It reminded her of a bad
hearsal.
“No,” she answered, wondering at the harsh
simplicity of life.
“My father was a scoundrel then?” cried the
man, clenching his fists.
She shook her head. “I knew he was not free.
We loved each other very much. If he had lived,
would have made provision for us. Don’t speak
against him, my son. He was your father, and a
gentleman. Indeed he was highly connected.”
An oath broke from his lips. “I don’t care for
myself,” he exclaimed, “but don’t let Sibyl . . .
is a gentleman, isn’t it, who is in love with her,
says he is? Highly connected, too, I suppose.”

For a moment a hideous sense of humiliation
loomed over the woman. Her head drooped. She
lifted her eyes with shaking hands. “Sibyl has an
other,” she murmured; “I had none.”
The lad was touched. He went towards her, stooping down he kissed her. "I am sorry if I pained you by asking about my father," he said, "but I could not help it. I must go now. Goodbye. Don't forget that you will only have one child now to look after, and believe me that if a man wrongs my sister, I will find out who he is and track him down, and kill him like a dog. I swear it."

The exaggerated folly of the threat, the passion and the dramatic gesture that accompanied it, the mad, mad dramatic words, made life seem more vivid to her. She was familiar with the atmosphere. She breathed more freely, and for the first time in many months she really admired her son. She would have liked to have continued the scene on the same emotional scale, but he cut her short. Trunks had to be carried down, and muffins looked for. The lodging-house drudge bustled in and out. There was the bargaining with the woman. The moment was lost in vulgar details. It was with a renewed feeling of disappointment that she waved the tattered lace handkerchief from the window, as her son drove away. She was conscious that a great opportunity had been wasted. She consoled herself by telling Sibyl how desolate she felt her life would be, now that she had only one child to look after. She remembered the phrase. It had pleased her. Of the threat, she said nothing. It was vividly and dramatically expressed. She felt that they would all laugh it some day.
CHAPTER VI

I suppose you have heard the news, Basil?" said Lord Henry that evening, as Hallward was shown into a little private room at the Bristol where dinner had been laid for three.

"No, Harry," answered the artist, giving his hat and coat to the bowing waiter. "What is it? Nothing about politics, I hope? They don't interest me. There is hardly a single person in the House of Commons worth painting; though many of them would be the better for a little whitewashing."

"Dorian Gray is engaged to be married," said Lord Henry, watching him as he spoke.

Hallward started, and then frowned. "Dorian engaged to be married!" he cried. "Impossible!"

"It is perfectly true."

"To whom?"

"To some little actress or other."

"I can't believe it. Dorian is far too sensible."

"Dorian is far too wise not to do foolish things now and then, my dear Basil."

"Marriage is hardly a thing that one can do now and then, Harry."

"Except in America," rejoined Lord Henry, languidly. "But I didn't say he was married. I said he was engaged to be married. There is a great
difference. I have a distinct remembrance of being married, but I have no recollection at all of being engaged. I am inclined to think that I never was engaged."

"But think of Dorian's birth, and position, and wealth. It would be absurd for him to marry so much beneath him."

"If you want to make him marry this girl tell him that, Basil. He is sure to do it, then. Whenever a man does a thoroughly stupid thing, it is always from the noblest motives."

"I hope the girl is good, Harry. I don't want to see Dorian tied to some vile creature, who might degrade his nature and ruin his intellect."

"Oh, she is better than good—she is beautiful," murmured Lord Henry, sipping a glass of vermouth and orange-bitters. "Dorian says she is beautiful; and he is not often wrong about things of that kind. Your portrait of him has quickened his appreciation of the personal appearance of other people. It has had that excellent effect, amongst others. We are to see her to-night, if that boy doesn't forget his appointment."

"Are you serious?"

"Quite serious, Basil. I should be miserable if I thought I should ever be more serious than I am at the present moment."

"But do you approve of it, Harry?" asked the painter, walking up and down the room, and biting his lip. "You can't approve of it, possibly. It is some silly infatuation."

"I never approve, or disapprove, of anything
... It is an absurd attitude to take towards life. We are not sent into the world to air our moral judices. I never take any notice of what common people say, and I never interfere with what amusing people do. If a personality fascinates whatever mode of expression that personality acts is absolutely delightful to me. Dorian Gray in love with a beautiful girl who acts Juliet, proposes to marry her. Why not? If he died Messalina he would be none the less interesting. You know I am not a champion of marriage. The real drawback to marriage is that it makes one unselfish. And unselfish people are perilous. They lack individuality. Still, there are certain temperaments that marriage makes complex. They retain their egotism, and to it many other egos. They are forced to be more than one life. They become more highly organised, and to be highly organised is, I hold fancy, the object of man's existence. Besides, every experience is of value, and, whatever may say against marriage, it is certainly an experience. I hope that Dorian Gray will make his girl his wife, passionately adore her for six months, and then suddenly become fascinated by some one else. He would be a wonderful study.'”

You don't mean a single word of all that, sir; you know you don't. If Dorian Gray's life is spoiled, no one would be sorrier than yourself. You are much better than you pretend to be, and now this is a difficult thing to say, but I think you are.

Lord Henry laughed. “The reason we all like
to think so well of others is that we are all afraid for ourselves. The basis of optimism is sheer terror. We think that we are generous because we credit our neighbour with the possession of those virtues that are likely to be a benefit to us. We praise the banker that we may overdraw our account, and find good qualities in the highwayman in the hope that he may spare our pockets. I mean everything that I have said. I have the greatest contempt for optimism. As for a spoiled life, no life is spoiled but one whose growth is arrested. If you want to mar a nature, you have merely to reform it. As for marriage, of course that would be silly, but there are other and more interesting bonds between men and women. I will certainly encourage them. They have the charm of being fashionable. But here is Dorian himself. He will tell you more than I can."

"My dear Harry, my dear Basil, you must both congratulate me!" said the lad, throwing off his evening cape with its satin-lined wings and shaking each of his friends by the hand in turn. "I have never been so happy. Of course it is sudden; all really delightful things are. And yet it seems to me to be the one thing I have been looking for all my life." He was flushed with excitement and pleasure, and looked extraordinarily handsome.

"I hope you will always be very happy, Dorian," said Hallward, "but I don't quite forgive you for not having let me know of your engagement. You let Harry know."

"And I don't forgive you for being late for din-
"aer," broke in Lord Henry, putting his hand on the lad’s shoulder, and smiling as he spoke. "Come, let us sit down and try what the new chef here is like, and then you will tell us how it all came about."

"There is really not much to tell," cried Dorian, as they took their seats at the small round table. "What happened was simply this. After I left you yesterday evening, Harry, I dressed, had some dinner at that little Italian restaurant in Rupert Street you introduced me to, and went down at eight o’clock to the theatre. Sibyl was playing Rosalind. Of course the scenery was dreadful, and the Orlando absurd. But Sibyl! You should have seen her! When she came on in her boy’s clothes she was perfectly wonderful. She wore a moss-coloured velvet jerkin with cinnamon sleeves, slim brown cross-gartered hose, a dainty little green cap with a hawk’s feather caught in a jewel, and a hooded cloak lined with dull red. She had never seemed to me more exquisite. She had all the delicate grace of that Tanagra figurine that you have in your studio, Basil. Her hair clustered round her face like dark leaves round a pale rose. As for her acting—well, you shall see her to-night. She is simply a born artist. I sat in the dingy box absolutely enthralled. I forgot that I was in London and in the nineteenth century. I was away with my love in a forest that no man had ever seen. After the performance was over I went behind, and spoke to her. As we were sitting together, suddenly there came into her eyes a look that I had
never seen there before. My lips moved towards hers. We kissed each other. I can’t describe to you what I felt at that moment. It seemed to me that all my life had been narrowed to one perfect point of rose-coloured joy. She trembled all over and shook like a white narcissus. Then she flung herself on her knees and kissed my hands. I feel that I should not tell you all this, but I can’t help it. Of course our engagement is a dead secret. She has not even told her own mother. I don’t know what my guardians will say. Lord Radley is sure to be furious. I don’t care. I shall be of age in less than a year, and then I can do what I like. I have been right, Basil, haven’t I, to take my love out of poetry, and to find my wife in Shakespeare’s plays? Lips that Shakespeare taught to speak have whispered their secret in my ear. I have had the arms of Rosalind around me and kissed Juliet on the mouth.”

“Yes, Dorian, I suppose you were right,” said Hallward, slowly.

“Have you seen her to-day?” asked Lord Henry.

Dorian Gray shook his head. “I left her in the forest of Arden, I shall find her in an orchard in Verona.”

Lord Henry sipped his champagne in a meditative manner. “At what particular point did you mention the word marriage, Dorian? And what did she say in answer? Perhaps you forgot all about it.”

“My dear Harry, I did not treat it as a business
ansaction, and I did not make any formal pro-
sal. I told her that I loved her, and she said she
as not worthy to be my wife. Not worthy!
/hy, the whole world is nothing to me compared
ith her.""

"Women are wonderfully practical," murmured
ord Henry—"much more practical than we are.
atures of that kind we often forget to say
thing about marriage, and they always remind
Hallyward laid his hand upon his arm. "Don't,
arry. You have annoyed Dorian. He is not like
her men. He would never bring misery upon
yone. His nature is too fine for that."

Lord Henry looked across the table. "Dorian is
ver annoyed with me," he answered. "I asked
uestion for the best reason possible, for the
y reason, indeed, that excuses one for asking
y question—simple curiosity. I have a theory
hat it is always the women who propose to us, and
ot we who propose to the women. Except, of
course, in middle-class life. But then the middle
casses are not modern."

Dorian Gray laughed, and tossed his head.
'You are quite incorrigible, Harry; but I don't
ind. It is impossible to be angry with you.
hen you see Sibyl Vane you will feel that the
an who could wrong her would be a beast, a beast
ithout a heart. I cannot understand how anyone
an wish to shame the thing he loves. I love Sibyl
ane. I want to place her on a pedestal of gold,
d to see the world worship the woman who is
mine. What is marriage? An irrevocable vow. You mock at it for that. Ah! don't mock. It's
an irrevocable vow that I want to take. Her true
makes me faithful, her belief makes me good.
When I am with her, I regret all that you have
 taught me. I become different from what you
have known me to be. I am changed, and the
mere touch of Sibyl Vane's hand makes me forget
you and all your wrong, fascinating, poisonous
delightful theories.”

“And those are . . .?” asked Lord Henry, help-
ing himself to some salad.

“Oh, your theories about life, your theories
about love, your theories about pleasure. All your
theories, in fact, Harry.”

“Pleasure is the only thing worth having
theory about,” he answered, in his slow, melodic
voice. “But I am afraid I cannot claim my theory
as my own. It belongs to Nature, not to me.
Pleasure is Nature's test, her sign of approval.
When we are happy we are always good, but when
we are good we are not always happy.”

“Ah! but what do you mean by good?” cried
Basil Hallward.

“Yes,” echoed Dorian, leaning back in his chair
and looking at Lord Henry over the heavy clusters
of purple-lipped irises that stood in the centre of
the table, “what do you mean by good, Harry?

“To be good is to be in harmony with one's self,” he replied, touching the thin stem of his glass
with his pale, fine-pointed fingers. “Discord is to
be forced to be in harmony with others. One's own
life—that is the important thing. As for the lives of one's neighbours, if one wishes to be a prig or a Puritan, one can flaunt one's moral views about them, but they are not one's concern. Besides, Individualism has really the higher aim. Modern morality consists in accepting the standard of one's age. I consider that for any man of culture to accept the standard of his age is a form of the grossest immorality."

"But, surely, if one lives merely for one's self, Harry, one pays a terrible price for doing so?" suggested the painter.

"Yes, we are overcharged for everything nowadays. I should fancy that the real tragedy of the poor is that they can afford nothing but self-denial. Beautiful sins, like beautiful things, are the privilege of the rich."

"One has to pay in other ways but money."

"What sort of ways, Basil?"

"Oh! I should fancy in remorse, in suffering, in... well, in the consciousness of degradation."

Lord Henry shrugged his shoulders. "My dear fellow, mediæval art is charming, but mediæval emotions are out of date. One can use them in fiction, of course. But then the only things that one can use in fiction are the things that one has ceased to use in fact. Believe me, no civilised man ever regrets a pleasure, and no uncivilised man ever knows what a pleasure is."

"I know what pleasure is," cried Dorian Gray. "It is to adore someone."

"That is certainly better than being adored," he
answered, toying with some fruits. "Being adored is a nuisance. Women treat us just as Humanity treats its gods. They worship us, and are always bothering us to do something for them."

"I should have said that whatever they ask for they had first given to us," murmured the lad, gravely. "They create Love in our natures. They have a right to demand it back."

"That is quite true, Dorian," cried Hallward. "Nothing is ever quite true," said Lord Henry. "This is," interrupted Dorian. "You must admit, Harry, that women give to men the very gold of their lives."

"Possibly," he sighed, "but they invariably want it back in such very small change. That is the worry. Women, as some witty Frenchman once put it, inspire us with the desire to do masterpieces, and always prevent us from carrying them out."

"Harry, you are dreadful! I don’t know why I like you so much."

'You will always like me, Dorian," he replied. "Will you have some coffee, you fellows?—Waiter, bring coffee, and fine-champagne, and some cigarettes. No: don’t mind the cigarettes; I have some Basil, I can’t allow you to smoke cigars. You must have a cigarette. A cigarette is the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite, and leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want? Yes, Dorian, you will always be fond of me. I represent to you all the sins you have never had the courage to commit."
"What nonsense you talk, Harry!" cried the 1, taking a light from a fire-breathing silver agon that the waiter had placed on the table. Let us go down to the theatre. When Sibyl mes on the stage you will have a new ideal of e. She will represent something to you that you we never known."

"I have known everything," said Lord Henry, th a tired look in his eyes, "but I am always dy for a new emotion. I am afraid, however, at, for me at any rate, there is no such thing. ll, your wonderful girl may thrill me. I love sing. It is so much more real than life. Let us o Dorian, you will come with me. I am so ry, Basil, but there is only room for two in the ougham. You must follow us in a hansom."

They got up and put on their coats, sipping their fee standing. The painter was silent and pre-upied. There was a gloom over him. He could bear this marriage, and yet it seemed to him be better than many other things that might ve happened. After a few minutes, they all used downstairs. He drove off by himself, as l been arranged, and watched the flashing lights the little brougham in front of him. A strange se of loss came over him. He felt that Dorian ay would never again be to him all that he had in the past. Life had come between them. . His eyes darkened, and the crowded, flaring eets became blurred to his eyes. When the cab w up at the theatre, it seemed to him that he l grown years older.
CHAPTER VII

FOR some reason or other, the house was crowded that night, and the fat Jew manager who met them at the door was beaming from ear to ear with an oily, tremulous smile. He escorted them to their box with a sort of pompous humility, waving his fat jewelled hands, and talking at the top of his voice. Dorian Gray loathed him more than ever. He felt as if he had come to look for Miranda and had been met by Caliban. Lord Henry, upon the other hand, rather liked him. At least he declared he did, and insisted on shaking him by the hand, and assuring him that he was proud to meet a man who had discovered a real genius and gone bankrupt over a poet. Hallward amused himself with watching the faces in the pit. The heat was terribly oppressive, and the huge sunlight flamed like a monstrous dahlia with petals of yellow fire. The youths in the gallery had taken off their coats and waistcoats and hung them over the side. They talked to each other across the theatre, and shared their oranges with the tawdry girls who sat beside them. Some women were laughing in the pit. Their voices were horribly shrill and discordant. The sound of the popping of corks came from the bar.
"What a place to find one's divinity in!" said Henry.

"Yes!" answered Dorian Gray. "It was here I found her, and she is divine beyond all living things. When she acts you will forget everything. These common, rough people, with their coarse and brutal gestures, become quite different when she is on the stage. They sit silently and watch her. They weep and laugh as she wills them to do. She makes them as responsive as a lion. She spiritualises them, and one feels that they are of the same flesh and blood as one's self."

"The same flesh and blood as one's self! Oh, I do not!" exclaimed Lord Henry, who was scanning the occupants of the gallery through his opera-glass.

'Don't pay any attention to him, Dorian," said the painter. "I understand what you mean, and I believe in this girl. Anyone you love must be marvellous, and any girl that has the effect you describe must be fine and noble. To spiritualise a man's age—that is something worth doing. If this can give a soul to those who have lived without one, if she can create the sense of beauty in people whose lives have been sordid and ugly, if she can mould their selfishness and lend them tears and sorrows that are not their own, she is worthy of your adoration, worthy of the adoration of the Id. This marriage is quite right. I did not think so at first, but I admit it now. The gods love Sibyl Vane for you. Without her you would be incomplete."
"Thanks, Basil," answered Dorian Gray, pricking his hand. "I knew that you would understand me. Harry is so cynical, he terrifies me. But I like the orchestra. It is quite dreadful, but it lasts for about five minutes. Then the curtain rises, and you will see the girl to whom I am going to give all my life, to whom I have given everything that is good in me."

A quarter of an hour afterwards, amidst extraordinary turmoil of applause, Sibyl Vane stepped on to the stage. Yes, she was certainly lovely to look at—one of the loveliest creatures Lord Henry thought, that he had ever seen. There was something of the fawn in her shy grace and startled eyes. A faint blush, like the shadow of rose in a mirror of silver, came to her cheeks as she glanced at the crowded, enthusiastic house. She stepped back a few paces, and her lips seemed to tremble. Basil Hallward leaped to his feet as he began to applaud. Motionless, and as one in a dream, sat Dorian Gray, gazing at her. Lord Henry peered through his glasses, murmuring, "Charming! charming!"

The scene was the hall of Capulet's house, a Romeo in his pilgrim's dress had entered with Mercutio and his other friends. The band, such it was, struck up a few bars of music, and the dance began. Through the crowd of ungainly, shabbily-dressed actors, Sibyl Vane moved like a creature from a finer world. Her body swayed while she danced, as a plant sways in water. The curves of her throat were the cur
of a white lily. Her hands seemed to be made of cool ivory.

Yet she was curiously listless. She showed no sign of joy when her eyes rested on Romeo. The few words she had to speak—

"Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,  
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;  
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,  
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss—"

with the brief dialogue that follows, were spoken in a thoroughly artificial manner. The voice was exquisite, but from the point of view of tone it was absolutely false. It was wrong in colour. It took away all the life from the verse. It made the passion unreal.

Dorian Gray grew pale as he watched her. He was puzzled and anxious. Neither of his friends dared to say anything to him. She seemed to them to be absolutely incompetent. They were horribly disappointed.

Yet they felt that the true test of any Juliet is the balcony scene of the second act. They waited for that. If she failed there, there was nothing in her.

She looked charming as she came out in the moonlight. That could not be denied. But the staginess of her acting was unbearable, and grew worse as she went on. Her gestures became absurdly artificial. She over-emphasised everything that she had to say. The beautiful passage—

"Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night—"
was declaimed with the painful precision of a schoolgirl who has been taught to recite by a second-rate professor of elocution. When she leaned over the balcony and came to those wonderful lines—

"Although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say, 'It lightens.' Sweet, good-night!
This bud of love by summer's ripening breath
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet—"

she spoke the words as though they conveyed no meaning to her. It was not nervousness. Indeed, she was so far from being nervous, she was absolutely self-contained. It was simply bad art. She was a complete failure.

Even the common, uneducated audience of the pit and gallery lost their interest in the play. They got restless, and began to talk loudly and to whistle. The Jew manager, who was standing at the back of the dress-circle, stamped and swore with rage. The only person unmoved was the girl herself.

When the second act was over there came a storm of hisses, and Lord Henry got up from his chair and put on his coat. "She is quite beautiful, Dorian," he said, "but she can't act. Let us go."

"I am going to see the play through," answered the lad, in a hard, bitter voice. "I am awfully sorry that I have made you waste an evening, Harry. I apologise to you both."
"My dear Dorian, I should think Miss Vane was ill," interrupted Hallward. "We will come some other night."

'I wish she were ill," he rejoined. "But she seems to me to be simply callous and cold. She has entirely altered. Last night she was a great artist. This evening she is merely a commonplace, mediocre actress."

"Don't talk like that about anyone you love, Dorian. Love is a more wonderful thing than art."

"They are both simply forms of imitation," remarked Lord Henry. "But do let us go. Dorian, you must not stay here any longer. It is not good for one's morals to see bad acting. Besides, don't suppose you will want your wife to act. So what does it matter if she plays Juliet like a wooden doll? She is very lovely, and if she knows a little about life as she does about acting, she will be a delightful experience. There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating—people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing. Good heavens, my dear boy, don't look so tragic! The secret of remaining young is never to have an emotion that is unbecoming. Come to the club with Basil and myself. We will smoke cigarettes and drink to the beauty of Sibyl Vane. She is beautiful. What more can you want?"

"Go away, Harry," cried the lad. "I want to be alone. Basil, you must go. Ah! can't you see that my heart is breaking?" The hot tears came
to his eyes. His lips trembled, and, rushing to the back of the box, he leaned up against the wall, hiding his face in his hands.

"Let us go, Basil," said Lord Henry, with a strange tenderness in his voice; and the two young men passed out together.

A few moments afterwards the footlights flared up, and the curtain rose on the third act. Dorian Gray went back to his seat. He looked pale, and proud, and indifferent. The play dragged on, and seemed interminable. Half of the audience went out, tramping in heavy boots, and laughing. The whole thing was a fiasco. The last act was played to almost empty benches. The curtain went down, on a titter, and some groans.

As soon as it was over, Dorian Gray rushed behind the scenes into the greenroom. The girl was standing there alone, with a look of triumph on her face. Her eyes were lit with an exquisite fire. There was a radiance about her. Her parted lips were smiling over some secret of their own.

When he entered, she looked at him, and an expression of infinite joy came over her. "How badly I acted to-night, Dorian!" she cried.

"Horribly!" he answered, gazing at her in amazement—"horribly! It was dreadful. Are you ill? You have no idea what it was. You have no idea what I suffered."

The girl smiled. "Dorian," she answered, lingering over his name with long-drawn music in her voice, as though it were sweeter than honey to the red petals of her mouth—"Dorian, you should
ne understood. But you understand now, don’t
u?”
“Understand what?” he asked, angrily.
“Why I was so bad to-night. Why I shall al-
y be bad. Why I shall never act well again.”
He shrugged his shoulders. “You are ill, I sup-
se. When you are ill you shouldn’t act. You
ake yourself ridiculous. My friends were bored.
was bored.”
She seemed not to listen to him. She was trans-
ured with joy. An ecstasy of happiness dom-
ated her.
“Dorian, Dorian,” she cried, “before I knew
u, acting was the one reality of my life. It was
ly in the theatre that I lived. I thought that it
as all true. I was Rosalind one night, and Portia
other. The joy of Beatrice was my joy, and
sorrows of Cordelia were mine also. I believed
everything. The common people who acted
th me seemed to me to be godlike. The painted
nes were my world. I knew nothing but shad-
s, and I thought them real. You came—oh, my
autiful love!—and you freed my soul from
ison. You taught me what reality really is.
-night, for the first time in my life, I saw through
e hollowness, the sham, the silliness of the empty
geant in which I had always played. To-night,
 the first time, I became conscious that the
meo was hideous, and old, and painted, that the
sonlight in the orchard was false, that the scen-
 was vulgar, and that the words I had to speak
re unreal, were not my words, were not what I
wanted to say. You had brought me something higher, something of which all art is but a reflection. You had made me understand what love really is. My love! my love! Prince Charming! Prince of life! I have grown sick of shadows. You are more to me than all art can ever be. What have I to do with the puppets of a play? When I came on to-night, I could not understand how it was that everything had gone from me. I thought that I was going to be wonderful. I found that I could do nothing. Suddenly it dawned on my soul what it all meant. The knowledge was exquisite to me. I heard them hissing, and I smiled. What could they know of love such as ours? Take me away, Dorian—take me away with you, where we can be quite alone. I hate the stage. I might mimic a passion that I do not feel, but I cannot mimic one that burns me like fire. Oh, Dorian, Dorian, you understand now what it signifies? Even if I could do it, it would be profanation for me to play at being in love. You have made me see that."

He flung himself down on the sofa, and turned away his face. "You have killed my love," he muttered.

She looked at him in wonder, and laughed. He made no answer. She came across to him, and with her little fingers stroked his hair. She knelt down and pressed his hands to her lips. He drew them away, and a shudder ran through him.

Then he leaped up, and went to the door. "Yes," he cried, "you have killed my love. You used to
in my imagination. Now you don’t even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect. I loved because you were marvellous, because you had beauty and intellect, because you realised the dreams of great poets and gave shape and substance to the shadows of art. You have thrown it away. You are shallow and stupid. My God! You mad I was to love you! What a fool I have been! You are nothing to me now. I will never see you again. I will never think of you. I will never mention your name. You don’t know what you were to me, once. Why, once... Oh, I can’t bear to think of it! I wish I had never laid eyes on you! You have spoiled the romance of my life. How little you can know of love, if you say: "Rams your art! Without your art you are nothing. I would have made you famous, splendid, magnificent. The world would have worshipped you, and you would have borne my name. What are you now? A third-rate actress with a wet face."

The girl grew white, and trembled. She clenched her hands together, and her voice seemed to stick in her throat. "You are not serious, Dorian?" she murmured. "You are acting."

"'Acting! I leave that to you. You do it so well," he answered bitterly.

She rose from her knees, and, with a piteous expression of pain in her face, came across the room to him. She put her hand upon his arm, and looked into his eyes. He thrust her back. Don’t touch me!" he cried.
A low moan broke from her, and she flung herself at his feet, and lay there like a trampled flower. "Dorian, Dorian, don't leave me!" she whispered. "I am so sorry I didn't act well, I was thinking of you all the time. But I will try, indeed, I will try. It came so suddenly across my love for you. I think I should never have known it if you had not kissed me—if we had never kissed each other. Kiss me again, my love. Don't go away from me. I couldn't bear it. Oh, don't go away from me. My brother... No, never mind. He didn't mean it. He was in jest... But you, oh! can't you forgive me for last night? I will work so hard, and try to improve. Don't be cruel to me because I love you better than anything in the world. After all, it is quite true that I have not pleased you. But you are quite right, Dorian. I should have shown more of an artist. It was foolish of me; and I couldn't help it. Oh, don't leave me, don't leave me." A fit of passionate sobbing choked her. She crouched on the floor like a wounded thing, and Dorian Gray, with his beautiful eyes, looked down at her, and his chiselled lips curled in exquisite disdain. There is always something ridiculous about the emotions of people who one has ceased to love. Sibyl Vane seemed to him to be absurdly melodramatic. Her tears and sobs annoyed him.

"I am going," he said at last, in his calm, detached voice. "I don't wish to be unkind, but I can see you again. You have disappointed me."
She wept silently, and made no answer, but pt nearer. Her little hands stretched blindly ; and appeared to be seeking for him. He ped on his heel, and left the room. In a few nents he was out of the theatre.

There he went to he hardly knew. He remem- ed wandering through dimly-lit streets, past it black-shadowed archways and evil-looking ses. Women with hoarse voices and harsh hter had called after him. Drunkards had ed by cursing, and chattering to themselves monstrous apes. He had seen grotesque chil- huddled upon doorsteps, and heard shrieks oaths from gloomy courts.

The dawn was just breaking he found him- close to Covent Garden. The darkness lifted,
flushed with faint fires, the sky hollowed f into a perfect pearl. Huge carts filled with ling lilies rumbled slowly down the polished ty street. The air was heavy with the perfume he flowers, and their beauty seemed to bring an anodyne for his pain. He followed into market, and watched the men unloading their gons. A white-smocked carter offered him e cherries. He thanked him, and wondered he refused to accept any money for them, began to eat them listlessly. They had been ked at midnight, and the coldness of the n had entered into them. A long line of boys ying crates of striped tulips, and of yellow red roses, defiled in front of him, threading way through the huge jade-green piles of
vegetables. Under the portico, with its grey bleached pillars, loitered a troop of draggled headed girls, waiting for the auction to be over. Others crowded round the swinging doors of the coffee-house in the Piazza. The heavy cart-horses slipped and stamped upon the rough stones, straining their bells and trappings. Some of the drivers were lying asleep on a pile of sacks. Iris-necked and pink-footed, the pigeons ran about picking seeds.

After a little while, he hailed a hansom, and drove home. For a few moments he loitered up the doorstep, looking round at the silent Squares, with its blank, close-shuttered windows, and staring blinds. The sky was pure opal now, and the roofs of the houses glistened like silver against it. From some chimney opposite a wreath of smoke was rising. It curled, a vivid riband, through the nacre-coloured air.

In the huge gilt Venetian lantern, spoil of some Doge's barge, that hung from the ceiling of the great oak-panelled hall of entrance, lights were still burning from three flickering jets: thin blue petals of flame they seemed, rimmed with white fire. He turned them out, and, having thrown his hat and cape on the table, passed through the library towards the door of his bedroom, a large octagonal chamber on the ground floor that, his new-born feeling for luxury, he had just decorated for himself, and hung with some curious Renaissance tapestries that had been discovered stored in a disused attic at Selby Roy.
as he was turning the handle of the door, his eye fell upon the portrait Basil Hallward had painted of him. He started back as if in surprise. Then he went on into his own room, looking somewhat puzzled. After he had taken the buttonhole out of his coat, he seemed to hesitate. Finally he came back, went over to the picture, and examined it. In the dim arrested light that struggled through the cream-coloured silk blinds, the face appeared to him to be a little changed. The expression looked different. One would have said that there was a touch of cruelty in the mouth. It was certainly strange.

He turned round, and, walking to the window, drew up the blind. The bright dawn flooded the room, and swept the fantastic shadows into dusky corners, where they lay shuddering. But the expression that he had noticed in the face of the portrait seemed to linger there, to be more intensified even. The quivering, ardent sunlight owed him the lines of cruelty round the mouth clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror he had done some dreadful thing.

He winced, and, taking up from the table an oval glass framed in ivory Cupids, one of LordBytey's many presents to him, glanced hurriedly to its polished depths. No line like that warped red lips. What did it mean? He rubbed his eyes, and came close to the picture, and examined it again. There were no signs of any change when he looked into the actual inting, and yet there was no doubt that the
whole expression had altered. It was not a fancy of his own. The thing was horribly parent.

He threw himself into a chair, and began to think. Suddenly there flashed across his mind what he had said in Basil Hallward's studio the day the picture had been finished. Yes, he remembered it perfectly. He had uttered a wish that he himself might remain young, and portrait grow old; that his own beauty might untarnished, and the face on the canvas bear the burden of his passions and his sins; that painted image might be scarred with the lines of suffering and thought, and that he might keep the delicate bloom and loveliness of his then conscious boyhood. Surely his wish had not been fulfilled? Such things were impossible. It seemed monstrous even to think of them. And, there was the picture before him, with the teeth of cruelty in the mouth.

Cruelty! Had he been cruel? It was the gift of fault, not his. He had dreamed of her as a great artist, had given his love to her because he had thought her great. Then she had disappointed him. She had been shallow and unworthy. A yet, a feeling of infinite regret came over him, he thought of her lying at his feet sobbing like a little child. He remembered with what callous he had watched her. Why had he been like that? Why had such a soul been given him? But he had suffered also. During the terrible hours that the play had lasted, he l
centuries of pain, aon upon aon of torture. he was well worth hers. She had marred him moment, if he had wounded her for an age. les, women were better suited to bear sorrow men. They lived on their emotions. They thought of their emotions. When they took s, it was merely to have someone with whom could have scenes. Lord Henry had told that, and Lord Henry knew what women Why should he trouble about Sibyl Vane? was nothing to him now. t the picture? What was he to say of that? ld the secret of his life, and told his story. d taught him to love his own beauty. Would ech him to loathe his own soul? Would he look at it again? ; it was merely an illusion wrought on the oled senses. The horrible night that he had had left phantoms behind it. Suddenly had fallen upon his brain that tiny scarlet t that makes men mad. The picture had not ged. It was folly to think so. t it was watching him, with its beautiful ed face and its cruel smile. Its bright hair ed in the early sunlight. Its blue eyes met wn. A sense of infinite pity, not for himself, or the painted image of himself, came over It had altered already, and would alter more. old would wither into grey. Its red and white would die. For every sin that he commit- a stain would fleck and wreck its fairness. he would not sin. The picture, changed or
unchanged, would be to him the visible emb of conscience. He would resist temptation. would not see Lord Henry any more—would he at any rate, listen to those subtle poisonous theories that in Basil Hallward’s garden had stirred within him the passion for impossible things. He would go back to Sibyl Vane, make her amends, marry her, try to love her again. Yes, it was his duty to do so. She must have suffered more than he had. Poor child! He had been selfish and cruel to her. The fascination that she had exercised over him would return. They would be happy together. His life with her would be beautiful and pure.

He got up from his chair, and drew a large screech right in front of the portrait, shuddering as he glanced at it. “How horrible!” he murmured to himself, and he walked across to the window and opened it. When he stepped out on to the grass he drew a deep breath. The fresh morning seemed to drive away all his sombre passions. He thought only of Sibyl. A faint echo of his voice came back to him. He repeated her name over and over again. The birds that were singing in the dew-drenched garden seemed to be telling flowers about her.
CHAPTER VIII

'T was long past noon when he awoke. His valet had crept several times on tiptoe into the room to see if he was stirring, and had wondered that made his young master sleep so late. Finally a bell sounded, and Victor came softly in with a sip of tea, and a pile of letters, on a small tray of Sévres china, and drew back the olive-satin curtains, with their shimmering blue lining, that hung in front of the three tall windows.

"Monsieur has well slept this morning," he said, drowsily.

"What o'clock is it, Victor?" asked Dorian ray, drowsily.

"One hour and a quarter, Monsieur."

How late it was! He sat up, and, having sipped me tea, turned over his letters. One of them was from Lord Henry, and had been brought by that morning. He hesitated for a moment, and then put it aside. The others he opened listlessly. They contained the usual collection of cards, invitations to dinner, tickets for private ews, programmes of charity concerts, and the te, that are showered on fashionable young men very morning during the season. There was a ther heavy bill, for a chased silver Louis-Quinze ilet-set, that he had not yet had the courage to

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send on to his guardians, who were extremely fashioned people and did not realise that we li
an age when unnecessary things are our only cessities; and there were several very courte
worded communications from Jermyn S money-lenders offering to advance any sum money at a moment’s notice and at the reasonable rates of interest.

After about ten minutes he got up, and, th
ing on an elaborate dressing-gown of silk brodered cashmere wool, passed into the or
paved bathroom. The cool water refreshed after his long sleep. He seemed to have forgo
all that he had gone through. A dim sens having taken part in some strange tragedy c
to him once or twice, but there was the unre
of a dream about it.

As soon as he was dressed, he went into library and sat down to a light French break
that had been laid out for him on a small ro
table close to the open window. It was an quisite day. The warm air seemed laden with spices. A bee flew in, and buzzed round blue-dragon bowl that, filled with sulphur-yel
roses, stood before him. He felt perfectly hap

Suddenly his eye fell on the screen that he placed in front of the portrait, and he started.

“Too cold for Monsieur?” asked his va
putting an omelette on the table. “I shut window?”

Dorian shook his head. “I am not cold,” murmured.
Was it all true? Had the portrait really nged? Or had it been simply his own imaginion that had made him see a look of evil where he had been a look of joy? Surely a painted was could not alter? The thing was absurd. would serve as a tale to tell Basil some day. would make him smile.

nd, yet, how vivid was his recollection of the thing! First in the dim twilight, and then he bright dawn, he had seen the touch of ity round the warped lips. He almost dreaded alet leaving the room. He knew that when was alone he would have to examine the por- He was afraid of certainty. When the re and cigarettes had been brought and the turned to go, he felt a wild desire to tell him main. As the door was closing behind him alled him back. The man stood waiting for his ers. Dorian looked at him for a moment. am not at home to anyone, Victor," he said, a sigh. The man bowed and retired.

hen he rose from the table, lit a cigarette, and g himself down on a luxuriously-cushioned th that stood facing the screen. The screen an old one, of gilt Spanish leather, stamped wrought with a rather florid Louis-Quatorze ern. He scanned it curiously, wondering if before it had concealed the secret of a man's would he move it aside, after all? Why not let ay there? What was the use of knowing? If thing was true, it was terrible. If it was not
true, why trouble about it? But what if, by some fate or deadlier chance, eyes other than his spied behind, and saw the horrible change? What should he do if Basil Hallward came and asked to look at his own picture? Basil would be sure to do that. No; the thing had to be examined, and at once. Anything would be better than this dreadful state of doubt.

He got up, and locked both doors. At least he would be alone when he looked upon the mask of his shame. Then he drew the screen aside, and saw himself face to face. It was perfectly true. The portrait had altered.

As he often remembered afterwards, and always with no small wonder, he found himself at first gazing at the portrait with a feeling of almost scientific interest. That such a change should have taken place was incredible to him. And yet it was a fact. Was there some subtle affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? Could it be that what that soul thought, they realized?—that what it dreamed, they made true? Or was there some other, more terrible reason? He shuddered, and felt afraid, and, going back to the couch, lay there, gazing at the picture in sickened horror.

One thing, however, he felt that it had done for him. It had made him conscious how unjust, how cruel, he had been to Sibyl Vane. It was not too late to make reparation for that. She could still be his wife. His unreal and selfish love would
l to some higher influence, would be trans-

ted into some nobler passion, and the portrait

Basil Hallward had painted of him would be

ide to him through life, would be to him what

ness is to some, and conscience to others, and

fear of God to us all. There were opiates for

orse, drugs that could lull the moral sense to

. But here was a visible symbol of the degrada-

ton of sin. Here was an ever-present sign of

ruin men brought upon their souls.

three o'clock struck, and four, and the half-hour

; its double chime, but Dorian Gray did not

He was trying to gather up the scarlet

ads of life, and to weave them into a pattern;

nd his way through the sanguine labyrinth of

ion through which he was wandering. He did

know what to do, or what to think. Finally,

ent over to the table, and wrote a passionate

er to the girl he had loved, imploring her for-

ness, and accusing himself of madness. He

red page after page with wild words of sorrow,

ilder words of pain. There is a luxury in

proach. When we blame ourselves we feel

; no one else has a right to blame us. It is the

ession, not the priest, that gives us absol-

. When Dorian had finished the letter, he

that he had been forgiven.

uddenly there came a knock to the door, and he

Lord Henry's voice outside. "My dear boy,

st see you. Let me in at once. I can't bear

shutting yourself up like this."

ie made no answer at first, but remained quite
still. The knocking still continued, and louder. Yes, it was better to let Lord H and to explain to him the new life he was lead, to quarrel with him if it became neccessary, to part if parting was inevitable. He jumped up, drew the screen hastily aside, and unlocked the door.

"I am so sorry for it all, Dorian," said Henry, as he entered. "But you must not be too much about it."

"Do you mean about Sibyl Vane?" asked the lad.

"Yes, of course," answered Lord Henry into a chair, and slowly pulling off his gloves. "It is dreadful, from one point of view, but it was not your fault. Tell me, did you see her, after the play was over?"

"Yes."

"I felt sure you had. Did you make with her?"

"I was brutal, Harry—perfectly brutal. But it is all right now. I am not sorry for anything that has happened. It has taught me to know better."

"Ah, Dorian, I am so glad you take it this way! I was afraid I would find you phlegmatic and bearing that nice curly hair of yours."

"I have got through all that," said he, shaking his head, and smiling. "I am happy now. I know what conscience is, and it is not what you told me it was."

The divinest thing in us. Don't sneer at it, Ha..."
—at least not before me. I want to be good. It’s bear the idea of my soul being hideous."
A very charming artistic basis for ethics, an! I congratulate you on it. But how are going to begin?”
by marrying Sibyl Vane.”
Marrying Sibyl Vane!” cried Lord Henry, ling up, and looking at him in perplexed ement. "But, my dear Dorian——"
Yes, Harry, I know what you are going to say.
thing dreadful about marriage. Don’t say Don’t ever say things of that kind to me.
Two days ago I asked Sibyl to marry me.
not going to break my word to her. She is: my wife!”
’our wife! Dorian! . . . Didn’t you get my :? I wrote to you this morning, and sent the down, by my own man.”
’our letter? Oh, yes, I remember. I have not it yet, Harry. I was afraid there might be thing in it that I wouldn’t like. You cut life eces with your epigrams.’
’ou know nothing then?”
What do you mean?"
ord Henry walked across the room, and, sitting a by Dorian Gray, took both his hands in his and held them tightly. “Dorian,” he said, letter—don’t be frightened—was to tell you Sibyl Vane is dead.”
cry of pain broke from the lad’s lips, and he d to his feet, tearing his hands away from Henry’s grasp. “Dead! Sibyl dead! It is
not true! It is a horrible lie! How dare you say it?"

"It is quite true, Dorian," said Lord Henry, gravely. "It is in all the morning papers. I wrote down to you to ask you not to see anyone till I came. There will have to be an inquest, of course, and you must not be mixed up in it. Things like that make a man fashionable in Paris. But in London people are so prejudiced. Here, one should never make one’s début with a scandal. One should reserve that to give an interest to one’s old age. I suppose they don’t know your name at the theatre? If they don’t, it is all right. Did anyone see you going round to her room? That is an important point."

Dorian did not answer for a few moments. He was dazed with horror. Finally he stammered in a stifled voice: "Harry, did you say an inquest? What did you mean by that? Did Sibyl—? Oh, Harry, I can’t bear it! But be quick. Tell me everything at once."

"I have no doubt it was not an accident, Dorian, though it must be put in that way to the public. It seems that as she was leaving the theatre with her mother, about half-past twelve or so, she said she had forgotten something upstairs. They waited some time for her, but she did not come down again. They ultimately found her lying dead on the floor of her dressing-room. She had swallowed something by mistake, some dreadful thing they use at theatres. I don’t know what it was, but it had either prussic acid or white lead
in it. I should fancy it was prussic acid, as she seems to have died instantaneously."

"Harry, Harry, it is terrible!" cried the lad.

"Yes; it is very tragic, of course, but you must not get yourself mixed up in it. I see by 'The Standard' that she was seventeen. I should have thought she was almost younger than that. She looked such a child, and seemed to know so little about acting. Dorian, you mustn't let this thing get on your nerves. You must come and dine with me, and afterwards we will look in at the Opera. It is a Patti night, and everybody will be there. You can come to my sister's box. She has got some smart women with her."

"So I have murdered Sibyl Vane," said Dorian Gray, half to himself—"murdered her as surely as if I had cut her little throat with a knife. Yet the roses are not less lovely for all that. The birds sing just as happily in my garden. And to-night I am to dine with you, and then go on to the Opera, and sup somewhere, I suppose, afterwards. How extraordinarily dramatic life is! If I had read all this in a book, Harry, I think I would have wept over it. Somehow, now that it has happened actually, and to me, it seems far too wonderful for tears. Here is the first passionate love-letter I have ever written in my life. Strange, that my first passionate love-letter should have been addressed to a dead girl. Can they feel, I wonder, those white silent people we call the dead? Sibyl! Can she feel, or know, or listen? Oh, Harry, how I loved her once! It seems years ago to me now."
She was everything to me. Then came that dreadful night—was it really only last night?—she played so badly, and my heart almost gave way. She explained it all to me. It was terribly painful. But I was not moved a bit. I thought her silliness was absurd. Suddenly something happened that made me afraid. I can't tell you what it was, but I felt it was terrible. I said I would go back to her. I had done wrong. And now she is dead. My God! Harry, what shall I do? You know the danger I am in, and there is nothing I can do to keep me straight. She would have done this to me. She had no right to kill herself. It was all of her.”

“My dear Dorian,” answered Lord Henry, as he produced a cigarette from his case, and produced a matchbox, “the only way a woman can reform a man is by boring him so completely that he loses all possible interest in life. If you were married this girl you would have been wretched. Of course you would have treated her kindly, and you would have done what kind people always do. But she would have seen that you were absolutely indifferent to her. When a woman finds that out about her husband, she either becomes dreadfully dowdy, or else she gets very smart bonnets that some other woman’s band has to pay for. I say nothing about social mistake, which would have been a great deal worse, which, of course, I would not have allowed, because I am sure that in any case the whole thing would have been an absolute failure.”
"I suppose it would," muttered the lad, walking and down the room, and looking horribly pale. But I thought it was my duty. It is not my fault that this terrible tragedy has prevented my doing what was right. I remember your saying once that there is a fatality about good resolutions—that they are always made too late. Mine certainly are."

"Good resolutions are useless attempts to interfere with scientific laws. Their origin is pure vanity. Their result is absolutely nil. They give us, now and then, some of those luxurious sterile motions that have a certain charm for the weak. But is all that can be said for them. They are imly cheques that men draw on a bank where they have no account."

"Harry," cried Dorian Gray, coming over and sitting down beside him, "why is it that I cannot feel this tragedy as much as I want to? I don't think I am heartless. Do you?"

"You have done too many foolish things during the last fortnight to be entitled to give yourself that name, Dorian," answered Lord Henry, with a sweet, melancholy smile.

The lad frowned. "I don't like that explanation, Harry," he rejoined, "but I am glad you don't think I am heartless. I am nothing of the kind. I know I am not. And yet I must admit that this thing that has happened does not affect me as it should. It seems to me to be simply like a wonderful ending to a wonderful play. It has all the terrible beauty of a Greek tragedy, a tragedy
in which I took a great part, but by which I have not been wounded."

"It is an interesting question," said Lord Henry, who found an exquisite pleasure in playing on the lad's unconscious egotism—"an extremely interesting question. I fancy that the true explanation is this. It often happens that the real tragedies of life occur in such an inartistic manner that they hurt us by their crude violence, their absolute incoherence, their absurd want of meaning, their entire lack of style. They affect us just as vulgarity affects us. They give us an impression of sheer brute force, and we revolt against that. Sometimes, however, a tragedy that possesses artistic elements of beauty crosses our lives. If these elements of beauty are real, the whole thing simply appeals to our sense of dramatic effect. Suddenly we find that we are no longer the actors, but the spectators of the play. Or rather we are both. We watch ourselves, and the mere wonder of the spectacle enraptles us. In the present case, what is it that has really happened? Someone has killed herself for love of you. I wish that I had ever had such an experience. It would have made me in love with love for the rest of my life. The people who have adored me—there have not been very many, but there have been some—have always insisted on living on, long after I had ceased to care for them, or they to care for me. They have become stout and tedious, and when I meet them they go in at once for reminiscences. That awful memory of woman! What a fearful
ring it is! And what an utter intellectual stagna-
on it reveals! One should absorb the colour of
in, but one should never remember its details.
etails are always vulgar."
"I must sow poppies in my garden," sighed Dor-

"There is no necessity," rejoined his companion.
Life has always poppies in her hands. Of course,
 and then things linger. I once wore nothing
not violets all through one season, as a form of art-
istic mourning for a romance that would not die.
imately, however, it did die. I forget what killed
I think it was her proposing to sacrifice the
hole world for me. That is always a dreadful
oment. It fills one with the terror of eternity.
ell—would you believe it?—a week ago, at Lady
ampshire's, I found myself seated at dinner next
lady in question, and she insisted on going over
whole thing again, and digging up the past, and
king up the future. I had buried my romance in
bed of asphodel. She dragged it out again, and
ured me that I had spoiled her life. I am bound
tate that she ate an enormous dinner, so I did
ot feel any anxiety. But what a lack of taste she
owed! The one charm of the past is that it is
past. But women never know when the cur-
in has fallen. They always want a sixth act, and
soon as the interest of the play is entirely over
ey propose to continue it. If they were allowed
r own way, every comedy would have a tragic
ding, and every tragedy would culminate in a
ce. They are charmingly artificial, but they
have no sense of art. You are more fortunate than I am. I assure you, Dorian, that not one of the women I have known would have done for me what Sibyl Vane did for you. Ordinary women always console themselves. Some of them do it by going in for sentimental colours. Never trust a woman who wears mauve, whatever her age may be, or a woman over thirty-five who is fond of pink ribbons. It always means that they have a history. Others find a great consolation in suddenly discovering the good qualities of their husbands. They flaunt their conjugal felicity in one’s face, as if it were the most fascinating of sins. Religion consoles some. Its mysteries have all the charm of a flirtation, a woman once told me; and I can quite understand it. Besides, nothing makes one so vain as being told that one is a sinner. Conscience makes egotists of us all. Yes; there is really no end to the consolations that women find in modern life. Indeed, I have not mentioned the most important one."

"What is that, Harry?" said the lad, listlessly.

"Oh, the obvious consolation. Taking someone else’s admirer when one loses one’s own. In good society that always whitewashes a woman. But really, Dorian, how different Sibyl Vane must have been from all the women one meets! There is something to me quite beautiful about her death. I am glad I am living in a century when such wonders happen. They make one believe in the reality of the things we all play with, such as romance, passion, and love."
I was terribly cruel to her. You forget that." I am afraid that women appreciate cruelty, might cruelty, more than anything else. They're wonderfully primitive instincts. We have uncipated them, but they remain slaves looking their masters, all the same. They love being unated. I am sure you were splendid. I have never seen you really and absolutely angry, but I can't say how delightful you looked. And, after all, said something to me the day before yesterday seemed to me at the time to be merely fanciful, that I see now was absolutely true, and it holds key to everything."

What was that, Harry?"

You said to me that Sibyl Vane represented to all the heroines of romance—that she was Desmona one night, and Ophelia the other; that if she died as Juliet, she came to life as Imogen."

She will never come to life again now," muttered the lad, burying his face in his hands.

No, she will never come to life. She has played last part. But you must think of that lonely th in the tawdry dressing-room simply as ane lurid fragment from some Jacobean trag- as a wonderful scene from Webster, or Ford, Cyril Tourneur. The girl never really lived, so she has never really died. To you at least was always a dream, a phantom that flitted through Shakespeare's plays and left them lovelier its presence, a reed through which Shakespere's music sounded richer and more full of joy. moment she touched actual life, she marred
it, and it marred her, and so she passed away. Mourn for Ophelia, if you like. Put ashes on your head because Cordelia was strangled. Cut out against Heaven because the daughter of Babantio died. But don’t waste your tears over Sibyl Vane. She was less real than they are."

There was a silence. The evening darkened the room. Noiselessly, and with silver feet, shadows crept in from the garden. The color faded wearily out of things.

After some time Dorian Gray looked up. "I have explained me to myself, Harry," he mumbled, with something of a sigh of relief. "It was all that you have said, but somehow I was afraid of it, and I could not express it to myself. How do you know me! But we will not talk again of what has happened. It has been a marvellous experience. That is all. I wonder if life has still in store for me anything as marvellous."

"Life has everything in store for you, Dorian. There is nothing that you, with your extraordinary good looks, will not be able to do."

"But suppose, Harry, I became haggard, old, and wrinkled? What then?"

"Ah, then," said Lord Henry, rising to get up, "then, my dear Dorian, you would have to fight for your victories. As it is, they are brought to you. No, you must keep your good looks. Live in an age that reads too much to be wise, and that thinks too much to be beautiful. We cannot spare you. And now you had better dress, and drive down to the club. We are rather late, as it
"I think I shall join you at the Opera, Harry. I feel too tired to eat anything. What is the number of your sister's box?"

"Twenty-seven, I believe. It is on the grand tier. You will see her name on the door. But I am sorry you won't come and dine."

"I don't feel up to it," said Dorian, listlessly. But I am awfully obliged to you for all that you have said to me. You are certainly my best friend. No one has ever understood me as you have."

"We are only at the beginning of our friendship, Dorian," answered Lord Henry, shaking him by the hand. "Good-bye. I shall see you before nine-thirty, I hope. Remember, Patti is singing."

As he closed the door behind him, Dorian Gray rang the bell, and in a few minutes Victor appeared with the lamps and drew the blinds down. He waited impatiently for him to go. The man seemed to take an interminable time over everything.

As soon as he had left, he rushed to the screen, and drew it back. No; there was no further change in the picture. It had received the news of Sibyl's death before he had known of it himself. He was conscious of the events of life as they occurred. The vicious cruelty that marred the fines of the mouth had, no doubt, appeared at the very moment that the girl had drunk the poison, whatever it was. Or was it indifferent to results? Did it merely take cognizance of what passed within the soul? He wondered, and hoped that
some day he would see the change taking place before his very eyes, shuddering as he hoped it.

Poor Sibyl! what a romance it had all been! She had often mimicked death on the stage. Death himself had touched her, and taken her with him. How had she played that dreadful scene? Had she cursed him, as she died? No, she had died for love of him, and love would always be a sacrament to him now. She had atoned everything, by the sacrifice she had made of her life. He would not think any more of what she had made him go through, on that horrible night at the theatre. When he thought of her, it would be a wonderful tragic figure sent on to the world's stage to show the supreme reality of Love. A wondrous tragic figure? Tears came to his eyes as he remembered her childlike look, and winsome fancy ways, and shy tremulous grace. He brushed them away hastily, and looked again at the picture.

He felt that the time had really come for making his choice. Or had his choice already been made? Yes, life had decided that for him—life, and not his own infinite curiosity about life. Eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, joys and wilder sins—he was to have all the things. The portrait was to bear the burden of his shame: that was all.

A feeling of pain crept over him as he thought of the desecration that was in store for the fair face on the canvas. Once, in boyish mockery of Narcissus, he had kissed, or feigned to kiss, those painted lips that now smiled so cruelly at him. Morning
morning he had sat before the portrait, wondering at its beauty, almost enamoured of it, as it seemed to him at times. Was it to alter now with every mood to which he yielded? Was it to become a monstrous and loathsome thing, to be hidden away in a locked room, to be shut out from the light that had so often touched to brighter gold the waving wonder of its hair? The pity of it! the pity of it!

For a moment he thought of praying that the terrible sympathy that existed between him and the picture might cease. It had changed in answer to a prayer; perhaps in answer to a prayer it might remain unchanged. And, yet, who, that knew anything about Life, would surrender the chance of remaining always young, however fantastic that chance might be, or with what fateful consequences it might be fraught? Besides, was it really under his control? Had it indeed been prayer that had produced the substitution? Might there not be some curious scientific reason for it all? If thought could exercise its influence upon a living organism, might not thought exercise an influence upon dead and inorganic things? Nay, without thought or conscious desire, might not things external to ourselves vibrate in unison with our moods and passions, atom calling to atom in secret love of strange affinity? But the reason was of no importance. He would never again tempt by a prayer any terrible power. If the picture was to alter, it was to alter. That was all. Why inquire too closely into it?
For there would be a real pleasure in watching it. He would be able to follow his mind into its secret places. This portrait would be to him the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul. And when winter came upon it, he would still be standing where spring trembles on the verge of summer. When the blood crept from its face, and left behind a pallid mask of chalk with leaden eyes, he would keep the glamour of boyhood. Not one blossom of his loveliness would ever fade. Not one pulse of his life would ever weaken. Like the gods of the Greeks, he would be strong, and fleet, and joyous. What did it matter what happened to the coloured image on the canvas? He would be safe. That was everything.

He drew the screen back into its former place in front of the picture, smiling as he did so, and passed into his bedroom, where his valet was already waiting for him. An hour later he was at the Opera, and Lord Henry was leaning over his chair.
CHAPTER IX

As he was sitting at breakfast next morning, Basil Hallward was shown into the room.

"I am so glad I have found you, Dorian," he said, gravely. "I called last night, and they told me you were at the Opera. Of course I knew that was impossible. But I wish you had left word where you had really gone to. I passed a dreadful evening, half afraid that one tragedy might be followed by another. I think you might have telegraphed for me when you heard of it first. I read of it quite by chance in a late edition of 'The Globe', that I picked up at the club. I came here at once, and was miserable at not finding you. I can't tell you how heart-broken I am about the whole thing. I know what you must suffer. But where were you? Did you go down and see the girl's mother? For a moment I thought of following you there. They gave the address in the paper. Somewhere in the Euston Road, isn't it? But I was afraid of intruding upon a sorrow that I could not lighten. Poor woman! What a state she must be in! And her only child, too! What did she say about it all?"

"My dear Basil, how do I know?" murmured Dorian Gray, sipping some pale-yellow wine from a delicate gold-beaded bubble of Venetian glass,
and looking dreadfully bored. "I was at the Opera. You should have come on there. I met Lady Gwendolyne, Harry's sister, for the first time. We were in her box. She is perfectly charming and Patti sang divinely. Don't talk about home subjects. If one doesn't talk about a thing, it has never happened. It is simply expression, as Harry says, that gives reality to things. I may mention that she was not the woman's only child. There is a son, a charming fellow, I believe. But he is not on the stage. He is a sailor, or something. And now, tell me about yourself and what you are painting."

"You went to the Opera?" said Hallward, speaking very slowly, and with a strained touch of pain in his voice. "You went to the Opera when Sibyl Vane was lying dead in some sordid lodging? You can talk to me of other women being charming, and of Patti singing divinely, before the girl you loved has even the quiet of a grave to sleep in. Why, man, there are horrors in store for that little white body of hers!"

"Stop, Basil! I won't hear it!" cried Dorian, leaping to his feet. "You must not tell me about things. What is done is done. What is past is past."

"You call yesterday the past?"

"What has the actual lapse of time got to do with it? It is only shallow people who require years to get rid of an emotion. A man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as easily as he can invent a pleasure. I don't want to be at the mercy of my
emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them.”

“Dorian, this is horrible! Something has changed you completely. You look exactly the same wonderful boy who, day after day, used to come down to my studio to sit for his picture. But you were simple, natural, and affectionate then. You were the most unspoiled creature in the whole world. Now, I don’t know what has come over you. You talk as if you had no heart, no pity in you. It is all Harry’s influence. I see that.”

The lad flushed up, and, going to the window, looked out for a few moments on the green, flickering, sun-lashed garden. “I owe a great deal to Harry, Basil,” he said, at last—“more than I owe to you. You only taught me to be vain.”

“Well, I am punished for that, Dorian—or shall be some day.”

“I don’t know what you mean, Basil,” he exclaimed, turning round. “I don’t know what you want. What do you want?”

“I want the Dorian Gray I used to paint,” said the artist, sadly.

“Basil,” said the lad, going over to him, and putting his hand on his shoulder, “you have come too late. Yesterday when I heard that Sibyl Vane had killed herself—”

“Killed herself! Good heavens! is there no doubt about that?” cried Hallward, looking up at him with an expression of horror.

“My dear Basil! Surely you don’t think it was a vulgar accident? Of course she killed herself.”
The elder man buried his face in his hand. "How fearful," he muttered, and a shudder ran through him.

"No," said Dorian Gray, "there is nothing fearful about it. It is one of the great romantic tragedies of the age. As a rule, people who act lead the most commonplace lives. They are good husbands, or faithful wives, or something tedious. You know what I mean—middle-class virtue, all that kind of thing. How different it was! She lived her finest tragedy. She was always a heroine. The last night she played—the night you saw her—she acted badly because she had known the reality of love. When she knew unreality, she died, as Juliet might have died. She passed again into the sphere of art. There is something of the martyr about her. Her death has all the pathetic uselessness of martyrdom, its wasted beauty. But, as I was saying, you must not think I have not suffered. If you had come yesterday at a particular moment—about half past five, perhaps, or a quarter to six—you would have found me in tears. Even Harry, who was here, who brought me the news, in fact, had no idea what I was going through. I suffered immensely. Then it passed away. I cannot repeat an emotion. No one can, except sentimentalists. And you are awfully unjust, Basil. You come down here to console me. That is charming of you. You find me consoled, and you are furious. He liked a sympathetic person! You remind me of a story Harry told me about a certain philanthrop
ho spent twenty years of his life in trying to get some grievance redressed, or some unjust law ltered—I forget exactly what it was. Finally he exceeded, and nothing could exceed his disappoint ment. He had absolutely nothing to do, lmost died of ennui, and became a confirmed disanthrope. And besides, my dear old Basil, if ou really want to console me, teach me rather to forget what has happened, or to see it from the proper artistic point of view. Was it not Gautier o used to write about la consolation des arts? remember picking up a little vellum-covered ook in your studio one day and chancing on that slighthe phrase. Well, I am not like that young an you told me of when we were down at Marlow together, the young man who used to say that ellow satin could console one for all the miseries f life. I love beautiful things that one can touch nd handle. Old brocades, green bronzes, lacquer rork, carved ivories, exquisite surroundings, luxu ry, pomp, there is much to be got from all these. ut the artistic temperament that they create, or t any rate reveal, is still more to me. To become he spectator of one’s own life, as Harry says, is to scape the suffering of life. I know you are sur prised at my talking to you like this. You have ot realised how I have developed. I was a school oy when you knew me. I am a man now. I ave new passions, new thoughts, new ideas. am different, but you must not like me less. I m changed, but you must always be my friend. Of urse I am very fond of Harry. But I know that
you are better than he is. You are not stronger—you are too much afraid of life—but you are better. And how happy we used to be together! Don’t leave me, Basil, and don’t quarrel with me. I am what I am. There is nothing more to be said.”

The painter felt strangely moved. The lad was infinitely dear to him, and his personality had been the great turning-point in his art. He could not bear the idea of reproaching him any more. After all, his indifference was probably merely a mood that would pass away. There was so much in him that was good, so much in him that was noble.

“Well, Dorian,” he said, at length, with a sad smile, “I won’t speak to you again about this horrible thing, after to-day. I only trust your name won’t be mentioned in connection with it. The inquest is to take place this afternoon. Have they summoned you?”

Dorian shook his head and a look of annoyance passed over his face at the mention of the word “inquest.” There was something so crude and vulgar about everything of the kind. “They don’t know my name,” he answered.

“But surely she did?”

“Only my Christian name, and that I am quite sure she never mentioned to anyone. She told me once that they were all rather curious to learn who I was, and that she invariably told them my name was Prince Charming. It was pretty of her. You must do me a drawing of Sibyl, Basil. I should like to have something more of her than the mem-
of a few kisses and some broken pathetic
I will try and do something, Dorian, if it would
see you. But you must come and sit to me
self again. I can’t get on without you.”
I can never sit to you again, Basil. It is im-
ible!” he exclaimed, starting back.
he painter stared at him. “My dear boy, what
sense!” he cried. “Do you mean to say you
t like what I did of you? Where is it? Why
e you pulled the screen in front of it? Let me
at it. It is the best thing I have ever done. 
take the screen away, Dorian. It is simply
raceful of your servant hiding my work like
. I felt the room looked different as I came

My servant has nothing to do with it, Basil.
don’t imagine I let him arrange my room for
He settles my flowers for me sometimes—
is all. No; I did it myself. The light was too
ng on the portrait.”
Too strong! Surely not, my dear fellow? It
 admirable place for it. Let me see it.” And
ward walked towards the corner of the room.
ery of terror broke from Dorian Gray’s lips,
he rushed between the painter and the screen.
asil,” he said, looking very pale, “you must not
at it. I don’t wish you to.”
Not look at my own work! you are not serious.
shouldn’t I look at it?” exclaimed Hallward,

[If you try to look at it, Basil, on my word of
honour I will never speak to you again as long as I live. I am quite serious. I don’t offer any explanation, and you are not to ask for any. Be remember, if you touch this screen, everything alive between us.”

Hallward was thunderstruck. He looked Dorian Gray in absolute amazement. He had never seen him like this before. The lad was actually pallid with rage. His hands were clenched and the pupils of his eyes were like disks of fire. He was trembling all over.

“Dorian!”

“Don’t speak!”

“But what is the matter? Of course I won’t look at it if you don’t want me to,” he said, rather coldly, turning on his heel, and going over towards the window. “But, really, it seems rather absurd that I shouldn’t see my own work, especially as I am going to exhibit it in Paris in the autumn. I shall probably have to give it another coat of varnish before that, so I must see it some day, and why not today?”

“To exhibit it? You want to exhibit it?” claimed Dorian Gray, a strange sense of terror creeping over him. Was the world going to find out his secret? Were people to gape at the mystery of his life? That was impossible. Something—he did not know what—had to be done once.

“Yes; I don’t suppose you will object to the Georges Petit is going to collect all my best pictures for a special exhibition in the Rue de Sèze, wh
open the first week in October. The portrait only be away a month. I should think you would easily spare it for that time. In fact, you are to be out of town. And if you keep it always in a screen, you can't care much about it.”

Dorian Gray passed his hand over his forehead. There were beads of perspiration there. He felt he was on the brink of a horrible danger.

"I told you a month ago that you would never sit it,“ he cried. “Why have you changed your mind? You people who go in for being con-art have just as many moods as others have. The only difference is that your moods are rather single. You can't have forgotten that you promised me most solemnly that nothing in the world would induce you to send it to any exhibition. You told Harry exactly the same thing.”

topped suddenly, and a gleam of light came into his eyes. He remembered that Lord Henry had said to him once, half seriously and half in jest, you want to have a strange quarter of an hour, Basil to tell you why he won't exhibit your picture. He told me why he wouldn't, and it was a sensation to me.” Yes, perhaps Basil, too, had a secret. He would ask him and try.

"Basil,” he said, coming over quite close, and taking him straight in the face, “we have each a secret. Let me know yours and I shall tell mine. What was your reason for refusing to sit my picture?”

The painter shuddered in spite of himself. Dorian, if I told you, you might like me less than
you do, and you would certainly laugh at me. I could not bear your doing either of those two things. If you wish me never to look at you picture again, I am content. I have always you to look at. If you wish the best work I have ever done to be hidden from the world, I am satisfied. Your friendship is dearer to me than any fame or reputation."

"No, Basil, you must tell me," insisted Dorian Gray. "I think I have a right to know." His feeling of terror had passed away, and curiosity had taken its place. He was determined to find out Basil Hallward's mystery.

"Let us sit down, Dorian," said the painter, looking troubled. "Let us sit down. And just answer me one question. Have you noticed in the picture something curious?—something that probably at first did not strike you, but that revealed itself to you suddenly?"

"Basil!" cried the lad, clutching the arms of his chair with trembling hands, and gazing at him with wild, startled eyes.

"I see you did. Don't speak. Wait till you hear what I have to say. Dorian, from the moment I met you, your personality had the most extraordinary influence over me. I was dominated, soul, brain, and power by you. You became to me the visible incarnation of that unseen ideal whose memory haunts us artists like an exquisite dream. I worshipped you. I grew jealous of everyone to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all to myself. I was only happy when I
with you. When you were away from me you
are still present in my art. . . . Of course I never
knew anything about this. It would have
been impossible. You would not have understood
I hardly understood it myself. I only knew
that I had seen perfection face to face, and that
world had become wonderful to my eyes—too
wonderful, perhaps, for in such mad worships
there is peril, the peril of losing them, no less than
the peril of keeping them. . . . Weeks and weeks
went on, and I grew more and more absorbed in
you. Then came a new development. I had
seen you as Paris in dainty armour, and as
love with huntsman’s cloak and polished boar-
bar. Crowned with heavy lotus-blossoms you
did sit on the prow of Adrian’s barge, gazing
across the green turbid Nile. You had leant over
the still pool of some Greek woodland, and seen in
the water’s silent silver the marvel of your own
be. And it had all been what art should be,
conscious, ideal, and remote. One day, a fatal
ty I sometimes think, I determined to paint a
wonderful portrait of you as you actually arc, not
the costume of dead ages, but in your own dress
and in your own time. Whether it was the Real-
m of the method, or the mere wonder of your
own personality, thus directly presented to me
without mist or veil, I cannot tell. But I know
that as I worked at it, every flake and film of
your seemed to me to reveal my secret. I grew
raid that others would know of my idolatry. I
had, Dorian, that I had told too much, that I had
put too much of myself into it. Then it was that I resolved never to allow the picture to be exhibited. You were a little annoyed; but then you did not realise all that it meant to me. Harry, to whom I talked about it, laughed at me. But I did not mind that. When the picture was finished, and I sat alone with it, I felt that I was right...

Well, after a few days the thing left my studio, and as soon as I had got rid of the intolerable fascination of its presence, it seemed to me that I had been a fool in imagining that I had seen anything in it more than that you were extremely good-looking and that I could paint. Even now I cannot help feeling that it is a mistake to think that the passionate emotion one feels in creation is ever really shown in the work one creates. Art is always more abstract than we fancy. Form and colour tell us of form and colour—that is all. It often seems to me that art conceals the artist far more completely than it ever reveals him. And so when I got this offer from Paris I determined to make your portrait the principal thing in my exhibition. It never occurred to me that you would refuse. I see now that you were right. The picture cannot be shown. You must not be angry with me, Dorian, for what I have told you. As I said to Harry, once you are made to be worshipped.”

Dorian Gray drew a long breath. The colour came back to his cheeks, and a smile played about his lips. The peril was over. He was safe for the time. Yet he could not help feeling infinite pity for the painter who had just made this strange com-
on to him, and wondered if he himself would be so dominated by the personality of a d. Lord Henry had the charm of being very gerous. But that was all. He was too clever too cynical to be really fond of. Would there be someone who would fill him with a strange ntry? Was that one of the things that life had ore?

It is extraordinary to me, Dorian,” said Hall,

“that you should have seen this in the por-

. Did you really see it?”

I saw something in it,” he answered, “some-
g that seemed to me very curious.”

Well, you don’t mind my looking at the thing ?”

Dorian shook his head. “You must not ask me, Basil. I could not possibly let you stand in t of that picture.”

You will some day, surely?”

Never.”

Well, perhaps you are right. And now good-

Dorian. You have been the one person in my who has really influenced my art. Whatever I done that is good, I owe to you. Ah! you t know what it cost me to tell you all that I told you.”

My dear Basil,” said Dorian, “what have you me? Simply that you felt that you ad-
d me too much. That is not even a com-
ent.”

It was not intended as a compliment. It was a sessi
seems to have gone out of me. Perhaps one should never put one's worship into words."

"It was a very disappointing confession."

"Why, what did you expect, Dorian? You didn't see anything else in the picture, did you? There was nothing else to see?"

"No; there was nothing else to see. Why you ask? But you mustn't talk about worsh... It is foolish. You and I are friends, Basil, and must always remain so."

"You have got Harry," said the painter, said

"Oh, Harry!" cried the lad, with a ripple laughter. "Harry, Harry spends his days in saying what is incredible, and his evenings in doing what is improbable. Just the sort of life I would like to live. But still I don't think I would go to Harry if I were in trouble. I would sooner go to you, Basil."

"You will sit to me again?"

"Impossible!"

"You spoil my life as an artist by refusing, Dorian. No man came across two ideal things. I come across one."

"I can't explain it to you, Basil, but I'm never sit to you again. There is something far about a portrait. It has a life of its own. I'll come and have tea with you. That will be just pleasant."

"Pleasanter for you, I am afraid," muttered Hallward, regretfully. "And now good-bye. I'm sorry you won't let me look at the picture of you again. But that can't be helped. I quite understand what you feel about it."
e left the room, Dorian Gray smiled to him-
Poor Basil! how little he knew of the true
! And how strange it was that, instead of
been forced to reveal his own secret, he had
led, almost by chance, in wrestling a secret
is friend! How much that strange confes-
plained to him! The painter’s absurd fits of
y, his wild devotion, his extravagant pane-
his curious reticences—he understood them
r, and he felt sorry. There seemed to him
omething tragic in a friendship so coloured
ance.
ighed, and touched the bell. The portrait
be hidden away at all costs. He could not
ch a risk of discovery again. It had been
f him to have allowed the thing to remain,
or an hour, in a room to which any of his
had access.
CHAPTER X

WHEN his servant entered, he looked at him steadfastly, and wondered if he had thought of peering behind the screen. The man was quite impassive, and waited for his orders. Dorian lit a cigarette, and walked over to the glass and glanced into it. He could see the reflection of Victor's face perfectly. It was like a placid mask of servility. There was nothing to be afraid of there. Yet he thought it best to be on his guard.

Speaking very slowly, he told him to tell the housekeeper that he wanted to see her, and then to go to the frame-maker and ask him to send two of his men round at once. It seemed to him that the man left the room his eyes wandered in the direction of the screen. Or was that merely his own fancy?

After a few moments, in her black silk dress with old-fashioned thread mittens on her wrinkled hands, Mrs. Leaf bustled into the library. He asked her for the key of the schoolroom.

"The old schoolroom, Mr. Dorian?" she exclaimed. "Why, it is full of dust. I must get it arranged, and put straight before you go into it. It is not fit for you to see, sir. It is not, indeed."

"I don't want it put straight, Leaf. I only want the key."
Vell, sir, you'll be covered with cobwebs if you
to it. Why, it hasn't been opened for nearly
years, not since his lordship died."
winced at the mention of his grandfather.
hateful memories of him. "That does not
er," he answered. "I simply want to see the
that is all. Give me the key."
And here is the key, sir," said the old lady,
g over the contents of her bunch with tremu-
y uncertain hands. "Here is the key. I'll
it off the bunch in a moment. But you don't
of living up there, sir, and you so comfort-
here?"
No, no," he cried, petulantly. "Thank you,
. That will do."
 lingered for a few moments, and was
ious over some detail of the household.
sighed, and told her to manage things as
thught best. She left the room, wreathed
iles.
the door closed, Dorian put the key in his
et, and looked round the room. His eye fell
large, purple satin coverlet heavily embroid-
with gold, a splendid piece of late seven-
th-century Venetian work that his grand-
 had found in a convent near Bologna. Yes,
would serve to wrap the dreadful thing in. It
perhaps served often as a pall for the dead.
it was to hide something that had a corrup-
of its own, worse than the corruption of death
—something that would breed horrors and
would never die. What the worm was to the
corpse, his sins would be to the painted image on the canvas. They would mar its beauty, and take away its grace. They would defile it, and make it shameful. And yet the thing would still live on. It would be always alive.

He shuddered, and for a moment he regretted that he had not told Basil the true reason why he had wished to hide the picture away. Basil would have helped him to resist Lord Henry's influence and the still more poisonous influences that came from his own temperament. The love that he bore him—for it was really love—had nothing in it that was not noble and intellectual. It was not the mere physical admiration of beauty that is born of the senses, and that dies when the senses tire. It was such love as Michael Angelo had known and Montaigne, and Winckelmann, and Shakespeare himself. Yes, Basil could have saved him. But it was too late now. The past could always be annihilated. Regret, denial, or forgetfulness could do that. But the future was inevitable. There were passions in him that would find their terrible outlet, dreams that would make the shadow of their evil real.

He took up from the couch the great purple-and-gold texture that covered it, and, holding it in his hands, passed behind the screen. Was the face on the canvas viler than before? It seemed to him that it was unchanged; and yet his loathing of it was intensified. Gold hair, blue eyes, and rose-red lips—they all were there. It was simply the expression that had altered. That was horrible in
cruelty. Compared to what he saw in it of
losure or rebuke, how shallow Basil’s reproaches
out Sibyl Vane had been!—how shallow, and of
at little account! His own soul was looking out
him from the canvas and calling him to judg-
ent. A look of pain came across him, and he
ng the rich pall over the picture. As he did so,
cock came to the door. He passed out as his
vant entered.

“The persons are here, Monsieur.”

He felt that the man must be got rid of at
ce. He must not be allowed to know where
picture was being taken to. There was some-
ing sly about him, and he had thoughtful,
cherous eyes. Sitting down at the writing-
tle, he scribbled a note to Lord Henry, asking
m to send him round something to read, and
minding him that they were to meet at eight-
ten that evening.

“Wait for an answer,” he said, handing it to
m, “and show the men in here.”

In two or three minutes there was another
ock, and Mr. Hubbard himself, the celebrated
me-maker of South Audley Street, came in with
owh rough-looking young assistant. Mr.
vard was a florid, red-whiskered little man,
ose admiration for art was considerably tem-
ed by the inveterate impecuniosity of most of
artists who dealt with him. As a rule, he never
’t his shop. He waited for people to come to him.
he always made an exception in favour of
orian Gray. There was something about Dorian
that charmed everybody. It was a pleasure ever to see him.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Gray?" he said, rubbing his fat freckled hands. "I thought I would do myself the honour of coming round to see you, Mr. Hubbard. I have just got a beauty of a frame, a Fonthill, I believe. Admirably suited for a religious subject, Mr. Gray."

"I am so sorry you have given yourself the trouble of coming round, Mr. Hubbard. I shall certainly drop in and look at the frame—though I don't go in much at present for religious art—but to-day I only want a picture carried to the top of the house for me. It is rather heavy, so I thought I would ask you to lend me a couple of your men."

"No trouble at all, Mr. Gray. I am delighted to be of any service to you. Which is the work of art, sir?"

"This," replied Dorian, moving the screen back. "Can you move it, covering and all, just as it is? I don't want it to get scratched going upstairs."

"There will be no difficulty, sir," said the genial frame-maker, beginning, with the aid of his assistant, to unhook the picture from the long brass chains by which it was suspended. "And, now, where shall we carry it to, Mr. Gray?"

"I will show you the way, Mr. Hubbard, if you will kindly follow me. Or perhaps you had better go in front. I am afraid it is right at the top of the house. We will go up by the front staircase, as it is wider."
He held the door open for them, and they passed into the hall and began the ascent. The burlate character of the frame had made the sture extremely bulky, and now and then, in the obsequious protests of Mr. Hubbard; to had the true tradesman's spirited dislike of seeing a gentleman doing anything useful, Dorian touched his hand to it so as to help them.

"Something of a load to carry, sir," gasped the tile man, when they reached the top landing. He wiped his shiny forehead.

"I am afraid it is rather heavy," murmured Dorian, as he unlocked the door that opened into a room that was to keep for him the curious cret of his life and hide his soul from the eyes of men.

He had not entered the place for more than four years—not, indeed, since he had used it first as a study when he was a child, and then as a study when he grew somewhat older. It was a large, well-proportioned room, which had been socially built by the last Lord Kelso for the use of a little grandson whom, for his strange likeness to his mother, and also for other reasons, he had always hated and desired to keep at a distance. It appeared to Dorian to have but little changed. Here was the huge Italian cassone, with its fantastically-painted panels and its tarnished gilt moldings, in which he had so often hidden himself as a boy. There the satinwood bookcase filled with his dog-eared schoolbooks. On the wall and it was hanging the same ragged Flemish.
tapestry, where a faded king and queen were playing chess in a garden, while a company of hawkers rode by, carrying hooded birds on their gauntleted wrists. How well he remembered it all! Every moment of his lonely childhood came back to him as he looked round. He recalled the staid purity of his boyish life, and it seemed horribly to him that it was here the fatal portrait was hidden away. How little he had thought, in the dead days, of all that was in store for him!

But there was no other place in the house secure from prying eyes as this. He had the key and no one else could enter it. Beneath its purple pall, the face painted on the canvas could be seen bestial, sodden, and unclean. What did it matter? No one could see it. He himself would not see it. Why should he watch the hideous corruption of his soul? He kept his youth—that was enough. And, besides, might not his nature get finer, after all? There was no reason that the picture should be so full of shame. Some love might come across his life, and purify him, and shield him from those sins that seemed to be already stirring in spirit and in flesh—those curious unpictured sins whose very mystery lent them their sublimity and their charm. Perhaps, some day, the cruel look would have passed away from the sensitive mouth, and he might show to the world Basil Hallward's masterpiece.

No; that was impossible. Hour by hour, week by week, the thing upon the canvas was growing old. It might escape the hideousness
but the hideousness of age was in store for it. The cheeks would become hollow or flaccid. Yellow crow’s-feet would creep round the fading eyes and make them horrible. The hair would lose its lighness, the mouth would gape or droop, would look foolish or gross, as the mouths of old men are. Here would be the wrinkled throat, the cold, blue-veined hands, the twisted body, that he remembered in the grandfather who had been so kind to him in his boyhood. The picture had to be concealed. There was no help for it.

“Bring it in, Mr. Hubbard, please,” he said, barely, turning round. “I am sorry I kept you long. I was thinking of something else.”

“Always glad to have a rest, Mr. Gray,” answered the frame-maker, who was still gasping for breath. “Where shall we put it, sir?”

“Oh, anywhere. Here: this will do. I don’t want to have it hung up. Just lean it against the wall. Thanks.”

“Might one look at the work of art, sir?” Dorian started. “It would not interest you, Mr. Hubbard,” he said, keeping his eye on the man. He felt ready to leap upon him and fling him to the ground if he dared to lift the gorgeous hanging that concealed the secret of his life. “I shan’t trouble you any more now. I am much obliged for your kindness in coming round.”

“Not at all, not at all, Mr. Gray. Ever ready to do anything for you, sir.” And Mr. Hubbard stepped downstairs, followed by the assistant, who glanced back at Dorian with a look of shy
wonder in his rough, uncomely face. He had never seen anyone so marvellous.

When the sound of their footsteps had died away, Dorian locked the door, and put the key into his pocket. He felt safe now. No one would ever look upon the horrible thing. No eye but his would ever see his shame.

On reaching the library he found that it was just after five o'clock, and that the tea had been already brought up. On a little table of dark perfumed wood thickly encrusted with nacre, a present from Lady Radley, his guardian's wife, a pretty professional invalid, who had spent the preceding winter in Cairo, was lying a note from Lord Henry, and beside it was a book bound in yellow paper, the cover slightly torn and the edges soiled. A copy of the third edition of "The St. James's Gazette" had been placed on the tea-tray. It was evident that Victor had returned. He wondered if he had met the men in the hall as they were leaving the house, and had wormed out of them what they had been doing. He would be sure to miss the picture—had no doubt missed it already, while he had been laying the tea-things. The screen had not been set back, and a blank space was visible on the wall. Perhaps some night he might find him creeping upstairs and trying to force the door of the room. It was a horrible thing to have a spy in one's house. He had heard of rich men who had been blackmailed all their lives by some servant who had read a letter, or overheard a conversation, or picked up a card with an
tress, or found beneath a pillow a withered
ner or a shred of crumpled lace.
He sighed, and, having poured himself out some
, opened Lord Henry's note. It was simply to
that he sent him round the evening paper, and
ook that might interest him, and that he would
at the club at eight-fifteen. He opened "The
James's" languidly, and looked through it. A
pencil-mark on the fifth page caught his eye.
dered attention to the following paragraph:

"INQUEST ON AN ACTRESS—An inquest was
held this morning at the Bell Tavern, Hoxton
Road, by Mr. Danby, the District Coroner, on
the body of Sibyl Vane, a young actress recently
engaged at the Royal Theatre, Holborn. A ver-
dict of death by misadventure was returned.
Considerable sympathy was expressed for the
mother of the deceased, who was greatly af-
ected during the giving of her own evidence,
and that of Dr. Birrell, who had made the post-
mortem examination of the deceased."

He frowned, and, tearing the paper in two, went
t across the room and flung the pieces away. How
it all was! And how horribly real ugliness
he things! He felt a little annoyed with Lord
ury for having sent him the report. And it was
ainly stupid of him to have marked it with red
cil. Victor might have read it. The man knew
e than enough English for that.
Perhaps he had read it, and had begun to sus-
something. And, yet, what did it matter?
What had Dorian Gray to do with Sibyl Vane's death? There was nothing to fear. Dorian had not killed her.

His eye fell on the yellow book that Lord Henry had sent him. What was it, he wondered. He went towards the little pearl-coloured octagonal stand, that had always looked to him like the nest of some strange Egyptian bees that wrought in silver, and taking up the volume, flung himself in an armchair, and began to turn over the leaves. After a few minutes he became absorbed. It was the strangest book that he had ever read. It seemed to him that in exquisite raiment, and the delicate sound of flutes, the sins of the world were passing in dumb show before him. This was the dimly dreamed-of unreal to him. Things of which he had never dreamed were gradually revealed.

It was a novel without a plot, and with only one character, being, indeed, simply a psychological study of a certain young Parisian, who spent his life trying to realise in the nineteenth century the passions and modes of thought that belong to every century except his own, and to sum up, it was, in himself the various moods through which the world-spirit had ever passed, loving and hating, their mere artificiality those renunciations the men have unwisely called virtue, as much as the natural rebellions that wise men still call sin. The style in which it was written was that curious jewelled style, vivid and obscure at once, full of argot and of archaisms, of technical expression
of elaborate paraphrases, that characterises
tork of some of the finest artists of the French
of Symbolistes. There were in it metaphors
onstrous as orchids, and as subtle in colour.
ife of the senses was described in the terms of
ical philosophy. One hardly knew at times
ber one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of
edieval saint or the morbid confessions of a
n sinner. It was a poisonous book. The
odour of incense seemed to cling about its
and to trouble the brain. The mere cadence
sentences, the subtle monotony of their
, so full as it was of complex refrains and
ents elaborately repeated, produced in the
of the lad, as he passed from chapter to
er, a form of reverie, a malady of dreaming,
made him unconscious of the falling day and
ing shadows.
oudless, and pierced by one solitary star, a
er-green sky gleamed through the windows.
ad on by its wan light till he could read no
. Then, after his valet had reminded him
al times of the lateness of the hour, he
p, and, going into the next room, placed
ook on the little Florentine table that
s stood at his bedside, and began to dress
ner.
was almost nine o'clock before he reached the
where he found Lord Henry sitting alone, in
orning-room, looking very much bored.
am so sorry, Harry,” he cried, “but really it
irely your fault. That book you sent me so
fascinated me: that I forgot how the time was going.”

“Yes: I thought you would like it,” replied the host, rising from his chair.

“I didn’t say I liked it, Harry. I said it fascinated me. There is a great difference.”

“Ah, you have discovered that?” murmured Lord Henry. And they passed into the dim room.
CHAPTER XI

years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book. Or perhaps be more accurate to say that he never to free himself from it. He procured from less than nine large-paper copies of the tion, and had them bound in different so that they might suit his various moods changing fancies of a nature over which he at times, to have almost entirely lost con- the hero, the wonderful young Parisian, in ramic and the scientific tempera- were so strangely blended, became to end of prefiguring type of himself. And, the whole book seemed to him to contain 7 of his own life, written before he had point he was more fortunate than the antastic hero. He never knew—never, had any cause to know—that somewhat dread of mirrors, and polished metal and still water, which came upon the Parisian so early in his life, and was occa- the sudden decay of a beauty that had parently, been so remarkable. It was with cruel joy—and perhaps in nearly every certainly in every pleasure, cruelty has its
place—that he used to read the latter par
book, with its really tragic, if somewha
emphasised, account of the sorrow and de
one who had himself lost what in others, an
world, he had most dearly valued.

For the wonderful beauty that had so fas
Basil Hallward, and many others beside,
seemed never to leave him. Even those who
heard the most evil things against him, at
time to time strange rumours about his
life crept through London and became the
of the clubs, could not believe anything to
honour when they saw him. He had alw
look of one who had kept himself unspott
the world. Men who talked grossly becam
when Dorian Gray entered the room. Th
something in the purity of his face that
them. His mere presence seemed to recall
the memory of the innocence that they
ished. They wondered how one so charm
graceful as he was could have escaped the
an age that was at once sordid and sensual

Often, on returning home from one of the
terious and prolonged absences that gave
such strange conjecture among those who
friends, or thought that they were so, he
would creep upstairs to the locked room, or
doors, with the key that never left him no
stand, with a mirror, in front of the portra
Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking
the evil and ageing face on the canvas, and
the fair young face that laughed back at hi
The polished glass. The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul. He would examine with minute care, and sometimes with a monstrous and terrible delight, the bideous lines that seared the wrinkling forehead, or crawled around the heavy sensual mouth, wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age. He would place his white hands beside the coarse bloated hands of the picture, and smile. He mocked the misshapen body and the failing limbs.

There were moments, indeed, at night, when lying sleepless in his own delicately-scented chamber, or in the sordid room of the little ill-famed tavern near the Docks, which, under an assumed name, and in disguise, it was his habit to frequent, he would think of the ruin he had brought upon his soul, with a pity that was all the more poignant because it was purely selfish. But moments such as these were rare. That curiosity about life which Lord Henry had first stirred in him, as they sat together in the garden of their friend, seemed to increase with gratification. The more he knew, the more he desired to know. He had mad hungers that grew more ravenous as he fed them.

Yet he was not really reckless, at any rate in his relations to society. Once or twice every month during the winter, and on each Wednesday evening while the season lasted, he would throw open to the world his beautiful house and have the most cele-
brated musicians of the day to charm
brated musicians of the day to charm
with the wonders of their art. His little
with the wonders of their art. His little
the settling of which Lord Henry alway
the settling of which Lord Henry alway
him, were noted as much for the careful
him, were noted as much for the careful
and placing of those invited, as for the
taste shown in the decoration of the table
and placing of those invited, as for the table
its subtle symphonic arrangements of exot
taste shown in the decoration of the table
ers, and embroidered cloths, and antique
ers, and embroidered cloths, and antique
gold and silver. Indeed, there were mar
gold and silver. Indeed, there were mar
cially among the very young men, who
cially among the very young men, who
fancied that they saw, in Dorian Gray
fancied that they saw, in Dorian Gray
realisation of a type of which they had
type of which they had
dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, a type
dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, a type
to combine something of the real cultu
to combine something of the real cultu
schor with all the grace and distinction
schor with all the grace and distinction
fect manner of a citizen of the world. T
fect manner of a citizen of the world. T
he seemed to be of the company of tho
he seemed to be of the company of tho
Dante describes as having sought to "ma
Dante describes as having sought to "ma
selves perfect by the worship of beauty
selves perfect by the worship of beauty
Gautier, he was one for whom "the visit
Gautier, he was one for whom "the visit
existed."
existed."

And, certainly, to him Life itself was
And, certainly, to him Life itself was
the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the
the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the
t seemed to be but a preparation. For
these great, of the arts, and for it all the
t seemed to be but a preparation. For
which what is really fantastic becomes f
which what is really fantastic becomes f
ment universal, and Dandyism, which, in
ment universal, and Dandyism, which, in
way, is an attempt to assert the absolute
way, is an attempt to assert the absolute
ity of beauty, had, of course, their fascin
ity of beauty, had, of course, their fascin
him. His mode of dressing, and the p
him. His mode of dressing, and the p
styles that from time to time he affected,
styles that from time to time he affected,
marked influence on the young exquisite
marked influence on the young exquisite
Mayfair balls and Pall Mall club windo
in everything that he did, and tried to be the accidental charm of his graceful, to him only half-serious, fopperies. While he was but too ready to accept the that was almost immediately offered to his coming of age, and found, indeed, a pleasure in the thought that he might come to the London of his own day what Neronian Rome the author of the ‘con’ once had been, yet in his inmost heart d to be something more than a mere arti umentiarum, to be consulted on the wearing , or the knotting of a necktie, or the concane. He sought to elaborate some new life that would have its reasoned philos- l its ordered principles, and find in the sing of the senses its highest realisation. Oorship of the senses has often, and with tice, been decried, men feeling a natural of terror about passions and sensations stronger than themselves, and that they of sharing with the less highly organ- of existence. But it appeared to Dorian the true nature of the senses had never erstood, and that they had remained d animal merely because the world had starve them into submission or to kill pain, instead of aiming at making them of a new spirituality, of which a fine or beauty was to be the dominant char-

As he looked back upon man moving history, he was haunted by a feeling of
loss. So much had been surrendered! and to little purpose! There had been mad willful
actions, monstrous forms of self-torture and
denial, whose origin was fear, and whose result
a degradation infinitely more terrible than fancied degradation from which, in their in-
rance, they had sought to escape, Nature, in wonderful irony, driving out the anchorite to
with the wild animals of the desert and giving the hermit the beasts of the field as his com-
ions.

Yes: there was to be, as Lord Henry had
phesied, a new Hedonism that was to recreate
and to save it from that harsh, uncomely puri-
ism that is having, in our own day; its curious
vival. It was to have its service of the intel-
certainly; yet, it was never to accept any theor-
system that would involve the sacrifice of a
mode of passionate experience. Its aim, in-
was to be experience itself, and not the fruit
experience, sweet or bitter as they might be.
the asceticism that deadens the senses, as of
vulgar profligacy that dulls them, it was to be
nothing. But it was to teach man to concent-
himself upon the moments of a life that is it
but a moment.

There are few of us who have not someti-
wakened before dawn, either after one of the
dreamless nights that make us almost enamored of death, or one of those nights of horror and
shapen joy, when through the chambers of
brain sweep phantoms more terrible than rea
elf, and instinct with that vivid life that lurks all grotesques, and that lends to Gothic art its during vitality, this art being, one might fancy, especially the art of those whose minds have been staled with the malady of reverie. Gradually the fingers creep through the curtains, and they hear to tremble. In black fantastic shapes, neb shadows crawl into the corners of the room, crouch there. Outside, there is the stirring of is among the leaves, or the sound of men going in to their work, or the sigh and sob of the wind ning down from the hills, and wandering round silent house, as though it feared to wake the pers, and yet must needs call forth sleep from purple cave. Veil after veil of thin dusky gauze lifted, and by degrees the forms and colours of ings are restored to them, and we watch the vn remaking the world in its antique pattern e wan mirrors get back their mimic life. The neless tapers stand where we had left them, and ide them lies the half-cut book that we had n studying, or the wired flower that we had rn at the ball, or the letter that we had been aid to read, or that we had read too often. thing seems to us changed. Out of the unreal adows of the night comes back the real life that had known. We have to resume it where we 1 left off, and there steals over us a terrible use of the necessity for the continuance of energy the same wearisome round of stereotyped pits, or a wild longing, it may be, that our eye- might open some morning upon a world that
had been refashioned anew in the darkness for our pleasure, a world in which things would have free shapes and colours, and be changed, or have other secrets, a world in which the past would have little or no place, or survive, at any rate, in no conscious form of obligation or regret, the remembrance even of joy having its bitterness, and the memories of pleasure their pain.

It was the creation of such worlds as these that seemed to Dorian Gray to be the true object, amongst the true objects, of life; and in his search for sensations that would be at once new and delightful, and possess that element of strangeness that is so essential to romance, he would oftentimes adopt certain modes of thought that he knew to be really alien to his nature, abandon himself to the subtle influences, and then, having, as it were, caught their colour and satisfied his intellectual curiosity, leave them with that curious indifference that is not incompatible with a real ardour of temperament, and that indeed, according to certain modern psychologists, is often a condition of it.

It was rumoured of him once that he was about to join the Roman Catholic communion; and certainly the Roman ritual had always a great attraction for him. The daily sacrifice, more awful than all the sacrifices of the antique world, stirs him as much by its superb rejection of the evidence of the senses as by the primitive simplicity of its elements and the eternal pathos of the human tragedy that it sought to symbolise. He loved to kneel down on the cold marble pavement, and watch th
rest, in his stiff flowered vestment, slowly and
his white hands moving aside the veil of the
ernacle, or raising aloft the jewelled lantern-
ped monstrance with that pallid wafer that at
es, one would fain think, is indeed the "panis
eslis," the bread of angels, or, robed in the gar-
nts of the Passion of Christ, breaking the Host
to the chalice, and smiting his breast for his sins.
se fuming censers, that the grave boys, in their
and scarlet, tossed into the air like great gilt
vers, had their subtle fascination for him. As
passed out, he used to look with wonder at the
ck confessionals, and long to sit in the dim
dow of one of them and listen to men and
men whispering through the worn grating the
story of their lives.
but he never fell into the error of arresting his
ellectual development by any formal acceptance
reed or system, or of mistaking, for a house in
ich to live, an inn that is but suitable for the so-
rn of a night, or for a few hours of a night in
ich there are no stars and the moon is in travail.
cticism, with its marvellous power of making
mon things strange to us, and the subtle antin-
ianism that always seems to accompany it,
ed him for a season; and for a season he
lined to the materialistic doctrines of the Dar-
isimus movement in Germany, and found a
ious pleasure in tracing the thoughts and pas-
s of men to some pearly cell in the brain, or
white nerve in the body, delighting in the
ception of the absolute dependence of the spirit
on certain physical conditions, morbid or healthy, normal or diseased. Yet, as has been said of him before, no theory of life seemed to him to be of any importance compared with life itself. He was keenly conscious of how barren all intellectual speculation is when separated from action and experiment. He knew that the senses, no less than the soul, have their spiritual mysteries to reveal.

And so he would now study perfumes, and the secrets of their manufacture, distilling heavily scented oils, and burning odorous gums from the East. He saw that there was no mood of the mind that had not its counterpart in the sensuous life, and set himself to discover their true relations, wondering what there was in frankincense that made one mystical, and in ambergris that stirred one’s passions, and in violets that woke the memory of dead romances, and in musk that troubled the brain, and in champak that stained the imagination; and seeking often to elaborate a real psychology of perfumes, and to estimate the several influences of sweet-smelling roots, and scented pollen-laden flowers, or aromatic balms, and dark and fragrant woods, of spikenard that sickens, of hovenia that makes men mad, and aloes that are said to be able to expel melancholy from the soul.

At another time he devoted himself entirely to music, and in a long latticed room, with a vermillion-and-gold ceiling and walls of olive-green lacquer, he used to give curious concerts, in which mad gypsies tore wild music from little zithers.
are yellow-shawled Tunisians plucked at the red strings of monstrous lutes, while grinning vees beat monotonously upon copper drums, crouching upon scarlet mats, slim turbaned men blew through long pipes of reed or brass, charmed, or feigned to charm, great hooded vres and horrible horned adders. The harsh vals and shrill discords of barbaric music d hed him at times when Schubert's grace, and in's beautiful sorrows, and the mighty har- es of Beethoven himself, fell unheeded on his

He collected together from all parts of the l the strangest instruments that could be l, either in the tombs of dead nations or g the few savage tribes that have survived act with Western civilisations, and loved uch and try them. He had the mysterious varis of the Rio Negro Indians, that women ot allowed to look at, and that even youths not see till they have been subjected to fast-nd scourging, and the earthen jars of the vians that have the shrill cries of birds, and of human bones such as Alfonso de Ovallle l in Chili, and the sonorous green jaspers that sound near Cuzco and give forth a note of sin- sweetness. He had painted gourds filled pebbles that rattled when they were shaken; ong clarin of the Mexicans, into which the rmer does not blow, but through which he es the air; the harsh ture of the Amazon s, that is sounded by the sentinels who sit all ong in high trees, and can be heard, it is said,
at a distance of three leagues; the *teponaztili*, that has two vibrating tongues of wood, and is beaten with sticks that are smeared with an elastic gum obtained from the milky juice of plants; the *yolbells* of the Aztecs, that are hung in clusters like grapes; and a huge cylindrical drum, covered with the skins of great serpents, like the one that Bernal Diaz saw when he went with Cortes into the Mexican temple, and of whose doleful sound he has left us so vivid a description. The fantastic character of these instruments fascinated him, and he felt a curious delight in the thought that Art, like Nature, has her monsters, things of bestial shape and with hideous voices. Yet, after some time, he wearied of them, and would sit in his box at the Opera, either alone or with Lord Henry, listening in rapt pleasure to “Tannhäuser,” and seeing in the prelude to that great work of art a presentation of the tragedy of his own soul.

On one occasion he took up the study of jewels, and appeared at a costume ball as Anne de Joyeuse, Admiral of France, in a dress covered with five hundred and sixty pearls. This taste enthralled him for years, and, indeed, may be said never to have left him. He would often spend a whole day settling and resettling in their cases the various stones that he had collected, such as the olive-green chrysoberyl that turns red by lamp-light, the cymophane with its wire-like line of silver, the pistachio-coloured peridot, rose-pink and wine-yellow topazes, carbuncles of fiery scarlet with tremulous four-rayed stars, flame-red
mmamon-stones, orange and violet spinels, and amethysts with their alternate layers of ruby and sapphire. He loved the red gold of the sunstone, and the moonstone's pearly whiteness, and the token rainbow of the milky opal. He procured from Amsterdam three emeralds of extraordinary size and richness of colour, and had a turquoise la vieille roche that was the envy of all the connoisseurs.

He discovered wonderful stories, also, about jewels. In Alphonso's "Clericalis Disciplina" a serpent was mentioned with eyes of real jacinth, and in the romantic history of Alexander, the enquirer of Emathia was said to have found in the vale of Jordan snakes "with collars of real emeralds growing on their backs." There was a dragon in the brain of the dragon, Philostratus told, and "by the exhibition of golden letters and a scarlet robe" the monster could be thrown into a magical sleep, and slain. According to the great chemist, Pierre de Boniface, the diamond rendered a man invisible, and the agate of India made eloquent. The cornelian appeased anger, and the hyacinth provoked sleep, and the amethyst drove away the fumes of wine. The garnet cast at demons, and the hydropicus deprived the moon of her colour. The selenite waxed and waned with the moon, and the meloceleus, that discovered thieves, could be affected only by the blood of kids. Leonardus Camillus had seen a white one taken from the brain of a newly-killed toad, that was a certain antidote against poison. The
bezoar, that was found in the heart of the Arabian deer, was a charm that could cure the plague. In the nests of Arabian birds was the aspilates, that, according to Democritus, kept the wearer from any danger by fire.

The King of Ceilan rode through his city with a large ruby in his hand, at the ceremony of his coronation. The gates of the palace of John the Priest were "made of sardius, with the horn of the horned snake inwrought, so that no man might bring poison within." Over the gable were "two golden apples, in which were two carbuncles," so that the gold might shine by day, and the carbuncles by night. In Lodge's strange romance "A Margarite of America" it was stated that in the chamber of the queen one could behold "all the chaste ladies of the world, inchased out of silver, looking through fair mirrours of chrysolites, carbuncles, sapphires, and greene emeraults." Marco Polo had seen the inhabitants of Zipangu place rose-coloured pearls in the mouths of the dead. A sea-monster had been enamoured of the pearl that the diver brought to King Perozes, and had slain the thief, and mourned for seven moons over its loss. When the Huns lured the king into the great pit, he flung it away—Procopius tells the story—nor was it ever found again, though the Emperor Anastasius offered five hundred-weight of gold pieces for it. The King of Malabar had shown to a certain Venetian a rosary of three hundred and four pearls, one for every god that he worshipped.
When the Duke de Valentinnois, son of Alexander VI., visited Louis XII. of France, his horse was loaded with gold leaves, according to Brantôme, and his cap had double rows of rubies that threw out a great light. Charles of England had ridden in stirrups hung with four hundred and twenty-one diamonds. Richard II. had a coat, valued at thirty thousand marks, which was covered with balas rubies. Hall described Henry VIII., on his way to the Tower previous to his coronation, as wearing "a jacket of raised gold, the placard embroidered with diamonds and other rich stones, and a great bauderike about his neck of large balasses." The favourites of James I. wore earrings of emeralds set in gold filigrane. Edward II. gave to Piers Gaveston a suit of red-gold armour studded with jacinths, a collar of gold roses set with turquoise-stones, and a skull-cap parsemé with pearls. Henry II. wore jewelled gloves reaching to the elbow, and had a hawk-glove sewn with twelve rubies and fifty-two great orients. The ducal hat of Charles the Rash, the last Duke of Burgundy of his race, was hung with pear-shaped pearls, and studded with sapphires.

How exquisite life had once been! How gorgeous in its pomp and decoration! Even to read of the luxury of the dead was wonderful.

Then he turned his attention to embroideries, and to the tapestries that performed the office of frescoes in the chill rooms of the Northern nations of Europe. As he investigated the subject—and he always had an extraordinary faculty of becoming
absolutely absorbed for the moment in whatever he took up—he was almost saddened by the reflection of the ruin that Time brought on beautiful and wonderful things. He, at any rate, had escaped that. Summer followed summer, and the yellow jonquils bloomed and died many times, and nights of horror repeated the story of their shame, but he was unchanged. No winter marred his face or stained his flower-like bloom. How different it was with material things! Where had they passed to? Where was the great crocus-coloured robe, on which the gods fought against the giants, that had been worked by brown girls for the pleasure of Athena? Where, the huge velarium that Nero had stretched across the Colosseum at Rome, that Titan sail of purple on which was represented the starry sky, and Apollo driving a chariot drawn by white gilt-reined steeds? He longed to see the curious table-napkins wrought for the Priest of the Sun, on which were displayed all the dainties and viands that could be wanted for a feast; the mortuary cloth of King Chilperic, with its three hundred golden bees; the fantastic robes that excited the indignation of the Bishop of Pontus, and were figured with "lions, panthers, bears, dogs, forests, rocks, hunters—all, in fact, that a painter can copy from nature;" and the coat that Charles of Orleans once wore, on the sleeves of which were embroidered the verses of a song beginning "Madame, je suis tout joyeux," the musical accompaniment of the words being wrought in gold thread, and each note, of square shape in those days,
ned with four pearls. He read of the room that
prepared at the palace at Rheims for the use of
Joan of Burgundy, and was decorated with
irteen hundred and twenty-one parrots, made
broderie, and blazoned with the king’s arms,
five hundred and sixty-one butterflies, whose
go were similarly ornamented with the arms of
queen, the whole worked in gold.” Catherine
Médicis had a mourning-bed made for her of
ck velvet powdered with crescents and suns.
curtains were of damask, with leafy wreaths
garlands, figured upon a gold and silver
nd, and fringed along the edges with broider-
of pearls, and it stood in a room hung with rows
he queen’s devices in cut black velvet upon
h of silver. Louis XIV. had gold embroidered
atides fifteen feet high in his apartment. The
bed of Sobieski, King of Poland, was made of
ma gold brocade embroidered in turquoises
verses from the Koran. Its supports were of
r gilt, beautifully chased, and profusely set
 enamel and jewelled medallions. It had
taken from the Turkish camp before Vienna,
the standard of Mohammed had stood be-
h the tremulous gilt of its canopy.

nd so, for a whole year, he sought to accumulate
most exquisite specimens that he could find of
le and embroidered work, getting the dainty
i muslins, finely wrought with gold-thread
ates, and stitched over with iridescent beetles’
s; the Dacca gauzes, that from their tran-
cy are known in the East as “woven air.”
and "running water," and "evening dew;" strange figured cloths from Java; elaborate yellow Chinese hangings; books bound in tawny satins or fair blue silks, and wrought with fleurs de lys, birds, and images; veils of lacis worked in Hungary point; Sicilian brocades, and stiff Spanish velvets; Georgian work with its gilt coins, and Japanese Foukousas with their green-toned golds and their marvellously-plumaged birds.

He had a special passion, also, for ecclesiastical vestments, as indeed he had for everything connected with the service of the Church. In the long cedar chests that lined the west gallery of his house he had stored away many rare and beautiful specimens of what is really the raiment of the Bride of Christ, who must wear purple and jewels and fine linen that she may hide the pallid macerated body that is worn by the suffering that she seeks for, and wounded by self-inflicted pain. He possessed a gorgeous cope of crimson silk and gold-thread damask, figured with a repeating pattern of golden pomegranates set in six-petalled formal blossoms, beyond which on either side was the pine-apple device wrought in seed-pearls. The orphreys were divided into panels representing scenes from the life of the Virgin, and the coronation of the Virgin was figured in coloured silks upon the hood. This was Italian work of the fifteenth century. Another cope was of green velvet, embroidered with heart-shaped groups of acanthus-leaves, from which spread long-stemmed white blossoms, the details of which were picked out with silver-thread and
coloured crystals. The morse bore a seraph’s head in gold-thread raised work. The orphreys were woven in a diaper of red and gold silk, and were starred with medallions of many saints and martyrs, among whom was St. Sebastian. He had chasubles, also, of amber-coloured silk, and blue silk and gold brocade, and yellow silk damask and cloth of gold, figured with representations of the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ, and embroidered with lions and peacocks and other emblems; dalmatics of white satin and pink silk damask, decorated with tulips and dolphins and fleurs de lys; altar frontals of crimson velvet and blue linen; and many corporals, chalice-veils, and sudaria. In the mystic offices to which such things were put, there was something that quickened his imagination.

For these treasures, and everything that he collected in his lovely house, were to be to him means of forgetfulness, modes by which he could escape, for a season, from the fear that seemed to him at times to be almost too great to be borne. Upon the walls of the lonely locked room where he had spent so much of his boyhood, he had hung with his own hands the terrible portrait whose changing features showed him the real degradation of his life, and in front of it had draped the purple-and-gold pall as a curtain. For weeks he would not go there, would forget the hideous painted thing, and get back his light heart, his wonderful joyousness, his passionate absorption in mere existence. Then, suddenly, some night he would creep out of the
house, go down to dreadful places near Blue Gums, and stay there, day after day, until he is driven away. On his return he would sit in front of the picture, sometimes loathing it and him but filled, at other times, with that pride of individualism that is half the fascination of sin, and seeing with secret pleasure, at the misshapen shape that had to bear the burden that should have been his own.

After a few years he could not endure to be out of England, and gave up the villa that he shared at Trouville with Lord Henry, as well as the little white walled-in house at Algiers where he had more than once spent the winter. He hated to be separated from the picture that was such a part of his life, and was also afraid that during his absence someone might gain access to the room in spite of the elaborate bars that he had caused to be placed upon the door.

He was quite conscious that this would tell nothing. It was true that the portrait still preserved, under all the foulness and ugliness of face, its marked likeness to himself; but what could they learn from that? He would laugh at anyone who tried to taunt him. He had painted it. What was it to him how vile and of shame it looked? Even if he told them, would they believe it?

Yet he was afraid. Sometimes when he went down at his great house in Nottinghamshire, entertaining the fashionable young men of his own age who were his chief companions, and astounding
county by the wanton luxury and gorgeous splen-
dour of his mode of life, he would suddenly leave
his guests and rush back to town to see that the
door had not been tampered with, and that the pic-
ture was still there. What if it should be stolen?
The mere thought made him cold with horror.
Surely the world would know his secret then. Per-
haps the world already suspected it.

For, while he fascinated many, there were not a
few who distrusted him. He was very nearly
black-balled at a West End club of which his birth
and social position fully entitled him to become a
member, and it was said that on one occasion when
he was brought by a friend into the smoking-room
of the Churchill, the Duke of Berwick and another
gentleman got up in a marked manner and went
out. Curious stories became current about him
after he had passed his twenty-fifth year. It was
rumoured that he had been seen brawling with
foreign sailors in a low den in the distant parts of
Whitechapel, and that he consorted with thieves
and coiners and knew the mysteries of their trade.
His extraordinary absences became notorious, and,
when he used to reappear again in society, men
would whisper to each other in corners, or pass him
with a sneer, or look at him with cold searching
eyes, as though they were determined to discover
his secret.

Of such insolences and attempted slights he, of
course, took no notice, and in the opinion of most
people his frank debonair manner, his charming
boyish smile, and the infinite grace of that wonder-
ful youth that seemed never to leave him, were themselves a sufficient answer to the calumnies, so they termed them, that were circulated about him. It was remarked, however, that some of those who had been most intimate with him appeared, after a time, to shun him. Women had wildly adored him, and for his sake braved all social censure and set convention to defiance, were seen to grow pallid with shame and horror if Dorian Gray entered the room.

Yet these whispered scandals only increased the eyes of many, his strange and dangerous charm. His great wealth was a certain element of security. Society, civilised society at least, never very ready to believe anything to the detriment of those who are both rich and fascinating. It feels instinctively that manners are of more importance than morals, and, in its opinion, the highest respectability is of much less value than possession of a good chef. And, after all, it is a poor consolation to be told that the man who has given one a bad dinner, or poor wine, is irreproachable in his private life. Even the cardinal virtues cannot atone for half-cold entrées, as Lord Henry Wood remarked once, in a discussion on the subject; and there is possibly a good deal to be said for his view. For the canons of good society are, or should be, the same as the canons of art. Form is absolutely essential to it. It should have the dignity of ceremony, as well as its unreality, and should combine the insincere character of a romantic poet with the wit and beauty that make such plas-
elghtful to us. Is insincerity such a terrible thing? I think not. It is merely a method by which we can multiply our personalities.

Such, at any rate, was Dorian Gray's opinion. He used to wonder at the shallow psychology of those who conceive the Ego in man as a thing simple, permanent, reliable, and of one essence. To him, man was a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh was tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead. He loved to stroll through the gaunt cold picture-gallery of his country house and look at the various portraits of those whose blood flowed in his veins. Here was Philip Herbert, described by Francis Osborne, in his "Memoirs on the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James," as one who was "caressed by the Court for his handsome face, which kept him not long company." Was it young Herbert's life that he sometimes led? Had some strange poisonous germ crept from body to body till it had reached his own? Was it some dim sense of that tuned grace that had made him so suddenly, and most without cause, give utterance, in Basil allward's studio, to the mad prayer that had soanged his life? Here, in gold-embroidered red sablet, jewelled surcoat, and gilt-edged ruff and rist-bands, stood Sir Anthony Sherard, with his ver-and-black armour piled at his feet. What had this man's legacy been? Had the lover of Jovanna of Naples bequeathed him some inheri-
tance of sin and shame? Were his own actions merely the dreams that the dead man had not dared to realise? Here, from the fading canvas, smiled Lady Elizabeth Devereux, in her gauze hood, pearl stomacher, and pink slashed sleeves. A flower was in her right hand, and her left clasped an enamelled collar of white and damask roses. On a table by her side lay a mandolin and an apple. There were large green rosettes upon her little pointed shoes. He knew her life, and the strange stories that were told about her lovers. Had he something of her temperament in him? These oval heavy-lidded eyes seemed to look curiously at him. What of George Willoughby, with his powdered hair and fantastic patches? How evil he looked! The face was saturnine and swarthy, and the sensual lips seemed to be twisted with disdain. Delicate lace ruffles fell over the lean yellow hands that were so over-laden with rings. He had been a macaroni of the eighteenth century, and the friend, in his youth, of Lord Ferrars. What of the second Lord Beckenham, the companion of the Prince Regent in his wildest days, and one of the witnesses at the secret marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert? How proud and handsome he was, with his chestnut curls and insolent pose! What passions had he bequeathed? The world had looked upon him as infamous. He had led the orgies at Carlton House. The Star of the Garter glittered upon his breast. Beside him hung the portrait of his wife, a pallid, thin-lipped woman in black. Her blood, also, stirred within
How curious it all seemed! And his mother her Lady Hamilton face, and her moist winered lips—he knew what he had got from her. ad got from her his beauty, and his passion for beauty of others. She laughed at him in her ; Bacchante dress. There were vine leaves in hair. The purple spilled from the cup she was ing. The carnations of the painting had with-<br/>
but the eyes were still wonderful in their h and brilliancy of colour. They seemed to w him wherever he went.<br/>
get one had ancestors in literature, as well as in own race, nearer perhaps in type and temper- ut, many of them, and certainly with an influ- of which one was more absolutely conscious. e were times when it appeared to Dorian that the whole of history was merely the rec- of his own life, not as he had lived it in act and mstance, but as his imagination had created him, as it had been in his brain and in his ons. He felt that he had known them all, strange terrible figures that had passed s the stage of the world and made sin so ellous, and evil so full of subtlety. It seemed n that in some mysterious way their lives had his own.<br/>
he hero of the wonderful novel that had so nced his life had himself known this curious . In the seventh chapter he tells how, ed with laurel, lest lightning might strike he had sat, as Tiberius, in a garden at Capri, g the shameful books of Elephantis, while
dwarfs and peacocks strutted round him, and flute-player mocked the swinger of the censer; as Caligula, had caroused with the green-shirted jockeys in their stables and supped in an inhuman manger with a jewel-frontleted horse; and Domitian, had wandered through a corridor with marble mirrors, looking round with haggard eyes for the reflection of the dagger that would end his days, and sick with that ennui, that terrible tedium vitæ, that comes on those to whose life denies nothing; and had peered through clear emerald at the red shambles of the Court, and then, in a litter of pearl and purple drawn by silver-shod mules, been carried through the Street of Pomegranates to a House of Gold, and had men cry on Nero Cæsar as he passed by; and Elagabulus, had painted his face with colours, plied the distaff among the women, and brought the Moon from Carthage, and given her in marriage to the Sun.

Over and over again Dorian used to read fantastic chapter, and the two chapters immediately following, in which, as in some curiosities or cunningly-wrought enamels, pictured the awful and beautiful forms of whom Vice and Blood and Weariness had monstrous or mad: Filippo, Duke of Milan, slew his wife, and painted her lips with a secret poison that her lover might suck death from dead thing he fondled; Pietro Barbi, the Venetian, known as Paul the Second, who sought in his vanity to assume the title of Formosus, and wi.
ara, valued at two hundred thousand florins, was
ought at the price of a terrible sin; Gian Maria
isconti, who used hounds to chase living men,
 whose murdered body was covered with roses
 a harlot who had loved him; the Borgia on his
hite horse, with Fratricide riding beside him, and
mantle stained with the blood of Perotto; Pie-
o Riario, the young Cardinal Archbishop of
rence, child and minion of Sixtus IV., whose
auty was equalled only by his debauchery, and
received Leonora of Aragon in a pavilion of
ite and crimson silk, filled with nymphs and
ntaurs, and gilded a boy that he might serve at
feast as Ganymede or Hylas; Ezzelin, whose
ancholy could be cured only by the spectacle
death, and who had a passion for red blood, as
men have for red wine—the son of the Fiend,
was reported, and one who had cheated his
ther at dice when gambling with him for his own
ul; Giambattista Cibo, who in mockery took the
me of Innocent, and into whose torpid veins the
od of three lads was infused by a Jewish doctor;
gismondo Malatesta, the lover of Isotta, and the
rd of Rimini, whose effigy was burned at Rome
the enemy of God and man, who strangled
lyssena with a napkin, and gave poison to
eva d’Este in a cup of emerald, and in honour
a shameful passion built a pagan church for
ristian worship; Charles VI., who had so wildly
ored his brother’s wife that a leper had warned
m of the insanity that was coming on him, and
o, when his brain had sickened and grown.
strange, could only be soothed by Saracen cap painted with the images of Love and Death; Madness; and, in his trimmed jerkin and jewelled cap and acanthus-like curls, Grifonetto Baglione who slew Astorre with his bride, and Simonetto, with his page, and whose comeliness was so great that, as he lay dying in the yellow piazza of Pegia, those who had hated him could not choose but weep, and Atalanta, who had cursed him, bless him.

• There was a horrible fascination in them. He saw them at night, and they troubled his imagination in the day. The Renaissance knew strange manners of poisoning—poisoning by helmet and a lighted torch, by an embroidered glove and a jewelled fan, by a gilded pomander, by an amber chain. Dorian Gray had been poisoned by a book. There were moments when he looked on evil simply as a mode through which he could realise his conception of the beautiful.
CHAPTER XII

as on the ninth of November, the eve of his own thirty-eighth birthday, as he often referred afterwards. 
was walking home about eleven o'clock from Henry's, where he had been dining, and was ed in heavy furs, as the night was cold and

At the corner of Grosvenor Square and Audley Street a man passed him in the mist, ng very fast, and with the collar of his grey turned up. He had a bag in his hand. n recognised him. It was Basil Hallward. nge sense of fear, for which he could not it, came over him. He made no sign of sition, and went on quickly in the direction own house.

Hallward had seen him. Dorian heard himopping on the pavement, and then hurrying him. In a few moments his hand was on his

Dorian! What an extraordinary piece of luck! been waiting for you in your library ever nine o'clock. Finally I took pity on yourervant, and told him to go to bed, as he let t. I am off to Paris by the midnight train, particularly wanted to see you before I left. ight it was you, or rather your fur coat, as
you passed me. But I wasn’t quite sure. Do you recognise me?”

“In this fog, my dear Basil? Why, I can’t recognise Grosvenor Square. I believe my house is somewhere about here, but I don’t feel at all certain about it. I am sorry you are going away. I have not seen you for ages. But I suppose you will be back soon?”

“No: I am going to be out of England for months. I intend to take a studio in Paris, shut myself up till I have finished a great picture I have in my head. However, it wasn’t about myself I wanted to talk. Here we are at your door. Let me come in for a moment. I have something to say to you.”

“I shall be charmed. But won’t you miss the train?” said Dorian Gray, languidly, as he put up the steps and opened the door with his large key.

The lamp-light struggled out through the curtains and Hallward looked at his watch. “I have had a good deal of time,” he answered. “The train doesn’t go till twelve-fifteen, and it is only just eleven. Indeed I was on my way to the club to look for you, when I met you. You see, I shan’t have any delay about luggage, as I have sent on my heavy things. All that I have with me is in this bag, and I can easily get to Victoria in twenty minutes.”

Dorian looked at him and smiled. “What are you for a fashionable painter to travel! A Gladstone bag, and an ulster! Come in, or the fog will blow you into the house. And mind you don’t talk al
thing serious. Nothing is serious nowadays. Least nothing should be."

Dallward shook his head as he entered, and folded Dorian into the library. There was a bright fire blazing in the large open hearth. The logs were lit, and an open Dutch silver spirit-stood, with some siphons of soda-water and cut-glass tumblers, on a little marqueterie table.

You see your servant made me quite at home, Dorian. He gave me everything I wanted, including your best gold-tipped cigarettes. He is a most pitiable creature. I like him much better than the Frenchman you used to have. What has become of the Frenchman, by the bye?"

Dorian shrugged his shoulders. "I believe he ried Lady Radley’s maid, and has established in Paris as an English dressmaker. Anglophile is very fashionable over there now, I hear. Seems silly of the French, doesn't it? But—do you know?—he was not at all a bad servant. I er liked him, but I had nothing to complain ut. One often imagines things that are quite urd. He was really very devoted to me, and ned quite sorry when he went away. Have ther brandy-and-soda? Or would you like k-and-seltzer? I always take hock-and-seltzer self. There is sure to be some in the next n."

"Thanks, I won’t have anything more," said the nter, taking his cap and coat off, and throwing in on the bag that he had placed in the corner.
"And now, my dear fellow, I want to speak to you seriously. Don't frown like that. You make it much more difficult for me."

"What is it all about?" cried Dorian, in a petulant way, flinging himself down on the sofa. "I hope it is not about myself. I am tired of myself to-night. I should like to be somebody else.

"It is about yourself," answered Hallward, in his grave, deep voice, "and I must say it to you. I shall only keep you half an hour."

Dorian sighed, and lit a cigarette. "Half an hour!" he murmured.

"It is not much to ask of you, Dorian, and it is entirely for your own sake that I am speaking. I think it right that you should know that the most dreadful things are being said against you in London."

"I don't wish to know anything about them. I love scandals about other people, but scandals about myself don't interest me. They have got the charm of novelty."

"They must interest you, Dorian. Every gentleman is interested in his good name. You don't want people to talk of you as something vile and degraded. Of course you have your position, and your wealth, and all that kind of thing. But position and wealth are not everything. Mind you don't believe these rumours at all. At least, I can't believe them when I see you. Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed. People talk sometimes of secret vices. There are no such things. If a wretched man is..."
hows itself in the lines of his mouth, the
his eyelids, the moulding of his hands
nebody—I won’t mention his name, but
him—came to me last year to have his
one. I had never seen him before, and
heard anything about him at the time,
ave heard a good deal since. He offered
agent price. I refused him. There was
in the shape of his fingers that I hated.
what I was quite right in what I fan-
t him. His life is dreadful. But you,
ith your pure, bright, innocent face, and
ellous untroubled youth—I can’t believe
against you. And yet I see you very
and you never come down to the studio
when I am away from you, and I hear all
ous things that people are whispering
, I don’t know what to say. Why is it,
at a man like the Duke of Berwick
room of a club when you enter it? Why
many gentlemen in London will neither
house nor invite you to theirs? You
friend of Lord Staveley. I met him at
week. Your name happened to come
versation, in connection with the minia-
have lent to the exhibition at the Dud-
eley curled his lip, and said that you
the most artistic tastes, but that you
n whom no pure-minded girl should be
know, and whom no chaste woman
in the same room with. I reminded him
friend of yours, and asked him what
he meant. He told me. He told me right before everybody. It was horrible! Why is your friendship so fatal to young men? There was the wretched boy in the Guards who committed suicide. You were his great friend. There was Henry Ashton, who had to leave England, with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable. What about Adrian Singleton, and his dreadful end? What about Lord Kent’s only son, and his career? I met his father yesterday in St. James Street. He seemed broken with shame and sorrow. What about the young Duke of Perth? What of life has he got now? What gentleman would associate with him?”

“Stop, Basil. You are talking about things which you know nothing,” said Dorian Gray, bracing his lip, and with a note of infinite contempt in his voice. “You ask me why Berwick leaves the room when I enter it. It is because I know everything about his life, not because he knows anything about mine. With such blood as he has in his veins, how could his record be clean? You tell me about Henry Ashton and young Perth. Did you teach the one his vices, and the other his debauchery? If Kent’s silly son takes his wife from the streets what is that to me? If Adrian Singleton writes his friend’s name across a bill, am I to keep silent? I know how people chatter in England. The middle classes air their moral prejudices on their gross dinner-tables, and whisper about what they call the profligacies of their betters in order to try and pretend that they are in smart society, and...
intimate terms with the people they slander. In his country it is enough for a man to have dis-
sion and brains for every common tongue to against him. And what sort of lives do these
people, who pose as being moral, lead them-
as? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in
native land of the hypocrite."

Dorian," cried Hallward, "that is not the
question. England is bad enough, I know, and
lish society is all wrong. That is the reason
I want you to be fine. You have not been
One has a right to judge of a man by the
et he has over his friends. Yours seem to lose
sense of honour, of goodness, of purity. You
filled them with a madness for pleasure.
y have gone down into the depths. You led
n there. Yes: you led them there, and yet you
smile, as you are smiling now. And there is
se behind. I know you and Harry are insepa-
e. Surely for that reason, if for none other,
should not have made his sister's name a
word."

Take care, Basil. You go too far." I
must speak, and you must listen. You shall
en. When you met Lady Gwendolen, not a
uth of scandal had ever touched her. Is there a
decent woman in London now who would
w with her in the Park? Why, even her chil-
are not allowed to live with her. Then there
other stories—stories that you have been seen
ping at dawn out of dreadful houses and slink-
in disguise into the foulest dens in London.
Are they true? Can they be true? When I first heard them, I laughed. I hear them now, and they make me shudder. What about your country house, and the life that is led there? Dorian, you don't know what is said about you. I won't tell you that I don't want to preach to you. I remember Harry saying once that every man who turned himself into an amateur curate for the moment always began by saying that, and then proceeded to break his word. I do want to preach to you. I want you to lead such a life as will make the world respect you. I want you to have a clean name and a fair record. I want you to get rid of the dreadful people you associate with. Don't shrug your shoulders like that. Don't be so indifferent. You have a wonderful influence. Let it be for good, not for evil. They say that you corrupt everyone with whom you become intimate, and that it is quite sufficient for you to enter a house, for shame of some kind to follow after. I don't know whether it is so or not. How should I know? But it is said of you. I am told things that it seems impossible to doubt. Lord Gloucester was one of my greatest friends at Oxford. He showed me a letter that his wife had written to him when she was dying alone in her villa at Mentone. Your name was implicated in the most terrible confession I ever read. I told him that it was absurd—that I knew you thoroughly, and that you were incapable of anything of the kind. Know you? I wonder do I know you? Before I could answer that, I should have to see your soul.”
"To see my soul!" muttered Dorian Gray, starting up from the sofa and turning almost white from fear.

"Yes," answered Hallward, gravely, and with deep-toned sorrow in his voice—"to see your soul. But only God can do that."

A bitter laugh of mockery broke from the lips of the younger man. "You shall see it yourself, tonight!" he cried, seizing a lamp from the table. "Come: it is your own handiwork. Why shouldn't you look at it? You can tell the world all about it afterwards, if you choose. Nobody would believe you. If they did believe you, they would like me all the better for it. I know the age better than you do, though you will prate about it so tediously. Come, I tell you. You have chattered enough about corruption. Now you shall look on it face to face."

There was the madness of pride in every word he uttered. He stamped his foot upon the ground in his boyish insolent manner. He felt a terrible joy at the thought that someone else was to share his secret, and that the man who had painted the portrait that was the origin of all his shame was to be burdened for the rest of his life with the hideous memory of what he had done.

"Yes," he continued, coming closer to him, and looking steadfastly into his stern eyes, "I shall show you my soul. You shall see the thing that you fancy only God can see."

Hallward started back. "This is blasphemy, Dorian!" he cried. "You must not say things like
that. They are horrible, and they don't mean anything."

"You think so?" He laughed again.

"I know so. As for what I said to you to-night, I said it for your good. You know I have been always a staunch friend to you."

"Don't touch me. Finish what you have to say."

A twisted flash of pain shot across the painter's face. He paused for a moment, and a wild feeling of pity came over him. After all, what right had he to pry into the life of Dorian Gray? If he had done a tithe of what was rumoured about him, how much he must have suffered! Then he straightened himself up, and walked over to the fireplace, and stood there, looking at the burning logs with their frost-like ashes and their throbbing cores of flame.

"I am waiting, Basil," said the young man, in a hard, clear voice.

He turned round. "What I have to say is this," he cried. "You must give me some answer to these horrible charges that are made against you. If you tell me that they are absolutely untrue from beginning to end, I shall believe you. Deny them, Dorian, deny them! Can't you see what I am going through? My God! don't tell me that you are bad, and corrupt, and shameful."

Dorian Gray smiled. There was a curl of contempt on his lips. "Come upstairs, Basil," he said, quietly. "I keep a diary of my life from day to day, and it never leaves the room in which it is
written. I shall show it to you if you come with me.

"I shall come with you, Dorian, if you wish it. I have missed my train. That makes no matter. I can go to-morrow. But don't ask me to ad anything to-night. All I want is a plain answer to my question."

"That shall be given to you upstairs. I couldn't give it here. You will not have to read long."
CHAPTER XIII

He passed out of the room, and began the ascent, Basil Hallward following close behind. They walked softly, as men do instinctively at night. The lamp cast fantastic shadows on the wall and staircase. A rising wind made some of the windows rattle.

When they reached the top landing, Dorian set the lamp down on the floor, and taking out the key turned it in the lock. "You insist on knowing, Basil?" he asked, in a low voice.

"Yes."

"I am delighted," he answered, smiling. Then he added, somewhat harshly, "you are the one man in the world who is entitled to know everything about me. You have had more to do with my life than you think:" and, taking up the lamp, he opened the door and went in. A cold current of air passed them, and the light shot up for a moment in a flame of murky orange. He shuddered. "Shut the door behind you," he whispered, as he placed the lamp on the table.

Hallward glanced round him, with a puzzled expression. The room looked as if it had not been lived in for years. A faded Flemish tapestry, a curtained picture, an old Italian cassone, and an almost empty bookcase—that was all that it
THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

seemed to contain, besides a chair and a table. As Dorian Gray was lighting a half-burned candle that was standing on the mantelshelf, he saw that the whole place was covered with dust, and that the carpet was in holes. A mouse ran scuffling behind the wainscoting. There was a damp odour of mildew.

"So you think that it is only God who sees the soul, Basil? Draw that curtain back, and you will see mine."

The voice that spoke was cold and cruel. "You are mad, Dorian, or playing a part," muttered Hallward, frowning.

"You won't? Then I must do it myself," said the young man; and he tore the curtain from its rod, and flung it on the ground.

An exclamation of horror broke from the painter's lips as he saw in the dim light the hideous face on the canvas grinning at him. There was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing. Good heavens! it was Dorian Gray's own face that he was looking at! The horror, whatever it was, had not yet entirely spoiled that marvellous beauty. There was still some gold in the thinning hair and some scarlet on the sensual mouth. The sodden eyes had kept something of the loveliness of their blue, the noble curves had not yet completely passed away from chiselled nostrils and from plastic throat. Yes, it was Dorian himself. But who had done it? He seemed to recognise his own brush-work, and the frame was his own design. The idea was monstrous, yet he
felt afraid. He seized the lighted candle, and held it to the picture. In the left-hand corner was his own name, traced in long letters of bright vermilion.

It was some foul parody, some infamous, ignoble satire. He had never done that. Still, it was his own picture. He knew it, and he felt as if his blood had changed in a moment from fire to sluggish ice. His own picture! What did it mean? Why had it altered? He turned, and looked at Dorian Gray with the eyes of a sick man. His mouth twitched, and his parched tongue seemed unable to articulate. He passed his hand across his forehead. It was dank with clammy sweat.

The young man was leaning against the mantelshelf, watching him with that strange expression that one sees on the faces of those who are absorbed in a play when some great artist is acting. There was neither real sorrow in it nor real joy. There was simply the passion of the spectator, with perhaps a flicker of triumph in his eyes. He had taken the flower out of his coat, and was smelling it, or pretending to do so.

"What does this mean?" cried Hallward, at last. His own voice sounded shrill and curious in his ears.

"Years ago, when I was a boy," said Dorian Gray, crushing the flower in his hand, "you met me, flattered me, and taught me to be vain of my good looks. One day you introduced me to a friend of yours, who explained to me the wonder of youth, and you finished the portrait of me that
revealed to me the wonder of beauty. In a mad moment, that, even now, I don’t know whether I regret or not, I made a wish, perhaps you would call it a prayer . . ."

"I remember it! Oh, how well I remember it! No! the thing is impossible. The room is damp. Mildew has got into the canvas. The paints I used had some wretched mineral poison in them. I tell you the thing is impossible."

"Ah, what is impossible?" murmured the young man, going over to the window, and leaning his forehead against the cold, mist-stained glass.

"You told me you had destroyed it."

"I was wrong. It has destroyed me."

"I don’t believe it is my picture."

"Can’t you see your ideal in it?" said Dorian, bitterly.

"My ideal, as you call it . . ."

"As you called it."

"There was nothing evil in it, nothing shameful. You were to me such an ideal as I shall never meet again. This is the face of a satyr."

"It is the face of my soul."

"Christ! what a thing I must have worshipped!"

"Each of us has Heaven and Hell in him, Basil," cried Dorian, with a wild gesture of despair.

Hallward turned again to the portrait, and ached at it. "My God! if it is true," he exclaimed, and this is what you have done with your life, hy, you must be worse even than those who talk against you fancy you to be!" He held the light
up again to the canvas, and examined it. The surface seemed to be quite undisturbed, and as he had left it. It was from within, apparently, that the foulness and horror had come. Through some strange quickening of inner life the leprosies of sin were slowly eating the thing away. The rotting of a corpse in a watery grave was not so fearful.

His hand shook, and the candle fell from its socket on the floor, and lay there sputtering. He placed his foot on it and put it out. Then he flung himself into the rickety chair that was standing by the table and buried his face in his hands.

"Good God, Dorian, what a lesson! what an awful lesson!" There was no answer, but he could hear the young man sobbing at the window. "Pray, Dorian, pray," he murmured. "What is it that one was taught to say in one's boyhood? 'Lead us not into temptation. Forgive us our sins. Wash away our iniquities.' Let us say that together. The prayer of your pride has been answered. The prayer of your repentance will be answered also. I worshipped you too much. I am punished for it. You worshipped yourself too much. We are both punished."

Dorian Gray turned slowly around, and looked at him with tear-dimmed eyes. "It is to Basil," he faltered.

"It is never too late, Dorian. Let us kneel down and try if we cannot remember a prayer. Isn't there a verse somewhere: 'Though your sins be as scarlet, yet I will make them as white as snow'?"

"Those words mean nothing to me now."
"Hush! don't say that. You have done enough evil in your life. My God! don't you see that accursed thing leering at us?"

Dorian Gray glanced at the picture, and suddenly an uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil Hallward came over him, as though it had been suggested to him by the image on the canvas, whispered into his ear by those grinning lips. The mad passions of a hunted animal stirred within him, and he loathed the man who was seated at the table, more than in his whole life he had ever loathed anything. He glanced wildly around. Something glimmered on the top of the painted chest that faced him. His eye fell on it. He knew what it was. It was a knife that he had brought up, some days before, to cut a piece of cord, and had forgotten to take away with him. He moved slowly towards it, passing Hallward as he did so. As soon as he got behind him, he seized it, and turned round. Hallward stirred in his chair as if he was going to rise. He rushed at him, and dug the knife into the great vein that is behind the ear, crushing the man's head down on the table, and stabbing again and again.

There was a stifled groan, and the horrible sound of someone choking with blood. Three times the writhed arms shot up convulsively, waving grotesque stiff-fingered hands in the air. He stabbed him twice more, but the man did not move. Something began to trickle on the floor. He waited for a moment, still pressing the head down. Then he threw the knife on the table, and listened.
He could hear nothing but the drip, drip on the threadbare carpet. He opened the door and went out on the landing. The house was absolutely quiet. No one was about. For a few seconds he stood bending over the balustrade, and peering down into the black seething well of darkness. Then he took out the key and returned to the room, locking himself in as he did so.

The thing was still seated in the chair, straining over the table with bowed head, and humped back and long fantastic arms. Had it not been for the red jagged tear in the neck, and the clotted black pool that was slowly widening on the table, one would have said that the man was simply asleep.

How quickly it had all been done! He felt strangely calm, and, walking over to the window, opened it, and stepped out on the balcony. The wind had blown the fog away, and the sky was like a monstrous peacock’s tail, starred with myriads of golden eyes. He looked down, and saw the policeman going his rounds and flashing the long beam of his lantern on the doors of the silent houses. The crimson spot of a prowling hansom gleamed at the corner, and then vanished. A woman in a fluttering shawl was creeping slowly by the railings, staggering as she went. Now and then she stopped, and peered back. Once, she began to sing in a hoarse voice. The policeman strolled over and said something to her. She stumbled away, laughing. A bitter blast swept across the Square. The gas-lamps flickered, and became blue, and the leafless trees shook their black iron
aches to and fro. He shivered, and went back, ng the window behind him.
aving reached the door, he turned the key, and ned it. He did not even glance at the murdered
. He felt that the secret of the whole thing not to realise the situation. The friend who painted the fatal portrait to which all his ery had been due, had gone out of his life. it was enough.
hen he remembered the lamp. It was a rather ous one of Moorish workmanship, made of dull er inlaid with arabesques of burnished steel, studded with coarse turquoises. Perhaps it ht be missed by his servant, and questions ld be asked. He hesitated for a moment, then turned back and took it from the table. He ld not help seeing the dead thing. How still it ! How horribly white the long hands looked! as like a dreadful wax image.
aving locked the door behind him, he crept tly downstairs. The woodwork creaked, and ned to cry out as if in pain. He stopped sev- times, and waited. No: everything was still. as merely the sound of his own footsteps.
hen he reached the library, he saw the bag and ; in the corner. They must be hidden away ewhere. He unlocked a secret press that was he wainscoting, a press in which he kept his . curious disguises, and put them into it. He d easily burn them afterwards. Then he ed out his watch. It was twenty minutes to two. e sat down, and began to think. Every year—
every month, almost—men were strangled in England for what he had done. There had been madness of murder in the air. Some red star had come too close to the earth. . . . And yet was there any evidence against him? Basil Hallward had left the house at eleven. No one had seen him come in again. Most of the servants were at Selb Royal. His valet had gone to bed. . . . Paris, Yes. It was to Paris that Basil had gone, and by the midnight train, as he had intended. With his curious reserved habits, it would be months before any suspicions would be aroused. Months.

Everything could be destroyed long before that.

A sudden thought struck him. He put on his fur coat and hat, and went out into the hall. Then he paused, hearing the slow heavy tread of the policeman on the pavement outside, and seeing the flash of the bull’s-eye reflected in the window. He waited, and held his breath.

After a few moments he drew back the latch and slipped out, shutting the door very gently behind him. Then he began ringing the bell. In about five minutes his valet appeared half dressed and looking very drowsy.

"I am sorry to have had to wake you up, Francis," he said, stepping in; "but I had forgotten my latchkey. What time is it?"

"Ten minutes past two, sir," answered the man looking at the clock and blinking.

"Ten minutes past two? How horribly late! You must wake me at nine to-morrow. I have some work to do."
"All right, sir."
"Did anyone call this evening?"
"Mr. Hallward, sir. He stayed here till eleven, and then he went away to catch his train."
"Oh! I am sorry I didn't see him. Did he leave a message?"
"No, sir, except that he would write to you from Paris, if he did not find you at the club."
"That will do, Francis. Don't forget to call me at nine to-morrow."
"No, sir."

The man shambled down the passage in his slippers. Dorian Gray threw his hat and coat upon the table, and passed into the library. For a quarter of an hour he walked up and down the room biting his lip, and thinking. Then he took down the Blue Book from one of the shelves, and began to turn over the leaves. "Alan Campbell, 152, Berford Street, Mayfair." Yes; that was the man he wanted.
CHAPTER XIV

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray, and opened the shutters. Dorian was sleeping quite peacefully, lying on his right side, with one hand underneath his cheek. He looked like a boy who had been tired out with play, or study.

The man had to touch him twice on the shoulder before he woke, and as he opened his eyes a faint smile passed across his lips, as though he had been lost in some delightful dream. Yet he had not dreamed at all. His night had been untroubled by any images of pleasure or of pain. But youth smiles without any reason. It is one of its chiefest charms.

He turned round, and, leaning upon his elbow, began to sip his chocolate. The mellow November sun came streaming into the room. The sky was bright, and there was a genial warmth in the air. It was almost like a morning in May.

Gradually the events of the preceding night crept with silent blood-stained feet into his brain, and reconstructed themselves there with terrible distinctness. He winced at the memory of all that he had suffered, and for a moment the same curious feeling of loathing for Basil Hallward that had made him kill him as he sat in the chair, came

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...k to him, and he grew cold with passion. The man was still sitting there, too, and in the light now. How horrible that was! Such things were for the darkness, not for the.

He felt that if he brooded on what he had gone through he would sicken or grow mad. There were sins whose fascination was more in the doing than in the doing of them; strange triumphs that gratified the pride more than the senses, and gave to the intellect a quickened sense of joy, greater than any joy they brought, could ever bring, to the senses. But this was one of them. It was a thing to be driven out of the mind, to be drugged with poppies, to be angled lest it might strangle one itself.

When the half-hour struck, he passed his hand over his forehead, and then got up hastily, and addressed himself with even more than his usual care, giving a good deal of attention to the choice of his necktie and scarf-pin, and changing his clothes more than once. He spent a long time also on breakfast, tasting the various dishes, talking to his valet about some new liveries that he was going of getting made for the servants at Selby, going through his correspondence. At some of the letters he smiled. Three of them bored him. One he read several times over, and then set up with a slight look of annoyance in his face.

"That awful thing, a woman's memory!" as Lord Henry had once said.

...fter he had drunk his cup of black coffee, he...
wiped his lips slowly with a napkin, motioned
his servant to wait, and going over to the tal
sat down and wrote two letters. One he put
his pocket, the other he handed to the valet.

"Take this round to 152, Hertford Stre
Francis, and if Mr. Campbell is out of town, g
his address."

As soon as he was alone, he lit a cigarette, a
began sketching upon a piece of paper, drawi
first flowers, and bits of architecture, and the
human faces. Suddenly he remarked that eve
face that he drew seemed to have a fantastic lik
ness to Basil Hallward. He frowned, and, getti
up, went over to the bookcase and took out
volume at hazard. He was determined that I
would not think about what had happened until
became absolutely necessary that he should do so

When he had stretched himself on the sofa, l
looked at the title-page of the book. It w
Gautier’s "Emaux et Camées," Charpentier
Japanese-paper edition, with the Jacquemart
etching. The binding was of citron-green leath
with a design of gilt trellis-work and dott
pomegranates. It had been given to him b
Adrian Singleton. As he turned over the pag
his eye fell on the poem about the hand of Lac
naire, the cold yellow hand "du supplice enco
mal lavée," 10 with its downy red hairs and i
"doigts de faune." 11 He glanced at his own whi
taper fingers, shuddering slightly in spite of his
self, and passed on, till he came to those love
stanzas upon Venice—
"Sur une gamme chromatique,  
Le sein de perles ruisselant,  
La Vénus de l'Adriatique  
Sort de l'eau son corps rose et blanc."

"Les dômes, sur l'azur des ondes  
Suivant la phrase au pur contour,  
S'enflent comme des gorges rondes  
Que soulève un soupir d'amour."

"L'esquif aborde et me dépose,  
Jetant son amarre au pilier,  
Devant une façade rose,  
Sur le marbre d'un escalier."  

How exquisite they were! As one read them, it seemed to be floating down the green waterways of the pink and pearl city, seated in a blackondola with silver prow and trailing curtains. The mere lines looked to him like those straight streaks of turquoise-blue that follow one as one ships out to the Lido. The sudden flashes of lour reminded him of the gleam of the opal-and-is-throated birds that flutter round the talloney-combed Campanile, or stalk, with suchately grace, through the dim, dust-stained arcades. Leaning back with half-closed eyes, he kept saying over and over to himself—

"Devant une façade rose,  
Sur le marbre d'un escalier."

The whole of Venice was in those two lines. He remembered the autumn that he had passed there, and a wonderful love that had stirred him to mad,ightful follies. There was romance in every
place. But Venice, like Oxford, had kept background for romance, and, to the true ro
otic, background was everything, or almost ev
thing. Basil had been with him part of the t
and had gone wild over Tintoret. Poor E what a horrible way for a man to die!
He sighed, and took up the volume again, tried to forget. He read of the swallows tha
in and out of the little café at Smyrna where
Hadjis sit counting their amber beads and turbaned merchants smoke their long tass
pipes and talk gravely to each other; he re
the Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde that w
ears of granite in its lonely sunless exile, and l
to be back by the hot lotus-covered Nile, w
there are Sphinxes, and rose-red ibises, and v
vultures with gilded claws, and crocodiles,
small beryl eyes, that crawl over the green st
ing mud; he began to brood over those v
which, drawing music from kiss-stained ma
tell of that curious statue that Gautier com
to a contralto voice, the "monstre charmant" couches in the porphyry-room of the Louvre.
after a time the book fell from his hand. He
nervous, and a horrible fit of terror came over
What if Alan Campbell should be out of Engl
Days would elapse before he could come! Per
Perhaps he might refuse to come. What sh
he do then? Every moment was of vital in
tance. They had been great friends once, y
years before—almost inseparable, indeed. ' t
the intimacy had come suddenly to an end. W
met in society now, it was only Dorian Gray smiled; Alan Campbell never did.

He was an extremely clever young man, though had no real appreciation of the visible arts, and never little sense of the beauty of poetry he possessed he had gained entirely from Dorian. His dominant intellectual passion was for science. At Cambridge he had spent a great deal of his time in the Laboratory, and had taken a good place in the Natural Science Tripos of his year. In fact, he was still devoted to the study of chemistry and had a laboratory of his own, in which he shut himself up all day long, greatly to annoyance of his mother, who had set her heart on his standing for Parliament, and had an idea that a chemist was a person who made prescriptions. He was an excellent musician, ever, as well, and played both the violin and piano better than most amateurs. In fact, it was music that had first brought him and Dorian together—music and that indefinable attention that Dorian seemed to be able to exercise never he wished, and indeed exercised often without being conscious of it. They had met at Berkshire's the night that Rubinstein played there, and after that used to be always seen together at the Opera, and wherever good music was going on. For eighteen months their intimacy lasted. Campbell was always either at the Royal or in Grosvenor Square. To him, as many others, Dorian Gray was the type of thing that is wonderful and fascinating in.
life. Whether or not a quarrel had taken place between them no one ever knew. But suddenly people remarked that they scarcely spoke when they met, and that Campbell seemed always to go away early from any party at which Dorian Gray was present. He had changed, too—was strangely melancholy at times, appeared almost to dislike hearing music, and would never himself play, giving as his excuse, when he was called upon, that he was so absorbed in science that he had no time left in which to practise. And this was certainly true. Every day he seemed to become more interested in biology, and his name appeared once or twice in some of the scientific reviews, in connection with certain curious experiments.

This was the man Dorian Gray was waiting for. Every second he kept glancing at the clock. At the minutes went by he became horribly agitated. At last he got up, and began to pace up and down the room, looking like a beautiful caged thing. He took long stealthy strides. His hands were curiously cold.

The suspense became unbearable. Time seemed to him to be crawling with feet of lead, while he by monstrous winds was being swept towards the jagged edge of some black cleft of precipice. He knew what was waiting for him there; saw it indeed, and, shuddering, crushed with dank hands his burning lids as though he would have robbed the very brain of sight, and driven the eyeballs back into their cave. It was useless. The brain
had its own food on which it battened, and the imagination, made grotesque by terror, twisted and distorted as a living thing by pain, danced like some foul puppet on a stand, and grinned through moving masks. Then, suddenly, Time stopped for him. Yes: that blind, slow-breathing thing crawled no more, and horrible thoughts, Time being dead, raced nimbly, on in front, and dragged a hideous future from its grave, and showed it to him. He stared at it. Its very horror made him stone.

At last the door opened, and his servant entered. He turned glazed eyes upon him.

"Mr. Campbell, sir," said the man.

A sigh of relief broke from his parched lips, and the colour came back to his cheeks.

"Ask him to come in at once, Francis." He felt that he was himself again. His mood of cowardice had passed away.

The man bowed, and retired. In a few moments Alan Campbell walked in, looking very stern and rather pale, his pallor being intensified by his coal-black hair and dark eyebrows.

"Alan! this is kind of you. I thank you for coming."

"I had intended never to enter your house again, Gray. But you said it was a matter of life and death." His voice was hard and cold. He spoke with slow deliberation. There was a look of contempt in the steady searching gaze that he turned on Dorian. He kept his hands in the pockets of his Astrakhan coat, and seemed not to
have noticed the gesture with which he had been greeted.

"Yes: it is a matter of life and death, Alan, and to more than one person. Sit down."

Campbell took a chair by the table, and Dorian sat opposite to him. The two men's eyes met. In Dorian's there was infinite pity. He knew that what he was going to do was dreadful.

After a strained moment of silence, he leaned across and said, very quietly, but watching the effect of each word upon the face of him he had sent for: "Alan, in a locked room at the top of this house, a room to which nobody but myself has access, a dead man is seated at a table. He has been dead ten hours now. Don't stir, and don't look at me like that. Who the man is, why he died, how he died, are matters that do not concern you. What you have to do is this——"

"Stop, Gray. I don't want to know anything further. Whether what you have told me is true or not true, doesn't concern me. I entirely decline to be mixed up in your life. Keep your horrible secrets to yourself. They don't interest me any more."

"Alan, they will have to interest you. This one will have to interest you. I am awfully sorry for you, Alan. But I can't help myself. You are the one man who is able to save me. I am forced to bring you into the matter. I have no option. Alan, you are scientific. You know about chemistry, and things of that kind. You have made experiments. What you have got to do is to
the thing that is upstairs—to destroy it not a vestige of it will be left. Nobody person come into the house. Indeed, at moment he is supposed to be in Paris. not be missed for months. When he is there must be no trace of him found here. an, you must change him, and everything ongs to him, into a handful of ashes that catter in the air."

are mad, Dorian."
I was waiting for you to call me Dorian."
are mad, I tell you—mad to imagine that raise a finger to help you, mad to make ous confession. I will have nothing to this matter, whatever it is. Do you think ng to peril my reputation for you? What e what devil’s work you are up to?"
as suicide, Alan."
I glad of that. But who drove him to it? hould fancy."
you still refuse to do this for me?"
ourse I refuse. I will have absolutely to do with it. I don’t care what shame n you. You deserve it all. I should not see you disgraced, publicly disgraced.
e you ask me, of all men in the world, to elf up in this horror? I should have knew more about people’s characters. Lord Henry Wotton can’t have taught about psychology, whatever else he has you. Nothing will induce me to stir a elp you. You have come to the wrong
man. Go to some of your friends. Don’t come to me.”

“Alan, it was murder. I killed him. You don’t know what he had made me suffer. Whatever my life is, he had more to do with the making or the marring of it than poor Harry has had. He may not have intended it, the result was the same.”

“Murder! Good God, Dorian, is that what you have come to? I shall not inform upon you. It is not my business. Besides, without my stirring the matter, you are certain to be arrested. Nobody ever commits a crime without doing something stupid. But I will have nothing to do with it.”

“You must have something to do with it. Wait a moment; listen to me. Only listen, Alan. All I ask of you is to perform a certain scientific experiment. You go to hospitals and dead-houses and the horrors that you do there don’t affect you. If in some hideous dissecting-room or fetid laboratory you found this man lying on a leaden table with red gutters scooped out in it for the blood to flow through, you would simply look upon him as an admirable subject. You would not turn a hair. You would not believe that you were doing anything wrong. On the contrary, you would probably feel that you were benefiting the human race or increasing the sum of knowledge in the world or gratifying intellectual curiosity, or something of that kind. What I want you to do is merely what you have often done before. Indeed, to destroy a body must be far less horrible than what you are
customed to work at. And, remember, it is the
ly piece of evidence against me. If it is dis-
ered, I am lost; and it is sure to be discovered
less you help me.'
'I have no desire to help you. You forget that.
m simply indifferent to the whole thing. It has
thing to do with me.'
'Alan, I entreat you. Think of the position I
in. Just before you came I almost fainted with
or. You may know terror yourself some day.
don't think of that. Look at the matter purely
m the scientific point of view. You don't in-
ter where the dead things on which you exper-
t come from. Don't inquire now. I have told
 too much as it is. But I beg of you to do this.
 were friends once, Alan.'
'Don't speak about those days, Dorian: they
dead.'
'The dead linger sometimes. The man upstairs
 not go away. He is sitting at the table with
wed head and outstretched arms. Alan! Alan!
you don't come to my assistance I am ruined.
y, they will hang me, Alan! Don't you unnder-
d? They will hang me for what I have done.'
'There is no good in prolonging this scene. I
olutely refuse to do anything in the matter. It
sane of you to ask me.'
'You refuse?''
'Yes.'
'I entreat you, Alan.'
'It is useless.'
The same look of pity came into Dorian Gray's
eyes. Then he stretched out his hand, took a piece of paper, and wrote something on it. He re-read it twice, folded it carefully, and pushed it across the table. Having done this, he got up, and stepped over to the window.

Campbell looked at him in surprise, and took up the paper, and opened it. As he read it, his face became ghastly pale, and he fell back in his chair. A horrible sense of sickness came over him. He felt as if his heart was beating its last death in some empty hollow.

After two or three minutes of terrible silence, Dorian turned round, and came and stood behind him, putting his hand upon his shoulder.

"I am so sorry for you, Alan," he murmured, "but you leave me no alternative. I have a letter written already. Here it is. You see the added postscript. If you don't help me, I must send it. If you do help me, I will send it. You know what the result will be. But you are going to help me. It is possible for you to refuse now. I tried to spare you. You will do me the justice to admit that.

"I could not have been more stern, harsh, offensive. You treated me as a man has ever dared to treat me—no living man has ever dared to treat me in any rate. I bore it all. Now it is for me to dictate terms."

Campbell buried his face in his hands, an involuntary shudder passed through him.

"Yes, it is my turn to dictate terms, Alan. I know what they are. The thing is quite simple. Come, don't work yourself into this fever. The thing has to be done. Face it, and do it."
A groan broke from Campbell's lips, and he shivered all over. The ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece seemed to him to be dividing Time into separate atoms of agony, each of which was too terrible to be borne. He felt as if an iron ring was being slowly tightened round his forehead, as if the disgrace with which he was threatened had already come upon him. The hand upon his shoulder weighed like a hand of lead. It was intolerable. It seemed to crush him.

"Come, Alan, you must decide at once."

"I cannot do it," he said, mechanically, as though words could alter things.

"You must. You have no choice. Don't delay."

He hesitated a moment. "Is there a fire in the room upstairs?"

"Yes, there is a gas-fire with asbestos."

"I shall have to go home and get some things from the laboratory."

"No, Alan, you must not leave the house. Write out on a sheet of note-paper what you want, and my servant will take a cab and bring the things back to you."

Campbell scrawled a few lines, blotted them, and addressed an envelope to his assistant. Dorian took the note up and read it carefully. Then he rang the bell, and gave it to his valet, with orders to return as soon as possible, and to bring the things with him.

As the hall door shut, Campbell started nervously, and, having got up from the chair, went over to the chimney-piece. He was shivering with
a kind of ague. For nearly twenty minutes, neither of the men spoke. A fly buzzed noisily about the room, and the ticking of the clock was like the beat of a hammer.

As the chime struck one, Campbell turned round, and, looking at Dorian Gray, saw that his eyes were filled with tears. There was something in the purity and refinement of that sad face that seemed to enrage him. "You are infamous, absolutely infamous!" he muttered.

"Hush, Alan: you have saved my life," said Dorian.

"Your life? Good heavens! what a life that is! You have gone from corruption to corruption, and now you have culminated in crime. In doing what I am going to do, what you force me to do, it is not of your life that I am thinking."

"Ah, Alan," murmured Dorian, with a sigh. "I wish you had a thousandth part of the pity for me that I have for you." He turned away as he spoke, and stood looking out at the garden. Campbell made no answer.

After about ten minutes a knock came to the door, and the servant entered, carrying a large mahogany chest of chemicals, with a long coil of steel and platinum wire and two rather curiously-shaped iron clamps.

"Shall I leave the things here, sir?" he asked Campbell.

"Yes," said Dorian. "And I am afraid, Francis, that I have another errand for you. What is the
ame of the man at Richmond who supplies Selby with orchids?"

"Harden, sir."

"Yes—Harden. You must go down to Richmond at once, see Harden personally, and tell him to send twice as many orchids as I ordered, and to have as few white ones as possible. In fact, I don't want any white ones. It is a lovely day, Francis, and Richmond is a very pretty place, otherwise I wouldn't bother you about it."

"No trouble, sir. At what time shall I be back?"

Dorian looked at Campbell. "How long will our experiment take, Alan?" he said, in a calm, different voice. The presence of a third person in the room seemed to give him extraordinary courage.

Campbell frowned, and bit his lip. "It will take about five hours," he answered.

"It will be time enough, then, if you are back at half-past seven, Francis. Or stay: just leave my things out for dressing. You can have the evening to yourself. I am not dining at home, so I will not want you."

"Thank you, sir," said the man, leaving the room.

"Now, Alan, there is not a moment to be lost. How heavy this chest is! I'll take it for you. You ring the other things." He spoke rapidly, and in an authoritative manner. Campbell felt dominated by him. They left the room together.

When they reached the top landing, Dorian
took out the key and turned it in the lock. He stopped, and a troubled look came into his eyes. He shuddered. "I don't think I can go in, Al," he murmured.

"It is nothing to me. I don't require you," Campbell, coldly.

Dorian half opened the door. As he did so he saw the face of his portrait leering in the sun. On the floor in front of it the torn curtain lay. He remembered that the night before he had forgotten, for the first time in his life, to replace the fatal canvas, and was about to rush forward when he drew back with a shudder.

What was that loathsome red dew that glistened in the wet and glistening, on one of the hands, as the canvas had sweated blood? How horrible it was!—more horrible, it seemed to him for a moment, than the silent thing that he knew stretched across the table, the thing whose tenebrous misshapen shadow on the spotted ceiling showed him that it had not stirred, but was there, as he had left it.

He heaved a deep breath, opened the door a little wider, and with half-closed eyes and averted head walked quickly in, determined that he would not look even once upon the dead man. To his horror he saw that he had left it hanging, and taking up the gold and passionflower, he flung it right over the picture.

There he stopped, feeling afraid to turn round, and his eyes fixed themselves on the intricacies of the pattern before him. He heard Campbell bringing in the heavy chest, and the irons, and
my things that he had required for his dreadful job. He began to wonder if he and Basil Hallward had ever met, and, if so, what they had thought of each other.

"I am not here," said a stern voice behind him. He turned and hurried out, just conscious that Dorian had been thrust back into the chair, that Campbell was gazing into a glistening pewter box as he was going downstairs. He heard key being turned in the lock.

It was long after seven when Campbell came back into the library. He was pale, but absolutely n. "I have done what you asked me to do," he stammered. "And now, good-bye. Let us never each other again."

You have saved me from ruin, Alan. I cannot get that," said Dorian, simply.

As soon as Campbell had left, he went upstairs. There was a horrible smell of nitric acid in the room. But the thing that had been sitting at the table was gone.
THAT evening, at eight-thirty, dressed and wearing a large bunch of Parma violets, Dorian Gray was ushered into Lady Narborough’s drawing-room by her servants. His forehead was throbbing, his fingers were clenched on the arm of the chair, and he felt wildly excited. He greeted his hostess with the usual easy and graceful manner as he bent over her hostess’s hand. She looked at him in surprise, and then laughed, and seemed so much at one’s ease as when she was playing a part. Certainly no one looking at Dorian Gray that night could have believed that he had passed through a tragedy as horrible as any of the tragedies of our age. Those finely-shaped fingers had never clutched a knife for sin, nor had those soft, expressive lips have cried out on God and good. He could not help wondering at the terrible contrast between his demeanour, and for a moment felt a terrible pleasure of a double life.

It was a small party, got up rather by Lady Narborough, who was a very woman, with what Lord Henry used to call the remains of really remarkable ugliness. She had proved an excellent wife to one of the most tedious ambassadors, and having buried her husband properly in a marble mausoleum, she had herself designed, and married off...
ters to some rich, rather elderly men, she devoted herself now to the pleasures of French fiction, French cookery, and French esprit when she could get it.

Dorian was one of her special favourites, and she always told him that she was extremely glad she had not met him in early life. "I know, my dear, I should have fallen madly in love with you," she used to say, "and thrown my bonnet right over the mills for your sake. It is most fortunate that you were not thought of at the time. As it was, our bonnets were so unbecoming, and the mills were so occupied in trying to raise the wind, that I never had even a flirtation with anybody. However, that was all Narborough's fault. He was dreadfully short-sighted, and there is no pleasure in taking in a husband who never sees anything."

Her guests this evening were rather tedious. The fact was, as she explained to Dorian, behind a very shabby fan, one of her married daughters had come up quite suddenly to stay with her, and, to make matters worse, had actually brought her husband with her. "I think it is most unkind of her, my dear," she whispered. "Of course I go and stay with them every summer after I come from Homburg, but then an old woman like me must have fresh air sometimes, and besides, I really wake them up. You don't know what an existence they lead down there. It is pure unadulterated country life. They get up early, because they have so much to do, and go to bed early
because they have so little to think about. There has not been a scandal in the neighbourhood since the time of Queen Elizabeth, and consequently they all fall asleep after dinner. You shan't sit next either of them. You shall sit by me, and amuse me."

Dorian murmured a graceful compliment, and looked round the room. Yes: it was certainly a tedious party. Two of the people he had never seen before, and the others consisted of Ernest Harrowden, one of those middle-aged mediocrities so common in London clubs who have no enemies but are thoroughly disliked by their friends; Lady Ruxton, an over-dressed woman of forty-seven, with a hooked nose, who was always trying to get herself compromised, but was so peculiarly plain that to her great disappointment no one would ever believe anything against her; Mrs. Erlynne, a pushing nobody, with a delightful lisp, and Venetian-red hair; Lady Alice Chapman, his hostess's daughter, a dowdy dull girl, with one of those characteristic British faces, that, once seen, are never remembered; and her husband, a red-cheeked, white-whiskered creature who, like so many of his class, was under the impression that inordinate joviality can atone for an entire lack of ideas.

He was rather sorry he had come, till Lady Nabeborough, looking at the great ormolu gilt clock that sprawled in gaudy curves on the mauve-draped mantelshelf, exclaimed: "How horrid of Henry Wotton to be so late! I sent round to him
this morning on chance, and he promised faithfully not to disappoint me.”

It was some consolation that Harry was to be there, and when the door opened and he heard his slow musical voice lending charm to some insincere apology, he ceased to feel bored.

But at dinner he could not eat anything. Plate after plate went away untasted. Lady Narborough kept scolding him for what she called “an insult to poor Adolphe, who invented the menu especially for you,” and now and then Lord Henry looked across at him, wondering at his silence and abstracted manner. From time to time the butler filled his glass with champagne. He drank eagerly, and his thirst seemed to increase.

“Dorian,” said Lord Henry, at last, as the chaudfroid was being handed round, “what is the matter with you to-night? You are quite out of sorts.”

“I believe he is in love,” cried Lady Narborough, “and that he is afraid to tell me for fear I should be jealous. He is quite right. I certainly should.”

“Dear Lady Narborough,” murmured Dorian, smiling, “I have not been in love for a whole week—not, in fact, since Madame de Ferrol left town.”

“How you men can fall in love with that woman!” exclaimed the old lady. “I really cannot understand it.”

“It is simply because she remembers you when you were a little girl, Lady Narborough,” said
Lord Henry. "She is the one link between us and your short frocks."

"She does not remember my short frocks at all, Lord Henry. But I remember her very well at Vienna thirty years ago, and how décolletée she was then."

"She is still décolletée," he answered, taking an olive in his long fingers; "and when she is in a very smart gown she looks like an édition de luxe of a bad French novel. She is really wonderful, and full of surprises. Her capacity for family affection is extraordinary. When her third husband died, her hair turned quite gold from grief."

"How can you, Harry!" cried Dorian.

"It is a most romantic explanation," laughed the hostess. "But her third husband, Lord Henry! You don't mean to say Ferrol is the fourth."

"Certainly, Lady Narborough."

"I don't believe a word of it."

"Well, ask Mr. Gray. He is one of her most intimate friends."

"Is it true, Mr. Gray?"

"She assures me so, Lady Narborough," said Dorian. "I asked her whether, like Marguerite de Navarre, she had their hearts embalmed and hung at her girdle. She told me she didn't, because none of them had had any hearts at all."

"Four husbands! Upon my word that is trop de zèle."

"Trop d'audace, I tell her," said Dorian.

"Oh! she is audacious enough for anything, my
THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY  253
dear. And what is Ferrol like? I don't know him."

"The husbands of very beautiful women belong to the criminal classes," said Lord Henry, sipping his wine.

Lady Narborough hit him with her fan. "Lord Henry, I am not at all surprised that the world says that you are extremely wicked."

"But what world says that?" asked Lord Henry, elevating his eyebrows. "It can only be the next world. This world and I are on excellent terms."

"Everybody I know says you are very wicked," cried the old lady, shaking her head.

Lord Henry looked serious for some moments. "It is perfectly monstrous," he said, at last, "the way people go about nowadays saying things against one behind one's back that are absolutely and entirely true."

"Isn't he incorrigible?" cried Dorian, leaning forward in his chair.

"I hope so," said his hostess, laughing. "But really if you all worship Madame de Ferrol in this ridiculous way, I shall have to marry again so as to be in the fashion."

"You will never marry again, Lady Narborough," broke in Lord Henry. "You were far too happy. When a woman marries again it is because she detested her first husband. When a man marries again, it is because he adored his first wife. Women try their luck; men risk theirs."
"Narborough wasn't perfect," cried the old lady.

"If he had been, you would not have loved him, my dear lady," was the rejoinder. "Women love us for our defects. If we have enough of them they will forgive us everything, even our intellects. You will never ask me to dinner again, after saying this, I am afraid, Lady Narborough; but it is quite true."

"Of course it is true, Lord Henry. If we women did not love you for your defects, where would you all be? Not one of you would ever be married. You would be a set of unfortunate bachelors. Not, however, that that would alter you much. Nowadays all the married men live like bachelors, and all the bachelors like married men."

"Fin de siècle," murmured Lord Henry.

"Fin du globe," answered his hostess.

"I wish it were fin du globe," said Dorian, with a sigh. "Life is a great disappointment."

"Ah, my dear," cried Lady Narborough, putting on her gloves, "don't tell me that you have exhausted Life. When a man says that, one knows that Life has exhausted him. Lord Henry is very wicked, and I sometimes wish that I had been; but you are made to be good—you look so good. I must find you a nice wife. Lord Henry, don't you think that Mr. Gray should get married?"

"I am always telling him so, Lady Narborough," said Lord Henry, with a bow.

"Well, we must look out for a suitable match for him. I shall go through Debrett carefully to-
ght, and draw out a list of all the eligible young
lies.”
“With their ages, Lady Narborough?” asked
rian.
“Of course, with their ages, slightly edited.
it nothing must be done in a hurry. I want it
be what ‘The Morning Post’ calls a suitable
iance, and I want you both to be happy.”
“What nonsense people talk about happy mar-
ges!” exclaimed Lord Henry. “A man can be
ppy with any woman, as long as he does not
ve her.”
“Ah! what a cynic you are!” cried the old lady,
ing back her chair, and nodding to Lady
xton. “You must come and dine with me
on again. You are really an admirable tonic,
ch better than what Sir Andrew prescribes
me. You must tell me what people you would
ke to meet, though. I want it to be a delightful
hering.”
“I like men who have a future, and women
to have a past,” he answered. “Or do you think
at would make it a petticoat party?”
“I fear so,” she said, laughing, as she stood up.
A thousand pardons, my dear Lady Ruxton,”
de added. “I didn’t see you hadn’t finished your
garette.”
“Never mind, Lady Narborough. I smoke a
eat deal too much. I am going to limit myself,
the future.”
“Pray don’t, Lady Ruxton,” said Lord Henry.
Moderation is a fatal thing. Enough is as bad
as a meal. More than enough is as good a feast."

Lady Ruxton glanced at him curiously. "I must come and explain that to me some at noon, Lord Henry. It sounds a fanciful theory," she murmured, as she swept out of room.

"Now, mind you don’t stay too long over politics and scandal," cried Lady Narboro from the door. "If you do, we are sure to squabble upstairs."

The men laughed, and Mr. Chapman got solemnly from the foot of the table and came up to the top. Dorian Gray changed his seat, and sat by Lord Henry. Mr. Chapman began to talk in a loud voice about the situation in House of Commons. He guffawed at his adversaries. The word *doctrinaire*—word full of te to the British mind—reappeared from time to time between his explosions. An alliterative fix served as an ornament of oratory. He hoisted the Union Jack on the pinnacles of Thou. The inherited stupidity of the race—sound English common sense he jovially termed it—shown to be the proper bulwark for Society.

A smile curved Lord Henry’s lips, and turned round and looked at Dorian.

"Are you better, my dear fellow?" he asked. "You seemed rather out of sorts at dinner."

"I am quite well, Harry. I am tired. That’s all."

"You were charming last night. The l
duchess is quite devoted to you. She tells me he is going down to Selby."

"She has promised to come on the twentieth."

"Is Monmouth to be there too?"

"Oh, yes, Harry."

"He bores me dreadfully, almost as much as he bores her. She is very clever, too clever for a woman. She lacks the indefinable charm of weakness. It is the feet of clay that makes the gold of the image precious. Her feet are very pretty, but they are not feet of clay. White porcelain feet, if you like. They have been through the fire, and what fire does not destroy it hardens. He has had experiences."

"How long has she been married?" asked Dorian.

"An eternity, she tells me. I believe, according to the peerage, it is ten years, but ten years with Monmouth must have been like eternity, with time thrown in. Who else is coming?"

"Oh, the Willoughbys, Lord Rugby and his wife, our hostess, Geoffrey Clouston, the usual et. I have asked Lord Grotrian."

"I like him," said Lord Henry. "A great many people don't, but I find him charming. He tones for being occasionally somewhat over-touched, by being always absolutely over-educated. He is a very modern type."

"I don't know if he will be able to come, Harry. He may have to go to Monte Carlo with his other."

"Ah! what a nuisance people's people are!"
Try and make him come. By the way, Dori, you ran off very early last night. You left before eleven. What did you do afterwards? Did you go straight home?"

Dorian glanced at him hurriedly, and frowned.

"No, Harry," he said at last, "I did not get home till nearly three."

"Did you go to the club?"

"Yes," he answered. Then he bit his lip.

"No, I don't mean that. I didn't go to the club. I walked about. I forget what I did. . . ."

"Inquisitive you are, Harry! You always want to know what one has been doing. I always want to forget what I have been doing. I came in at half-past two, if you wish to know the exact time. I had left my latch-key at home, and my servant had to let me in. If you want any corroborative evidence on the subject you can ask him."

Lord Henry shrugged his shoulders. "My dear fellow, as if I cared! Let us go up to the dining-room. No sherry, thank you, Mr. Chap..."

Something has happened to you, Dorian. You are not yourself to-night."

"Don't mind me, Harry. I am irritable, out of temper. I shall come round and see you to-morrow or next day. Make my excuses to Lady Narborough. I shan't go upstairs. I shall go home. I must go home."

"All right, Dorian. I daresay I shall see you to-morrow at tea-time. The Duchess is coming."

"I will try to be there, Harry," he said, leaving the room. As he drove back to his own house..."
conscious that the sense of terror he thought had strangled had come back to him. Lord Henry’s casual questioning had made him lose his nerves for the moment, and he wanted his nerve still. Things that were dangerous had to be destroyed. He winced. He hated the idea even touching them.

Yet it had to be done. He realised that, and then he had locked the door of his library, he opened the secret press into which he had thrust Basil Hallward’s coat and bag. A huge fire was blazing. He piled another log on it. The smell of the singeing clothes and burning leather was horrible. It took him three-quarters of an hour to consume everything. At the end he felt faint and sick, and having lit some Algerian pastilles in pierced copper brazier, he bathed his hands and prehead with a cool musk-scented vinegar.

Suddenly he started. His eyes grew strangely bright, and he gnawed nervously at his under-lip. Between two of the windows stood a large Florentine cabinet, made out of ebony, and inlaid with ivory and blue lapis. He watched it as though it were a thing that could fascinate and make afraid, as though it held something that he longed for and yet almost loathed. His breath quickened. A mad craving came over him. He lit a cigarette and then threw it away. His eyelids drooped till the long fringed lashes almost touched his cheek. But he still watched the cabinet. At last he got up from the sofa on which he had been lying, went over to it, and, having unlocked it,
touched some hidden spring. A triangular depression passed slowly out. His fingers moved instinctively towards it, dipped in, and closed on something. It was a small Chinese box of black and gold lacquer, elaborately wrought, the sides patinated with curved waves, and the silken cords hung round crystals and tasselled in plaited threads. He opened it. Inside was a paste, waxy in lustre, the odour curiously heavy and persistent.

He hesitated for some moments, with a strained immobile smile upon his face. Then shivering though the atmosphere of the room was tepid, he drew himself up, and glanced at the clock which was twenty minutes to twelve. He put the box back, shutting the cabinet doors as he did so, and went into his bedroom.

As midnight was striking bronze blows upon the dusky air, Dorian Gray dressed commonly, with a muffler wrapped round his throat, quietly out of the house. In Bond Street he hailed a hansom with a good horse. He hailed it, in a low voice gave the driver an address.

The man shook his head. "It is too far for me," he muttered.

"Here is a sovereign for you," said Dorian Gray. "You shall have another if you drive fast."

"All right, sir," answered the man, "you will be there in an hour," and after his fare had got turned his horse round, and drove rapidly towards the river.
CHAPTER XVI

A COLD rain began to fall, and the blurred street-lamps looked ghastly in the dripping
ist. The public-houses were just closing, and
m men and women were clustering in broken
ups round their doors. From some of the bars
me the sound of horrible laughter. In others,
unkards brawled and screamed.
Lying back in the hansom, with his hat pulled
er his forehead, Dorian Gray watched with list-
s eyes the sordid shame of the great city, and
w and then he repeated to himself the words
at Lord Henry had said to him on the first day
ey had met: “To cure the soul by means of the
eses, and the senses by means of the soul.” Yes,
at was the secret. He had often tried it, and
uld try it again now. There were opium-dens,
er one could buy oblivion, dens of horror where
memory of old sins could be destroyed by the
adness of sins that were new.
The moon hung low in the sky like a yellow
ull. From time to time a huge misshapen cloud
etched a long arm across and hid it. The gas-
ps grew fewer, and the streets more narrow
d gloomy. Once the man lost his way, and had
rive back half a mile. A steam rose from the
se as it splashed up the puddles. The side-
windows of the hansom were clogged with a grey-flannel mist.

"To cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul!" How the words rang in his ears! His soul, certainly, was sick to death. Was it true that the senses could cure it? Innocent blood had been spilt. What could atonement for that? Ah! for that there was no atonement; but though forgiveness was impossible, forgiveness was possible still, and he was determined to forget, to stamp the thing out, to crush it as one would crush the adder that had stung one. Indeed, what right had Basil to have spoken to him as he had done? Who had made him a judge over others? He had said things that were dreadful, horrible, not to be endured.

On and on plodded the hansom, going slower; it seemed to him, at each step. He thrust up the trap, and called to the man to drive faster. The hideous hunger for opium began to gnaw at him. His throat burned, and his delicate hands twitched nervously together. He struck at the horse madly with his stick. The driver laughed, and whipped up. He laughed in answer, and the man was silent.

The way seemed interminable, and the streets like the black web of some sprawling spider. The monotony became unbearable, and, as the mist thickened, he felt afraid.

Then they passed by lonely brickfields. The fog was lighter here, and he could see the strange bottle-shaped kilns with their orange fan-like tongues
ire. A dog barked as they went by, and far
ny in the darkness some wandering sea-gull
amed. The horse stumbled in a rut, then
ved aside, and broke into a gallop.
fter some time they left the clay road, and
ted again over rough-paven streets. Most of
indows were dark, but now and then fan-
tic shadows were silhouetted against some
lit blind. He watched them curiously. They
ed like monstrous marionettes, and made
ures like live things. He hated them. A dull
e was in his heart. As they turned a corner a
an yelled something at them from an open
r, and two men ran after the hansom for about
undred yards. The driver beat at them with
hip.
that is said that passion makes one think in a cir-
. Certainly with hideous iteration the bitten
es of Dorian Gray shaped and reshaped those
le words that dealt with soul and sense, till he
found in them the full expression, as it were,
his mood, and justified, by intellectual approval,
sions that without such justification would still
ominated his temper. From cell to cell of
brain crept the one thought; and the wild
ire to live, most terrible of all man’s appetites,
ickened into force each trembling nerve and
re. Ugliness that had once been hateful to him
use it made things real, became dear to him
for that very reason. Ugliness was the one
lity. The coarse brawl, the loathsome den,
 crude violence of disordered life, the very vile-
ness of thief and outcast, were more vivid, in their intense actuality of impression, than all the gracious shapes of Art, the dreamy shadows of Song. They were what he needed for forgetfulness. In three days he would be free.

Suddenly the man drew up with a jerk at the top of a dark lane. Over the low roofs and jagged chimney stacks of the houses rose the black mast of ships. Wreaths of white mist clung like ghostly sails to the yards.

"Somewhere about here, sir, ain't it?" he asked huskily through the trap.

Dorian started, and peered round. "This we do," he answered, and, having got out hastily, gave the driver the extra fare he had promised him, he walked quickly in the direction of the quay. Here and there a lantern gleamed at the stern of some huge merchantman. The light shot and splintered in the puddles. A red glare came from an outward-bound steamer that was coaling. The slimy pavement looked like a wet mackintosh.

He hurried on towards the left, glancing now and then to see if he was being followed. In about seven or eight minutes he reached a small shabby house, that was wedged in between two gaunt factories. In one of the top-windows stood a lamp. He stopped, and gave a peculiar knock.

After a little time he heard steps in the passage and the chain being unhooked. The door opened quietly, and he went in without saying a word to the squat misshapen figure that flattened itself in the shadow as he passed. At the end of the hall,
hung a tattered green curtain that swayed and shook in the gusty wind which had followed him in from the street. He dragged it aside, and entered a long, low room which looked as if it had once been a third-rate dancing-saloon. Shrieking gas-jets, dulled and distorted in the fly-blown mirrors that faced them, were ranged round the walls. Greasy reflectors of ribbed tin backed them, making quivering discs of light. The floor was covered with ochre-coloured sawdust, trampled here and there into mud, and stained with dark rings of spilt liquor. Some Malays were crouching by a little charcoal stove playing with bone counters, and showing their white teeth as they chattered. In one corner, with his head buried in his arms, a sailor sprawled over a table, and by the tawdrily-painted bar that ran across one complete side stood two haggard women mocking an old man who was brushing the sleeves of his coat with an expression of disgust. “He thinks he’s got red ants on him,” laughed one of them, as Dorian passed by. The man looked at her in terror and began to whimper.

At the end of the room there was a little staircase, leading to a darkened chamber. As Dorian hurried up its three rickety steps, the heavy odour of opium met him. He heaved a deep breath, and his nostrils quivered with pleasure. When he entered, a young man with smooth yellow hair, who was bending over a lamp, lighting a long thin pipe, looked up at him, and nodded in a hesitating manner.

“You here, Adrian?” muttered Dorian.
"Where else should I be?" he answered, listlessly. "None of the chaps will speak to me now."
"I thought you had left England."
"Darlington is not going to do anything. My brother paid the bill at last. George doesn't speak to me either. . . . I don't care," he added, with a sigh. "As long as one has this stuff, one doesn't want friends. I think I have had too many friends."

Dorian winced, and looked round at the grotesque things that lay in such fantastic postures on the ragged mattresses. The twisted limbs, the gaping mouths, the staring lustreless eyes, fascinated him. He knew in what strange heavens they were suffering, and what dull hells were teaching them the secret of some new joy. They were better off than he was. He was imprisoned in thought. Memory, like a horrible malady, was eating his soul away. From time to time he seemed to see the eyes of Basil Hallward looking at him. Yet he felt he could not stay. The presence of Adrian Singleton troubled him. He wanted to be where no one would know who he was. He wanted to escape from himself.

"I am going on to the other place," he said, after a pause.
"On the wharf?"
"Yes."
"That mad-cat is sure to be there. They won't have her in this place now."

Dorian shrugged his shoulders. "I am sick of women who love one. Women who hate one are
more interesting. Besides, the stuff is bet-
luch the same.”
like it better. Come and have something to
. I must have something.”
don’t want anything,” murmured the young

ever mind.”
rian Singleton rose up wearily, and followed
n to the bar. A half-caste, in a ragged turban
shabby ulster, grinned a hideous greeting as
rust a bottle of brandy and two tumblers in
of them. The women sidled up, and began to
er. Dorian turned his back on them, and
omething in a low voice to Adrian Singleton.
crooked smile, like a Malay crease, writhed
; the face of one of the women. “We are
proud to-night,” she sneered.
or God’s sake don’t talk to me,” cried Dor-
tamping his foot on the ground. “What do
rant? Money? Here it is. Don’t ever talk
again.”
o red sparks flashed for a moment in the
n’s sodden eyes, then flickered out, and left
dull and glazed. She tossed her head, and
; the coins off the counter with greedy fingers.
companion watched her enviously.
’s no use,” sighed Adrian Singleton. “I
care to go back. What does it matter? I
ite happy here.”
ou will write to me if you want anything,
you?” said Dorian, after a pause.
"Perhaps."
"Good-night, then."
"Good-night," answered the young man, going up the steps, and wiping his parched mouth with a handkerchief.

Dorian walked to the door with a look of pain in his face. As he drew the curtain aside a hideous laugh broke from the painted lips of the woman who had taken his money. "There goes devil's bargain!" she hiccuped, in a hoarse voice.

"Curse you!" he answered, "don't call that."

She snapped her fingers. "Prince Charlie, what you like to be called, ain't it?" she yelled after him.

The drowsy sailor leapt to his feet as she spoke and looked wildly round. The sound of the slaming of the hall door fell on his ear. He rushed as if in pursuit.

Dorian Gray hurried along the quay through the drizzling rain. His meeting with Adrian had strangely moved him, and he wondered if ruin of that young life was really to be laid at the door, as Basil Hallward had said to him with a sense of infamy of insult. He bit his lip, and for a second his eyes grew sad. Yet, after all, what did it matter to him? One's days were too brief to take the burden of another's errors on one's shoulders. Each man lived his own life, and paid his own price for living it. The only pity was one had to pay so often for a single fault. One had to
... and over again, indeed. In her dealings with Destiny never closed her accounts. There are moments, psychologists tell us, when passion for sin, or for what the world calls sin, dominates a nature, that every fibre of the body, every cell of the brain, seems to be instinct with rful impulses. Men and women at such mo-
ents lose the freedom of their will. They move their terrible end as automatons move. Choice aken from them, and conscience is either killed, if it lives at all, lives but to give rebellion its cination, and disobedience its charm. For all s, as theologians weary not of reminding us, are s of disobedience. When that high spirit, that rning-star of evil, fell from heaven, it was as a el that he fell.

Callous, concentrated on evil, with stained nd, and soul hungry for rebellion, Dorian Gray stened on, quickening his step as he went, but he darted aside into a dim archway, that had wed him often as a short cut to the ill-famed ice where he was going, he felt himself suddenly ped from behind, and before he had time to end himself he was thrust back against the ill, with a brutal hand round his throat. 

He struggled madly for life, and by a terrible brt wrenched the tightening fingers away. In aond he heard the click of a revolver, and saw the pm of a polished barrel pointing straight at his id, and the dusky form of a short thick-set man ing him.

"What do you want?" he gasped.
“Keep quiet,” said the man. “If you stir, shoot you.”

“You are mad. What have I done to you?”

“You wrecked the life of Sibyl Vane,” was the answer, “and Sibyl Vane was my sister. She killed herself. I know it. Her death is at your door. I swore I would kill you in return. For years I have sought you. I had no clue, no trace. The two people who could have described you were dead. I knew nothing of you but the pen name she used to call you. I heard it to-night by chance. Make your peace with God, for to-night you are going to die.”

Dorian Gray grew sick with fear. “I never knew her,” he stammered. “I never heard of her. You are mad.”

“You had better confess your sin, for as sure as I am James Vane, you are going to die.” That was a horrible moment. Dorian did not know what to say or do. “Down on your knees!” growled the man. “I give you one minute to make your peace—no more. I go on board to-night for India, and I must do my job first. One minute. That’s all.”

Dorian’s arms fell to his side. Paralysed with terror, he did not know what to do. Suddenly, wild hope flashed across his brain. “Stop,” he cried. “How long ago is it since your sister died? Quick, tell me!”

“Eighteen years,” said the man. “Why do you ask me? What do years matter?”

“Eighteen years,” laughed Dorian Gray, wit
a touch of triumph in his voice. "Eighteen years! Set me under the lamp and look at my face!"

James Vane hesitated for a moment, not understanding what was meant. Then he seized Dorian Gray and dragged him from the archway.

Dim and wavering as was the wind-blown light, yet it served to show him the hideous error, as it seemed, into which he had fallen, for the face of the man he had sought to kill had all the bloom of boyhood, all the unstained purity of youth. He seemed little more than a lad of twenty summers, hardly older, if older indeed at all, than his sister had been when they had parted so many years ago. It was obvious that this was not the man who had destroyed her life.

He loosened his hold and reeled back. "My God! my God!" he cried, "and I would have murdered you!"

Dorian Gray drew a long breath. "You have been on the brink of committing a terrible crime, my man," he said, looking at him sternly. "Let this be a warning to you not to take vengeance into your own hands."

"Forgive me, sir," muttered James Vane. "I was deceived. A chance word I heard in that damned den set me on the wrong track."

"You had better go home, and put that pistol away, or you may get into trouble," said Dorian, turning on his heel, and going slowly down the street.

James Vane stood on the pavement in horror. He was trembling from head to foot. After a little
while a black shadow that had been creeping along the dripping wall, moved out into the light and came close to him with stealthy footsteps. He felt a hand laid on his arm and looked round with a start. It was one of the women who had been drinking at the bar.

"Why didn't you kill him?" she hissed out, putting her haggard face quite close to his. "I knew you were following him when you rushed out from Daly's. You fool! You should have killed him. He has lots of money, and he's as bad as bad."

"He is not the man I am looking for," he answered, "and I want no man's money. I want a man's life. The man whose life I want must be nearly forty now. This one is little more than a boy. Thank God, I have not got his blood upon my hands."

The woman gave a bitter laugh. "Little more than a boy!" she sneered. "Why, man, it's nigh on eighteen years since Prince Charming made me what I am."

"You lie!" cried James Vane.

She raised her hand up to heaven. "Before God I am telling the truth," she cried.

"Before God?"

"Strike me dumb if it ain't so. He is the worst one that comes here. They say he has sold himself to the devil for a pretty face. It's nigh on eighteen years since I met him. He hasn't changed much since then. I have though," she added, with a sickly leer.
‘You swear this?’
‘I swear it,’ came in hoarse echo from her flat uth. “But don’t give me away to him,” she ined; “I am afraid of him. Let me have some ney for my night’s lodging.”
He broke from her with an oath, and rushed to corner of the street, but Dorian Gray had dis- eared. When he looked back, the woman had ished also.
CHAPTER XVII

A WEEK later Dorian Gray was sitting in the conservatory at Selby Royal talking to the pretty Duchess of Monmouth, who with her husband, a jaded-looking man of sixty, was among his guests. It was tea-time, and the mellow light of the huge lace-covered lamp that stood on the table lit up the delicate china and hammered silver of the service at which the Duchess was presiding. Her white hands were moving daintily among the cups, and her full red lips were smiling at something that Dorian had whispered to her. Lord Henry was lying back in a silk-draped wicker chair, looking at them. On a peach-coloured divan sat Lady Narborough pretending to listen to the Duke’s description of the last Brazilian beetle that he had added to his collection. Three young men in elaborate smoking-suits were handing tea-cakes to some of the women. The house party consisted of twelve people, and there were more expected to arrive on the next day.

“What are you two talking about?” said Lord Henry, strolling over to the table, and putting his cup down. “I hope Dorian has told you about my plan for rechristening everything, Gladys. It is a delightful idea.”

“But I don’t want to be rechristened, Harry,
rejoined the Duchess, looking up at him with her wonderful eyes. "I am quite satisfied with my own name, and I am sure Mr. Gray should be satisfied with his."

"My dear Gladys, I would not alter either name for the world. They are both perfect. I was thinking chiefly of flowers. Yesterday I cut an orchid, for my buttonhole. It was a marvellous spotted thing, as effective as the seven deadly sins. In a thoughtless moment I asked one of the gardeners what it was called. He told me it was a fine specimen of 'Robinsoniana,' or something dreadful of that kind. It is a sad truth, but we have lost the faculty of giving lovely names to things. Names are everything. I never quarrel with actions. My one quarrel is with words. That is the reason I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing he is fit for."

"Then what should we call you, Harry?" she asked.

"His name is Prince Paradox," said Dorian.

"I recognise him in a flash," exclaimed the Duchess.

"I won't hear of it," laughed Lord Henry, sinking into a chair. "From a label there is no escape! I refuse the title."

"Royalties may not abdicate," fell as a warning from pretty lips.

"You wish me to defend my throne, then?"

"Yes."
"I give the truths of to-morrow."
"I prefer the mistakes of to-day," she answered.
"You disarm me, Gladys," he cried, catching the wilfulness of her mood.
"Of your shield, Harry: not of your spear."
"I never tilt against Beauty," he said, with a wave of his hand.
"That is your error, Harry, believe me. You value beauty far too much."
"How can you say that? I admit that I think that it is better to be beautiful than to be good. But on the other hand no one is more ready than I am to acknowledge that it is better to be good than to be ugly."
"Ugliness is one of the seven deadly sins, then?" cried the Duchess. "What becomes of your simile about the orchid?"
"Ugliness is one of the seven deadly virtues, Gladys. You, as a good Tory, must not underrate them. Beer, the Bible, and the seven deadly virtues have made our England what she is."
"You don't like your country, then?" she asked.
"I live in it."
"That you may censure it the better."
"Would you have me take the verdict of Europe on it?" he inquired.
"What do they say of us?"
"That Tartuffe has emigrated to England and opened a shop."
"Is that yours, Harry?"
"I give it to you."
"I could not use it. It is too true."
"You need not be afraid. Our countrymen
never recognise a description."
"They are practical."
"They are more cunning than practical. When
they make up their ledger, they balance stupidity
wealth, and vice by hypocrisy."
"Still, we have done great things."
"Great things have been thrust on us, Gladys."
"We have carried their burden."
"Only as far as the Stock Exchange."
She shook her head. "I believe in the race,"
cried.
"It represents the survival of the pushing."
"It has development."
"Decay fascinates me more."
"What of Art?" she asked.
"It is a malady."
"Love?"
"An illusion."
"Religion?"
"The fashionable substitute for Belief."
"You are a sceptic."
"Never! Scepticism is the beginning of
truth."
"What are you?"
"To define is to limit."
"Give me a clue."
"Threads snap. You would lose your way in
a labyrinth."
"You bewilder me. Let us talk of something
else."
"Our host is a delightful topic. Years ago he was christened Prince Charming."

"Ah! don't remind me of that," cried Dorian Gray.

"Our host is rather horrid this evening," answered the Duchess, colouring. "I believe he thinks that Monmouth married me on purely scientific principles as the best specimen he could find of a modern butterfly."

"Well, I hope he won't stick pins into you, Duchess," laughed Dorian.

"Oh! my maid does that already, Mr. Gray, when she is annoyed with me."

"And what does she get annoyed with you about, Duchess?"

"For the most trivial things, Mr. Gray, I assure you. Usually because I come in at ten minutes to nine and tell her that I must be dressed by half-past eight."

"How unreasonable of her! You should give her warning."

"I daren't, Mr. Gray. Why, she invents hats for me. You remember the one I wore at Lady Hilstone's garden-party? You don't, but it is nice of you to pretend that you do. Well, she made it out of nothing. All good hats are made out of nothing."

"Like all good reputations, Gladys," interrupted Lord Henry. "Every effect that one produces gives one an enemy. To be popular one must be a mediocrity."

"Not with women," said the Duchess, shaking
head; "and women rule the world. I assure
we can't bear mediocrities. We women, as
someone says, love with our ears, just as you men
with your eyes, if you ever love at all."
'It seems to me that we never do anything
\textit{?}," murmured Dorian.
'Ah! then, you never really love, Mr. Gray,"
swered the Duchess, with mock sadness.
'My dear Gladys!' cried Lord Henry. 'How
\textit{?} you say that? Romance lives by repetition,
repetition converts an appetite into an art.
\textit{?}, each time that one loves is the only time
\textit{?} has ever loved. Difference of object does not
\textit{?} singleness of passion. It merely intensifies
We can have in life but one great experience
best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that
\textit{experience as often as possible.}"
'Even when one has been wounded by it,
\textit{?}?" asked the Duchess, after a pause.
'Especially when one has been wounded by
\textit{?} answered Lord Henry.
The Duchess turned and looked at Dorian Gray
\textit{\textbf{with a curious expression in her eyes.}} 'What do
\textit{?} say to that, Mr. Gray?" she inquired.
Dorian hesitated for a moment. Then he
\textit{\textbf{rew his head back and laughed.}} 'I always
\textit{\textbf{ree with Harry, Duchess.}}"
'Even when he is wrong?"
'\textbf{Harry is never wrong, Duchess.}"
'\textbf{And does his philosophy make you happy?}"
'\textbf{I have never searched for happiness. Who
\textbf{nts happiness?}} I have searched for pleasure."
"And found it, Mr. Gray?"
"Often. Too often."

The Duchess sighed. "I am searching peace," she said, "and if I don't go and dress shall have none this evening."

"Let me get you some orchids, Duchess cried Dorian, starting to his feet, and walk down the conservatory.

"You are flirting disgracefully with him," said Lord Henry to his cousin. "You had better take care. He is very fascinating."

"If he were not, there would be no battle."
"Greek meets Greek, then?"
"I am on the side of the Trojans. They fight for a woman."
"They were defeated."
"There are worse things than capture," answered.

"You gallop with a loose rein."
"Pace gives life," was the riposte.13
"I shall write it in my diary to-night."
"What?"
"That a burnt child loves the fire."
"I am not even singed. My wings are untouched."
"You use them for everything, except flight."
"Courage has passed from men to women. is a new experience for us."
"You have a rival."
"Who?"

He laughed. "Lady Narborough," he whispered. "She perfectly adores him."
“You fill me with apprehension. The appeal to Antiquity is fatal to us who are romanticists.”
“Romanticists! You have all the methods of science.”
“Men have educated us.”
“But not explained you.”
“Describe us as a sex,” was her challenge.
“Sphynxes without secrets.”
She looked at him, smiling. “How long Mr. Gray is!” she said. “Let us go and help him. I have not yet told him the colour of my frock.”
“Ah! you must suit your frock to his flowers, Gladys.”
“That would be a premature surrender.”
“Romantic Art begins with its climax.”
“I must keep an opportunity for retreat.”
“In the Parthian manner?”
“They found safety in the desert. I could not do that.”
“Women are not always allowed a choice,” he answered, but hardly had he finished the sentence before from the far end of the conservatory came a stifled groan, followed by the dull sound of a heavy fall. Everybody started up. The Duchess stood motionless in horror. And with fear in his eyes Lord Henry rushed through the flapping palms to find Dorian Gray lying face downward on the tiled floor in a death-like swoon.
He was carried at once into the blue drawing-room, and laid upon one of the sofas. After a short time he came to himself, and looked round with a dazed expression.
"What has happened?" he asked. "Oh, remember. Am I safe here, Harry?" He began to tremble.

"My dear Dorian," answered Lord Hen. "You merely fainted. That was all. You must have overtired yourself. You had better come down to dinner. I will take your place."

"No, I will come down," he said, struggling to his feet. "I would rather come down. I must not be alone."

He went to his room and dressed. There was wild recklessness of gaiety in his manner as he sat at table, but now and then a thrill of terror ran through him when he remembered the pressed against the window of the conservatory like a white handkerchief, he had seen the face of James Vane watching him.
CHAPTER XVIII

THE next day he did not leave the house, and, indeed, spent most of the time in his own room, sick with a wild terror of dying, and yet different to life itself. The consciousness of being hunted, snared, tracked down, had begun to dominate him. If the tapestry did but tremble in the wind, he shook. The dead leaves that were blown against the leaded panes seemed to him like his own wasted resolutions and wild regrets. When he closed his eyes, he saw again the sailor's face peering through the mist-stained glass, and horror seemed once more to lay its hand upon his heart.

But perhaps it had been only his fancy that had called vengeance out of the night, and set the hideous shapes of punishment before him. Actual life was chaos, but there was something terribly logical in the imagination. It was the imagination that set remorse to dog the feet of sin. It was the imagination that made each crime bear its misshapen brood. In the common world of fact the wicked were not punished, nor the good rewarded. Success was given to the strong, failure thrust upon the weak. That was all. Besides, had any stranger been prowling round the house he would have been seen by the servants

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or the keepers. Had any footmarks been found on the flower-beds, the gardeners would have reported it. Yes: it had been merely a fable. Sibyl Vane's brother had not come back to tell him. He had sailed away in his ship to found a new life in some winter sea. From him, at any rate, he was safe. Why, the man did not know who he was, could not know who he was. The mask youth had saved him.

And yet if it had been merely an illusion, how terrible it was to think that conscience could not vanish such fearful phantoms, and give them vital form, and make them move before one! What sort of life would his be, if day and night, shades of his crime were to peer at him from silent corners, to mock him from secret places, to whisper in his ear as he sat at the feast, to wake him with icy fingers as he lay asleep! As the thought crept through his brain, he grew pale with terror and the air seemed to him to have become suddenly colder. Oh! in what a wild hour of madness had killed his friend! How ghastly the memory of the scene! He saw it all again! Each hideous detail came back to him with added horror. Out of the black cave of Time, terror and swathed in scarlet, rose the image of his sin. When Lord Henry came in at six o'clock, I found him crying as one whose heart will break.

It was not till the third day that he ventured to go out. There was something in the cedar-scented air of that winter morning that seemed to bring him back his joyousness and h
ardour for life. But it was not merely the physical conditions of environment that had caused the change. His own nature had revolted against the excess of anguish that had sought to maim and mar the perfection of its calm. With subtle and slyly-wrought temperaments it is always so. Their strong passions must either bruise or bend. They either slay the man, or themselves die.

Shallow sorrows and shallow loves live on. The loves and sorrows that are great are destroyed by their own plenitude. Besides, he had convinced himself that he had been the victim of a terror-stricken imagination, and looked back now on his years with something of pity and not a little of contempt.

After breakfast he walked with the Duchess for an hour in the garden, and then drove across the park to join the shooting-party. The crisp frost lay like salt upon the grass. The sky was an inverted cup of blue metal. A thin film of ice bordered the flat reed-grown lake.

At the corner of the pine-wood he caught sight of Sir Geoffrey Clouston, the Duchess's brother, jerking two spent cartridges out of his gun. He jumped from the cart, and having told the groom to take the mare home, made his way towards his guest through the withered bracken and rough undergrowth.

"Have you had good sport, Geoffrey?" he asked.

"Not very good, Dorian. I think most of the birds have gone to the open. I dare say it will be better after lunch, when we get to new ground."
Dorian strolled alone by his side. The keen aromatic air, the brown and red lights that glimmered in the wood, the hoarse cries of the beat ringing out from time to time, and the sharp snap of the guns that followed, fascinated him, and filled him with a sense of delightful freedom. He was dominated by the carelessness of happiness by the high indifference of joy.

Suddenly from a lumpy tussock of old grass some twenty yards in front of them, with black-tipped ears erect, and long hinder limbs throwing it forward, started a hare. It bolted for a thick of alders. Sir Geoffrey put his gun to his shoulder, but there was something in the animal's grace of movement that strangely charmed Dorian Gray and he cried out at once: "Don't shoot it, Geoffrey. Let it live."

"What nonsense, Dorian!" laughed his companion, and as the hare bounded into the thick he fired. There were two cries heard, the cry of a hare in pain, which is dreadful, the cry of a man in agony, which is worse.

"Good heavens! I have hit a beater!" exclaimed Sir Geoffrey. "What an ass the man was to get in front of the guns! Stop shooting there!" he called out at the top of his voice. "A man hurt."

The head-keeper came running up with a stick in his hand.

"Where, sir? Where is he?" he shouted. At the same time the firing ceased along the line.

"Here," answered Sir Geoffrey, angrily, hurry
towards the thicket. "Why on earth don't keep your men back? Spoiled my shooting the day."

Dorian watched them as they plunged into alder-clump, brushing the lithe, swinging aches aside. In a few moments they emerged, a body after them into the sunlight, turned away in horror. It seemed to him that misfortune followed wherever he went. Herd Sir Geoffrey ask if the man was really dead, the affirmative answer of the keeper. The seemed to him to have become suddenly e with faces. There was the trampling of tiad feet, and the low buzz of voices. A great per-breasted pheasant came beating through boughs overhead.

After a few moments, that were to him, in his turbed state, like endless hours of pain, he a hand laid on his shoulder. He started, and red round.

Dorian," said Lord Henry, "I had better tell n that the shooting is stopped for to-day. It ld not look well to go on."

I wish it were stopped for ever, Harry," he were, bitterly. "The whole thing is hideous cruel. Is the man . . . ?"

He could not finish the sentence.

I am afraid so," rejoined Lord Henry. "He the whole charge of shot in his chest. He it have died almost instantaneously. Come; us go home."

hey walked side by side in the direction of the
avenue for nearly fifty yards without speaking.

Then Dorian looked at Lord Henry, and said with a heavy sigh: "It is a bad omen, Harry. It is a very bad omen."

"What is?" asked Lord Henry. "Oh! the accident, I suppose. My dear fellow, it can't be helped. It was the man's own fault. Why did he get in front of the guns? Besides, it's nothing to us. It is rather awkward for Geoffrey, of course. It does not do to pepper beaters. It makes people think that one is a wild shot. And Geoffrey is not; he shoots very straight. But there is no use talking about the matter."

Dorian shook his head. "It is a bad omen, Harry. I feel as if something horrible were going to happen to some of us. To myself, perhaps," he added, passing his hand over his eyes, with a gesture of pain.

The elder man laughed. "The only horrible thing in the world is ennui, Dorian. That is the one sin for which there is no forgiveness. But we are not likely to suffer from it, unless these fellows keep chattering about this thing at dinner. I must tell them that the subject is to be tabooed. As for omens, there is no such thing as an omen. Destiny does not send us heralds. She is too wise or too cruel for that. Besides, what on earth could happen to you, Dorian? You have everything in the world that a man can want. There is no one who would not be delighted to change places with you."

"There is no one with whom I would not change
as, Harry. Don't laugh like that. I am telling you the truth. The wretched peasant has just died, is better off than I am. I have a...or of Death. It is the coming of Death terrifies me. Its monstrous wings seem to loom in the leaden air around me. Good heavens! you see a man moving behind the trees there, hugging me, waiting for me?"

Lord Henry looked in the direction in which the gloved hand was pointing. "Yes," he said, smiling, "I see the gardener waiting for you. I suppose he wants to ask you what flowers you wish to have on the table to-night. How dreadfully nervous you are, my dear fellow! You come and see my doctor, when we get back.

rian heaved a sigh of relief as he saw the approach of the gardener. The man touched his hat in a stiff manner, and then produced a letter, which he handed to his master. "Her Grace needs me to wait for an answer," he murmured.

rian put the letter into his pocket. "Tell..." he said, coldly. The man turned round, and went rapidly in the direction of the house.

ow fond women are of doing dangerous things!" laughed Lord Henry. "It is one of the things in them that I admire most. A woman is not with anybody in the world as long as people are looking on."

ow fond you are of saying dangerous things,
Harry! In the present instance you are quite astray. I like the Duchess very much, but don’t love her.”

“And the Duchess loves you very much, she likes you less, so you are excellently matchless.”

“You are talking scandal, Harry, and there never any basis for scandal.”

“The basis of every scandal is an immoral taintiness,” said Lord Henry, lighting a cigarette.

“You would sacrifice anybody, Harry, for the sake of an epigram.”

“The world goes to the altar of its own accord.”

“I wish I could love,” cried Dorian Gray, in a deep note of pathos in his voice. “But I have lost the passion, and forgotten the desire. I am too much concentrated on myself. My personality has become a burden to me. I wish to escape, to go away, to forget. It was not of me to come down here at all. I think I should send a wire to Harvey to have the yacht got ready. On a yacht one is safe.”

“Safe from what, Dorian? You are in no trouble. Why not tell me what it is? You know I would help you.”

“I can’t tell you, Harry,” he answered, as he stood up and stretched his hands towards the table. “And I dare say it is only a fancy of mine. An unfortunate accident has upset me. I have a horrible presentiment that something of that kind may happen to me.”

“What nonsense!”

“I hope it is, but I can’t help feeling it.”
is the Duchess, looking like Artemis in a
pre-maded gown. You see we have come back,
hess.”
I have heard all about it, Mr. Gray,” she
vered. “Poor Geoffrey is terribly upset.
It seems that you asked him not to shoot the
. How curious!”
Yes, it was very curious. I don’t know what
e me say it. Some whim, I suppose. It
ed the loveliest of little live things. But I
sorry they told you about the man. It is a
ous subject.”
It is an annoying subject,” broke in Lord
ry. “It has no psychological value at all.
if Geoffrey had done the thing on purpose,
interesting he would be! I should like to
someone who had committed a real murder.”
How horrid of you, Harry!” cried the
hess. “Isn’t it, Mr. Gray? Harry, Mr.
y is ill again. He is going to faint.”
orian drew himself up with an effort, and
ed. “It is nothing, Duchess,” he murmured;
nerves are dreadfully out of order. That is
I am afraid I walked too far this morning.
’t hear what Harry said. Was it very bad?
must tell me some other time. I think Iego and lie down. You will excuse me, won’t

ney had reached the great flight of steps that
rom the conservatory on to the terrace. As
glass door closed behind Dorian, Lord Henry
ed and looked at the Duchess with his slum-
berous eyes. "Are you very much in love with him?" he asked.

She did not answer for some time, but stared at the landscape. "I wish I knew," she said at last.

He shook his head. "Knowledge would be fatal. It is the uncertainty that charms us. A mist makes things wonderful."

"One may lose one's way."

"All ways end at the same point, my dear Gladys."

"What is that?"

"Disillusion."

"It was my début in life," she sighed.

"It came to you crowned."

"I am tired of strawberry leaves."

"They become you."

"Only in public."

"You would miss them," said Lord Henry.

"I will not part with a petal."

"Monmouth has ears."

"Old age is dull of hearing."

"Has he never been jealous?"

"I wish he had been."

He glanced about as if in search of something.

"What are you looking for?" she inquired.

"The button from your foil," he answered.

"You have dropped it."

She laughed. "I have still the mask."

"It makes your eyes lovelier," was his reply.

She laughed again. Her teeth showed like white seeds in a scarlet fruit.
Upstairs, in his own room, Dorian Gray was sitting on a sofa, with terror in every tingling fibre of his body. Life had suddenly become too burdensome a burden for him to bear. The dreadful path of the unlucky beater, shot in the thicket of a wild animal, had seemed to him to prefigure a path for himself also. He had nearly swooned when Lord Henry had said in a chance mood of cynical jesting.

At five o'clock he rang his bell for his servant and gave him orders to pack his things for the night-express to town, and to have the brougham ready by eight-thirty. He was determined not to sleep another night at Selby Royal. It is an ill-omened place. Death walked there in sunlight. The grass of the forest had been dotted with blood.

Then he wrote a note to Lord Henry, telling him that he was going up to town to consult his doctor, and asking him to entertain his guests in his absence. As he was putting it into the envelope, a knock came to the door, and his valet informed him that the head-keeper wished to see him. He frowned, and bit his lip. "Send him in," he muttered, after some moments' hesitation. As soon as the man entered Dorian pulled his note-book out of a drawer, and spread it out before him.

"I suppose you have come about the unfortunate accident of this morning, Thornton?" he said, taking up a pen.

"Yes, sir," answered the gamekeeper.
“Was the poor fellow married? Had he any people dependent on him?” asked Dorian, looking bored. “If so, I should not like them to be left in want, and will send them any sum of money you may think necessary.”

“We don’t know who he is, sir. That is what I took the liberty of coming to you about.”

“Don’t know who he is?” said Dorian, listlessly. “What do you mean? Wasn’t he one of your men?”

“No, sir. Never saw him before. Seems like a sailor, sir.”

The pen dropped from Dorian Gray’s hand, and he felt as if his heart had suddenly stopped beating. “A sailor?” he cried out. “Did you say a sailor?”

“Yes, sir. He looks as if he had been a sort of sailor; tattooed on both arms, and that kind of thing.”

“Was there anything found on him?” said Dorian, leaning forward and looking at the man with startled eyes. “Anything that would tell his name?”

“Some money, sir—not much, and a six-shooter. There was no name of any kind. A decent-looking man, sir, but rough-like. A sort of sailor, we think.”

Dorian started to his feet. A terrible hope fluttered past him. He clutched at it madly. “Where is the body?” he exclaimed. “Quick! I must see it at once.”

“It is in an empty stable in the Home Farm.
The folk don’t like to have that sort of thing in their houses. They say a corpse brings bad luck.”

The Home Farm! Go there at once and meet me. Tell one of the grooms to bring my horse and. No. Never mind. I'll go to the stables myself. It will save time."

In less than a quarter of an hour Dorian Gray was galloping down the long avenue as hard as he could go. The trees seemed to sweep past in spectral procession, and wild shadows seemed to cross themselves across his path. Once the mare reared at a white gate-post and nearly threw him. He lashed her across the neck with his whip. She cleft the dusky air like an arrow. The hooves flew from her hoofs.

At last he reached the Home Farm. Two men were loitering in the yard. He leapt from the saddle and threw the reins to one of them. In the farthest stable a light was glimmering. Something seemed to tell him that the body was there, and he hurried to the door, and put his hand upon the latch.

There he paused for a moment, feeling that he was on the brink of a discovery that would either save or mar his life. Then he thrust the door open, and entered.

In a heap of sacking in the far corner was lying a dead body of a man dressed in a coarse shirt and a pair of blue trousers. A spotted handkerchief had been placed over the face. A coarse vile, stuck in a bottle, sputtered beside it.
Dorian Gray shuddered. He felt that his could not be the hand to take the handkerchief away, and called out to one of the farm-servants to come to him.

"Take that thing off the face. I wish to see it," he said, clutching at the doorpost for support.

When the farm-servant had done so, he stepped forward. A cry of joy broke from his lips. The man who had been shot in the thicket was James Vane.

He stood there for some minutes looking at the dead body. As he rode home, his eyes were full of tears, for he knew he was safe.
CHAPTER XIX

'HERE is no use your telling me that you are going to be good,' cried Lord Henry, rubbing his white fingers into a red copper bowl with rose-water. "You're quite perfect, don't change."

Dorian Gray shook his head. "No, Harry, I done too many dreadful things in my life. not going to do any more. I began my good days yesterday."

Where were you yesterday?"

in the country, Harry. I was staying at a inn by myself."

My dear boy," said Lord Henry, smiling, body can be good in the country. There no temptations there. That is the reason people who live out of town are so absolutely vilised. Civilisation is not by any means an thing to attain to. There are only two by which man can reach it. One is by cultured, the other by being corrupt. try people have no opportunity of being e, so they stagnate."

'Culture and corruption," echoed Dorian. "I known something of both. It seems terrible now that they should ever be found together.

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For I have a new ideal, Harry. I am going to alter. I think I have altered."

"You have not yet told me what your greatest action was. Or did you say you had done more than one?" asked his companion, as he spilt into his plate a little crimson pyramid of seeded strawberries, and through a perforated shell-scraper, snowed white sugar upon them.

"I can tell you, Harry. It is not a story that could tell to anyone else. I spared somebody. It sounds vain, but you understand what I mean. She was quite beautiful, and wonderfully like Sibyl Vane. I think it was that which attracted me to her. You remember Sibyl, don't you? How long ago that seems! Well, she was not one of our own class, of course. She was simply a girl in a village. But I really loved her. I am quite sure that I loved her. All during this wonderful May that we have been having, I used to run down and see her two or three times a week. Yesterday she met me in a little orchard. The apple-blossoms kept tumbling down on her hair, and she was laughing. We were to have gone away together this morning at dawn. Suddenly I determined to leave her as flower-like as I had found her."

"I should think the novelty of the emotion must have given you a thrill of real pleasure, Dorian," interrupted Lord Henry. "But I must finish your idyll for you. You gave her good advice, and broke her heart. That was the beginning of your reformation."
"Harry, you are horrible! You mustn't say these dreadful things. Hetty's heart is not broken. Of course she cried, and all that. But there is no disgrace upon her. She can live, like Ardita, in her garden of mint and marigold."

"And weep over a faithless Florizel," said Lord Henry, laughing, as he leant back in his chair. My dear Dorian, you have the most curiously Byronic moods. Do you think this girl will ever really contented now with anyone of her own rank? I suppose she will be married some day to a rough carter or a grinning ploughman. Well, the fact of having met you, and loved you, will teach her to despise her husband, and she will be etched. From a moral point of view, I cannot say that I think much of your great renunciation. Then as a beginning, it is poor. Besides, how do you know that Hetty isn't floating at the moment in some star-lit mill-pond, with elegy water-lilies round her, like Ophelia?"

'I can't bear this, Harry! You mock at everything, and then suggest the most serious tragedies. I don't care what you say to me. I know I was right in acting as I did, for Hetty! As I rode past the farm this morning, I saw her white face at the window, like a ray of jasmine. Don't let us talk about it any more, and don't try to persuade me that the first action I have done for years, the first little of self-sacrifice I have ever known, is really part of sin. I want to be better. I am going to be better. Tell me something about yourself.
What is going on in town? I have not been the club for days."

"The people are still discussing poor Basil's appearance."

"I should have thought they had got tired that by this time," said Dorian, pouring him out some wine, and frowning slightly.

"My dear boy, they have only been talking about it for six weeks, and the British public really not equal to the mental strain of having more than one topic every three months. I have been very fortunate lately, however. I have had my own divorce-case, and Alan Campbell's suicide. Now they have got the mystery of the disappearance of an artist. Scotland Yard insists that the man in the grey ulster who for Paris by the midnight train on the ninth November was poor Basil, and the French police declare that Basil never arrived in Paris at all. I suppose in about a fortnight we shall be able to say that he has been seen in San Francisco. It is an odd thing, but everyone who disappears is sure to be seen at San Francisco. It must be a lightful city, and possess all the attractions of the next world."

"What do you think has happened to Basil," asked Dorian, holding up his Burgundy again to the light, and wondering how it was that he could discuss the matter so calmly.

"I have not the slightest idea. If Basil chose to hide himself, it is no business of mine. I am dead, I don't want to think about him. Do
is the only thing that ever terrifies me. I hate it.”

“Why?” said the younger man, wearily.

“Because,” said Lord Henry, passing beneath his nostrils the gilt trellis of an open vinaigrette box, “one can survive everything nowadays except that. Death and vulgarity are the only two facts in the nineteenth century that one cannot explain away. Let us have our coffee in the music-room, Dorian. You must play Chopin to me. The man with whom my wife ran away played Chopin exquisitely. Poor Victoria! I was very fond of her. The house is rather lonely without her. Of course married life is merely a habit, a bad habit. But then one regrets the loss even of one’s worst habits. Perhaps one regrets them the most. They are such an essential part of one’s personality.”

Dorian said nothing, but rose from the table and, passing into the next room, sat down to the piano and let his fingers stray across the white and black ivory of the keys. After the coffee had been brought in, he stopped, and, looking over at Lord Henry, said: “Harry, did it ever occur to you that Basil was murdered?”

Lord Henry yawned. “Basil was very popular, and always wore a Waterbury watch. Why should he have been murdered? He was not clever enough to have enemies. Of course he had a wonderful genius for painting. But a man can paint like Velasquez and yet be as dull as possible. Basil was really rather dull. He only
interested me once, and that was when he told me, years ago, that he had a wild adoration for you, and that you were the dominant motive of his art.”

“I was very fond of Basil,” said Dorian, with a note of sadness in his voice. “But don’t people say that he was murdered?”

“Oh, some of the papers do. It does not seem to me to be at all probable. I know there are dreadful places in Paris, but Basil was not the sort of man to have gone to them. He had no curiosity. It was his chief defect.”

“What would you say, Harry, if I told you that I had murdered Basil?” said the younger man. He watched him intently after he had spoken.

“I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn’t suit you. All crime is vulgar, just as all vulgarity is crime. It is not in you, Dorian, to commit a murder. I am sorry if I hurt your vanity by saying so, but I assure you it is true. Crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders. I don’t blame them in the smallest degree. I should fancy that crime was to them what art is to us, simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations.”

“A method of procuring sensations? Do you think, then, that a man who has once committed a murder could possibly do the same crime again? Don’t tell me that.”

“Oh! anything becomes a pleasure if one does it too often,” cried Lord Henry, laughing. “That
one of the most important secrets of life. I
duld fancy, however, that murder is always a
stake. One should never do anything that
I cannot talk about after dinner. But let us
us from poor Basil. I wish I could believe
he had come to such a really romantic end
you suggest; but I can’t. I dare say he fell
the Seine off an omnibus, and that the con-
tor hushed up the scandal. Yes: I should
scy that was his end. I see him lying now on
back under those dull-green waters with the
vy barges floating over him, and long weeds
ching in his hair. Do you know, I don’t think
would have done much more good work.
ing the last ten years his painting has gone off
y much.”
Dorian heaved a sigh, and Lord Henry strolled
oss the room and began to stroke the head of
rious Java parrot, a large grey-plumaged bird,
ink crest and tail, that was balancing itself
n a bamboo perch. As his pointed fingers
ched it, it dropped the white scurf of crinkled
over black glass-like eyes, and began to sway
wards and forwards.
Yes,” he continued, turning round, and taking
handkerchief out of his pocket; “his painting
quite gone off. It seemed to me to have lost
ething. It had lost an ideal. When you and
ceased to be great friends, he ceased to be a
artist. What was it separated you? I
pose he bored you. If so, he never forgave
. It’s a habit bores have. By the way, what
has become of that wonderful portrait he did for you? I don’t think I have ever seen it since you finished it. Oh! I remember your telling me years ago that you had sent it down to Selby, and it had got mislaid or stolen on the way. You never got it back? What a pity! It was really a masterpiece. I remember I wanted to buy it. I wish I had had a chance to buy it. It belonged to Basil’s last period. Since then, his work was that curious mixture of bad painting and good intentions that always entitles a man to be called a representative British artist. Did you advertise for it? I wish I had."

"I forget," said Dorian. "I suppose I did. But I never really liked it. I am sorry I sold it. The memory of the thing is hateful to me. Why do you talk of it? It used to remind me of those curious lines in some play—‘Hamlet’—how do they run?—"

"‘Like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart.’"

Yes: that is what it was like."

Lord Henry laughed. "If a man treats a painting artistically, his brain is his heart," he answered, sinking into an arm-chair.

Dorian Gray shook his head, and struck some soft chords on the piano. "‘Like the painting of a sorrow,’" he repeated, "‘a face without a heart.’"

The elder man lay back and looked at him with half-closed eyes. "By the way, Dorian," he said, after a pause, "‘what does it profit a man..."
gain the whole world and lose'—how does the station run?—'his own soul'?”

The music jarred and Dorian Gray started, and cried at his friend. “Why do you ask me that, try?”

My dear fellow,” said Lord Henry, elevating eyebrows in surprise, “I asked you because I thought you might be able to give me an answer. It is all. I was going through the Park last day, and close by the Marble Arch there stood a little crowd of shabby-looking people listening to an vulgar street-preacher. As I passed by, and the man yelling out that question to his audience. It struck me as being rather dramatic. Don is very rich in curious effects of that kind. It was Sunday, an uncouth Christian in a mackin-, a ring of sickly white faces under a broken of dripping umbrellas, and a wonderful use flung into the air by shrill, hysterical lips—as really very good in its way, quite a suggestion. I thought of telling the prophet that Art a soul, but that man had not. I am afraid, ever, he would not have understood me.”

Don’t, Harry. The soul is a terrible reality. an be bought, and sold, and bartered away. an be poisoned, or made perfect. There is a in each one of us. I know it.”

Do you feel quite sure of that, Dorian?”

Quite sure.”

Ah! then it must be an illusion. The things feels absolutely certain about are never true. t is the fatality of Faith, and the lesson of
Romance. How grave you are! Don't be serious. What have you or I to do with the superstitions of our age? No: we have given up our belief in the soul. Play me something. Play me a nocturne, Dorian, and, as you play, tell me in a low voice, how you have kept your youth. You must have some secret. I am only ten years older than you are, and I am wrinkled, and worn and yellow. You are really wonderful, Dorian. You have never looked more charming than you do to-night. You remind me of the day I saw you first. You were rather cheeky, very shy, and absolutely extraordinary. You have changed, of course, but not in appearance. I wish you would tell me your secret. To get back my youth, I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early, or be respectable. Youth There is nothing like it. It's absurd to talk of the ignorance of youth. The only people whose opinions I listen now with any respect are people much younger than myself. They see in front of me. Life has revealed to them the latest wonder. As for the aged, I always contradict the aged. I do it on principle. If you ask them their opinion on something that happened yesterday, they solemnly give you their opinions current in 1820, when people wore high stocks, believed in everything, and knew absolutely nothing. How lovely that thing you are playing is! I wonder did Chopin write it at Major with the sea weeping round the villa, and the spray dashing against the panes? It is marve
usly romantic. What a blessing it is that there
one art left to us that is not imitative! Don’t
op. I want music to-night. It seems to me that
are the young Apollo, and that I am Marsyas
tening to you. I have sorrows, Dorian, of my
th, that even you know nothing of. The
agedy of old age is not that one is old, but that
is young. I am amazed sometimes at my
hast sincerity. Ah, Dorian, how happy you are!
hat an exquisite life you have had! You have
unk deeply of everything. You have crushed
grapes against your palate. Nothing has
en hidden from you. And it has all been to
ou no more than the sound of music. It has
ot marred you. You are still the same.”
“I am not the same, Harry.”
“Yes: you are the same. I wonder what the
st of your life will be. Don’t spoil it by renun-
tations. At present you are a perfect type.
don’t make yourself incomplete. You are quite
awless now. You need not shake your head:
now you are. Besides, Dorian, don’t de-
tive yourself. Life is not governed by will or
ention. Life is a question of nerves, and
ures, and slowly built-up cells in which thought
es itself and passion has its dreams. You
ay fancy yourself safe, and think yourself
rong. But a chance tone of colour in a room
orning sky, a particular perfume that you
ce once loved and that brings subtle memories
th it, a line from a forgotten poem that you
ome across again, a cadence from a piece
of music that you had ceased to play—I tell you, Dorian, that it is on things like these that lives depend. Browning writes about that somewhere; but our own senses will imagine them for us.

There are moments when the odour of lilas blanches suddenly across me, and I have to wish I could change places with you, Dorian. The world has cried out against us both, but you have always worshipped you. It always will,

I am so glad that you have never done anything but never carved a statue, or painted a picture, produced anything outside of yourself! Life has been your art. You have set yourself to me. Your days are your sonnets.”

Dorian rose up from the piano, and passed his hand through his hair. “Yes, life has been exquisite,” he murmured, “but I am not going to have the same life, Harry. And you must not these extravagant things to me. You don’t know everything about me. I think that if you even you would turn from me. You last

“Why have you stopped playing, Dorian? Back and give me the nocturne over again. I want to hear it again. You are honey-colored moon hanging in the dusk to earth. You won’t? Let us go to the club, the club, It has been a charming evening, and we must
charmingly. There is some one at White's who wants immensely to know you—young Lord Pole, Bournemouth's eldest son. He has already copied your neckties, and has begged me to introduce him to you. He is quite delightful, and rather reminds me of you."

"I hope not," said Dorian, with a sad look in his eyes. "But I am tired to-night, Harry. I can't go to the club. It is nearly eleven, and I want to go to bed early."

"Do stay. You have never played so well as to-night. There was something in your touch that was wonderful. It had more expression than I had ever heard from it before."

"It is because I am going to be good," he answered, smiling. "I am a little changed, ready."

"You cannot change to me, Dorian," said Lord Henry. "You and I will always be friends."

"Yet you poisoned me with a book once. I will not forgive that. Harry, promise me that you will never lend that book to any one. It was harm."

"My dear boy, you are really beginning to realise. You will soon be going about like the avowed enemy of the reviver. Terror people against the sins of which you have grown tired. You are much too delightful to do that. Besides, it is no use. You and I are what we are, and will be what we will be. As for being poisoned by a book, there is no such thing as that. Art has influence upon action. It annihilates the
desire to act. It is superbly sterile. The books that the world calls immoral are books that shut out the world its own shame. That is all. But I won’t discuss literature. Come round to-morrow. I am going to ride at eleven. We might go together, and I will take you to lunch afterwards with Lady Branksome. She is a charming woman and wants to consult you about some tapestry she is thinking of buying. Mind you come. Shall we lunch with our little Duchess? She said she never sees you now. Perhaps you are tired of Gladys? I thought you would be. Her clever tongue gets on one’s nerves. Well, in any case I’ll be here at eleven.”

“Must I really come, Harry?”

“Certainly. The Park is quite lovely now. I don’t think there have been such lilacs since the year I met you.”

“Very well. I shall be here at eleven,” said Dorian. “Good-night, Harry.” As he reached the door he hesitated for a moment, as if he had something more to say. Then he sighed and went out.
CHAPTER XX

IT was a lovely night, so warm that he threw his coat over his arm, and did not even put his silk scarf round his throat. As he strolled home, smoking his cigarette, two young men in evening dress passed him. He heard one of them whisper to the other: "That is Dorian Gray." He remembered how pleased he used to be when he was pointed out, or stared at, or talked about. He was tired of hearing his own name now. Half the charm of the little village where he had been so often lately was that no one knew who he was. He had often told the girl whom he had lured to love him that he was poor, and she had believed him. He had told her once that he was wicked, and she had laughed at him, and answered that wicked people were always very old and very ugly. What a laugh she had!—just like a thrush singing. And how pretty she had been in her cotton dresses and her large hats! She knew nothing, but she had everything that he had lost.

When he reached home, he found his servant waiting up for him. He sent him to bed, and threw himself down on the sofa in the library, and began to think over some of the things that Lord Henry had said to him.

Was it really true that one could never change?
He felt a wild longing for the unstained pure of his boyhood—his rose-white boyhood, as Lord Henry had once called it. He knew that he had tarnished himself, filled his mind with corruption and given horror to his fancy; that he had been an evil influence to others, and had experienced a terrible joy in being so; and that, of the life that had crossed his own, it had been the fairest and the most full of promise that he had brought to shame. But was it all irretrievable? Was there no hope for him?

Ah! in what a monstrous moment of pride a passion he had prayed that the portrait should bear the burden of his days, and he keep the sullied splendour of eternal youth! All his fail had been due to that. Better for him that every sin of his life had brought its sure, swift penalty along with it. There was purification in punishment. Not “Forgive us our sins,” but “Smite us for our iniquities” should be the prayer of a man to a most just God.

The curiously carved mirror that Lord Henry had given to him, so many years ago now, standing on the table, and the white-limbed Cupids laughed round it as of old. He took up, as he had done on that night of horror, when he had first noted the change in the fatal picture and with wild, tear-dimmed eyes looked into polished shield. Once, some one who had terribly loved him had written to him a mad letter, ending with these idolatrous words: “The world changed because you are made of ivory and go..."
The curves of your lips rewrite history." The phrases came back to his memory, and he repeated them over and over to himself. Then he loathed his own beauty, and, flinging the mirror on the floor, crushed it into silver splinters beneath his heel. It was his beauty that had ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he had prayed for. But for those two things, his life might have been free from stain. His beauty had been to him but a mask, his youth but a mockery. What was youth at best? A green, an unripe time, a time of shallow moods and sickly thoughts. Why had he worn its livery? Youth had spoiled him.

It was better not to think of the past. Nothing could alter that. It was of himself, and of his own future, that he had to think. James Vane was hidden in a nameless grave in Selby churchyard. Alan Campbell had shot himself one night in his laboratory, but had not revealed the secret that he had been forced to know. The excitement, such as it was, over Basil Hallward's disappearance would soon pass away. It was already waning. He was perfectly safe there. Nor, indeed, was it the death of Basil Hallward that weighed most upon his mind. It was the living death of his own soul that troubled him. Basil had painted the portrait that had marred his life. He could not forgive him that. It was the portrait that had done everything. Basil had said things to him that were unbearable, and that he had yet borne with patience. The murder had been simply the madness of a moment. As
for Alan Campbell, his suicide had been his own act. He had chosen to do it. It was nothing to him.

A new life! That was what he wanted. That was what he was waiting for. Surely he had begun it already. He had spared one innocent thing, at any rate. He would never again tempt innocence. He would be good.

As he thought of Hetty Merton, he began to wonder if the portrait in the locked room had changed. Surely it was not still so horrible as it had been? Perhaps if his life became pure, he would be able to expel every sign of evil passion from the face. Perhaps the signs of evil had already gone away. He would go and look.

He took the lamp from the table and crept upstairs. As he unbarred the door a smile of joy flitted across his strangely young-looking face and lingered for a moment about his lips. Yes, he would be good, and the hideous thing that he had hidden away would no longer be a terror to him. He felt as if the load had been lifted from him already.

He went in quietly, locking the door behind him, as was his custom, and dragged the purple hanging from the portrait. A cry of pain and indignation broke from him. He could see no change, save that in the eyes there was a look of cunning, and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite. The thing was still loathsome—more loathsome, if possible, than before—and the scarlet dew that spotted the hand seemed
ghter, and more like blood newly spilt. Then
trembled. Had it been merely vanity that
did make him do his one good deed? Or the desire
of a new sensation, as Lord Henry had hinted,
his mocking laugh? Or that passion to act a
rt that sometimes makes us do things finer than
are ourselves? Or, perhaps, all these? And
y was the red stain larger than it had been? It
ned to have crept like a horrible disease over
wrinkled fingers. There was blood on the
ented feet, as though the thing had dripped—
od even on the hand that had not held the
ife. Confess? Did it mean that he was to
fess? To give himself up, and be put to death?
laughed. He felt that the idea was monstrous.
ides, even if he did confess, who would believe
a? There was no trace of the murdered man
where. Everything belonging to him had
destroyed. He himself had burned what had
below-stairs. The world would simply say
he was mad. They would shut him up if he
isted in his story. . . . Yet it was his duty
confess, to suffer public shame, and to make
blic atonement. There was a God who called
men to tell their sins to earth as well as to
ven. Nothing that he could do would cleanse
ill till he had told his own sin. His sin? He
ugged his shoulders. The death of Basil Hall-
rd seemed very little to him. He was thinking
etty Merton. For it was an unjust mirror,
irror of his soul that he was looking at.
ity? Curiosity? Hypocrisy? Had there
been nothing more in his renunciation than that. There had been something more. At least he had thought so. But who could tell? ... No. There had been nothing more. Through vanity he had spared her. In hypocrisy he had worn the mask of goodness. For curiosity's sake he had tried the denial of self. He recognised that now.

But this murder—was it to dog him all his life? Was he always to be burdened by his past? Was he really to confess? Never. There was only a bit of evidence left against him. The picture itself— that was evidence. He would destroy it. Why had he kept it so long? Once it had given him pleasure to watch it changing and growing old. Of late he had felt no such pleasure. It had kept him awake at night. When he had been away, he had been filled with terror lest other eyes should look upon it. It had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere memory had marred many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it.

He looked round, and saw the knife that had stabbed Basil Hallward. He had cleaned it many times, till there was no stain left upon it. It was bright, and glistened. As it had killed the painter, so it would kill the painter's work, and all that that meant. It would kill the past, and when that was dead he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul-life, and, without its hideous warnings, he would be at peace. He seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it.
here was a cry heard, and a crash. The cry so horrible in its agony that the frightened ants woke, and crept out of their rooms. Two men, who were passing in the Square below, ped, and looked up at the great house. They ked on till they met a policeman, and brought back. The man rang the bell several times, there was no answer. Except for a light in one the top windows, the house was all dark. After me, he went away and stood in an adjoining ico and watched.
Whose house is that, constable? asked the of the two gentlemen.
Mr. Dorian Gray’s, sir,” answered the police-
ey looked at each other, as they walked away sneered. One of them was Sir Henry Ashton’s.
side, in the servants’ part of the house, the clad domestics were talking in low whispers to other. Old Mrs. Leaf was crying and wringer hands. Francis was as pale as death.
ter about a quarter of an hour, he got the man and one of the footmen and crept up-
They knocked, but there was no reply.
called out. Everything was still. Finally, vainly trying to force the door, they got on oof, and dropped down on to the balcony. nwindows yielded easily: their bolts were old.
en they entered they found, hanging upon all, a splendid portrait of their master as they st seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite
youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognised who it was.

THE END OF
THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY
 LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME

• A STUDY OF DUTY
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LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME

CHAPTER I

IT was Lady Windermere's last reception before Easter, and Bentinck House was even more crowded than usual. Six Cabinet Ministers had come on from the Speaker's Levée in their stars and ribands, all the pretty women wore their smartest dresses, and at the end of the picture-gallery stood the Princess Sophia of Carls- nihe, a heavy Tartar-looking lady, with tiny black eyes and wonderful emeralds, talking bad French at the top of her voice, and laughing immoderately at everything that was said to her. It was certainly a wonderful medley of people. Gorgeous peeresses chatted affably to violent Radicals, popular preachers brushed coat-tails with eminent sceptics, a perfect bevy of bishops kept following a stout prima-donna from room to room, on the staircase stood several Royal Academicians, disguised as artists; and it was said that at one time the supper-room was absolutely crammed with geniuses. In fact, it was one of Lady Windern-
mere's best nights, and the Princess stayed till nearly half-past eleven.

As soon as she had gone, Lady Windermere returned to the picture-gallery, where a celebrated political economist was solemnly explaining the scientific theory of music to an indignant virtuoso from Hungary, and began to talk to the Duchess of Paisley. She looked wonderfully beautiful with her grand ivory throat, her large blue forget-me-not eyes, and her heavy coils of golden hair. Or pur they were—not that pale straw colour that nowadays usurps the gracious name of gold, but such gold as is woven into sunbeams or hidden in strange amber; and they gave to her face something of the frame of a saint, with not a little of the fascination of a sinner. She was a curious psychological study. Early in life she had discovered the important truth that nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion; and by a series of reckless escapades, half of them quite harmless, she had acquired all the privileges of a personality. She had more than once changed her husband; indeed, Debrett credits her with three marriages; but as she had never changed her lover, the world had long ago ceased to talk scandal about her. She was now forty years of age, childless, and with that inordinate passion for pleasure which is the secret of remaining young.

Suddenly she looked eagerly round the room, and said, in her clear contralto voice: "Where is my cheiromantist?"
‘Your what, Gladys?’ exclaimed the Duchess, ing an involuntary start.
‘My cheiromantist, Duchess; I can’t live hout him at present.’
‘Dear Gladys! you are always so original,’” murmured the Duchess, trying to remember at a cheiromantist really was, and hoping it s not the same as a cheiropodist.
‘He comes to see my hand twice a week ularly,’” continued Lady Windermere, “and nost interesting about it.”
‘Good heavens!’ said the Duchess to herself, e is a sort of cheiropodist after all. How very adful. I hope he is a foreigner at any rate. It uldn’t be quite so bad then.”
‘I must certainly introduce him to you.’
‘Introduce him!’ cried the Duchess; “you i’t mean to say he is here?” and she began king about for a small tortoise-shell fan and a y tattered lace shawl, so as to be ready to go a moment’s notice.
‘Of course he is here; I would not dream of ing a party without him. He tells me I have ure psychic hand, and that if my thumb had n the least little bit shorter, I should have n a confirmed pessimist, and gone into a vent.”
Oh, I see!’ said the Duchess, feeling very ch relieved; “he tells fortunes, I suppose?”
And misfortunes, too,” answered Lady Win- nere, “any amount of them. Next year, for ance, I am in great danger, both by land and,
sea, so I am going to live in a balloon, and draw up my dinner in a basket every evening. It is all written down on my little finger, or on the palm of my hand, I forget which."

"But surely that is tempting Providence, Gladys."

"My dear Duchess, surely Providence can resist temptation by this time. I think everyone should have their hands told once a month, so as to know what not to do. Of course, one does it all the same, but it is so pleasant to be warned. Now if some one doesn't go and fetch Mr. Podger at once, I shall have to go myself."

"Let me go, Lady Windermere," said a tall handsome young man, who was standing by, listening to the conversation with an amused smile.

"Thanks so much, Lord Arthur; but I am afraid you wouldn't recognise him."

"If he is as wonderful as you say, Lady Windermere, I couldn't well miss him. Tell me what he is like, and I'll bring him to you at once."

"Well, he is not a bit like a cheiromantist. I mean he is not mysterious, or esoteric, or romantic-looking. He is a little, stout man, with a funny, bald head, and great gold-rimmed spectacles; something between a family doctor and a country attorney. I'm really very sorry, but it is not my fault. People are so annoying. All my pianists look exactly like poets, and all my poets look exactly like pianists; and I remember last season asking a most dreadful conspirator..."
dinner, a man who had blown up ever so many people, and always wore a coat of mail, and carried a dagger up his shirt-sleeve; and do you know that when he came he looked just like a nice old clergyman, and cracked jokes all the evening? Of course, he was very amusing, and all that, but I was awfully disappointed; and when I asked him about the coat of mail, he only laughed, and said it was far too cold to wear in England. Ah, here is Mr. Podgers! Now, Mr. Podgers, I want you to tell the Duchess of Paisley's hand. Duchess, you must take your glove off. No, not the left hand, the other.”

“Dear Gladys, I really don't think it is quite right,” said the Duchess, feebly unbuttoning a rather soiled kid glove.

“Nothing interesting ever is,” said Lady Windermere: “on a fait le monde ainsi.” But I must introduce you. Duchess, this is Mr. Podgers, my pet cheiromantist. Mr. Podgers, this is the Duchess of Paisley, and if you say that she has a larger mountain of the moon than I have, I will never believe in you again.”

“I am sure, Gladys, there is nothing of the kind in my hand,” said the Duchess gravely.

“Your Grace is quite right,” said Mr. Podgers, glancing at the little fat hand with its short square fingers, “the mountain of the moon is not developed. The line of life, however, is excellent. Kindly bend the wrist. Thank you. Three distinct lines on the rascette!” You will live to a great age, Duchess, and be extremely
happy. Ambition—very moderate, line of intellect not exaggerated, line of heart—"

"Now, do be indiscreet, Mr. Podgers," cried Lady Windermere.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," said Mr. Podgers, bowing, "if the Duchess ever had been, but I am sorry to say that I see great permanence of affection, combined with a strong sense of duty."

"Pray go on, Mr. Podgers," said the Duchess, looking quite pleased.

"Economy is not the least of your Grace's virtues," continued Mr. Podgers, and Lady Windermere went off into fits of laughter.

"Economy is a very good thing," remarked the Duchess complacently; "when I married Paisley he had eleven castles, and not a single house fit to live in."

"And now he has twelve houses, and not a single castle," cried Lady Windermere.

"Well, my dear," said the Duchess, "I like—"

"Comfort," said Mr. Podgers, "and modern improvements, and hot water laid on in every bedroom. Your Grace is quite right. Comfort is the only thing our civilisation can give us."

"You have told the Duchess's character admirably, Mr. Podgers, and now you must tell Lady Flora's"; and in answer to a nod from the smiling hostess, a tall girl, with sandy Scotch hair, and high shoulder-blades, stepped awkwardly from behind the sofa, and held out a long, bony hand with spatulate fingers.
"Ah, a pianist! I see," said Mr. Podgers, "an excellent pianist, but perhaps hardly a musician. Very reserved, very honest, and with a great love of animals."

"Quite true!" exclaimed the Duchess, turning to Lady Windermere, "absolutely true! Flora keeps two dozen collie dogs at Macloskie, and would turn our town house into a menagerie if her father would let her."

"Well, that is just what I do with my house every Thursday evening," cried Lady Windermere, laughing, "only I like lions better than collie dogs."

"Your one mistake, Lady Windermere," said Mr. Podgers, with a pompous bow.

"If a woman can't make her mistakes charming, she is only a female," was the answer. "But you must read some more hands for us. Come, Sir Thomas, show Mr. Podgers yours"; and a grave-looking old gentleman, in a white waistcoat, came forward, and held out a thick rugged hand, with a very long third finger.

"An adventurous nature; four long voyages in the past, and one to come. Been shipwrecked three times. No, only twice, but in danger of a shipwreck your next journey. A strong Conservative, very punctual, and with a passion for collecting curiosities. Had a severe illness between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Was left a forlorn when about thirty. Great aversion to cats and Radicals."

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Sir Thomas; "you must really tell my wife's hand, too."
“Your second wife’s,” said Mr. Podgers quietly still keeping Sir Thomas’s hand in his. “Your second wife’s. I shall be charmed”; but Lady Marvel, a melancholy-looking woman, with brown hair and sentimental eyelashes, entirely declined to have her past or her future exposed; and nothing that Lady Windermere could do would induce Monsieur de Koloff, the Russian Ambassador, even to take his gloves off. In fact, many people seemed afraid to face the odd little man with his stereotyped smile, his gold spectacles, and his bright, beady eyes; and when he told poor Lady Fermor, right out before every one, that she did not care a bit for music, but was extremely fond of musicians, it was generally felt that cheiromancy was a most dangerous science, and one that ought not to be encouraged, except in a tête-à-tête.

Lord Arthur Savile, however, who did not know anything about Lady Fermor’s unfortunate story, and who had been watching Mr. Podgers with a great deal of interest, was filled with an immense curiosity to have his own hand read, and feeling somewhat shy about putting himself forward, crossed over the room to where Lady Windermere was sitting, and, with a charming blush, asked her if she thought Mr. Podgers would mind.

“Of course, he won’t mind,” said Lady Windermere, “that is what he is here for. All my lions, Lord Arthur, are performing lions, and jump through hoops whenever I ask them. But I must warn you beforehand that I shall tell Sybil everything. She is coming to lunch with me to-morrow,
All about bonnets, and if Mr. Podgers finds out you have a bad temper, or a tendency to gout, a wife living in Bayswater, I shall certainly let know all about it."

Lord Arthur smiled, and shook his head. "I not afraid," he answered. "Sibyl knows me well as I know her."

Ah! I am a little sorry to hear you say that. proper basis for marriage is a mutual mis-

erstanding. No, I am not at all cynical, I merely got experience, which, however, is much the same thing. Mr. Podgers, Lord hur Savile is dying to have his hand read. it tell him that he is engaged to one of the beautiful girls in London, because that eared in 'The Morning Post' a month ago."

Dear Lady Windermere," cried the Mar-

ness of Jedburgh, "do let Mr. Podgers stay a little longer. He has just told me I should on the stage, and I am so interested."

If he has told you that, Lady Jedburgh, I certainly take him away. Come over at once, Podgers, and read Lord Arthur's hand."

Well," said Lady Jedburgh, making a little e as she rose from the sofa, "if I am not to allowed to go on the stage, I must be allowed e part of the audience at any rate."

Of course; we are all going to be part of the ence," said Lady Windermere; "and now, Mr. gers, be sure and tell us something nice. Lord hur is one of my special favourites."
it when Mr. Podgers saw Lord Arthur's hand
he grew curiously pale; and said nothing. A shudder seemed to pass through him, and his great bushy eyebrows twitched convulsively, in an odd, irritating way they had when he was puzzled. Then some huge beads of perspiration broke out on his yellow forehead, like a poisonous dew, and his fat fingers grew cold and clammy.

Lord Arthur did not fail to notice these strange signs of agitation, and, for the first time in his life, he himself felt fear. His impulse was to rush from the room, but he restrained himself. It was better to know the worst, whatever it was, than to be left in this hideous uncertainty.

"I am waiting, Mr. Podgers," he said.

"We are all waiting," cried Lady Windermere, in her quick, impatient manner, but the cheiro-mantist made no reply.

"I believe Arthur is going on the stage," said Lady Jedburgh, "and that, after your scolding, Mr. Podgers is afraid to tell him so."

Suddenly Mr. Podgers dropped Lord Arthur's right hand, and seized hold of his left, bending down so low to examine it that the gold rims of his spectacles seemed almost to touch the palm. For a moment his face became a white mask of horror, but he soon recovered his sang-froid, and looking up at Lady Windermere, said with a forced smile: "It is the hand of a charming young man."

"Of course it is!" answered Lady Windermere, "but will he be a charming husband? That is what I want to know."
“All charming young men are,” said Mr. Podgers.

“I don’t think a husband should be too fascinating,” murmured Lady Jedburgh pensively, “it is so dangerous.”

“My dear child, they never are too fascinating,” cried Lady Windermere. “But what I want are details. Details are the only things that interest. What is going to happen to Lord Arthur?”

“Well, within the next few months Lord Arthur will go a voyage——”

“Oh yes, his honeymoon, of course!”

“And lose a relative.”

“Not his sister, I hope?” said Lady Jedburgh, in a piteous tone of voice.

“Certainly not his sister,” answered Mr. Podgers, with a deprecating wave of the hand, “a distant relative merely.”

“Well, I am dreadfully disappointed,” said Lady Windermere. “I have absolutely nothing to tell Sybil to-morrow. No one cares about distant relatives nowadays. They went out of fashion years ago. However, I suppose she had better have a black silk by her; it always does for church, you know. And now let us go to supper. They are sure to have eaten everything up, but we may find some hot soup. François used to make excellent soup once, but he is so agitated about politics at present, that I never feel quite certain about him. I do wish General Boulanger would keep quiet. Duchess, I am sure you are tired?”

“Not at all, dear Gladys,” answered the Duch-
and turned towards the door. "I have an
unforeseen project and the immemorial
rule of my ancestors will not hold.
Oh, Sir Thomas, I must. And my love!
"Farewell," she said to Sir Thomas very
softly, and the very treasure finally
agreed to part sometimes without asking
whether she might come more.

"In a few more Lord Arthur Savile had re-
turned on the fireplace, with the same ice-
cold look of him, and the same searing sense of
eternal pain. He smiled sadly at his sister, as she
nestled on Lord Pymakie's arm, looking in her pink brocade and pearls, and he
heard Lady Waverly on when she called to
follow her. He thought of Sybil Merton
the idea that anything could come between
made his eyes shine with tears.

Looking at him, one would have said
that he had stolen the shield of Pallas, and shot
the Gorgon's head. He seemed turned to
and his face was like marble in its mela-
He had lived the delicate and luxurious
young man of birth and fortune, a life ex-
quise freedom from sordid care, its beautiful
momentance; and now for the first time he
consciously of the terrible mystery of Destiny
awful meaning of Doom.

How mad and monstrous it all s
Could it be that written on his hand, it
acters that he could not read himself, b
mother could decipher, was some fearful secret of sin, some blood-red sign of crime? Was there no escape possible? Were we no better than chessmen, moved by an unseen power, vessels the potter fashions at his fancy, for honour or for shame? His reason revolted against it, and yet he felt that some tragedy was hanging over him, and that he had been suddenly called upon to bear an intolerable burden. Actors are so fortunate. They can choose whether they will appear in tragedy or in comedy, whether they will suffer or make merry, laugh or shed tears. But in real life it is different. Most men and women are forced to perform parts for which they have no qualifications. Our Guildensterns play Hamlet for us, and our Hamlets have to jest like Prince Hal. The world is a stage, but the play is badly cast.

Suddenly Mr. Podgers entered the room. When he saw Lord Arthur he started, and his coarse, fat face became a sort of greenish-yellow colour. The two men's eyes met, and for a moment there was silence.

"The Duchess has left one of her gloves here, Lord Arthur, and has asked me to bring it to her," said Mr. Podgers finally. "Ah, I see it on the sofa! Good evening."

"Mr. Podgers, I must insist on your giving me a straightforward answer to a question I am going to put to you."

"Another time, Lord Arthur, but the Duchess is anxious. I am afraid I must go."
"You shall not go. The Duchess is in no hurry."

"Ladies should not be kept waiting, Lord Arthur," said Mr. Podgers, with his sickly smile. "The fair sex is apt to be impatient."

Lord Arthur's finely-chiselled lips curled in petulant disdain. The poor Duchess seemed to him of very little importance at that moment. He walked across the room to where Mr. Podgers was standing, and held his hand out.

"Tell me what you saw there," he said. "Tell me the truth. I must know it. I am not a child."

Mr. Podgers's eyes blinked behind his gold-rimmed spectacles, and he moved uneasily from one foot to the other, while his fingers played nervously with a flash watch-chain.

"What makes you think that I saw anything in your hand, Lord Arthur, more than I told you?"

"I know you did, and I insist on your telling me what it was. I will pay you. I will give you a cheque for a hundred pounds."

The green eyes flashed for a moment, and then became dull again.

"Guineas?" said Mr. Podgers at last, in a low voice.

"Certainly. I will send you a cheque to-morrow. What is your club?"

"I have no club. That is to say, not just at present. My address is——, but allow me to give you my card;" and producing a bit of gilt-edge pasteboard from his waistcoat pocket, Mr.
dgers handed it, with a low bow, to Lord thur, who read on it—

Mr. SEPTIMUS R. PODGERS
Professional Cheiromantist
103a West Moon Street

'My hours are from ten to four," murmured :
Podgers mechanically, "and I make a uction for families."
'Be quick," cried Lord Arthur, looking very e, and holding his hand out.
Mr. Podgers glanced nervously round, and w the heavy portière across the door.
'It will take a little time, Lord Arthur, you l better sit down."
'Be quick, sir," cried Lord Arthur again, mping his foot angrily on the polished floor.
Mr. Podgers smiled, drew from his breast- ket a small magnifying glass, and wiped it efually with his handkerchief.
'I am quite ready," he said.
CHAPTER II

Ten minutes later, with face blanched with terror, and eyes wild with grief, Arthur Savile rushed from Bentinck House, crushing his way through the crowd of footmen that stood round the large striped carriage, and seeming not to see or hear anything. The night was bitter cold, and the gas-lamps on the square flared and flickered in the keen blast, but his hands were hot with fever, and his head burned like fire. On and on he went, with the gait of a drunken man. A policeman looked curiously at him as he passed, a beggar, who slouched from an archway to beg alms, grew frightened, seeing misery greater than his own. Once he stopped under an archway and looked down at his hands. He thought he detect the stain of blood already upon them, a faint cry broke from his trembling lips.

Murder! that is what the chieromantist seen there. Murder! The very night seemed to know it, and the desolate wind to howl in his ear. The dark corners of the streets were full of it. It grinned at him from the roofs of the houses.

First he came to the Park, whose sombre lands seemed to fascinate him. He leaned we
against the railings, cooling his brow against the wet metal, and listening to the tremulousness of the trees. “Murder! murder!” he kept repeating, as though iteration could dim the horror of the word. The sound of his own ice made him shudder, yet he almost hoped at Echo might hear him, and wake the slumbering city from its dreams. He felt a mad desire stop the casual passer-by, and tell him everything. Then he wandered across Oxford Street into row, shameful alleys. Two women with tinted faces mocked at him as he went by. In a dark courtyard came a sound of oaths I blows, followed by shrill screams, and, huddled upon a damp doorstep, he saw the crooked, skewed forms of poverty and old. A strange pity ne over him. Were these children of sin and very predestined to their end, as he to his? re they, like him, merely the puppets of a monstrous show? And yet it was not the mystery, but the comedy suffering that struck him; its absolute uselessness, its grotesque want of meaning. How inherent everything seemed! How lacking in all mony! He was amazed at the discord between shallow optimism of the day, and the real facts existence. He was still very young.

After a time he found himself in front of Rylebone Church. The silent roadway looked a long riband of polished silver, flecked here there by the dark arabesques of waving shad-
owls. Far into the distance curved the line of flickering gas-lamps, and outside a little walled-in house stood a solitary hansom, the driver asleep inside. He walked hastily in the direction of Portland Place, now and then looking round, as though he feared that he was being followed. At the corner of Rich Street stood two men, reading a small bill upon a hoarding. An odd feeling of curiosity stirred him, and he crossed over. As he came near, the word “Murder,” printed in black letters, met his eye. He started, and a deep flush came into his cheek. It was an advertisement offering a reward for any information leading to the arrest of a man of medium height, between thirty and forty years of age, wearing a billy-cock hat, a black coat, and check trousers, and with a scar upon his right cheek. He read it over and over again, and wondered if the wretched man would be caught, and how he had been scarred. Perhaps, some day, his own name might be placarded on the walls of London. Some day, perhaps, a price would be set on his head also.

The thought made him sick with horror. He turned on his heel, and hurried on into the night.

Where he went he hardly knew. He had a dim memory of wandering through a labyrinth of sordid houses, of being lost in a giant web of sombre streets, and it was bright dawn when he found himself at last in Piccadilly Circus. As he strolled home towards Belgrave Square, he met the great waggons on their way to Covent
en. The white-smocked carters, with their ant sunburnt faces and coarse curly hair, e sturdily on, cracking their whips, and call-
ut now and then to each other; on the back huge grey horse, the leader of a jangling , sat a chubby boy, with a bunch of prim-
in his battered hat, keeping tight hold of jane with his little hands, and laughing; and reat piles of vegetables looked like masses of against the morning sky, like masses of green against the pink petals of some marvellous

Lord Arthur felt curiously affected, he not tell why. There was something in the 's delicate loveliness that seemed to him ressibly pathetic, and he thought of all the that break in beauty, and that set in storm.

: rustics, too, with their rough, good-
ted voices, and their nonchalant ways, a strange London they saw! A London free the sin of night and the smoke of day, a , ghost-like city, a desolate town of tombs! Wondered what they thought of it, and ter they knew anything of its splendour and ame, of its fierce, fiery-coloured joys, and its le hunger, of all it makes and mars from to eve. Probably it was to them merely a where they brought their fruits to sell, and they tarried for a few hours at most, leaving reets still silent, the houses still asleep. It him pleasure to watch them as they went Rude as they were, with their heavy, hob-
es, and their awkward gait, they
brought a little of Arcady with them. He felt that they had lived with Nature, and that she had taught them peace. He envied them that they did not know.

By the time he had reached Belgrave Square, the sky was a faint blue, and the birds were beginning to twitter in the gardens.
CHAPTER III

WHEN Lord Arthur woke it was twelve o’clock, and the midday sun was streaming through the ivory-silk curtains of his room. He got up and looked out of the window. A dim haze of heat was hanging over the great city, and the roofs of the houses were like dull silver. In the flickering green of the square below some children were flitting about like white butterflies, and the pavement was crowded with people on their way to the Park. Never had life seemed lovelier to him, never had the things of evil seemed more remote.

Then his valet brought him a cup of chocolate on a tray. After he had drunk it, he drew aside the heavy portière of peach-coloured plush, and passed into the bathroom. The light stole softly from above, through thin slabs of transparent alabaster, and the water in the marble tank glimmered like a moonstone. He plunged hastily in, till the cool ripples touched throat and hair, and then dipped his head right under, as though he could have wiped away the stain of some shameful memory. When he stepped out he felt almost at ease. The exquisite physical conditions of the moment had dominated him, as indeed often happens in the case of very finely-wrought natures,
for the senses, like fire, can purify as well as destroy.

After breakfast, he flung himself down on a divan, and lit a cigarette. On the mantel-shelf, framed in dainty old brocade, stood a large photograph of Sybil Merton, as he had seen her first at Lady Noel’s ball. The small, exquisitely-shaped head drooped slightly to one side, as though the thin, reed-like throat could hardly bear the burden of so much ‘beauty; the lips were slightly parted, and seemed made for sweet music; and all the tender purity of girlhood looked out in wonder from the dreaming eyes. With her soft, clinging dress of crêpe-de-chine, and her large leaf-shaped fan, she looked like one of those delicate little figures men find in the olive-woods near Tanagra; and there was a touch of Greek grace in her pose and attitude. Yet she was not petite.' She was simply perfectly proportioned—a rare thing in an age when so many women are either over life-size or insignificant.

Now as Lord Arthur looked at her, he was filled with the terrible pity that is born of love. He felt that to marry her, with the doom of murder hanging over his head, would be a betrayal like that of Judas, a sin worse than any the Borgia had ever dreamed of. What happiness could there be for them, when at any moment he might be called upon to carry out the awful prophecy written in his hand? What manner of life would be theirs while Fate still held this fearful fortune in the scales? The marriage must be post-
lord, at all costs. Of this he was quite resolved. 
ently though he loved the girl, and the mere h of her fingers, when they sat together, made 
erv of his body thrill with exquisite joy, he gnised none the less clearly where his duty lay, was fully conscious of the fact that he had no t to marry until he had committed the murder. done, he could stand before the altar with l Merton, and give his life into her hands out terror of wrong-doing. This done, he d take her to his arms, knowing that she ld never have to blush for him, never have to g her head in shame. But done it must be first; the sooner the better for both.
any men in his position would have pre- the primrose path of dalliance to the o heights of duty; but Lord Arthur was too cientious to set pleasure above principle. e was more than mere passion in his love; and l was to him a symbol of all that is good and e. For a moment he had a natural repugnance nst what he was asked to do, but it soon passed y. His heart told him that it was not a sin, a sacrifice; his reason reminded him that e was no other course open. He had to choose een living for himself and living for others, or selfishness to triumph over love. Sooner r later we are all called upon to decide on the 3 issue—of us all, the same question is asked. Lord Arthur it came early in life—before his
nature had been spoiled by the calculating cynicism of middle-age, or his heart corroded by the shallow, fashionable egotism of our day, and he felt no hesitation about doing his duty. Fortunately also, for him, he was no mere dreamer, or idle dilettante. Had he been so, he would have hesitated, like Hamlet, and let irresolution mar his purpose. But he was essentially practical. Life to him meant action, rather than thought. He had that rarest of all things, common sense.

The wild, turbid feelings of the previous night had by this time completely passed away, and it was almost with a sense of shame that he looked back upon his mad wanderings from street to street, his fierce emotional agony. The very sincerity of his sufferings made them seem unreal to him now. He wondered how he could have been so foolish as to rant and rave about the inevitable. The only question that seemed to trouble him was, whom to make away with; for he was not blind to the fact that murder, like the religions of the Pagan world, requires a victim as well as a priest. Not being a genius, he had no enemies, and indeed he felt that this was not the time for the gratification of any personal pique or dislike, the mission in which he was engaged being one of great and grave solemnity. He accordingly made out a list of his friends and relatives on a sheet of notepaper, and after careful consideration, decided in favour of Lady Clementina Beauchamp, a dear old lady who lived in Curzon Street, and was his own second cousin by his mother's side.
had always been very fond of Lady Clem, as they one called her, and as he was very wealthy self, having come into all Lord Rugby's prop-
when he came of age, there was no possibility of deriving any vulgar monetary advantage her death. In fact, the more he thought over matter, the more she seemed to him to be the right person, and, feeling that any delay would be unfair to Sybil, he determined to make arrangements at once.

The first thing to be done was, of course, to be with the cheiromantist; so he sat down at mal! Sheraton writing-table that stood near window, drew a cheque for £105, payable to order of Mr. Septimus Podgers, and, enclosing an envelope, told his valet to take it to West on Street. He then telephoned to the stables his hansom, and dressed to go out. As he was ring the room he looked back at Sybil Merton's tograph, and swore that, come what may, he would never let her know what he was doing for sake, but would keep the secret of his self-sacrifice hidden always in his heart.

On his way to the Buckingham, he stopped at a ist's, and sent Sybil a beautiful basket of nar-
us, with lovely white petals and staring pheas-
s' eyes, and on arriving at the club, went right to the library, rang the bell, and ordered waiter to bring him a lemon-and-soda, and a k on Toxicology. He had fully decided that on was the best means to adopt in this trouble-
le business. Anything like personal violence
was extremely distasteful to him, and besides, he was very anxious not to murder Lady Clementina in any way that might attract public attention, as he hated the idea of being lionised at Lady Windermere’s, or seeing his name figuring in the paragraphs of vulgar society-newspapers. He had also to think of Sybil’s father and mother, who were rather old-fashioned people, and might possibly object to the marriage if there was anything like a scandal, though he felt certain that if he told them the whole facts of the case they would be the very first to appreciate the motives that had actuated him. He had every reason, then, to decide in favour of poison. It was safe, sure, and quiet, and did away with any necessity for painful scenes, which, like most Englishmen, he had a root objection.

Of the science of poisons, however, he knew absolutely nothing, and as the waiter seemed quite unable to find anything in the library but “Ruff’s Guide” and “Bailey’s Magazine,” he examined the book-shelves himself, and finally came across a handsomely-bound edition of the “Pharmacopoeia,” and a copy of Erskine’s “Toxicology,” edited by Sir Mathew Reid, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, and one of the oldest members of the Buckingham, having been elected in mistake for somebody else; a contretemps that so enraged the Committee, that when the real man came up they black-balled him unanimously. Lord Arthur was a good deal puzzled at the technical term...
used in both books, and had begun to regret that he had not paid more attention to his classics at Oxford, when in the second volume of "Erskine," he found a very interesting and complete account of the properties of aconitine, written in fairly clear English. It seemed to him to be exactly the poison he wanted. It was swift—indeed, almost immediate, in its effect—perfectly painless, and when taken in the form of a gelatine capsule, the mode recommended by Sir Mathew, not by any means unpalatable. He accordingly made a note; upon his shirt-cuff, of the amount necessary for a fatal dose, put the books back in their places, and strolled up St. James' Street, to Pestle and Humbey's, the great chemists. Mr. Pestle, who always attended personally on the aristocracy, was a good deal surprised at the order, and in a very deferential manner murmured something about a medical certificate being necessary. However, as soon as Lord Arthur explained to him that it was for a large Norwegian mastiff that he was obliged to get rid of, as it showed signs of incipient rabies, and had already bitten the coachman twice in the calf of the leg, he expressed himself as being perfectly satisfied, complimented Lord Arthur on his wonderful knowledge of Toxicology, and had the prescription made up immediately.

Lord Arthur put the capsule into a pretty little silver bonbonnière that he saw in a shop window in Bond Street, threw away Pestle and Humbey's ugly pill-box, and drove off at once to Lady Clementina's.
“Well, monsieur le mauvais sujet,” cried the old lady, as he entered the room, “why haven't you been to see me all this time?”

“My dear Lady Clem, I never have a moment to myself,” said Lord Arthur, smiling.

“I suppose you mean that you go about a day long with Miss Sybil Merton, buying chiffon and talking nonsense? I cannot understand why people make such a fuss about being married. In my day we never dreamed of billing and cooing in public, or in private for that matter.”

“I assure you I have not seen Sybil for twenty-four hours, Lady Clem. As far as I can make out, she belongs entirely to her milliner.”

“Of course; that is the only reason you see to see an ugly old woman like myself. I warn you men don't take warning. On a fait des folies pour moi,21 and here I am, a poor rheumatic creature, with a false front and a bad temper. Why, if it were not for dear Lady Jansen, who sends me all the worst French novels she can find, I don't think I could get through the day. Doctors are no use at all, except to get fees out of one. They can't even cure my heartburn.”

“I have brought you a cure for that, Lady Clem,” said Lord Arthur gravely. “It is a wonderful thing, invented by an American.”

“I don't think I like American inventions, Arthur. I am quite sure I don't. I read some American novels lately, and they were quite nonsensical.”

“Oh, but there is no nonsense at all about
this, Lady Clem! I assure you it is a perfect cure. You must promise to try it;” and Lord Arthur brought the little box out of his pocket, and handed it to her.

“Well, the box is charming, Arthur. Is it really a present? That is very sweet of you. And is this the wonderful medicine? It looks like a bonbon. I’ll take it at once.”

“Good heavens! Lady Clem,” cried Lord Arthur, catching hold of her hand, “you mustn’t do anything of the kind. It is a homœopathic medicine, and if you take it without having heartburn, it might do you no end of harm. Wait till you have an attack, and take it then. You will be astonished at the result.”

“I should like to take it now,” said Lady Clementina, holding up to the light the little transparent capsule, with its floating bubble of liquid aconitine. I am sure it is delicious. The fact is that, though I hate doctors, I love medicines. However, I’ll keep it till my next attack.”

“And when will that be?” asked Lord Arthur eagerly. “Will it be soon?”

“I hope not for a week. I had a very bad time yesterday morning with it. But one never knows.”

“You are sure to have one before the end of the month then, Lady Clem?”

“I am afraid so. But how sympathetic you are to-day, Arthur! Really, Sybil has done you a great deal of good. And now you must run away, for I am dining with some very dull
people, who won't talk scandal, and I know that if I don't get my sleep now I shall never be able to keep awake during dinner. Goodbye, Arthur, give my love to Sybil, and thank you so much for the American medicine.”

"You won't forget to take it, Lady Clem, will you?" said Lord Arthur, rising from his seat.

"Of course I won't, you silly boy. I think it is most kind of you to think of me, and I shall write and tell you if I want any more."

Lord Arthur left the house in high spirits, and with a feeling of immense relief.

That night he had an interview with Sybil Merton. He told her how he had been suddenly placed in a position of terrible difficulty, from which neither honour nor duty would allow him to recede. He told her that the marriage must be put off for the present, as until he had got rid of his fearful entanglements, he was not a free man. He implored her to trust him, and not to have any doubts about the future. Everything would come right, but patience was necessary.

The scene took place in the conservatory of Mr. Merton's house, in Park Lane, where Lord Arthur had dined as usual. Sybil had never seemed more happy, and for a moment Lord Arthur had been tempted to play the coward part, to write to Lady Clementina for the pill and to let the marriage go on as if there was no such person as Mr. Podgers in the world. His better nature, however, soon asserted itself, an
en when Sybil flung herself weeping into his arms, he did not falter. The beauty that stirred his senses had touched his conscience also. He felt that to wreck so fair a life for the sake of a few months' pleasure would be a wrong thing to do.

He stayed with Sybil till nearly midnight, comforting her and being comforted in turn, and early the next morning he left for Venice, after writing a manly, firm letter to Mr. Merton about the necessary postponement of the marriage.
CHAPTER IV

IN Venice he met his brother, Lord Surb, who happened to have come over to Corfu in his yacht. The two young men spent a delightful fortnight together. In the morning they rode on the Lido, or glided up and down the green canals in their long black gondola; in the afternoon they usually entertained visitors on their yacht; and in the evening they dined at Floria and smoked innumerable cigarettes on the Piazzetta. Yet somehow Lord Arthur was not happy. Every day he studied the obituary column in "The Times" expecting to see a notice of Lady Clement's death, but every day he was disappointed. He began to be afraid that some accident had happened to her, and often regretted that he prevented her taking the aconite when she had been so anxious to try its effect. Sir Arthur's letters, too, though full of love, and trust, and tenderness, were often very sad in their tone, and sometimes he used to think that he had parted from her for ever.

After a fortnight Lord Surbiton got bored with Venice, and determined to run down the coast to Ravenna, as he heard there was some capital cock-shooting in the Pinetum. Lord Arthur at first refused absolutely to come,
tion, of whom he was extremely fond, finally aded him that if he stayed at Danielli’s mself he would be moped to death, and on mor of the 15th they started, with a or’-east wind blowing, and a rather y sea. The sport was excellent, and the open-air life brought the colour back to Arthur’s cheek, but about the 22nd he anxious about Lady Clementina, and, in of Surbiton’s remonstrances, came back to by train.
he stepped out of his gondola on to the steps, the proprietor came forward to meet with a sheaf of telegrams. Lord Arthur ed them out of his hand, and tore them Everything had been successful. Lady ntina had died quite suddenly on the of the 17th!
first thought was for Sybil, and he sent a telegram announcing his immediate to London. He then ordered his valet to his things for the night mail, sent his gons about five times their proper fare, and ran his sitting-room with a light step and a nt heart. There he found three letters g for him. One was from Sybil herself, sympathy and condolence. The others rom his mother, and from Lady Clemen solicitor. It seemed that the old lady had with the Duchess that very night, had de every one by her wit and esprit, but had some somewhat early, complaining of heart-
burn. In the morning she was found dead in bed, having apparently suffered no pain. Mathew Reid had been sent for at once, but, of course, there was nothing to be done, and she was to be buried on the 22nd at Beauchamp Chapel. A few days before she died she had made her will and left Lord Arthur her little house in Curzon Street, and all her furniture, personal effects, pictures, with the exception of her collection of miniatures, which was to go to her sister, Lady Margaret Rufford, and her amethyst necklace which Sybil Merton was to have. The property was not of much value; but Mr. Mansfield, solicitor, was extremely anxious for Lord Arthur to return at once, if possible, as there were a great many bills to be paid, and Lady Clementina never kept any regular accounts.

Lord Arthur was very much touched by Lady Clementina's kind remembrance of him, and that Mr. Podgers had a great deal to answer for. His love of Sybil, however, dominated every other emotion, and the consciousness that he had done his duty gave him peace and comfort. When he arrived at Charing Cross, he felt perfectly happy.

The Mertons received him very kindly. Sybil made him promise that he would never again allow anything to come between them, and marriage was fixed for the 7th June. Life seemed to him once more bright and beautiful, and his old gladness came back to him again.

One day, however, as he was going over
in Curzon Street, in company with Lady Mentina's solicitor and Sybil herself, burn-packages of faded letters, and turning out-ers of odd rubbish, the young girl suddenly a little cry of delight.

What have you found, Sybil?" said Lord ur, looking up from his work, and smiling. This lovely little silver bonbonnière, Arthur. it quaint and Dutch? Do give it to me! ow amethysts won't become me till I am eighty."

was the box that had held the aconitine.

rd Arthur started, and a faint blush came his cheek. He had almost entirely for- n what he had done, and it seemed to him rious coincidence that Sybil, for whose sake ad gone through all that terrible anxiety, ld have been the first to remind him of it. If course you can have it, Sybil. I gave it or Lady Clem myself."

Oh! thank you, Arthur; and may I have bonbon too? I had no notion that Lady mentina liked sweets. I thought she was far ntellectual." rd Arthur grew deadly pale, and a horrible crossed his mind.

bonbon, Sybil? What do you mean?" he in a slow, hoarse voice.

here is one in it, that is all. It looks quite nd dusty, and I have not the slightest inten- of eating it. What is the matter, Arthur? white you look!"
Lord Arthur rushed across the room, seized the box. Inside it was the amber-colored capsule, with its poison-bubble. Lady Cleopatra had died a natural death after all!

The shock of the discovery was almost too much for him. He flung the capsule into the fire and sank on the sofa with a cry of despair.
CHAPTER V

MR. MERTON was a good deal distressed at the second postponement of the marriage, and Lady Julia, who had already ordered her dress for the wedding, did all in her power to make Sybil break off the match. Dearly, however, as Sybil loved her mother, she had given her whole life into Lord Arthur’s hands, and nothing that Lady Julia could say could make her waver in her faith. As for Lord Arthur himself, it took him days to get over his terrible disappointment, and for a time his nerves were completely unstrung. His excellent common sense, however, soon asserted itself, and his sound, practical mind did not leave him long in doubt about what to do. Poison having proved a complete failure, dynamite, or some other form of explosive, was obviously the proper thing to try.

He accordingly looked again over the list of his friends and relatives, and, after careful consideration, determined to blow up his uncle, the Dean of Chichester. The Dean, who was a man of great culture and learning, was extremely fond of clocks, and had a wonderful collection of timepieces, ranging from the fifteenth century to the present day, and it seemed to Lord Arthur that this hobby of the good Dean’s offered him
an excellent opportunity for carrying out his scheme. Where to procure an explosive machine was, of course, quite another matter. The London Directory gave him no information on the point, and he felt that there was very little use in going to Scotland Yard about it, as they never seemed to know anything about the movements of the dynamite faction till after an explosion had taken place, and not much even then.

Suddenly he thought of his friend Rouvaloff, a young Russian of very revolutionary tendencies, whom he had met at Lady Windermere’s in the winter. Count Rouvaloff was supposed to be writing a life of Peter the Great, and to have come over to England for the purpose of studying the documents relating to that Tsar’s residence in this country as a ship carpenter; but it was generally suspected that he was a Nihilist agent, and there was no doubt that the Russian Embassy did not look with any favour upon his presence in London. Lord Arthur felt that he was just the man for his purpose, and drove down one morning to his lodgings in Bloomsbury to ask his advice and assistance.

“So you are taking up politics seriously?” said Count Rouvaloff, when Lord Arthur had told him the object of his mission; but Lord Arthur, who hated swagger of any kind, felt bound to admit to him that he had not the slightest interest in social questions, and simply wanted the explosive machine for a purely family matter, in which no one was concerned but himself.
Count Rouvaloff looked at him for some moments in amazement, and then seeing that he was quite serious, wrote an address on a piece of paper, initialled it, and handed it to him across the table.

"Scotland Yard would give a good deal to know this address, my dear fellow."

"They shan't have it," cried Lord Arthur, laughing; and after shaking the young Russian warmly by the hand he ran downstairs, examined the paper, and told the coachman to drive to Soho Square.

There he dismissed him, and strolled down Greek Street, till he came to a place called Bayle's Court. He passed under the archway, and found himself in a curious cul-de-sac, that was apparently occupied by a French Laundry, as a perfect network of clothes-lines was stretched across from house to house, and there was a flutter of white linen in the morning air. He walked right to the end, and knocked at a little green house. After some delay, during which every window in the court became a blurred mass of peering faces, the door was opened by a rather rough-looking foreigner, who asked him in very bad English what his business was. Lord Arthur handed him the paper Count Rouvaloff had given him. When the man saw it he bowed, and invited Lord Arthur into a very shabby front parlour on the ground-floor, and in a few moments Herr Winckelkopf, as he was called in England, bustled into the room, with a very wine-stained napkin round his neck, and a fork in his left hand.
"Count Rouvaloff has given me an introduction to you," said Lord Arthur, bowing, "and I am anxious to have a short interview with you on a matter of business. My name is Smith, Mr. Robert Smith, and I want you to supply me with an explosive clock."

"Charmed to meet you, Lord Arthur," said the genial little German, laughing. "Don’t look alarmed, it is my duty to know everybody, and remember seeing you one evening at Lady Windermeres’s. I hope her ladyship is quite well. Do you mind sitting with me while I finish my breakfast? There is an excellent pâté, and my friends are kind enough to say that my Rhine wine is better than any they get at the German Embassy and before Lord Arthur had got over his surprise at being recognised, he found himself seated in the back-room, sipping the most delicious Marcobrunner out of a pale yellow hock-glass marked with the Imperial monogram, and chatting in the friendliest manner possible to the famous conspirator.

"Explosive clocks," said Herr Winckelkopf, "are not very good things for foreign exportation as, even if they succeed in passing the Custom House, the train service is so irregular, that they usually go off before they have reached their proper destination. If, however, you want one for home use, I can supply you with an excellent article, and guarantee that you will be satisfied with the result. May I ask for whom it is intended? If it is for the police, or for any other reason..."
connected with Scotland Yard, I am afraid I
cannot do anything for you. The English de-
tectives are really our best friends, and I have
always found that by relying on their stupidity,
we can do exactly what we like. I could not spare
one of them."

"I assure you," said Lord Arthur, "that it
has nothing to do with the police at all. In
fact, the clock is intended for the Dean of
Chichester."

"Dear me! I had no idea that you felt so
strongly about religion, Lord Arthur. Few young
men do nowadays."

"I am afraid you overrate me, Herr Winckel-
kopf," said Lord Arthur, blushing. "The fact is,
I really know nothing about theology."

"It is a purely private matter then?"

"Purely private."

Herr Winckelkopf shrugged his shoulders, and
left the room, returning in a few minutes with a
round cake of dynamite about the size of a penny,
and a pretty little French clock, surmounted by an
ormolu figure of Liberty trampling on the hydra
of Despotism.

Lord Arthur's face brightened up when he saw
it. "That is just what I want," he cried, "and
now tell me how it goes off."

"Ah! there is my secret," answered Herr
Winckelkopf, contemplating his invention with a
justifiable look of pride; "let me know when you
wish it to explode, and I will set the machine to
the moment."
"Well, to-day is Tuesday, and if you could send it off at once——"

"That is impossible; I have a great deal of important work on hand for some friends of mine in Moscow. Still, I might send it off to-morrow."

"Oh, it will be quite time enough!" said Lord Arthur politely, "if it is delivered to-morrow night or Thursday morning. For the moment of the explosion, say Friday at noon exactly. The Dean is always at home at that hour."

"Friday, at noon," repeated Herr Winckelkopf, and he made a note to that effect in a large ledger that was lying on a bureau near the fireplace.

"And now," said Lord Arthur, rising from his seat, "pray let me know how much I am in your debt."

"It is such a small matter, Lord Arthur, that I do not care to make any charge. The dynamite comes to seven and sixpence, the clock will be three pounds ten, and the carriage about five shillings. I am only too pleased to oblige any friend of Count Rouvaloff's."

"But your trouble, Herr Winckelkopf?"

"Oh, that is nothing! It is a pleasure to me. I do not work for money; I live entirely for my art."

Lord Arthur laid down £4 2s. 6d. on the table, thanked the little German for his kindness, and, having succeeded in declining an invitation to meet some Anarchists at a meat-tea on the following Saturday, left the house and went off to the Park.
For the next two days he was in a state of the greatest excitement, and on Friday at twelve o'clock he drove down to the Buckingham to wait for news. All the afternoon the stolid hall-porter kept posting up telegrams from various parts of the country giving the results of horse-races, the verdicts in divorce suits, the state of the weather, and the like, while the tape ticked out wearisome details about an all-night sitting in the House of Commons, and a small panic on the Stock Exchange. At four o'clock the evening papers came in, and Lord Arthur disappeared into the library with the "Pall Mall," the "St. James's," the "Globe," and the "Echo," to the immense indignation of Colonel Goodchild, who wanted to read the reports of a speech he had delivered that morning at the Mansion House, on the subject of South African Missions, and the advisability of having black Bishops in every province, and for some reason or other had a strong prejudice against the "Evening News." None of the papers, however, contained even the slightest allusion to Chichester, and Lord Arthur felt that the attempt must have failed. It was a terrible blow to him, and for a time he was quite unnerved. Herr Winckelkopf, whom he went to see the next day, was full of elaborate apologies, and offered to supply him with another clock free of charge, or with a case of nitro-glycerine bombs at cost price. But he had lost all faith in explosives, and Herr Winckelkopf himself acknowledged that everything is so adulterated nowadays, that
even dynamite can hardly be got in a pure condition. The little German, however, while admitting that something must have gone wrong with the machinery, was not without hope that the clock might still go off, and instanced the case of a barometer that he had once sent to the military Governor at Odessa, which, though timed to explode in ten days, had not done so for something like three months. It was quite true that when it did go off, it merely succeeded in blowing a housemaid to atoms, the Governor having gone out of town six weeks before, but at least it showed that dynamite, as a destructive force, was, when under the control of machinery, a powerful, though a somewhat unpunctual agent. Lord Arthur was a little consoled by this reflection, but even here he was destined to disappointment, for two days afterwards, as he was going upstairs, the Duchess called him into her boudoir, and showed him a letter she had just received from the Deanery.

"Jane writes charming letters," said the Duchess; "you must really read her last. It is quite as good as the novels Mudie sends us."

Lord Arthur seized the letter from her hand. It ran as follows:

"THE DEANERY, CHICHESTER,

"27th May.

"My Dearest Aunt,

"Thank you so much for the flannel for the Dorcas Society, and also for the gingham. I quite agree with you that it is nonsense their
wanting to wear pretty things, but everybody is so Radical and irreligious nowadays, that it is difficult to make them see that they should not try and dress like the upper classes. I am sure I don’t know what we are coming to. As papa has often said in his sermons, we live in an age of unbelief.

“We have had great fun over a clock that an unknown admirer sent papa last Thursday. It arrived in a wooden box from London, carriage paid; and papa feels it must have been sent by some one who had read his remarkable sermon ‘is Licence Liberty?’ for on the top of the clock was a figure of a woman, with what papa said was the cap of Liberty on her head. I didn’t think it very becoming myself, but papa said it was historical, so I suppose it is all right. Parker unpacked it, and papa put it on the mantelpiece in the library, and we were all sitting there on Friday morning, when just as the clock struck twelve, we heard a whirring noise, a little puff of smoke came from the pedestal of the figure, and the goddess of Liberty fell off, and broke her nose on the fender! Maria was quite alarmed, but it looked so ridiculous, that James and I went off into fits of laughter, and even papa was amused. When we examined it, we found it was a sort of alarum clock, and that, if you set it to a particular hour, and put some gunpowder and a cap under a little hammer, it went off whenever you wanted. Papa said it must not remain in the library, as it made a noise, so Reggie
carried it away to the schoolroom, and does nothing but have small explosions all day long. Do you think Arthur would like one for a wedding present? I suppose they are quite fashionable in London. Papa says they should do a great deal of good, as they show that Liberty can't last, but must fall down. Papa says Liberty was invented at the time of the French Revolution. How awful it seems!

"I have now to go to the Dorcas, where I will read them your most instructive letter. How true, dear aunt, your idea is, that in their rank of life they should wear what is becoming. I must say it is absurd, their anxiety about dress, when there are so many more important things in this world, and in the next. I am so glad your flowered poplin turned out so well, and that your lace was not torn. I am wearing my yellow satin, that you so kindly gave me, at the Bishop's on Wednesday, and think it will look all right. Would you have bows or not? Jennings says that every one wears bows now, and that the underskirt should be frilled. Reggie has just had another explosion, and papa has ordered the clock to be sent to the stables. I don't think papa likes it so much as he did at first, though he is very flattered at being sent such a pretty and ingenious toy. It shows that people read his sermons, and profit by them.

"Papa sends his love, in which James, and Reggie, and Maria all unite, and, hoping that
Uncle Cecil’s gout is better, believe me, dear aunt, ever your affectionate niece,

“JANE PERCY.

“PS.—Do tell me about the bows. Jennings insists they are the fashion.”

Lord Arthur looked so serious and unhappy over the letter, that the Duchess went into fits of laughter.

“My dear Arthur,” she cried, “I shall never show you a young lady’s letter again! But what shall I say about the clock? I think it is a capital invention, and I should like to have one myself.”

“I don’t think much of them,” said Lord Arthur, with a sad smile, and, after kissing his mother, he left the room.

When he got upstairs, he flung himself on a sofa, and his eyes filled with tears. He had done his best to commit this murder, but on both occasions he had failed, and through no fault of his own. He had tried to do his duty, but it seemed as if Destiny herself had turned traitor. He was oppressed with the sense of the barrenness of good intentions, of the futility of trying to be fine. Perhaps, it would be better to break off the marriage altogether. Sybil would suffer, it is true, but suffering could not really mar a nature so noble as hers. As for himself, what did it matter? There is always some war in which a man can die, some cause to which a man can give his life, and as life had no pleasure for him,
so death had no terror. Let Destiny work out his doom. He would not stir to help her.

At half-past seven he dressed, and went down to the club. Surbiton was there with a party of young men, and he was obliged to dine with them. Their trivial conversation and idle jests did not interest him, and as soon as coffee was brought he left them, inventing some engagement in order to get away. As he was going out of the club, the hall porter handed him a letter. It was from Herr Winckelkopf, asking him to call down the next evening, and look at an explosive umbrella, that went off as soon as it was opened. It was the very latest invention, and had just arrived from Geneva. He tore the letter up into fragments. He had made up his mind not to try any more experiments. Then he wandered down to the Thames Embankment, and sat for hours by the river. The moon peered through a mane of tawny clouds, as if it were a lion’s eye, and innumerable stars spangled the hollow vault, like gold dust powdered on a purple dome. Now and then a barge swung out into the turbid stream, and floated away with the tide, and the railway signals changed from green to scarlet as the trains ran shrieking across the bridge. After some time, twelve o’clock boomed from the tall tower at Westminster, and at each stroke of the sonorous bell the night seemed to tremble. Then the railway lights went out, one solitary lamp left gleaming like a large ruby on a giant mast, and the roar of the city became fainter.
At two o'clock he got up, and strolled towards Blackfriars. How unreal everything looked! How like a strange dream! The houses on the other side of the river seemed built out of darkness. One would have said that silver and shadow had fashioned the world anew. The huge dome of St. Paul's loomed like a bubble through the dusky air.

As he approached Cleopatra's Needle he saw a man leaning over the parapet, and as he came nearer the man looked up, the gas-light falling full upon his face.

It was Mr. Podgers, the cheiromantist! No one could mistake the fat, flabby face, the gold-rimmed spectacles, the sickly feeble smile, the sensual mouth.

Lord Arthur stopped. A brilliant idea flashed across him, and he stole softly up behind. In a moment he had seized Mr. Podgers by the legs, and flung him into the Thames. There was a coarse oath, a heavy splash, and all was still. Lord Arthur looked anxiously over, but could see nothing of the cheiromantist but a tall hat, pirouetting in an eddy of moonlit water. After a time it also sank, and no trace of Mr. Podgers was visible. Once he thought that he caught sight of the bulky misshapen figure striking out for the staircase by the bridge, and a horrible feeling of failure came over him, but it turned out to be merely a reflection, and when the moon shone out from behind a cloud it passed away. At last he seemed to have
realised the decree of destiny. He heaved a deep sigh of relief, and Sybil's name came to his lips.

"Have you dropped anything, sir?" said a voice behind him suddenly.

He turned round, and saw a policeman with a bull's-eye lantern.

"Nothing of importance, sergeant," he answered, smiling, and hailing a passing hansom, he jumped in, and told the man to drive to Belgrave Square.

For the next few days he alternated between hope and fear. There were moments when he almost expected Mr. Podgers to walk into the room, and yet at other times he felt that it could not be so unjust to him. Twice he went to the chiromantist's address in West Moon Street, but he could not bring himself to ring the bell. He longed for certainty, and was afraid of it.

Finally it came. He was sitting in the smoking room of the club having tea, and listening rather wearily to Surbiton's account of the last comic song at the Gaiety, when the waiter came in with the evening papers. He took up the "St. James" and was listlessly turning over its pages, when this strange heading caught his eye:

**Suicide of a Chiromantist.**

He turned pale with excitement, and began to read. The paragraph ran as follows:

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e on the subject of the Human Hand, that l shortly be published, when it will no doubt ract much attention. The deceased was by-five years of age, and does not seem to e left any relations.

d Arthur rushed out of the club with the still in his hand, to the immense amaze-
of the hall-porter, who tried in vain to stop and drove at once to Park Lane. Sybil saw rom the window, and something told her that s the bearer of good news. She ran down to him, and, when she saw his face, she knew ll was well.
ly dear Sybil," cried Lord Arthur, "let us be ed to-morrow!"
ou foolish boy! Why, the cake is not even xed!" said Sybil, laughing through her tears.
CHAPTER VI

WHEN the wedding took place, some weeks later, St. Peter's was crowded with a perfect mob of smart people. The service was read in the most impressive manner by Dean of Chichester, and everybody agreed they had never seen a handsomer couple than the bride and bridegroom. They were more handsome, however—they were happy. Nor for a single moment did Lord Arthur regret that he had suffered for Sybil's sake, while at her side, gave him the best things a woman can give to any man—worship, tenderness, and for them romance was not killed by reality. He always felt young.

Some years afterwards, when two beautiful children had been born to them, Lady Winder came down on a visit to Alton Priory, a lovelier place, that had been the Duke's wedding present to his son; and one afternoon as she was sitting with Lady Arthur under a lime-tree in the garden, watching the little boy and girl as they played and down the rose-walk, like a fitful sunbeam of sunshine, suddenly took her hostess's hand in hers, and "Are you happy, Sybil?"

"Dear Lady Windermere, of course I am happy. Aren't you?"
"I have no time to be happy, Sybil. I always like the last person who is introduced to me; but, as a rule, as soon as I know people I get tired of them."

"Don't your lions satisfy you, Lady Windermere?"

"Oh dear, no! lions are only good for one season. As soon as their manes are cut, they're the dullest creatures going. Besides, they behave very badly, if you are really nice to them. Do you remember that horrid Mr. Podgers? He was a dreadful impostor. Of course, I didn't mind at all, and even when he wanted to borrow money I forgave him, but I could not stand his asking love to me. He has really made me hate seiromancy. I go in for telepathy now. It is much more amusing."

"You mustn't say anything against cheiromancy here, Lady Windermere; it is the only object that Arthur does not like people to talk about. I assure you he is quite serious over it."

"You don't mean to say that he believes in it, Sybil?"

"Ask him, Lady Windermere, here he is;" and Lord Arthur came up the garden with a huge bunch of yellow roses in his hand, and his two children dancing round him.

"Lord Arthur?"

"Yes, Lady Windermere."

"You don't mean to say that you believe in seiromancy?"
"Of course I do," said the young man, smiling.
"But why?"
"Because I owe to it all the happiness of my life," he murmured, throwing himself into a wicker chair.
"My dear Lord Arthur, what do you owe to it?"
"Sybil," he answered, handing his wife the roses, and looking into her violet eyes.
"What nonsense!" cried Lady Windermere. "I never heard such nonsense in all my life."

THE END OF
LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME
THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

A HYLO-IDEALISTIC ROMANCE
CHAPTER I
CHAPTER II
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CHAPTER VII
THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

CHAPTER I

WHEN Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Canterville Chase, everyone told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the most punctilious honour, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

"We have not cared to live in the place ourselves," said Lord Canterville, "since my grand-aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, the Rev. Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger
servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library."

"My Lord," answered the Minister, "I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actresses and primadonnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show."

"I fear that the ghost exists," said Lord Canterville, smiling, "though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family."

"Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy."

"You are certainly very natural in America," answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis's last observation, "and if you don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I warned you."

A few weeks after this, the purchase was completed, and at the close of the season the Minister
and his family went down to Canterville Chase. Mrs. Otis, who, as Miss Lucretia R. Tappan, of 7est 53d Street, had been a celebrated New York belle, was now a very handsome, middle-aged woman, with fine eyes, and a superb profile. Many American ladies on leaving their native land adopt an appearance of chronic ill-health, under the impression that it is a form of European finement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error. She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language. Her eldest son, christened Washington by his parents, a moment of patriotism, which he never used to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the German at the Newport Casino for three successive seasons, and even in London was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peerage were only weaknesses. Otherwise he was extremely usible. Miss Virginia E. Otis was a little girl fifteen, lithe and lovely as a fawn, and with a freedom in her large blue eyes. She was a wonderful amazon, and had once raced old Lord Lton on her pony twice round the park, winning a length and a half, just in front of the Achilles statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Essex, who proposed for her on the spot, and
was sent back to Eton that very night by his guardians, in floods of tears. After Virginia came the twins, who were usually called "The Stars and Stripes," as they were always getting swished. They were delightful boys, and with the exception of the worthy Minister the only true republicans of the family.

As Canterville Chase is seven miles from Ascot, the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had telegraphed for a waggonette to meet them, and they started on their drive in high spirits. It was a lovely July evening, and the air was delicate with the scent of the pine-woods. Now and then they heard a wood pigeon brooding over its own sweet voice, or saw, deep in the rustling fern, the burnished breast of the pheasant. Little squirrels peered at them from the beech trees as they went by, and the rabbits scudded away through the brushwood and over the mossy knolls, with their white tails in the air. As they entered the avenue of Canterville Chase, however, the sky became suddenly overcast with clouds, a curious stillness seemed to hold the atmosphere, a great flight of rooks passed silently over their heads, and, before they reached the house, some big drops of rain had fallen.

Standing on the steps to receive them was an old woman, neatly dressed in black silk, with a white cap and apron. This was Mrs. Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs. Otis, at Lady Canterville's earnest request, had consented to keep on in her former position. She made them each
low curtsey as they alighted, and said in a
saint, old-fashioned manner: "I bid you wel-
me to Canterville Chase." Following her,
ey passed through the fine Tudor hall into the
kery, a long, low room, panelled in black oak,
the end of which was a large stained-glass win-
now. Here they found tea laid out for them, and,
ter taking off their wraps, they sat down and
gan to look round, while Mrs. Umney waited
them.
Suddenly Mrs. Otis caught sight of a dull red
up on the floor just by the fireplace and, quite
conscious of what it really signified, said to
rs. Umney: "I am afraid something has been
lt there."
"Yes, madam," replied the old housekeeper
a low voice, "blood has been spilt on that
ot."
"How horrid," cried Mrs. Otis; "I don't at
care for blood-stains in a sitting-room. It
st be removed at once."
The old woman smiled, and answered in the
me low, mysterious voice: "It is the blood of
dy Eleanore de Canterville, who was mur-
red on that very spot by her own husband, Sir
non de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon sur-
ered her nine years, and disappeared suddenly
her very mysterious circumstances. His body
never been discovered, but his guilty spirit
haunts the Chase. The blood-stain has been
admired by tourists and others, and cannot
removed."
"That is all nonsense," cried Washington Otis; "Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time," and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere he had fallen upon his knees, and was rapidly scouring the floor with a small stick of what looked like a black cosmetic. In a few moments no trace of the blood-stain could be seen.

"I knew Pinkerton would do it," he exclaimed triumphantly, as he looked round at his admiring family; but no sooner had he said these words than a terrible flash of lightning lit up the sombre room, a fearful peal of thunder made them all start to their feet, and Mrs. Umney fainted.

"What a monstrous climate!" said the American Minister calmly, as he lit a long cheroot. "I guess the old country is so over-populated that they have not enough decent weather for everybody. I have always been of opinion that emigration is the only thing for England."

"My dear Hiram," cried Mrs. Otis, "what can we do with a woman who faints?"

"Charge it to her like breakages," answered the Minister; "she won't faint after that;" and in a few moments Mrs. Umney certainly came to. There was no doubt, however, that she was extremely upset, and she sternly warned Mr. Otis to beware of some trouble coming to the house.

"I have seen things with my own eyes, sir," she said, "that would make any Christian's hair
stand on end, and many and many a night I have not closed my eyes in sleep for the awful things that are done here." Mr. Otis, however, and his wife warmly assured the honest soul that they were not afraid of ghosts, and, after invoking the blessings of Providence on her new master and mistress, and making arrangements for an increase of salary, the old housekeeper tottered off to her own room.
realised the decree of destiny. He heaved a deep sigh of relief, and Sybil’s name came to his lips.

“Have you dropped anything, sir?” said a voice behind him suddenly.

He turned round, and saw a policeman with a bull’s-eye lantern.

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Yesterday morning, at seven o’clock, the body of Mr. Septimus R. Podgers, the eminent cheiro-
tantist, was washed on shore at Greenwich, just in front of the Ship Hotel. The unfortunate gentleman had been missing for some days, and considerable anxiety for his safety had been felt in chiromantic circles. It is supposed that he committed suicide under the influence of a temporary mental derangement, caused by overwork, and a verdict to that effect was returned his afternoon by the coroner’s jury. Mr. Rodgers had just completed an elaborate treatise on the subject of the Human Hand, that will shortly be published, when it will no doubt attract much attention. The deceased was sixty-five years of age, and does not seem to have left any relations.

Lord Arthur rushed out of the club with the er still in his hand, to the immense amazement of the hall-porter, who tried in vain to stop him, and drove at once to Park Lane. Sybil saw from the window, and something told her that was the bearer of good news. She ran down to meet him, and, when she saw his face, she knew all was well.

My dear Sybil,” cried Lord Arthur, “let us be fried to-morrow!”

You foolish boy! Why, the cake is not even red!” said Sybil, laughing through her tears.
His eyes were as red burning coals; long grey hair fell over his shoulders in matted coils; his garments, which were of antique cut, were soiled and ragged, and from his wrists and ankles hung heavy manacles and rusty gyves.

"My dear sir," said Mr. Otis, "I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator. It is said to be completely efficacious upon one application, and there are several testimonials to that effect on the wrapper from some of our most eminent native divines. I shall leave it here for you by the bedroom candles, and will be happy to supply you with more should you require it." With these words the United States Minister laid the bottle down on a marble table, and, closing his door, retired to rest.

For a moment the Canterville ghost stood quite motionless in natural indignation; then, dashing the bottle violently upon the polished floor, he fled down the corridor, uttering hollow groans, and emitting a ghastly green light. Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared, and a large pillow whizzed past his head! There was evidently no time to be lost, so, hastily adopting the Fourth Dimension of Space as a means of escape, he vanished through the wainscoting, and the house became quite quiet.

On reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing, he leaned up against a moonbeam to recover
"I have no time to be happy, Sybil. I always feel the last person who is introduced to me; it, as a rule, as soon as I know people I get tired of them."

"Don't your lions satisfy you, Lady Windermere?"

"Oh dear, no! lions are only good for one reason. As soon as their manes are cut, they become the dullest creatures going. Besides, they have very badly, if you are really nice to them. Do you remember that horrid Mr. Podgers? He was a dreadful impostor. Of course, I didn't mind at all, and even when he wanted to borrow money I forgave him, but I could not stand his asking love to me. He has really made me hate chiromancy. I go in for telepathy now. It is much more amusing."

"You mustn't say anything against chiromancy here, Lady Windermere; it is the only object that Arthur does not like people to talk about. I assure you he is quite serious about it."

"You don't mean to say that he believes in it, bil?"

"Ask him, Lady Windermere, here he is;"

Lord Arthur came up the garden with a huge bunch of yellow roses in his hand, and his children dancing round him.

"Lord Arthur?"

"Yes, Lady Windermere."

"You don't mean to say that you believe in chiromancy?"
"Of course I do," said the young man, smiling.
"But why?"
"Because I owe to it all the happiness of my life," he murmured, throwing himself into a wicker chair.
"My dear Lord Arthur, what do you owe to it?"
"Sybil," he answered, handing his wife the roses, and looking into her violet eyes.
"What nonsense!" cried Lady Windermere.
"I never heard such nonsense in all my life."

THE END OF
LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME
THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

A HYLO-IDEALISTIC ROMANCE
according to the simple rites of the Free American Reformed Episcopal Church, they found it a bright emerald-green. These kaleidoscopic changes naturally amused the party very much, and bets on the subject were freely made every evening. The only person who did not enter into the joke was little Virginia, who, for some unexplained reason, was always a good deal distressed at the sight of the blood-stain, and very nearly cried the morning it was emerald-green.

The second appearance of the ghost was on a Sunday night. Shortly after they had gone to bed they were suddenly alarmed by a fearfully crash in the hall. Rushing downstairs, they found that a large suit of old armour had become detached from its stand, and had fallen on the stone floor, while, seated in a high-backed chair, was the Canterville ghost, rubbing his knees with an expression of acute agony on his face. The twins, having brought their peashooters with them, at once discharged two pellets on him, with that accuracy of aim which can only be attained by long and careful practice on a writing-master, while the United States Minister covered him, with his revolver, and called upon him in accordance with Californian etiquette, to hold up his hands! The ghost started up with a wild shriek of rage, and swept through them like a mist, extinguishing Washington Otis's candle as he passed, and so leaving them all in total darkness. On reaching the top of the staircase he recovered himself, and
THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

CHAPTER I

WHEN Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Canterville Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who as a man of the most punctilious honour, had it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

"We have not cared to live in the place ourselves," said Lord Canterville, "since my grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, the Rev. Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger
servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library."

"My Lord," answered the Minister, "I will take the furniture and I come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows red, and carrying off primadonnas, I reckon a thing as a ghost in home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show."

"I fear that the ghost exists," said Lord Canterville, smiling, "though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family."

"Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy."

"You are certainly very natural in America," answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis’s last observation, "and if you don’t mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I warned you."

A few weeks after this, the purchase was completed, and at the close of the season the Minister
make his way quietly to Washington Otis's room, gibber at him from the foot of the bed, and stab himself three times in the throat to the sound of slow music. He bore Washington a special grudge, being quite aware that it was he who was in the habit of removing the famous Canterville blood-stain, by means of Pinkerton's Paragon Detergent. Having reduced the reckless and fool-hardy youth to a condition of abject terror, he was then to proceed to the room occupied by the United States Minister and his wife, and there to place a clammy hand on Mrs. Otis's forehead, while he hissed into her trembling husband's ear the awful secrets of the charnel-house. With regard to little Virginia, he had not quite made up his mind. She had never insulted him in any way, and was pretty and gentle. A few hollow groans from the wardrobe, he thought, would be more than sufficient, or, if that failed to wake her, he might grabble at the counterpane with palsy-twitching fingers. As for the twins, he was quite determined to teach them a lesson. The first thing to be done was, of course, to sit upon their chests, so as to produce the stifling sensation of nightmare. Then, as their beds were quite close to each other, to stand between them in the form of a green, icy-cold corpse, till they became paralysed with fear, and finally, to throw off the winding-sheet, and crawl round the room, with white bleached bones and one rolling eyeball, in the character of "Dumb Daniel, or the Suicide's Skeleton," a
role in which he had on more than one occasion produced a great effect, and which he considered quite equal to his famous part of "Martin the Maniac, or the Masked Mystery."

At half-past ten he heard the family go to bed. For some time he was disturbed by wild shrieks of laughter from the twins, with the light-hearted gaiety of schoolboys were evidently amusing themselves before they retired to rest, but at a quarter past eleven all was still, and, as midnight sounded, he set forth. The owl beat against the window pane, the raven croaked from the old yew-tree, the wind wandered moaning round the house like a lost soul; but the Otis family slept and were conscious of their doom, and, high above the rain and storm he could hear the steady moan of the Minister for the United States. He stepped stealthily out of the wainscoting, with an evil smile on his cruel, wrinkled mouth, and the moon hid her face in a cloud as he stole past the great oriel window, where his own arms and those of his murdered wife were blazoned in azure and gold. On and on he glided, like an evil shadow, the very darkness seeming to loathe him as he passed. Once he thought he heard something call, and stopped; but it was only the baying of a dog from the Red Farm, and he went on, muttering strange sixteenth-century curses, and ever and anon brandishing the rusty dagger in the midnight air. Finally he reached the corner of the passage that led to luckless
Washington's room. For a moment he paused there, the wind blowing his long grey locks about his head, and twisting into grotesque and fantastic folds the nameless horror of the dead man's shroud. Then the clock struck the quarter, and he felt the time was come. He chuckled to himself, and turned the corner; but no sooner had he done so, than, with a piteous wail of terror, he fell back, and hid his blanched face in his long, bony hands. Right in front of him was standing a horrible spectre, motionless as a carven image, and monstrous as a madman's dream! Its head was bald and burnished; its face round, and fat, and white; and hideous laughter seemed to have writhed its features into an eternal grin. From the eyes streamed rays of scarlet light, the mouth was a wide well of fire, and a hideous garment, like to his own, swathed with its silent snows the Titan form. On its breast was a placard with strange writing in antique characters, some scroll of shame it seemed, some record of wild sins, some awful calendar of crime, and, with its right hand, it bore aloft a falchion of gleaming steel.

Never having seen a ghost before, he naturally was terribly frightened, and, after a second hasty glance at the awful phantom, he fled back to his room, tripping up in his long winding-sheet as he sped down the corridor, and finally dropping the rusty dagger into the Minister's jack-boots, where it was found in the morning by the butler. Once in the privacy of his own
CHAPTER VI

WHEN the wedding took place, some three weeks later, St. Peter’s was crowded with a perfect mob of smart people. The service was read in the most impressive manner by the Dean of Chichester, and everybody agreed that they had never seen a handsomer couple than the bride and bridegroom. They were more than handsome, however—they were happy. Never for a single moment did Lord Arthur regret all that he had suffered for Sybil’s sake, while she, on her side, gave him the best things a woman can give to any man—worship, tenderness, and love. For them romance was not killed by reality. They always felt young.

Some years afterwards, when two beautiful children had been born to them, Lady Windermere came down on a visit to Alton Priory, a lovely old place, that had been the Duke’s wedding present to his son; and one afternoon as she was sitting with Lady Arthur under a lime-tree in the garden, watching the little boy and girl as they played up and down the rose-walk, like fitful sunbeams, she suddenly took her hostess’s hand in hers, and said, “Are you happy, Sybil?”

“Dear Lady Windermere, of course I am happy. Aren’t you?”
The whole thing flashed across him. He had been tricked, foiled, and outwitted! The old Canterville look came into his eyes; he ground his toothless gums together; and, raising his withered hands high above his head, swore, according to the picturesque phraseology of the antique school, that when Chanticleer had sounded twice his merry horn, deeds of blood would be wrought, and Murder walk abroad with silent feet.

Hardly had he finished this awful oath when, from the red-tiled roof of a distant homestead, a cock crew. He laughed a long, low, bitter laugh, and waited. Hour after hour he waited, but the cock, for some strange reason, did not crow again. Finally, at half-past seven, the arrival of the housemaids made him give up his fearful vigil, and he stalked back to his room, thinking of his vain hope and baffled purpose. There he consulted several books of ancient chivalry, of which he was exceedingly fond, and found that, on every occasion on which his oath had been used, Chanticleer had always crowed a second time. "Perdition seize the naughty fowl," he muttered, "I have seen the day when, with my stout spear, I would have run him through the forge, and made him crow for me and 'twere in death!" He then retired to a comfortable lead coffin, and stayed there till evening.
CHAPTER IV

THE next day the ghost was very weak and tired. The terrible excitement of the last four weeks was beginning to have its effect. His nerves were completely shattered, and he started at the slightest noise. For five days he kept his room, and at last made up his mind to give up the point of the blood-stain on the library floor. If the Otis family did not want it, they clearly did not deserve it. They were evidently people on a low, material plane of existence, and quite incapable of appreciating the symbolic value of sensuous phenomena. The question of phantasmic apparitions, and the development of astral bodies, was of course quite a different matter, and really not under his control. It was his solemn duty to appear in the corridor once a week, and to gibber from the large oriel window on the first and third Wednesday in every month, and he did not see how he could honourably escape from his obligations. It is quite true that his life had been very evil, but, upon the other hand, he was most conscientious in all things connected with the supernatural. For the next three Saturdays, accordingly, he traversed the corridor as usual between midnight and three o'clock, taking every possible precaution against being either heard or seen. He
THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

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and ran away to Gretna Green with handsome Jack Castleton, declaring that nothing in the world would induce her to marry into a family that allowed such a horrible phantom to walk up and down the terrace at twilight. Poor Jack was afterwards shot in a duel by Lord Canterville on Wandsworth Common, and Lady Barbara died of a broken heart at Tunbridge Wells before the year was out, so, in every way, it had been a great success. It was, however, an extremely difficult "make-up," if I may use such a theatrical expression in connection with one of the greatest mysteries of the supernatural, or, to employ a more scientific term, the higher-natural world, and it took him fully three hours to make his preparations. At last everything was ready, and he was very pleased with his appearance. The big leather riding-boots that went with the dress were just a little too large for him, and he could only find one of the two horse-pistols, but, on the whole, he was quite satisfied, and at a quarter past one he glided out of the wainscoting and crept down the corridor. On reaching the room occupied by the twins, which I should mention was called the Blue Bed Chamber, on account of the colour of its hangings, he found the door just ajar. Wishing to make an effective entrance, he flung it wide open when a heavy jug of water fell right down on him, wetting him to the skin, and just missing his left shoulder by a couple of inches. At the same moment he heard stifled shrieks of laughter proceeding from the four-post bed. The shock to his ner
system was so great that he fled back to his as hard as he could go, and the next day he aid up with a severe cold. The only thing at all consoled him in the whole affair was the that he had not brought his head with him, ad he done so, the consequences might have very serious.

now gave up all hope of ever frightening rude American family, and contented him— as a rule, with creeping about the passages t slippers, with a thick red muffler round hroat for fear of draughts, and a small abuse, in case he should be attacked by the . The final blow he received occurred on 19th of September. He had gone down- to the great entrance-hall, feeling sure there, at any rate, he would be quite unmoll, and was amusing himself by making satir-emarks on the large Sarony photographs of the d States Minister and his wife, which had taken the place of the Canterville family pic-

He was simply but neatly clad in a long d, spotted with churchyard mould, had tied ; jaw with a strip of yellow linen, and carried all lantern and a sexton’s spade. In fact, he ressed for the character of “Jonas the Grave- or the Corpse-Snatcher of Chertsey Barn,” f his most remarkable impersonations, and which the Cantervilles had every reason to nber, as it was the real origin of their quarrel their neighbour, Lord Rufford. It was about rter past two o’clock in the morning, and, as
far as he could ascertain, no one was stirring; he was strolling towards the library, however, to see if there were any traces left of the blood—suddenly there leaped out on him from a corner two figures, who waved their arms above their heads, and shrieked out "BOO!" in his ear.

Seized with a panic, which, under the circumstances, was only natural, he rushed for the case, but found Washington Otis waiting for him there with the big garden-syringe; and being hemmed in by his enemies on every side, driven almost to bay, he vanished into the iron stove, which, fortunately for him, was not and had to make his way home through the and chimneys, arriving at his own room in arible state of dirt, disorder, and despair.

After this he was not seen again on any nocturnal expedition. The twins lay in wait for several occasions, and strewed the pas with nutshells every night to the great annoy of their parents and the servants, but it was avail. It was quite evident that his feelings so wounded that he would not appear. Mr. Consequently resumed his great work on the history of the Democratic Party, on which he been engaged for some years; Mrs. Otis organized a wonderful clam-bake, which amazed the county; the boys took to lacrosse, euchre, pool, and other American national games; and Virginia rode about the lanes on her pony, accompanied by the young Duke of Cheshire, who had c
and the last week of his holidays at Canter-
Chase. It was generally assumed that he
gone away, and, in fact, Mr. Otis
a letter to that effect to Lord Canterville,
in reply, expressed his great pleasure at
ews, and sent his best congratulations to
minister's worthy wife.

Otises, however, were deceived, for the
was still in the house, and though now
an invalid, was by no means ready to let
rest, particularly as he heard that among
ests was the young Duke of Cheshire, whose
-uncle, Lord Francis Stilton, had once bet a
ed guineas with Colonel Carbury that he
play dice with the Canterville ghost, and
ound the next morning lying on the floor of
rd-room in such a helpless paralytic state,
ough he lived on to a great age, he was
able to say anything again but "Double"

The story was well known at the time,
h, of course, out of respect to the feelings of
oble families, every attempt was made
it up; and a full account of all the cir-
ces connected with it will be found in
volume of Lord Tattle's "Recollections
Prince Regent and his Friends." The ghost,
aturally very anxious to show that he
st lost his influence over the Stiltons, with
indeed, he was distantly connected, his
rst cousin having been married en secondes
 to the Sieur de Bulkeley, from whom,
ey one knows, the Dukes of Cheshire
are lineally descended. Accordingly, he arranged for appearing to Virginia's lover in his celebrated impersonation of Vampire Monk, or, the Bloodless Benedict, a performance so horrible that when old Startup saw it, which she did on one fatal Year's Eve, in the year 1764, she went off in the most piercing shrieks, which culminated in violent apoplexy, and died in three days, disinheritng the Cantervilles, who were her closest relations, and leaving all her money to a London apothecary. At the last moment, however, his terror of the twins prevented his leaving his room, and the little Duke slept in peace under the great feathered canopy in the Royal chamber, and dreamed of Virginia.
CHAPTER V

A FEW days after this, Virginia and her curly-haired cavalier went out riding on Brockley meadows, where she tore her habit so badly in getting through a hedge, that, on their return home, she made up her mind to go up by the back staircase so as not to be seen. As she was running past the Tapestry Chamber, the door of which happened to be open, she fancied she saw some one inside, and thinking it was her mother's maid, who sometimes used to bring her work there, looked in to ask her to mend her habit. To her immense surprise, however, it was the Canterville Ghost himself! He was sitting by the window, watching the ruined gold of the yellowing trees fly through the air, and the red leaves dancing madly down the long avenue. His head was leaning on his hand, and his whole attitude was one of extreme depression. Indeed, so forlorn, and so much out of repair did he look, that little Virginia, whose first idea had been to run away and lock herself in her room, was filled with pity, and determined to try and comfort him. So light was her footfall, and so deep his melancholy, that he was not aware of her presence till she spoke to him.

"I am so sorry for you," she said, "but my
brothers are going back to Eton to-morrow, and then, if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you."

"It is absurd asking me to behave myself," he answered, looking round in astonishment at the pretty little girl who had ventured to address him, "quite absurd. I must rattle my chains and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night, if that is what you mean. It is my only reason for existing."

"It is no reason at all for existing, and you know you have been very wicked. Mrs. Umney told us, the first day we arrived here, that you had killed your wife."

"Well, I quite admit it," said the Ghost petulantly, "but it was a purely family matter and concerned no one else."

"It is very wrong to kill any one," said Virginia, who at times had a sweet Puritan gravity, caught from some old New England ancestor. "Oh, I hate the cheap severity of abstract ethics! My wife was very plain, never had my ruffs properly starched, and knew nothing about cookery. Why, there was a buck I had shot in Hogley Woods, a magnificent pricket, and do you know how she had it sent up to table? However, it is no matter now, for it is all over, and I don't think it was very nice of her brothers to starve me to death, though I did kill her."

"Starve you to death? Oh, Mr. Ghost, I mean Sir Simon, are you hungry? I have a sandwich in my case. Would you like it?"
'No, thank you, I never eat anything now; it is very kind of you, all the same, and you much nicer than the rest of your horrid, rude, gar, dishonest family.'

'Stop!' cried Virginia, stamping her foot, "it you who are rude, and horrid, and vulgar, and for dishonesty, you know you stole the paints of my box to try and furbish up that ridiculous od-stain in the library. First you took all reds, including the vermilion, and I couldn't any more sunsets, then you took the emerald- and the chrome-yellow, and finally I had hing left but indigo and Chinese white, and ld only do moonlight scenes, which are always ressing to look at, and not at all easy to paint. ever told on you, though I was very much an- ed, and it was most ridiculous, the whole ug; for who ever heard of emerald-green

Well, really," said the Ghost, rather meekly, hat was I to do? It is a very difficult thing et real blood nowadays, and, as your brother an it all with his Paragon Detergent, I cer- ly saw no reason why I should not have your its. As for colour, that is always a matter of e: the Cantervilles have blue blood, for in- ice, the very bluest in England; but I w you Americans don't care for things of kind."

You know nothing about it, and the best g you can do is to emigrate and improve r mind. My father will be only too happy
to give you a free passage, and though that is a heavy duty on spirits of every kind, there will be no difficulty about the Custom House, as the officers are all Democrats. Once in New York, you are sure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family Ghost.”

“I don’t think I should like America.”

“I suppose because we have no ruins and curiosities,” said Virginia satirically.

“No ruins! no curiosities!” answered the Ghost; “you have your navy and your mariners.”

“Good evening; I will go and ask papa to give the twins an extra week’s holiday.”

“Please don’t go, Miss Virginia,” he cried. “I am so lonely and so unhappy, and I really don’t know what to do. I want to go to sleep, and I cannot.”

“That’s quite absurd! You have merely to go to bed and blow out the candle. It is very difficult sometimes to keep awake, especially at church, but there is no difficulty at all about sleeping. Why, even babies know how to do it, and they are not very clever.”

“I have not slept for three hundred years,” said sadly, and Virginia’s beautiful blue eye opened in wonder; “for three hundred years I have not slept, and I am so tired.”

Virginia grew quite grave, and her little finger trembled like rose-leaves. She came towa
him, and kneeling down at his side, looked up into his old withered face.

"Poor, poor Ghost," she murmured; "have you no place where you can sleep?"

"Far away beyond the pine-woods," he answered, in a low dreamy voice, "there is a little garden. There the grass grows long and deep, there are the great white stars of the hemlock flower, there the nightingale sings all night long. All night long he sings, and the cold, crystal moon looks down, and the yew-tree spreads out his giant arms over the sleepers."

Virginia’s eyes grew dim with tears, and she hid her face in her hands.

"You mean the Garden of Death," she whispered.

"Yes, Death. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one’s head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no to-morrow. To forget time, to forgive life, to be at peace. You can help me. You can open for me the portals of Death’s house, for Love is always with you, and Love is stronger than Death is."

Virginia trembled, a cold shudder ran through her, and for a few moments there was silence. She felt as if she was in a terrible dream.

Then the Ghost spoke again, and his voice sounded like the sighing of the wind.

"Have you ever read the old prophecy on the stary window?"

"Oh, often," cried the little girl, looking up,
"I know it quite well. It is painted in curious black letters, and it is difficult to read. There are only six lines:

‘When a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,
When the barren almond tears,
And a little child gives away its tears,
Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville.’

But I don’t know what they mean."

"They mean," he said sadly, "that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet, and good, and gentle, the Angel of Death will have mercy on me. 'You will see fearful shapes in darkness, and wicked voices whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child their powers of Hell cannot prevail.'"

Virginia made no answer, and the Ghost wrung his hands in wild despair as he looked down at her bowed golden head. Suddenly she stood up very pale, and with a strange light in her eyes. "I am not afraid," she said firmly, "and I will ask the Angel to have mercy on you."

He rose from his seat with a faint cry of joy, and taking her hand bent over it with old-fashioned grace and kissed it. His fingers were as cold as ice, and his lips burned like fire, but Virginia did not falter, as he led her across the
sky room. On the faded green tapestry wereroidered little huntsmen. They blew theirassed horns and with their tiny hands waved her to go back. "Go back! little Virginia," they cried, "go back!" but the Ghost clutched er hand more tightly, and she shut her eyes against them. Horrible animals with lizard sills, and goggle eyes, blinked at her from the arven chimney-piece, and murmured: "Beware! ttle Virginia, beware! we may never see you gain," but the Ghost glided on more swiftly, and Virginia did not listen. When they reached the id of the room he stopped, and muttered some ords she could not understand. She opened her es, and saw the wall slowly fading away like a ist, and a great black cavern in front of her. A tter cold wind swept round them, and she felt mething pulling at her dress. "Quick, quick," ed the Ghost, "or it will be too late," and, in a ment, the wainscoting had closed behind them, d the Tapestry Chamber was empty.
CHAPTER VI

ABOUT ten minutes later, the bell rang for tea, and, as Virginia did not come, Mrs. Otis sent up one of the footmen to tell her. After a little time he returned and said that he could not find Miss Virginia anywhere. As was in the habit of going out to the garden in the evening to get flowers for the dinner-table, Otis was not at all alarmed at first, but when o'clock struck, and Virginia did not appear, became really agitated, and sent the boys to look for her, while she herself and Mrs. searched every room in the house. At half six the boys came back and said that they find no trace of their sister anywhere. They all now in the greatest state of excitement, do not know what to do, when Mr. Otis suddenly remembered that, some few days before, he had given a band of gypsies permission to camp in the park. He accordingly at once set off for Black Hollow, where he knew they were, accompanied by his eldest son and two of the farm-servants. The little Duke of Cheshire, who was very frantic with anxiety, begged hard to be allowed to go too, but Mr. Otis would not allow as he was afraid there might be a scuffle. Arriving at the spot, however, he found
the gypsies had gone, and it was evident that their departure had been rather sudden, as the fire was still burning, and some plates were lying on the grass. Having sent off Washington and the two men to scour the district, he ran home, and despatched telegrams to all the police inspectors in the county, telling them to look out for a little girl who had been kidnapped by tramps or gypsies. He then ordered his horse to be brought round, and, after insisting on his wife and the three boys sitting down to dinner, rode off down the Ascot Road with a groom. He had hardly, however, gone a couple of miles when he heard somebody galloping after him, and, looking round, saw the little Duke coming up on his pony, with his face very flushed and no hat.

"I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Otis," gasped out the boy, "but I can't eat any dinner as long as Virginia is lost. Please, don't be angry with me; if you had let us be engaged last year, there would never have been all this trouble. You won't send me back, will you? I can't go! I won't go!"

The Minister could not help smiling at the handsome young scapegrace, and was a good deal touched at his devotion to Virginia, so leaning down from his horse, he patted him kindly on the shoulders, and said: "Well, Cecil, if you won't go back I suppose you must come with me, but I must get you a hat at Ascot."

"Oh, bother my hat! I want Virginia!" cried the little Duke, laughing, and they galloped on to the railway station. There Mr. Otis inquired
of the station-master if any one answering the description of Virginia had been seen on the platform, but could get no news of her. The station-master, however, wired up and down the line, and assured him that a strict watch would be kept on her, and, after having bought a hat for the Duke from a linen-draper, who was just putting his shutters, Mr. Otis rode off to Benley, a village about four miles away, which he was told was a known haunt of the gypsies, as there was a little common next to it. Here they roused up the policeman, but could get no information from him; and, after riding all over the common, they turned their horses' heads homewards, and reached Chase about eleven o'clock, dead-tired and also heart-broken. They found Washington and the twins waiting for them at the gate-house with lanterns, as the avenue was very dark. Not the slightest trace of Virginia had been discovered. The gypsies had been caught on Brockley meadows, but she was not with them, and they explained their sudden departure by saying that they had mistaken the date of Chorton Fair, and had gone off in a hurry for fear they might be heard. Indeed, they had been quite distressed at hearing of Virginia's disappearance, as they were very grateful to Mr. Otis for having allowed them to camp in his park, and four of their number had remained behind to help in the search. The carp pond had been dragged, and the whole Chase thoroughly gone over, but without any result. It was evident that, for that night at any rate, Vir
ria was lost to them; and it was in a state of the deepest depression that Mr. Otis and the boys asked up to the house, the groom following behind with the two horses and the pony. In the hall they found a group of frightened servants, and lying on a sofa in the library was poor Mrs. Otis, almost out of her mind with terror and anxiety, and having her forehead bathed with eau-de-cologne by the old house-keeper. Mr. Otis at once insisted on her having something to eat, and ordered up supper for the whole party. It was a melancholy meal, as hardly any one spoke, and the twins were awestruck and subdued, as they were very fond of their sister. When they finished, Mr. Otis, in spite of the entreaties of the little Duke, ordered them all to bed, saying that nothing more could be done that night, and that he would telegraph in the morning to Scotland Yard for some detectives to be sent down immediately. Just as they were passing out of the king-room, midnight began to boom from the clock tower, and when the last stroke sounded they heard a crash and a sudden shrill cry; a dreadful sound of thunder shook the house, a strain of earthly music floated through the air, a panel at the top of the staircase flew back with a loud noise, a shout on the landing, looking very pale and white, in a little casket in her hand, stepped Virginia. A moment they had all rushed up to her. Mrs. is clasped her passionately in her arms, the Duke smothered her with violent kisses, and the ins executed a wild war-dance round the group.
“Good heavens! child, where have you been?” said Mr. Otis, rather angrily, thinking that she had been playing some foolish trick on them. “Cecil and I have been riding all over the country looking for you, and your mother has been frightened to death. You must never play these practical jokes any more.”

“Except on the Ghost! except on the Ghost!” shrieked the twins, as they capered about.

“My own darling, thank God you are found; you must never leave my side again,” murmured Mrs. Otis, as she kissed the trembling child, and smoothed the tangled gold of her hair.

“Papa,” said Virginia quietly, “I have been with the Ghost. He is dead, and you must come and see him. He had been very wicked, but he was really sorry for all that he had done, and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died.”

The whole family gazed at her in mute amazement, but she was quite grave and serious; and, turning round, she led them through the opening in the wainscoting down a narrow secret corridor, Washington following with a lighted candle, which he had caught up from the table. Finally, they came to a great oak door, studded with rusty nails. When Virginia touched it, it swung back on its heavy hinges, and they found themselves in a little low room, with a vaulted ceiling, and one tiny grated window. Imbedded in the wall was a huge iron ring, and chained to it was a gaunt skeleton, that was stretched out at full length on the stone floor, and seemed to be trying to grasp
in its long fleshless fingers an old-fashioned chamber and ewer, that were placed just out of its reach. The jug had evidently been once filled with water, as it was covered inside with green mould. There was nothing on the trencher but a pile of t. Virginia knelt down beside the skeleton, folding her little hands together, began to cry silently, while the rest of the party looked on in wonder at the terrible tragedy whose secret was disclosed to them.

Hallo!" suddenly exclaimed one of the twins, who had been looking out of the window to try to discover in what wing of the house the room was situated. "Hallo! the old withered almond-tree has blossomed. I can see the flowers quite clearly in the moonlight."

"God has forgiven him," said Virginia gravely, as she rose to her feet, and a beautiful light seemed to illumine her face.

What an angel you are!" cried the young man, and he put his arm round her neck and led her.
CHAPTER VII

FOUR days after these curious incidents, the funeral started from Canterville Castle about eleven o'clock at night. The hearse was drawn by eight black horses, each of which carried on its head a great tuft of nodding ostrich plumes, and the leaden coffin was covered by a rich purple pall, on which was embroidered in gold the Canterville coat-of-arms. By the light of the hearse and the coaches walked the servants with lighted torches, and the whole procession was wonderfully impressive. Lord Canterville was the chief mourner, having come up specially from Wales to attend the funeral, and sat in the first carriage along with little Virginia. Then came the United States Minister and his wife, then Washington and the three boys, and in the last carriage was Mrs. Umney. It was generally felt that, as she had been frightened by the ghost for more than fifty years of her life, she had a right to see the last of him. A deep grave had been dug in the corner of the churchyard just under the old yew-tree, and the service was read in the most impressive manner by the Rev. Augustus Dampier. When the ceremony was over, the servants, according to an old custom observed in the Canterville family, extinguished
orches, and, as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, Virginia stepped forward and laid the large cross made of white and pink almonds. As she did so, the moon came out from behind a cloud, and flooded with its silent silver light the churchyard, and from a distant copse a gale began to sing. She thought of the description of the Garden of Death, her eyes became dim with tears, and she hardly spoke during the drive home.

Next morning, before Lord Canterville up to town, Mr. Otis had an interview with him on the subject of the jewels the ghost had given to Virginia. They were perfectly exquisite, especially a certain ruby necklace with old Venetian setting, which was really a specimen of sixteenth-century work, and its value was so great that Mr. Otis felt scruples about allowing his daughter to keep them.

"Lord," he said, "I know that in this house the mortmain is held to apply to trinkets and jewels, and it is quite clear to me that these jewels are, or should be, heirlooms of the family. I must beg you, accordingly, to send them to London with you, and to regard them as a portion of your property which has been restored to you under certain circumstances. As for my daughter, she is merely 1, and has as yet, I am glad to say, but a passing interest in such appurtenances of idle luxury. Also informed by Mrs. Otis, who, I may say,
is no mean authority upon Art—having had the privilege of spending several winters in Boston when she was a girl—that these gems are of great monetary worth, and if offered for sale would fetch a tall price. Under these circumstances, Lord Canterville, I feel sure that you will recognise how impossible it would be for me to allow them to remain in the possession of any member of my family; and, indeed, all such vain gauds and toys, however suitable or necessary to the dignity of the British aristocracy, would be completely out of place among those who have been brought up on the severe, and I believe immortal principles of republican simplicity. Perhaps I should mention that Virginia is very anxious that you should allow her to retain the box as a memento of your unfortunate but misguided ancestor. As it is extremely old, and consequently a good deal out of repair, you may perhaps think fit to comply with her request. For my own part, I confess I am a good deal surprised to find a child of mine expressing sympathy with mediævalism in any form, and can only account for it by the fact that Virginia was born in one of your London suburbs shortly after Mrs. Otis had returned from a trip to Athens."

Lord Canterville listened very gravely to the worthy Minister’s speech, pulling his grey moustache now and then to hide an involuntary smile, and when Mr. Otis had ended, he shook him cordially by the hand, and said: "My dear sir, your charming little daughter rendered my
unlucky ancestor, Sir Simon, a very important service, and I and my family are much indebted to her for her marvellous courage and pluck. The jewels are clearly hers, and, egad, I believe that if I were heartless enough to take them from her, the wicked old fellow would be out of his grave in a fortnight, leading me the devil of a life. As for their being heirlooms, nothing is an heirloom that is not so mentioned in a will or legal document, and the existence of these jewels has been quite unknown. I assure you I have no more claim on them than your butler, and when Miss Virginia grows up I daresay she will be pleased to have pretty things to wear. Besides, you forget, Mr. Otis, that you took the furniture and the ghost at a valuation, and anything that belonged to the ghost passed at once into your possession, as, whatever activity Sir Simon may have shown in the corridor at night, in point of law he was really dead, and you acquired his property by purchase.”

Mr. Otis was a good deal distressed at Lord Canterville’s refusal, and begged him to reconsider his decision, but the good-natured peer was quite firm, and finally induced the Minister to allow his daughter to retain the present the ghost had given her, and when, in the spring of 1890, the young Duchess of Cheshire was presented at the Queen’s first drawing-room on the occasion of her marriage, her jewels were the universal theme of admiration. For Virginia received the coronet, which is the reward of all
good little American girls, and was married to her boy-lover as soon as he came of age. They were both so charming, and they loved each other so much, that every one was delighted at the match, except the old Marchioness of Dumbleton, who had tried to catch the Duke for one of her seven unmarried daughters, and had given no less than three expensive dinner-parties for that purpose. Mr. Otis was extremely fond of the young Duke personally, but, theoretically, he objected to titles, and, to use his own words, "was not without apprehension lest, amid the enervating influences of a pleasure-loving aristocracy, the true principles of republican simplicity should be forgotten." His objections, however, were completely overruled, and I believe that when he walked up the aisle of St. George's, Hanover Square, with his daughter leaning on his arm, there was not a prouder man in the whole length and breadth of England.

The Duke and Duchess, after the honeymoon was over, went down to Canterville Chase, and on the day after their arrival they walked over in the afternoon to the lonely churchyard by the pine-woods. There had been a great deal of difficulty at first about the inscription on Sir Simon's tombstone, but finally it had been decided to engrave on it simply the initials of the old gentleman's name, and the verse from the library window. The Duchess had brought with her some lovely roses, which she strewed upon the grave, and after they had stood by it
some time they strolled into the ruined chancel
he old abbey. There the Duchess sat down
a fallen pillar, while her husband lay at her
smoking a cigarette and looking up at her
stiful eyes. Suddenly he threw his cigarette
y, took hold of her hand, and said to her:
gerinia, a wife should have no secrets from
husband."

Dear Cecil! I have no secrets from you.”
Yes, you have,” he answered, smiling, “you
never told me what happened to you when
were locked up with the ghost.”
I have never told any one, Cecil,” said
inia gravely.
I know that, but you might tell me.”
Please don’t ask me, Cecil, I cannot tell you.
Sir Simon! I owe him a great deal. Yes,
t laugh, Cecil, I really do. He made me see
Life is, and what Death signifies, and why
is stronger than both.”

The Duke rose and kissed his wife lovingly.
You can have your secret as long as I have
heart,” he murmured.
You have always had that, Cecil.”
And you will tell our children some day, won’t

rinia blushed.

THE END OF
THE CANTERVILLE GHOST
THE SPHINX WITHOUT A SECRET

AN ETCHING
THE SPHINX WITHOUT A SECRET

ONE afternoon I was sitting outside the Café de la Paix, watching the splendour and shabbiness of Parisian life, and wondering over my vermouth at the strange panorama of pride and poverty that was passing before me, when I heard some one call my name. I turned round, and saw Lord Murchison. We had not met since we had been at college together, nearly ten years before, so I was delighted to come across him again, and we shook hands warmly. At Oxford we had been real friends. I had liked him immensely, he was so handsome, so high-spirited, and so honourable. We used to say of him that he would be the rest of fellows, if he did not always speak the truth, but I think we really admired him all the more for his frankness. I found him a good deal hanged. He looked anxious and puzzled, and seemed to be in doubt about something. I felt it could not be modern scepticism, for Murchison was the stoutest of Tories, and believed in the Pen-steuch as firmly as he believed in the House of 'eers; so I concluded that it was a woman, and asked him if he was married yet.
"I don't understand women well enough," he answered.
"My dear Gerald," I said, "women are meant to be loved, not to be understood."
"I cannot love where I cannot trust," he replied.
"I believe you have a mystery in your life, Gerald," I exclaimed; "tell me about it."
"Let us go for a drive," he answered, "it is too crowded here. No, not a yellow carriage, any other colour—there, that dark green one will do;" and in a few moments we were trotting down the boulevard in the direction of the Madeleine.
"Where shall we go to?" I said.
"Oh, anywhere you like!" he answered—"to the restaurant in the Bois; we will dine there, and you shall tell me all about yourself."
"I want to hear about you first," I said. "Tell me your mystery."
He took from his pocket a little silver-clasped morocco case, and handed it to me. I opened it. Inside there was the photograph of a woman. She was tall and slight, and strangely picturesque with her large vague eyes and loosened hair. She looked like a clairvoyante, and was wrapped in rich furs.
"What do you think of that face?" he said; "is it truthful?"
I examined it carefully. It seemed to me the face of some one who had a secret, but whether that secret was good or evil I could not say. It
auty was a beauty moulded out of many mys-
ries—the beauty, in fact, which is psychological,
at plastic—and the faint smile that just played
ross the lips was far too subtle to be really sweet.
"Well," he cried impatiently, "what do you say?"
"She is the Gioconda in sables," I answered.
Let me know all about her."
"Not now," he said; "after dinner," and began
talk of other things.
When the waiter brought us our coffee and
garettes I reminded Gerald of his promise. He
se from his seat, walked two or three times up
nd down the room, and, sinking into an armchair,
tld me the following story:
"One evening," he said, "I was walking down
nd Street about five o'clock. There was a
rrific crush of carriages, and the traffic was
most stopped. Close to the pavement was
nding a little yellow brougham, which, for
one reason or other, attracted my attention.
I passed by there looked out from it the face
showed you this afternoon. It fascinated me
mediately. All that night I kept thinking of
nd all the next day. I wandered up and down
at wretched Row, peering into every carriage,
d waiting for the yellow brougham; but I could
find ma belle inconnue,\textsuperscript{25} and at last I began to
ink she was merely a dream. About a week
erwards I was dining with Madame de Rastail.
inner was for eight o'clock; but at half-past eight
ere still waiting in the drawing-room. Finally
servant threw open the door, and announced.
Lady Alroy. It was the woman I had been looking for. She came in very slowly, looking like a moonbeam in grey lace, and, to my intense delight, was asked to take her in to dinner. After we had sat down, I remarked quite innocently: 'I thought I caught sight of you in Bond Street some time ago, Lady Alroy.' She grew very pale, and said to me in a low voice: 'Pray do not talk so loud; you may be overheard.' I felt miserable at having made such a bad beginning, and plunged recklessly into the subject of the French plays. I spoke very little, always in the same low music of voice, and seemed as if she was afraid of someone listening. I fell passionately, stupidly in love, and the indefinable atmosphere of mystery that surrounded her excited my most ardent curiosity. When she was going away, which she did very soon after dinner, I asked her if I might call and see her. She hesitated for a moment, glanced round to see if any one was near us, and then said: 'You to-morrow at a quarter to five.' I begged Madame de Rastail to tell me about her; but all that I could learn was that she was a widow with a beautiful house in Park Lane, and as some scientific bore began a dissertation on widows, exemplifying the survival of the matrimonia fittest, I left and went home.

'The next day I arrived at Park Lane punctually to the moment, but was told by the butler that Lady Alroy had just gone out. I went down to the club quite unhappy and very much puzzled, and after long consideration wrote her a letter, aski
if I might be allowed to try my chance some other afternoon. I had no answer for several days, but at last I got a little note saying she would be at home on Sunday at four, and with this extraordinary postscript: 'Please do not write to me here again; I will explain when I see you.' On Sunday she received me, and was perfectly charming; but when I was going away she begged of me, if I ever had occasion to write to her again, to address my letter to 'Mrs. Knox, care of Whittaker's Library, Green Street.' 'There are reasons,' she said, 'why I cannot receive letters in my own house.'

"All through the season I saw a great deal of her, and the atmosphere of mystery never left her. Sometimes I thought that she was in the power of some man, but she looked so unapproachable that I could not believe it. It was really very difficult for me to come to any conclusion, for she was like one of those strange crystals that one sees in museums, which are at one moment clear, and at another clouded. At last I determined to ask her to be my wife: I was sick and tired of the incessant secrecy that she imposed on all my visits, and on the few letters I sent her. I wrote to her at the library to ask her if she could see me the following Monday at six. She answered yes, and I was in the seventh heaven of delight. I was infatuated with her: in spite of the mystery, I thought then—in consequence of it, I see now. No; it was the woman herself I loved. The mystery troubled me, maddened me. Why did chance put me in its track?"
"You discovered it, then?" I cried.
"I fear so," he answered. "You can judge for yourself."

"When Monday came round I went to lunch with my uncle, and about four o'clock found myself in the Marylebone Road. My uncle, you know, lives in Regent’s Park. I wanted to get to Piccadilly, and took a short cut through a lot of shabby little streets. Suddenly I saw in front of me Lady Alroy, deeply veiled and walking very fast. On coming to the last house in the street, she went up the steps, took out a latch-key, and let herself in. ‘Here is the mystery,’ I said to myself; and I hurried on and examined the house. It seemed a sort of place for letting lodgings. On the doorstep lay her handkerchief, which she had dropped. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. Then I began to consider what I should do. I came to the conclusion that I had no right to spy on her, and I drove down to the club. At six I called to see her. She was lying on a sofa, in a tea-gown of silver tissue looped up by some strange moonstones that she always wore. She was looking quite lovely. ‘I am so glad to see you,’ she said; ‘I have not been out all day.’ I stared at her in amazement, and pulling the handkerchief out of my pocket, handed it to her. ‘You dropped this in Cumnor Street this afternoon, Lady Alroy,’ I said very calmly. She looked at me in terror, but made no attempt to take the handkerchief. ‘What were you doing there?’ I asked. ‘What right have you to ques-
The Sphinx Without a Secret

... and me?' she answered. 'The right of a man I love you,' I replied; 'I came here to ask you be my wife.' She hid her face in her hands, and into floods of tears. 'You must tell me,' I continued. She stood up, and, looking me straight the face, said: 'Lord Murchison, there is nothing to tell you.'—'You went to meet some one,' I said; 'this is your mystery.' She grew dreadfully white, and said, 'I went to meet no one.'—'Don't you tell the truth?' I exclaimed. 'I have it,' she replied. I was mad, frantic; I don't what I said, but I said terrible things to her. lly I rushed out of the house. She wrote me the next day; I sent it back unopened, and ed for Norway with Alan Colville. After a th I came back, and the first thing I saw in the Morning Post was the death of Lady Alroy. had caught a chill at the Opera, and had died ve days of congestion of the lungs. I shutclf up and saw no one. I had loved her so n, I had loved her so madly. Good God! how I loved that woman!' "You went to the street, to the house in it?" d.

'Yes,' he answered.

One day I went to Cumnor Street. I could help it; I was tortured with doubt. I knocked he door, and a respectable-looking woman ed it to me. I asked her if she had any rooms st. 'Well, sir,' she replied, 'the drawing-is are supposed to be let; but I have not seen ady for three months, and as rent is owing on.
them, you can have them.'—'Is this the lady?' I said, showing the photograph. 'That's her, sure enough,' she exclaimed; 'and when is she coming back, sir?'—'The lady is dead,' I replied. 'Oh, sir, I hope not!' said the woman; 'she was my best lodger. She paid me three guineas a week merely to sit in my drawing-rooms now and then.'—'She met some one here?' I said; but the woman assured me that it was not so, that she always came alone, and saw no one. 'What on earth did she do here?' I cried. 'She simply sat in the drawing-room, sir, reading books, and sometimes had tea,' the woman answered. I did not know what to say, so I gave her a sovereign and went away. Now, what do you think it all meant? You don't believe the woman was telling the truth?'

"I do."

"Then why did Lady Alroy go there?"

"My dear Gerald," I answered, "Lady Alroy was simply a woman with a mania for mystery. She took these rooms for the pleasure of going there with her veil down, and imagining she was a heroine. She had a passion for secrecy, but she herself was merely a Sphinx without a secret."

"Do you really think so?"

"I am sure of it," I replied.

He took out the morocco case, opened it, and looked at the photograph. "I wonder?" he said at last.
THE MODEL MILLIONAIRE

A NOTE OF ADMIRATION
THE MODEL MILLIONAIRE

UNLESS one is wealthy there is no use in being a charming fellow. Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed. The poor should be practical and prosaic. It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating. These are the great truths of modern life which Hughie Erskine never realised. Poor Hughie! Intellectually, we must admit, he was not of much importance. He never did a brilliant or even an ill-natured thing in his life. But then he was wonderfully good-looking, with his crisp brown hair, his clear-cut profile, and his grey eyes. He was as popular with men as he was with women, and he had every accomplishment except that of making money. His father had bequeathed him his cavalry sword and a "History of the Peninsular War" in fifteen volumes. Hughie hung the first over his looking-glass, put the second on a shelf between "Ruff's Guide" and "Baily's Magazine," and lived on a hundred a year that an old-aunt allowed him. So had tried everything. He had gone on the
Stock Exchange for six months; but what was a butterfly to do among bulls and bears? He had been a tea-merchant for a little longer, but he soon tired of pekoe and souchong. Then he tried selling dry sherry. That did not answer; the sherry was a little too dry. Ultimately he became nothing, a delightful, ineffectual young man with a perfect profile and no profession.

To make matters worse, he was in love. The girl he loved was Laura Merton, the daughter of a retired colonel who had lost his temper and his digestion in India, and had never found either of them again. Laura adored him, and he was ready to kiss her shoe-strings. They were the handsomest couple in London, and had not a penny-piece between them. The colonel was very fond of Hughie, but would not hear of an engagement.

"Come to me, my boy, when you have got ten thousand pounds of your own, and we will see about it," he used to say; and Hughie looked very glum in those days, and had to go to Laura for consolation.

One morning, as he was on his way to Holland Park, where the Mertons lived, he dropped in to see a great friend of his, Alan Trevor. Trevor was a painter. Indeed, few people escape the nowadays. But he was also an artist, and artists are rather rare. Personally he was a strange rough fellow, with a freckled face and a ragged beard. However, when he took up the brush he was a real master, and his pictures were
erly sought after. He had been very much racted by Hughie at first, it must be acknowleded, entirely on account of his personal charm. ne only people a painter should know,” he I to say, “are people who are belle and beau-
le, people who are an artistic pleasure to look nd an intellectual repose to talk to. Men who dandies and women who are darlings rule the ld, at least they should do so.” However, he got to know Hughie better, he liked him e as much for his bright, buoyant spirits and generous, reckless nature, and had given him permanent entrée to his studio.

Then Hughie came in he found Trevor put-
the finishing touches to a wonderful life-
picture of a beggar-man. The beggar him-
was standing on a raised platform in a corner ie studio. He was a wizened old man, with a like wrinkled parchment, and a most piteousession. Over his shoulders was flung a coarse rm cloak, all tears and tatters; his thick boots patched and cobbled, and with one hand cnt on a rough stick, while with the other eld out his battered hat for alms.

What an amazing model!” whispered Hughie, e shook hands with his friend.

An amazing model?” shouted Trevor at the of his voice; “I should think so! Such beg-
as he are not to be met with every day. A vaile, mon cher; a living Velasquez! My e! what an etching Rembrandt would have e of him!”
"Poor old chap!" said Hughie, "how miserably he looks! But I suppose, to you painters, face is his fortune?"

"Certainly," replied Trevor, "you don't want a beggar to look happy, do you?"

"How much does a model get for sitting?" asked Hughie, as he found himself a comfortable seat on a divan.

"A shilling an hour."

"And how much do you get for your picture, Alan?"

"Oh, for this I get two thousand!"

"Pounds?"

"Guineas. Painters, poets, and physici always get guineas."

"Well, I think the model should have a percentage," cried Hughie, laughing; "they work quite as hard as you do."

"Nonsense, nonsense! Why, look at trouble of laying on the paint alone, and staying all day long at one's easel! It's all very well, Hughie, for you to talk, but I assure you there are moments when Art almost attaches to the dignity of manual labor. But you must not chatter; I'm very busy. Smoke a cigarette and keep quiet."

After some time the servant came in, and told Trevor that the framemaker wanted to speak to him.

"Don't run away, Hughie," he said, as I went out, "I will be back in a moment."

The old beggar-man took advantage of Trevor's
The old man started, and a faint smile flitted across his withered lips. "Thank you, sir," he said, "thank you."

Then Trevor arrived, and Hughie took his arm, blushing a little at what he had done. He spent the day with Laura, got a charming cold for his extravagance, and had to walk home.

That night he strolled into the Palette Club about eleven o'clock, and found Trevor sitting by himself in the smoking-room drinking hock and seltzer.

"Well, Alan, did you get the picture finished right?" he said, as he lit his cigarette.

"Finished and framed, my boy!" answered Trevor; "and, by the bye, you have made a request. That old model you saw is quite voted to you. I had to tell him all about you—who you are, where you live, what your home is, what prospects you have—"

"My dear Alan," cried Hughie, "I shall probably find him waiting for me when I go home."

"Not in the least," said Trevor. "He was to be there an hour ago. He'll be here presently— or not, if he can't find you.

"Never mind," said Hughie. "I'll wait."

And he sat down in a chair by the fire, and smoked his pipe, waiting for Trevor to return.
But of course you are only joking. Poor old wretch! I wish I could do something for him. I think it is dreadful that any one should be so miserable. I have got heaps of old clothes at home—do you think he would care for any of them? Why, his rags were falling to bits."

"But he looks splendid in them," said Trevor. "I wouldn't paint him in a frock-coat for anything. What you call rags I call romance. What seems poverty to you is picturesqueness to me. However, I'll tell him of your offer."

"Alan," said Hughie seriously, "you paint are a heartless lot."

"An artist's heart is his head," replied Trevor, "and besides, our business is to realise the work as we see it, not to reform it as we know it. À chacun son métier.²⁸ And now tell me how Laura is. The old model was quite interested in her."

"You don't mean to say you talked to him about her?" said Hughie.

"Certainly I did. He knows all about the relentless colonel, the lovely Laura, and the £10,000."

"You told that old beggar all my private affairs?" cried Hughie, looking very red and angry.

"My dear boy," said Trevor, smiling, "that old beggar, as you call him, is one of the richest men in Europe. He could buy all London tomorrow without overdrawing his account. He has a house in every capital, dines off gold plate,
I can prevent Russia going to war when he does."

'What on earth do you mean?" exclaimed ghie.

'What I say," said Trevor. ‘'The old man I saw to-day in the studio was Baron Hausberg. He is a great friend of mine, buys all pictures and that sort of thing, and gave a commission a month ago to paint him as beggar. Que voulez-vous? La fantaisie d'un lionnaire!' And I must say he made a mag- cent figure in his rags, or perhaps I should in my rags; they are an old suit I got in un."

'Baron Hausberg!' cried Hughie. ‘'Good 'vens! I gave him a sovereign!' and he sank an armchair the picture of dismay.

'Gave him a sovereign!' shouted Trevor, and burst into a roar of laughter. ‘'My dear , you'll never see it again. Son affaire c'est gent des autres.'"

'I think you might have told me, Alan," said ghie sulkily, ‘'and not have let me make a fool of myself."

'Well, to begin with, Hughie," said Trevor, never entered my mind that you went about tributing alms in that reckless way. I can- derstand your kissing a pretty model, but ur giving a sovereign to an ugly one—by ve, no! Besides, the fact is that I really was t at home to-day to any one; and when you me in I didn't know whether Hausberg would.
like his name mentioned. You know he wasn't in full dress."

"What a duffer he must think me!" said Hughie.

"Not at all. He was in the highest spirits after you left; kept chuckling to himself and rubbing his old wrinkled hands together. I couldn't make out why he was so interested in knowing all about you; but I see it all now. He'll invest your sovereign for you, Hughie, and pay you the interest every six months, and have a capital story to tell after dinner."

"I am an unlucky devil," growled Hughie.

"The best thing I can do is to go to bed; and my dear Alan, you mustn't tell any one. I shouldn't dare show my face in the Row."

"Nonsense! It reflects the highest credit on your philanthropic spirit, Hughie. And don't run away. Have another cigarette, and you can talk about Laura as much as you like."

However, Hughie wouldn't stop, but walked home, feeling very unhappy, and leaving Alan Trevor in fits of laughter.

The next morning, as he was at breakfast, the servant brought him a card on which was written: "Monsieur Gustave Naudin, de la part de M. le Baron Hausberg." "I suppose he has come for an apology," said Hughie to himself; and he told the servant to show the visitor up.

An old gentleman with gold spectacles and grey hair came into the room, and said, in a
French accent: "Have I the honour of sing Monsieur Erskine?"

"Hie bowed.

have come from Baron Hausberg," he ued. "The Baron——"

beg, sir, that you will offer him my sin-
apologies," stammered Hughie.

The Baron," said the old gentleman with a "has commissioned me to bring you this

and he extended a sealed envelope.

the outside was written: "A wedding at to Hugh Erskine and Laura Merton, an old beggar," and inside was a cheque

0,000.

when they were married Alan Trevor was best man, and the Baron made a speech at wedding breakfast.

millionaire models," remarked Alan, "are enough; but, by Jove, model millionaires rer still!"

THE END OF

THE MODEL MILLIONAIRE
PORTRAIT OF MR. W. H.
CHAPTER I

And been dining with Erskine in his pretty little house in Birdcage Walk, and we were in the library over our coffee and cigarettes, the question of literary forgeries happened up in conversation. I cannot at present remember how it was that we struck upon this what curious topic, as it was at that time, know that we had a long discussion about her son, Ireland, and Chatterton, and that regard to the last I insisted that his so-called lies were merely the result of an artistic desire perfect representation; that we had no right barrel with an artist for the conditions under he chooses to present his work; and that all being to a certain degree a mode of acting, am to realise one's own personality on some native plane out of reach of the trammel-accidents and limitations of real life, to re an artist for a forgery was to confuse an d with an æsthetical problem.
Erskine, who was a good deal older than I was, and had been listening to me with the amused deference of a man of forty, suddenly put his hand upon my shoulder and said to me: "What would you say about a young man who had a strange theory about a certain work of art, believed in his theory, and committed a forgery in order to prove it?"

"Ah! that is quite a different matter," I answered.

Erskine remained silent for a few moments, looking at the thin grey threads of smoke that were rising from his cigarette. "Yes," he said after a pause, "quite different."

There was something in the tone of his voice, a slight touch of bitterness perhaps, that excited my curiosity. "Did you ever know anybody who did that?" I cried.

"Yes," he answered, throwing his cigarette into the fire—"a great friend of mine, Cyril Graham. He was very fascinating, and very foolish, and very heartless. However, he left me the only legacy I ever received in my life."

"What was that?" I exclaimed. Erskine rose from his seat, and going over to a tall inlaid cabinet that stood between the two windows, unlocked it, and came back to where I was sitting, holding in his hand a small panel picture set in an old and somewhat tarnished Elizabethan frame.

It was a full-length portrait of a young man in late sixteenth-century costume, standing by a table, with his right hand resting on an open
book. He seemed about seventeen years of age, and was of quite extraordinary personal beauty, though evidently somewhat effeminate. Indeed, had it not been for the dress and the closely cropped hair, one would have said that the face, with its dreamy wistful eyes, and its delicate scarlet lips, was the face of a girl. In manner, and especially in the treatment of the hands, the picture reminded one of François Clouet’s later work. The black velvet doublet with its fantastically gilded points, and the peacock-blue background against which it showed up so pleasantly, and from which it gained such luminous value of colour, were quite in Clouet’s style; and the two masks of Tragedy and Comedy that hung somewhat formally from the marble pedestal had that hard severity of touch—so different from the facile grace of the Italians—which even at the Court of France the great Flemish master never completely lost, and which in itself has always been a characteristic of the northern temper.

“It is a charming thing,” I cried, “but who is this wonderful young man, whose beauty Art has so happily preserved for us?”

“This is the portrait of Mr. W. H.,” said Erskine, with a sad smile. It might have been a chance effect of light, but it seemed to me that his eyes were quite bright with tears.

“Mr. W. H.!” I exclaimed; “who was Mr. W. H.?”

“Don’t you remember?” he answered; “look at the book on which his hand is resting.”
"I see there is some writing there, but I cannot make it out," I replied.

"Take this magnifying-glass and try," said Erskine, with the same sad smile still playing about his mouth.

I took the glass, and moving the lamp a little nearer, I began to spell out the crabbed sixteenth-century handwriting. "To the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets" . . . "Good heavens!" I cried, "is this Shakespeare's Mr. W. H.?

"Cyril Graham used to say so," muttered Erskine.

"But it is not a bit like Lord Pembroke," I answered. "I know the Penshurst portraits very well. I was staying near there a few weeks ago."

"Do you really believe then that the sonnets are addressed to Lord Pembroke?" he asked.

"I am sure of it," I answered. "Pembroke, Shakespeare, and Mrs. Mary Fitton are the three personages of the Sonnets; there is no doubt at all about it."

"Well, I agree with you," said Erskine, "but I did not always think so. I used to believe—well, I suppose I used to believe in Cyril Graham and his theory."

"And what was that?" I asked, looking at the wonderful portrait, which had already begun to have a strange fascination for me.

"It is a long story," said Erskine, taking the picture away from me—rather abruptly I thought at the time—"a very long story; but if you care to hear it, I will tell it to you."
I love theories about the Sonnets,” I cried; but I don’t think I am likely to be converted by my new idea. The matter has ceased to be a mystery to any one. Indeed, I wonder that it was a mystery.”

As I don’t believe in the theory, I am not going to convert you to it,” said Erskine, laughingly. “But it may interest you.”

Tell it to me, of course,” I answered. “If it is half as delightful as the picture, I shall be more than satisfied.”

Well,” said Erskine, lighting a cigarette, “I begin by telling you about Cyril Graham Self. He and I were at the same house at a. I was a year or two older than he was, we were immense friends, and did all our work and all our play together. There was, of course, a good deal more play than work, but I am not sorry for that. It is always an advantage not to have received a sound classical education, and what I learned in the fields at Eton has been quite as useful to me as anything I was taught at Cambridge. I could tell you that Cyril’s father and mother both dead. They had been drowned in a terrible yachting accident off the Isle of Wight. His father had been in the diplomatic service, had married a daughter, the only daughter, of old Lord Crediton, who became Cyril’s fiancée after the death of his parents. I don’t think Lord Crediton cared very much for him. He had never really forgiven his daughter
or marrying a man who had not a title. An extraordinary old aristocrat, who swooned costermonger, and had the manners of a I remember seeing him once on Speyside. He growled at me, gave me a sovereign, told me not to grow up a damned I like my father. Cyril had very little affection for him, and was only too glad to spend part of his holidays with us in Scotland. They really got on together at all. Cyril thought he was a bear, and he thought Cyril effeminate. Effeminate, I suppose, in some things, he was a very good rider and a capital fencer, he got the foils before he left Eton. But very languid in his manner, and not a little his good looks, and had a strong objection to ball. The two things that really gave him were poetry and acting. At Eton he was dressing up and reciting Shakespeare, and we went up to Trinity he became a rector. His first term. I remember always very jealous of his acting. I was no doubt very devoted to him; I suppose I were so different in some things. I was awkward, weakly lad, with huge terribly freckled. Freckles run in Scots just as gout does in English families. I used to say that of the two he went; but he always set an absurd on personal appearance, and once before our debating society to pose better to be good-looking than to
inly was wonderfully handsome. People did not like him, Philistines and college rs, and young men reading for the Church, to say that he was merely pretty; but was a great deal more in his face than mere iness. I think he was the most splendid ure I ever saw, and nothing could exceed grace of his movements, the charm of his 1er. He fascinated everybody who was worth nating, and a great many people who were He was often willful and petulant, and I used ink him dreadfully insincere. It was due, I t, chiefly to his inordinate desire to please. Cyril! I told him once that he was contented very cheap triumphs, but he only laughed. was horribly spoiled. All charming people, I , are spoiled. It is the secret of their tion.

However, I must tell you about Cyril’s acting. know that no actresses are allowed to play A.D.C. At least they were not in my time. it know how it is now. Well, of course Cyril always cast for the girls’ parts, and when ‘As Like It’ was produced he played Rosalind. as a marvellous performance. In fact, Cyril am was the only perfect Rosalind I have ever . It would be impossible to describe to you beauty, the delicacy, the refinement of the e thing. It made an immense sensation, and horrid little theatre, as it was then, was ded every night. Even when I read the play I can’t help thinking of Cyril. It might have
been written for him. The next term he took his degree, and came to London to read for the in- 
matic. But he never did any work. He spent days in reading Shakespeare's Sonnets, and evenings at the theatre. He was, of course, to go on the stage. It was all that I and Crediton could do to prevent him. Perhaps he had gone on the stage he would be alive. It is always a silly thing to give advice, but give good advice is absolutely fatal. If you will never fall into that error. If you you will be sorry for it.

"Well, to come to the real point of the story, one day I got a letter from Cyril asking me to come round to his rooms that evening. He had charming chambers in Piccadilly overlooking the Green Park, and as I used to go to see him every day, I was rather surprised at his taking the trouble to write. Of course I went, when I arrived I found him in a state of excitement. He told me that he had at last discovered the true secret of Shakespeare's Sonnets; that all the scholars and critics had been entirely on the wrong tack; and that he was the first who, working purely by inference, had found out who Mr. W. H. was. He was perfectly wild with delight, for a long time would not tell me his theory. Finally, he produced a bundle of notes, tore a copy of the Sonnets off the mantelpiece, and laid it down and gave me a long lecture on the subject.
"He began by pointing out that the young man to whom Shakespeare addressed these strangely passionate poems must have been somebody who was a really vital factor in the development of his dramatic art, and that this could not be said either of Lord Pembroke or Lord Southampton. Indeed, whoever he was, he could not have been anybody of high birth, as was shown very clearly by the 25th Sonnet, in which Shakespeare contrasts himself with those who are 'great princes' favourites,' says quite frankly—

"'Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most,'

and ends the sonnet by congratulating himself on the mean state of him he so adored.

"'Then happy I, that loved and am beloved
Where I may not remove nor be removed.'

This sonnet Cyril declared would be quite unintelligible if we fancied that it was addressed to either the Earl of Pembroke or the Earl of Southampton, both of whom were men of the highest position in England and fully entitled to be called 'great princes;' and he in corroboration of his view read me Sonnets cxxiv. and cxxv., in which Shakespeare tells us that his love is not 'the child of state,' that it 'suffers not in smiling pomp,' but is 'builded far from accident.' I listened with a good deal of interest,
for I don't think the point had ever been made before; but what followed was still more curious, and seemed to me at the time to entirely dispose of Pembroke's claim. We know from Meres that the Sonnets had been written before 1598, and Sonnet cix. informs us that Shakespeare's friendship for Mr. W. H. had been already in existence for three years. Now Lord Pembroke, who was born in 1580, did not come to London till he was eighteen years of age, that is to say till 1598, and Shakespeare's acquaintance with Mr. W. H. must have begun in 1594, or at the latest in 1595. Shakespeare, accordingly, could not have known Lord Pembroke till after the Sonnets had been written.

"Cyril pointed out also that Pembroke's father did not die till 1601; whereas it was evident from the line—

"'You had a father, let your son say so,'

that the father of Mr. W. H. was dead in 1598. Besides, it was absurd to imagine that any publisher of the time, and the preface is from the publisher's hand, would have ventured to address William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, as Mr. W. H.; the case of Lord Buckhurst being spoken of as Mr. Sackville being not really a parallel instance, as Lord Buckhurst was not a peer, but merely the younger son of a peer, with a courtesy title, and the passage in 'England's Parnassus,' where he is so spoken of, is not a formal and stately dedication, but simply a casual allusion. So far for Lord Pembroke,
ose supposed claims Cyril easily demolished ile I sat by in wonder. With Lord South-pton Cyril had even less difficulty. South-pton became at a very early age the lover of zabeth Vernon, so he needed no entreaties marry; he was not beautiful; he did not emble his mother, as Mr. W. H. did—

"Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime;'

1, above all, his Christian name was Henry, eras the punning sonnets (cxxxv. and lxx.) show that the Christian name of Shake-are's friend was the same as his own—Will. 'As for the other suggestions of unfortunate nmentators, that Mr. W. H. is a misprint for : W. S., meaning Mr. William Shakespeare; it 'Mr. W. H. all' should be read 'Mr. W. ll;' that Mr. W. H. is Mr. William Hathay; and that a full stop should be placed er 'wisheth,' making Mr. W. H. the writer l not the subject of the dedication—Cyril ; rid of them in a very short time; and it is t worth while to mention his reasons, though emember he sent me off into a fit of laughter reading to me, I am glad to say not in the ginal, some extracts from a German commen- or called Barnstorff, who insisted that Mr. H. was no less a person than 'Mr. William mself.' Nor would he allow for a moment t the Sonnets are mere satires on the work Drayton and John Davies of Hereford. To a, as indeed to me, they were poems of serious
and tragic import, wrung out of the bitterness of Shakespeare's heart, and made sweet by the honey of his lips. Still less would he admit that they were merely a philosophical allegory, and that in them Shakespeare is addressing his Ideal Self, or Ideal Manhood, or the Spirit of Beauty, or the Reason, or the Divine Logos, or the Catholic Church. He felt, as indeed I think we all must feel, that the Sonnets are addressed to an individual—to a particular young man whose personality for some reason seems to have filled the soul of Shakespeare with terrible joy and no less terrible despair.

"Having in this manner cleared the way as I were, Cyril asked me to dismiss from my mind any preconceived ideas I might have formed of the subject, and to give a fair and unbiased hearing to his own theory. The problem pointed out was this: Who was that young man of Shakespeare's day who, without being of noble birth or even of noble nature, was addressed by him in terms of such passionate adoration that we can but wonder at the strange worship, and are almost afraid to turn the key that unlocks the mystery of the poet's heart? Who was he whose physical beauty was such that it became the very corner-stone of Shakespeare's art; the very source of Shakespeare's inspiration; the very incarnation of Shakespeare's dreams? To look upon him as simply the object of certain love-poems is to miss the whole meaning of the poems: for the art of
THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W. H.

Shakespeare talks in the Sonnets is not art of the Sonnets themselves, which indeed to him but slight and secret things—it is art of the dramatist to which he is always lying; and he to whom Shakespeare said—

"'Thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning my rude ignorance,'

o whom he promised immortality—here breath most breathes, even in the mouth of men;—
surely none other than the boy-actor for m he created Viola and Imogen, Juliet and alind, Portia and Desdemona, and Cleo-a herself. This was Cyril Graham's theory, ved as you see purely from the Sonnets nselves, and depending for its acceptance so much on demonstrable proof or formal ence, but on a kind of spiritual and artistic e, by which alone he claimed could the true ning of the poems be discerned. I rememhis reading to me that fine sonnet—

How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth Than those old nine which rhymers invoke;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth Eternal numbers to outlive long date'
THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W. H.

—and pointing out how completely it corroborated his theory; and indeed he went through all the Sonnets carefully, and showed, or rather that he showed, that, according to his new explanation of their meaning, things that had seemed obscure, or evil, or exaggerated, became clear and rational, and of high artistic import, illustrating Shakespeare's conception of the true relations between the art of the actor and the art of the dramatist.

"It is of course evident that there must have been in Shakespeare's company some wonderful boy-actor of great beauty, to whom he intrusted the presentation of his noble heroines; for Shakespeare was a practical theatrical manager as well as an imaginative poet, and Cyril Graham had actually discovered the boy-actor's name. He was Will, or, as he preferred to call him, Willie Hughes. The Christian name he found of course in the punning sonnets, cxxxv. and cxliv.; the surname was, according to him, hidden in the eighth line of the 20th Sonnet, where Mr. W. H. is described as—

"'A man in hew, all Hews in his controwling.'

"In the original edition of the Sonnets 'Hews' is printed with a capital letter and in italics, and this, he claimed, showed clearly that a play on words was intended, his view receiving a good deal of corroboration from those sonnets in which curious puns are made on the words 'use' and 'usury.' Of course I was converted
once, and Willie Hughes became to me as I a person as Shakespeare. The only objection I made to the theory was that the name Willie Hughes does not occur in the list of actors of Shakespeare's company as it printed in the first folio. Cyril, however, pointed out that the absence of Willie Hughes's name from this list really corroborated the theory, it was evident from Sonnet lxxxvi. that Willie Hughes had abandoned Shakespeare's company and gone to a rival theatre, probably in some of Marlowe's plays. It is in reference to this that in a great sonnet on Chapman Shakespeare said to illie Hughes—

"'But when your countenance filled up his line,
Then lacked I matter; that enfeebled mine'—

The expression 'when your countenance filled his line' referring obviously to the beauty the young actor giving life and reality and added charm to Chapman's verse, the same idea being also put forward in the 79th Sonnet—

"'Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace,
But now my gracious numbers are decayed,
And my sick Muse does give another place;'

And in the immediately preceding sonnet, where Shakespeare says—

"'Every alien pen has got my use
And under thee their poesy disperse,'

He play upon words (use = Hughes) being of ourse obvious, and the phrase 'under thee
their poesy disperse,' meaning 'by your assistance as an actor bring their plays before the people.'

"It was a wonderful evening, and we sat up almost till dawn reading and re-reading the Sonnets. After some time, however, I began to see that before the theory could be placed before the world in a really perfected form, it was necessary to get some independent evidence about the existence of this young actor, Willie Hughes. If this could be once established, there could be no possible doubt about his identity with Mr. W. H.; but otherwise the theory would fall to the ground. I put this forward very strongly to Cyril, who was a good deal annoyed at what he called my Philistine tone of mind, and indeed was rather bitter upon the subject. However, I made him promise that in his own interest he would not publish his discovery till he had put the whole matter beyond the reach of doubt; and for weeks and weeks we searched the registers of City churches, the Alleyn MSS. at Dulwich, the Record Office, the papers of the Lord Chamberlain—everything, in fact, that we thought might contain some allusion to Willie Hughes. We discovered nothing, of course, and every day the existence of Willie Hughes seemed to me to become more problematical. Cyril was in a dreadful state, and used to go over the whole question day after day, entreatling me to believe; but I saw the one flaw in the theory, and I refused to be convinced till the actual existence of Willie
Hughes, a boy-actor of Elizabethan days, had
been placed beyond the reach of doubt or cavil.
"One day Cyril left town to stay with his
undfather, I thought at the time, but I after-
wards heard from Lord Crediton that this was
the case; and about a fortnight afterwards
received a telegram from him, handed in at
Warwick, asking me to be sure to come and
see with him that evening at eight o'clock.
When I arrived, he said to me: 'The only apostle
of St. Thomas, and Thomas was the only apostle who got it.'
asked him what he meant. He answered that he
had not merely been able to establish the existence
of the sixteenth century of a boy-actor of the
name of Willie Hughes, but to prove by the most
inclusive evidence that he was the Mr. W. H. of
Sonnets. He would not tell me anything
at the time; but after dinner he solemnly
produced the picture I showed you, and told me
that he had discovered it by the merest chance
led to the side of an old chest that he had
ought at a farmhouse in Warwickshire. The
rest itself, which was a very fine example of
Elizabethan work, he had, of course, brought with
in the centre of the front panel the
itials W. H. were undoubtedly carved. It
was this monogram that had attracted his atten-
ion, and he told me that it was not till he had had
the chest in his possession for several days that he
decided to make any careful examination of
inside. One morning, however, he saw that
one of the sides of the chest was much thicker than
the other, and looking more closely, he discovered
that a framed panel picture was clamped against
it. On taking it out, he found it was the picture
that is now lying on the sofa. It was very dirty,
and covered with mould; but he managed to clean
it, and, to his great joy, saw that he had fallen by
mere chance on the one thing for which he had
been looking. Here was an authentic portrait of
Mr. W. H., with his hand resting on the dedicatory
page of the Sonnets, and on the frame itself could
be faintly seen the name of the young man written
in black uncial letters on a faded gold ground,
'Master Will. Hewes.'

"Well, what was I to say? It never occurred
to me for a moment that Cyril Graham was
playing a trick on me, or that he was trying to
prove his theory by means of a forgery."

"But is it a forgery?" I asked.

"Of course it is," said Erskine. "It is a very
good forgery; but it is a forgery none the less.
I thought at the time that Cyril was rather
calm about the whole matter; but I remember
he more than once told me that he himself
required no proof of the kind, and that he thought
the theory complete without it. I laughed at him,
and told him that without it the theory would fall
to the ground, and I warmly congratulated him on
the marvellous discovery. We then arranged that
the picture should be etched or facsimiled, and
placed as the frontispiece to Cyril's edition of the
Sonnets; and for three months we did nothing but
over each poem line by line, till we had settled every difficulty of text or meaning. One unlucky day I was in a print-shop in Holborn, when I saw upon the counter some extremely beautiful drawings in silver-point. I was so attracted by them that I bought them; and the proprietor of the place, a man called Rawlings, told me that they were done by a young painter of the name of Merton, who was very clever, but as poor as a church mouse. I went to see Merton some time afterwards, having got his address from the bookseller, and found a pale, interesting young man, with a rather common-looking wife—his del, as I subsequently learned. I told him how much I admired his drawings, at which he seemed very pleased, and I asked him if he would show some of his other work. As we were looking over a portfolio full of really very lovely things—for Merton had a most delicate and delightful touch—I suddenly caught sight of a drawing of the portrait of Mr. W. H. There was no doubt whatever about it. It was almost a facsimile—the only difference being that the two masks of agedy and Comedy were not suspended from a marble table as they are in the picture, but lying on the floor at the young man’s feet. There on earth did you get that? I said. He was rather confused, and said—‘Oh, that is thing. I did not know it was in this port-fo. It is not a thing of any value.’ ‘It is what you did for Mr. Cyril Graham,’ exclaimed his le; ‘and if this gentleman wishes to buy it, let
him have it.' 'For Mr. Cyril Graham?' I repeated. 'Did you paint the picture of Mr. W. H.?' 'I don't understand what you mean,' he answered, growing very red. Well, the whole thing was quite dreadful. The wife let it all out. I gave her five pounds when I was going away. I can't bear to think of it now; but of course I was furious. I went off at once to Cyril's chambers, waited there for three hours before he came in, with that horrid lie staring me in the face, and told him I had discovered his forgery. He grew very pale and said—'I did it purely for your sake. You would not be convinced in any other way. It does not affect the truth of the theory.' 'The truth of the theory!' I exclaimed; 'the less we talk about that the better. You never even believed in it yourself. If you had, you would not have committed a forgery to prove it.' High words passed between us; we had a fearful quarrel. I dare say I was unjust. The next morning he was dead.'

"Dead!" I cried.

"Yes; he shot himself with a revolver. Some of the blood splashed upon the frame of the picture, just where the name had been painted. By the time I arrived—his servant had sent for me at once—the police were already there. He had left a letter for me, evidently written in the greatest agitation and distress of mind."

"What was in it?" I asked.

"Oh, that he believed absolutely in Willie Hughes; that the forgery of the picture had
THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W. H. 469

done simply as a concession to me, and not in the slightest degree invalidate the of the theory; and that in order to show me firm and flawless his faith in the whole thing he was going to offer his life as a sacrifice to secret of the Sonnets. It was a foolish, mad I remember he ended by saying that he sted to me the Willie Hughes theory, and it was for me to present it to the world, and lock the secret of Shakespeare's heart.”

t is a most tragic story,” I cried; “but why you not carried out his wishes?”

skine shrugged his shoulders. “Because it perfectly unsound theory from beginning to he answered.

ly dear Erskine,” I said, getting up from my “you are entirely wrong about the whole er. It is the only perfect key to Shakespeare’s sets that has ever been made. It is complete very detail. I believe in Willie Hughes.”

don’t say that,” said Erskine gravely; “I re there is something fatal about the idea, intellectually there is nothing to be said for I have gone into the whole matter, and sure you the theory is entirely fallacious. plausible up to a certain point. Then it . For heaven’s sake, my dear boy, don’t up the subject of Willie Hughes. You reak your heart over it.”

erksine,” I answered, “it is your duty to this theory to the world. If you will not , I will. By keeping it back you wrong
the memory of Cyril Graham, the youngest and the most splendid of all the martyrs of literature. I entreat you to do him justice. He died for this thing—don’t let his death be in vain.”

Erskine looked at me in amazement. “You are carried away by the sentiment of the whole story,” he said. “You forget that a thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it. I was devoted to Cyril Graham. His death was a horrible blow to me. I did not recover it for years. I don’t think I have ever recovered it. But Willie Hughes? There is nothing in the idea of Willie Hughes. No such person ever existed. As for bringing the whole thing before the world—the world thinks that Cyril Graham shot himself by accident. The only proof of his suicide was contained in the letter to me, and of this letter the public never heard anything. To the present day Lord Crediton thinks that the whole thing was accidental.”

“Cyril Graham sacrificed his life to a great idea,” I answered; “and if you will not tell of his martyrdom, tell at least of his faith.”

“His faith,” said Erskine, “was fixed in a thing that was false, in a thing that was unsound, in a thing that no Shakespearean scholar would accept for a moment. The theory would be laughed at. Don’t make a fool of yourself, and don’t follow a trail that leads nowhere. You start by assuming the existence of the very person whose existence is the thing to be proved. Besides, everybody knows that the Sonnets were
addressed to Lord Pembroke. The matter is settled once for all."

"The matter is not settled!" I exclaimed. "I will take up the theory where Cyril Graham left it, and I will prove to the world that he was right."

"Silly boy!" said Erskine. "Go home: it is after two, and don't think about Willie Hughes any more. I am sorry I told you anything about it, and very sorry indeed that I should have converted you to a thing in which I don't believe."

"You have given me the key to the greatest mystery of modern literature," I answered; "and I shall not rest till I have made you recognise, till I have made everybody recognise, that Cyril Graham was the most subtle Shakespearean critic of our day."

As I walked home through St. James's Park the dawn was just breaking over London. The white swans were lying asleep on the polished lake, and the gaunt Palace looked purple against the pale-green sky. I thought of Cyril Graham, and my eyes filled with tears.
CHAPTER II

It was past twelve o'clock when I awoke, and the sun was streaming in through the curtains of my room in long slanting beams of dusty gold. I told my servant that I would be at home to no one; and after I had had a cup of chocolate and a petit-pain, I took down from the book-shelf my copy of Shakespeare's Sonnets, and began to go carefully through them. Every poem seemed to me to corroborate Charles Graham's theory. I felt as if I had my hand upon Shakespeare's heart, and was counting each separate throb and pulse of passion. I thought of the wonderful boy-actor, and saw his face in every line.

Two sonnets, I remember, struck me particularly: they were the 53rd and the 67th. In the first of these, Shakespeare, complimenting William Hughes on the versatility of his acting, on his range of parts, a range extending from Rosalind to Juliet, and from Beatrice to Ophelia, says—

"What is your substance, whereof are you made, That millions of strange shadows on you tend? Since every one hath, every one, one shade, And you, but one, can every shadow lend"—

lines that would be unintelligible if they were
not addressed to an actor, for the word "shadow" ad in Shakespeare's day a technical meaning connected with the stage. "The best in this ind are but shadows," says Theseus of the actors in ne "Midsummer Night's Dream," and there are any similar allusions in the literature of the day. nese sonnets evidently belonged to the series in hich Shakespeare discusses the nature of the or's art, and of the strange and rare tempera- ent that is essential to the perfect stage-player. How is it," says Shakespeare to Willie Hughes, at that you have so many personalities?" and then e goes on to point out that his beauty is such that seems to realise every form and phase of fancy, emberly each dream of the creative imagination an idea that is still further expanded in the net that immediately follows, where, beginning th the line thought—

"O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!"

akespeare invites us to notice how the truth acting, the truth of visible presentation on e stage, adds to the wonder of poetry, giving e to its loveliness, and actual reality to its ideal rm. And yet, in the 67th Sonnet, Shakespeare lls upon Willie Hughes to abandon the stage ith its artificiality, its false mimic life of tinted face and unreal costume, its immoral fluences and suggestions, its remoteness from se true world of noble action and sincere ut-
"Ah! wherefore with infection should he live,
And with his presence grace impiety,
That sin by him advantage should achieve,
And lace itself with his society?
Why should false painting imitate his cheek
And steal dead seeming of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?"

It may seem strange that so great a dramatist as Shakespeare, who realised his own perfection as an artist and his humanity as a man on the ideal plane of stage-writing and stage-playing should have written in these terms about the theatre; but we must remember that in Sonnets cx. and cxi. Shakespeare shows us that he too was wearied of the world of puppets, and full of shame at having made himself "a motley to the view." The 111th Sonnet is especially bitter—

"O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
Pity me, then, and wish I were renewed"—

and there are many signs elsewhere of the same feeling, signs familiar to all real students of Shakespeare.

One point puzzled me immensely as I read the Sonnets, and it was days before I struck on the true interpretation, which indeed Cyril
Graham himself seems to have missed. I could not understand how it was that Shakespeare set so high a value on his young friend marrying. He himself had married young, and the result had been unhappiness, and it was not likely that he would have asked Willie Hughes to commit the same error. The boy-player of Rosalind had nothing to gain from marriage, or from the passions of real life. The early sonnets, with their strange entreaties to have children, seemed to me a jarring note. The explanation of the mystery came on me quite suddenly, and I found it in the curious dedication. It will be remembered that the dedication runs as follows:

TO • THE • ONLIE • BEGETTER • OF
THOSE • INSUING • SONNETS
MR. W. H. ALL • HAPPINESSE
AND • THAT • ETERNITIE
PROMISED
BY
OUR • EVER-LIVING • POET
WISHETH
THE • WELL-WISHING
ADVENTURER • IN
SETTING
FORTH.

T. T

Some scholars have supposed that the word "begetter" in this dedication means simply the procurer of the Sonnets for Thomas Thorpe the publisher; but this view is now generally abandoned, and the highest authorities are quite agreed that it is to be taken in the sense of
inspirer, the metaphor being drawn from the analogy of physical life. Now I saw that the same metaphor was used by Shakespeare himself all through the poems, and this set me on the right track. Finally I made my great discovery. The marriage that Shakespeare proposes for Willie Hughes is the "marriage with his Muse," an expression which is definitely put forward in the 82nd Sonnet, where, in the bitterness of his heart at the defection of the boy-actor for whom he had written his greatest parts, and whose beauty had indeed suggested them, he opens his complaint by saying—

"I'll grant thou wert not married to my Muse."

The children he begs him to beget are no children of flesh and blood, but more immortal children of undying fame. The whole cycle of the early sonnets is simply Shakespeare's invitation to Willie Hughes to go upon the stage and become a player. How barren and profitless a thing, he says, is this beauty of yours if it be not used—

"When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,  
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,  
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,  
Will be a tattered weed, of small worth held:  
Then being asked where all thy beauty lies,  
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,  
To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes,  
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise."

You must create something in art: my verse "is thine, and born of thee;" only listen to me,
nd I will "bring forth eternal numbers to out-
ve long date," and you shall people with forms 
of your own image the imaginary world of the 
tage. These children that you beget, he con-
continues, will not wither away, as mortal children 
o, but you shall live in them and in my plays: 
o but—

"Make thee another self, for love of me,
That beauty still may live in thine or thee!"

I collected all the passages that seemed to me 
\b corroborate this view, and they produced a 
nong impression on me, and showed me how 
\b complete Cyril Graham's theory really was. I 
\b saw that it was quite easy to separate those 
\b es in which he speaks of the Sonnets them-

\b selves from those in which he speaks of his great 
amatic work. This was a point that had 
\b en entirely overlooked by all critics up to 
\b ril Graham's day. And yet it was one 
\b the most important points in the whole 
\b ries of poems. To the Sonnets Shakespeare 
\b as more or less indifferent. He did not 
\b sh to rest his fame on them. They were 
\b him his "slight Muse," as he calls them, 
\d intended, as Meres tells us, for private 
\culation only among a few, a very few, 
\dends. Upon the other hand he was ext-
\bremely conscious of the high artistic value of 
\b plays, and shows a noble self-reliance upon 
\b's dramatic genius. When he says to Willie 
\bghes:
"But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee;"—

the expression "eternal lines" clearly alludes to one of his plays that he was sending him at the time, just as the concluding couplet points to his confidence in the probability of his plays being always acted. In his address to the Dramatic Muse (Sonnets c. and cr.), we find the same feeling.

"Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
Spends thou thy fury on some worthless song,
Darkening thy power to lend base subjects light?"

he cries, and he then proceeds to reproach the mistress of Tragedy and Comedy for her "neglect of Truth in Beauty dyed," and says—

"Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
Excuse not silence so; for 't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
And to be praised of ages yet to be.
Then do thy office, Muse; I teach thee how
To make him seem long hence as he shows now."

It is, however, perhaps in the 55th Sonnet that Shakespeare gives to this idea its fullest expression. To imagine that the "powerful rhyme" of the second line refers to the sonnet itself, is to entirely mistake Shakespeare's meaning. It
med to me that it was extremely likely, from general character of the sonnet, that a particu-
play was meant, and that the play was none
er but "Romeo and Juliet."

'Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful wars shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Not Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
   So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
   You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes."

was also extremely suggestive to note how
as elsewhere Shakespeare promised Willie
ghes immortality in a form that appealed to
's eyes—that is to say, in a spectacular
n, in a play that is to be looked at.
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s. Every day I seemed to be discovering
ething new, and Willie Hughes became to
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w him standing in the shadow of my room,
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den hair, his tender flower-like grace, his
amy deep-sunken eyes, his delicate mobile
limbs, and his white lily hands. His very name fascinated me. Willie Hughes! Willie Hughes! How musically it sounded! Yes; who else but he could have been the master-mistress of Shakespeare's passion, the lord of his love to whom he was bound in vassalage, the delicate minion of pleasure, the rose of the whole world, the herald of the spring decked in the proud livery of youth, the lovely boy whom it was sweet music to hear, and whose beauty was the very raiment of Shakespeare's heart, as it was the keystone of his dramatic power? How bitter now seemed the whole tragedy of his desertion and his shame!—shame that he made sweet and lovely by the mere magic of his personality, but that was none the less shame. Yet as Shakespeare forgave him, should not we forgive him also? I did not care to pry into the mystery of his sin.

His abandonment of Shakespeare's theatre was a different matter, and I investigated it at great length. Finally I came to the conclusion that Cyril Graham had been wrong in regarding the rival dramatist of the 80th Sonnet as Chapman. It was obviously Marlowe who was alluded to. At the time the Sonnets were written, such an expression as "the proud full sail of his great verse" could not have been used of Chapman's work, however applicable it might have been to the style of his later Jacobean plays. No: Marlowe was

\[ a \text{ Sonnet xx. 2.} \quad b \text{ Sonnet xxvi. 1.} \quad c \text{ Sonnet cxxvi. 9.} \\
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y the rival dramatist of whom Shakespeare
in such laudatory terms; and that

"Affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,"

the Mephistopheles of his Doctor Faustus.
but, Marlowe was fascinated by the beauty
grace of the boy-actor, and lured him away
the Blackfriars Theatre, that he might play
aveston of his "Edward II." That Shake-
e had the legal right to retain Willie Hughes's
own company is evident from Sonnet
vil., where he says:

arewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
nd like enough thou know'st thy estimate:
he charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
ly bonds in thee are all determinate.
or how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
nd for that riches where is my deserving?
he cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
nd so my patent back again is swerving.
hyself thou gavest, thy own work then not knowing,
r me, to whom thou gavest it, else mistaking;
thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
omes none again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter."

t him whom he could not hold by love,
could not hold by force. Willie Hughes
a member of Lord Pembroke's com-
and, perhaps in the open yard of the Red
Tavern, played the part of King Edward's
minion. On Marlowe's death, he seems
to have returned to Shakespeare, who, whatever his fellow-partners may have thought of the matter, was not slow to forgive the willfulness and treachery of the young actor.

How well, too, had Shakespeare drawn the temperament of the stage-player! Willie Hughes was one of those

"That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone."

He could act love, but could not feel it, could mimic passion without realising it.

"In many's looks the false heart's history
Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange,"

but with Willie Hughes it was not so. "Heaven," says Shakespeare, in a sonnet of mad idolatry—

"Heaven in thy creation did decree
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell;
Whate'er thy thoughts or thy heart's workings be,
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell."

In his "inconstant mind" and his "false heart," it was easy to recognise the insincerity and treachery that somehow seem inseparable from the artistic nature, as in his love of praise that desire for immediate recognition that characterises all actors. And yet, more fortunate in this than other actors, Willie Hughes was to know something of immortality. Inseparably connected with Shakespeare's plays, he was to live in them.
"Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die:
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse
When all the breathers of this world are dead."

were endless allusions, also, to Willie
ies's power over his audience—the "gazers,"
akespeare calls them; but perhaps the most
ct description of his wonderful mastery over
atic art was in "A Lover's Complaint,"
 Shakespeare says of him:

'In him a plenitude of subtle matter,
Applied to cautels, all strange forms receives,
Of burning blushes, or of weeping water,
Or swooning paleness; and he takes and leaves,
In either's aptness, as it best deceives,
To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,
Or to turn white and swoon at tragic shows.

So on the tip of his subduing tongue,
All kind of arguments and questions deep,
All replication prompt and reason strong,
For his advantage still did wake and sleep,
To make the weeper laugh, the laugher weep.
He had the dialect and the different skill,
Catching all passions in his craft of will."

I thought that I had really found Willie
es in Elizabethan literature. In a wonder-
graphic account of the last days of the great
of Essex, his chaplain, Thomas Knell, tells us
the night before the Earl died, "he called
William Hewes, which was his musician, to play upon the virginals and to sing. 'Play,' said he, 'my song, Will Hewes, and I will sing it to myself.' So he did it most joyfully, not as the howling swan, which, still looking down, waileth her end, but as a sweet lark, lifting up his hands and casting up his eyes to his God, with this mounted the crystal skies, and reached with his unwearyed tongue the top of highest heavens." Surely the boy who played on the virginals to the dying father of Sidney's Stella was none other but the Will Hewes to whom Shakespeare dedicated the Sonnets, and whom he tells us was himself sweet "music to hear." Yet Lord Essex died in 1576, when Shakespeare himself was but twelve years of age. It was impossible that his musician could have been the Mr. W. H. of the Sonnets. Perhaps Shakespeare's young friend was the son of the player upon the virginals! It was at least something to have discovered that Will Hewes was an Elizabethan name. Indeed the name Hewes seemed to have been closely connected with music and the stage. The first English actress was the lovely Margaret Hewes, whom Prince Rupert so madly loved. What more probable than that between her and Lord Essex's musician had come the boy-actor of Shakespeare's plays? But the proofs, the links—where were they? Alas! I could not find them. It seemed to me that I was always on the brink of absolute verification, but that I could never really attain to it.
from Willie Hughes's life I soon passed to
ghts of his death. I used to wonder what
been his end.

Perhaps he had been one of those English
rs who in 1604 went across sea to Germany
played before the great Duke Henry Julius
 Brunswick, himself a dramatist of no mean
r, and at the Court of that strange Elector
Brandenburg, who was so enamoured of
ety that he was said to have bought for his
ht in amber the young son of a travelling
k merchant, and to have given pageants in
ur of his slave all through that dreadful
ne year of 1606–7, when the people died of
ger in the very streets of the town, and for
pace of seven months there was no rain.
now at any rate that "Romeo and Juliet"
brought out at Dresden in 1613, along with
mlet" and "King Lear," and it was surely
one other than Willie Hughes that in 1615
death-mask of Shakespeare was brought by
and of one of the suite of the English am-
ador, pale token of the passing away of
great poet who had so dearly loved him.
ed there would have been something pecu-
fitting in the idea that the boy-actor,
beauty had been so vital an element in
realism and romance of Shakespeare's art,
ld have been the first to have brought to
any the seed of the new culture, and was
a way the precursor of that *Aufklärung* or
ination of the eighteenth century, that
splendid movement which, though begun by Lessing and Herder, and brought to its full and perfect issue by Goethe, was in no small part helped on by another actor—Friedrich Schroeder—who awoke the popular consciousness, and by means of the feigned passions and mimetic methods of the stage showed the intimate, the vital, connection between life and literature. If this was so—and there was certainly no evidence against it—it was not improbable that Willie Hughes was one of those English comedians (minae quidam ex Britannia, as the old chronicle calls them), who were slain at Nuremberg in a sudden uprising of the people, and were secretly buried in a little vineyard outside the city by some young men "who had found pleasure in their performances, and of whom some had sought to be instructed in the mysteries of the new art." Certainly no more fitting place could there be for him to whom Shakespeare said, "thou art all my art," than this little vineyard outside the city walls. For was it not from the sorrows of Dionysos that Tragedy sprang? Was not the light laughter of Comedy, with its careless merriment and quick replies, first heard on the lips of the Sicilian vine-dressers? Nay, did not the purple and red stain of the wine-froth on face and limbs give the first suggestion of the charm and fascination of disguise—the desire for self-concealment, the sense of the value of objectivity thus showing itself in the rude beginnings of the art? At any rate, wherever he lay
whether in the little vineyard at the gate of the thic town, or in some dim London church-
d amidst the roar and bustle of our great
—no gorgeous monument marked his rest-
place. His true tomb, as Shakespeare saw, i the poet's verse, his true monument the manence of the drama. So had it been with ers whose beauty had given a new creative pulse to their age. The ivory body of the hynian slave rots in the green ooze of the e, and on the yellow hills of the Cerameicus trewn the dust of the young Athenian; but inous lives in sculpture, and Charmides in losophy.
"But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee;"—

the expression "eternal lines" clearly alludes to one of his plays that he was sending him at the time, just as the concluding couplet points to his confidence in the probability of his plays being always acted. In his address to the Dramatic Muse (Sonnets C. and CI.), we find the same feeling.

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was also extremely suggestive to note how elsewhere Shakespeare promised Willie Hughes immortality in a form that appealed to men's eyes—that is to say, in a spectacular form, in a play that is to be looked at.
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His abandonment of Shakespeare's theatre was a different matter, and I investigated it at great length. Finally I came to the conclusion that Cyril Graham had been wrong in regarding the rival dramatist of the 80th Sonnet as Chapman. It was obviously Marlowe who was alluded to. At the time the Sonnets were written, such an expression as "the proud full sail of his great verse" could not have been used of Chapman's work, however applicable it might have been to the style of his later Jacobean plays. No: Marlowe was

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nearly the rival dramatist of whom Shakespeare speaks in such laudatory terms; and that

"Affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,"

as the Mephistopheles of his Doctor Faustus.

In doubt, Marlowe was fascinated by the beauty and grace of the boy-actor, and lured him away to the Blackfriars Theatre, that he might play Gaveston of his "Edward II." That Shakespeare had the legal right to retain Willie Hughes, his own company is evident from Sonnet xxvii., where he says:

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And like enough thou know'lt thy estimate:
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gavest, thy own work then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gavest it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes none again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter."

But him whom he could not hold by love, would not hold by force. Willie Hughes was a member of Lord Pembroke's company, and, perhaps in the open yard of the Red ll Tavern, played the part of King Edward's icate minion. On Marlowe's death, he seems
"Knew it for months past!" I cried. "But why didn't she stop him? Why didn't she have him watched? He must have been mad."

The doctor stared at me. "I don't know what you mean," he said.

"Well," I cried, "if a mother knows that her son is going to commit suicide..."

"Suicide!" he answered. "Poor Erskine did not commit suicide. He died of consumption. He came here to die. The moment I saw him I knew that there was no hope. One lung was almost gone, and the other was very much affected. Three days before he died he asked me was there any hope. I told him frankly that there was none, and that he had only a few days to live. He wrote some letters, and was quite resigned, retaining his senses to the last."

At that moment Lady Erskine entered the room with the fatal picture of Willie Hughes in her hand. "When George was dying he begged me to give you this," she said. As I took it from her, her tears fell on my hand.

The picture hangs now in my library, where it is very much admired by my artistic friends. They have decided that it is not a Clouet, but an Ouvry. I have never cared to tell them its true history. But sometimes, when I look at it, I think that there is really a great deal to be said for the Willie Hughes theory of Shakespeare's Sonnets.

THE END OF
THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W. M.
A HOUSE OF POMEGRANATES
“Knew it for months past!” I cried. “But why didn’t she stop him? Why didn’t she have him watched? He must have been mad.”

The doctor stared at me. “I don’t know what you mean,” he said.

“Well,” I cried, “if a mother knows that her son is going to commit suicide——”

“Suicide!” he answered. “Poor Erskine did not commit suicide. He died of consumption. He came here to die. The moment I saw him I knew that there was no hope. One lung was almost gone, and the other was very much affected. Three days before he died he asked me was there any hope. I told him frankly that there was none, and that he had only a few days to live. He wrote some letters, and was quite resigned, retaining his senses to the last.”

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THE END OF
THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W. H.
THE YOUNG KING
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THE YOUNG KING
To
Margaret Lady Brooke
THE YOUNG KING

It was the night before the day fixed for his coronation, and the young King was sitting alone in his beautiful chamber. His courtiers had all taken their leave of him, bowing their heads to the ground, according to the ceremonious age of the day, and had retired to the Great Hall of the Palace, to receive a few last lessons from the Professor of Etiquette; there being some of them who had still quite natural manners, such in a courtier is, I need hardly say, a very wise offence.

The lad—for he was only a lad, being but seventeen years of age—was not sorry at their parture, and had flung himself back with a deep sigh of relief on the soft cushions of his brodered couch, lying there, wild-eyed and en-mouthed, like a brown woodland Faun; or ne young animal of the forest newly snared the hunters.

And, indeed, it was the hunters who had made him, coming upon him almost by chance bare-limbed and pipe in hand, he was follow-
leaning against the carved penthouse of the chimney, looked round at the dimly-lit room. The walls were hung with rich tapestries representing the Triumph of Beauty. A large press, inlaid with agate and lapis-lazuli, filled one corner, and facing the window stood a curiously wrought cabinet with lacquer panels of powdered and mosaiced gold, on which were placed some delicate goblets of Venetian glass, and a cup of dark-veined onyx. Pale poppies were broidered on the silk coverlet of the bed, as though they had fallen from the tired hands of sleep, and tall reeds of fluted ivory bare up the velvet canopy, from which great tufts of ostrich plumes sprang, like white foam, to the pallid silver of the fretted ceiling. A laughing Narcissus in green bronze held a polished mirror above its head. On the table stood a flat bowl of amethyst.

Outside he could see the huge dome of the cathedral, looming like a bubble over the shadowy houses, and the weary sentinels pacing up and down on the misty terrace by the river. Far away, in an orchard, a nightingale was singing. A faint perfume of jasmine came through the open window. He brushed his brown curls back from his forehead, and taking up a lute, let his fingers stray across the cords. His heavy eyelids drooped, and a strange languor came over him. Never before had he felt so keenly, or with such exquisite joy, the magic and the mystery of beautiful things.

When midnight sounded from the clock-
uch, at least, was the story that men whis-
ed to each other. Certain it was that the
King, when on his deathbed, whether moved
remorse for his great sin, or merely desiring
that the kingdom should not pass away from his
love, had had the lad sent for, and, in the presence
he Council, had acknowledged him as his heir.
And it seems that from the very first moment
his recognition he had shown signs of that
magnificent passion for beauty that was destined to
exert so great an influence over his life. Those
accompanied him to the suite of rooms set
aside for his service, often spoke of the cry of
adoration that broke from his lips when he saw
delicate raiment and rich jewels that had
preparation for him, and of the almost fierce
with which he flung aside his rough leathern
and coarse sheepskin cloak. He missed,
red, at times the fine freedom of his forest
and was always apt to chase at the tedious
and ceremonies that occupied so much of each
day, but the wonderful palace—Joyeuse, as they
ed it—of which he now found himself lord,
ed to him to be a new world fresh-fashioned
his delight; and as soon as he could escape
the council-board or audience-chamber, he
uld run down the great staircase, with its
of gilt bronze and its steps of bright por-
ry, and wander from room to room, and from
idor to corridor, like one who was seeking to
in beauty an anodyne from pain, a sort of
oration from sickness.
"He is a man like myself. Indeed, there is but this difference between us: that he wears fine clothes while I go in rags; and that while I am weak from hunger, he suffers not a little from overfeeding."

"The land is free," said the young King, "and thou art no man's slave."

"In war," answered the weaver, "the strong make slaves of the weak, and in peace the rich make slaves of the poor. We must work to live, and they give us such mean wages that we die. We toil for them all day long, and they heap up gold in their coffers, and our children fade away before their time, and the faces of those we love become hard and evil. We tread out the grapes, and another drinks the wine. We sow the corn, and our own board is empty. We have chains, though no eye beholds them; and are slaves, though men call us free."

"Is it so with all?" he asked.

"It is so with all," answered the weaver, "with the young as well as with the old, with the women as well as with the men, with the little children as well as with those who are stricken in years. The merchants grind us down, and we must needs do their bidding. The priest rides by and tells his beads, and no man has care of us. Through our sunless lanes creeps Poverty with her hungry eyes, and Sin with his sodden face follows close behind her. Misery wakes us in the morning, and Shame sits with us at night. But what are these things to thee? Thou art
Il rare and costly materials had certainly at fascination for him, and in his eagerness procure them he had sent away many mer-
its, some to traffic for amber with the rough se-folk of the north seas, some to Egypt
ook for that curious green turquoise which
und only in the tombs of kings, and is said
possess magical properties, some to Persia
silken carpets and painted pottery, and
rs to India to buy gauze and stained ivory,
stones and bracelets of jade, sandalwood
blue enamel and shawls of fine wool.
ut what had occupied him most was the
he was to wear at his coronation, the robe
issued gold, and the ruby-studded crown,
the sceptre with its rows and rings of pearls.
ed, it was of this that he was thinking
ight, as he lay back on his luxurious couch,
ing the great pine-wood log that was burn-
 itself out on the open hearth. The designs,
were from the hands of the most famous
rs of the time, had been submitted to him
months before, and he had given orders
the artificers were to toil night and day to
them out, and that the whole world was
searched for jewels that would be worthy
work. He saw himself in fancy stand-
at the high altar of the cathedral in the fair
ent of a King, and a smile played and
ed about his boyish lips, and lit up with a
lustre his dark woodland eyes.
t some time he rose from his seat, and
leaning against the carved penthouse of the chimney, looked round at the dimly-lit room. The walls were hung with rich tapestries representing the Triumph of Beauty. A large panel inlaid with agate and lapis-lazuli, filled a corner, and facing the window stood a curious wrought cabinet with lacquer panels of powder blue and mosaiced gold, on which were placed six delicate goblets of Venetian glass, and a vase of dark-veined onyx. Pale poppies were brocaded on the silk coverlet of the bed, as though they had fallen from the tired hands of sleep, and tall reeds of fluted ivory bare up the veneer of the canopy, from which great tufts of ostrich plumes sprang, like white foam, to the pallid silver fretted ceiling. A laughing Narcissus in green bronze held a polished mirror above his head. On the table stood a flat bowl of amethyst.

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When midnight sounded from the chime of the bells.
wer he touched a bell, and his pages entered
disrobed him with much ceremony, pouring
se-water over his hands, and strewing flowers
his pillow. A few moments after that they
d left the room, he fell asleep.

And as he slept he dreamed a dream, and this
as his dream.
He thought that he was standing in a long,
attic, amidst the whir and clatter of many
oms. The meagre daylight peered in through
grated windows, and showed him the gaunt
ures of the weavers bending over their cases.
le, sickly-looking children were crouched on
huge crossbeams. As the shuttles dashed
rough the warp they lifted up the heavy
itens, and when the shuttles stopped they let
battens fall and pressed the threads together.
ir faces were pinched with famine, and their
hands shook and trembled. Some haggard
men were seated at a table sewing. A horrible
our filled the place. The air was foul and
vy, and the walls dripped and streamed with
mp.
The young King went over to one of the
vers, and stood by him and watched him.
And the weaver looked at him angrily, and
：“Why art thou watching me? Art thou
spy set on us by our master?”
“Who is thy master?” asked the young
ng.
“Our master!” cried the weaver, bitterly.
"He is a man like myself. Indeed, there is but this difference between us—that he wears fine clothes while I go in rags, and that while I am weak from hunger he suffers not a little from overfeeding."

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one of us. Thy face is too happy." And turned away scowling, and threw the shuttle s the loom, and the young King saw that s threaded with a thread of gold.
d a great terror seized upon him, and he to the weaver: "What robe is this that thou eaving?"
t is the robe for the coronation of the young ;" he answered; "what is that to thee?" d the young King gave a loud cry and , and lo! he was in his own chamber, and ugh the window he saw the great honey-red moon hanging in the dusky air.

d he fell asleep again and dreamed, and was his dream.
thought that he was lying on the deck of ge galley that was being rowed by a hundred s. On a carpet by his side the master of alley was seated. He was black as ebony, his turban was of crimson silk. Great ear-of silver dragged down the thick lobes of ears, and in his hands he had a pair of ivory e slaves were naked, but for a ragged loin- and each man was chained to his neighbour. hot sun beat brightly upon them, and the es ran up and down the gangway and d them with whips of hide. They stretched heir lean arms and pulled the heavy oars ugh the water. The salt spray flew from lades.
At six they reached a Boldt's Flag, and by
the moonlight. A light wood which ran from
the beach, and seemed to be divided in the
middle, and with a line near the dog. There, the
men, to their surprise, and surprise agitated.
The manner of the galley took a peculiar
air, and made out what was in the air.
The galley was one of the event, and the man
galley-as may. A woman unbound in a yel-
low took hold of slowly on a nail, looking in
now and then at the dead body.

As soon as they had cast anchor and had
down the sail, the negroes went into the ba-
er and brought up a long rope, having
attached it with lead. The manner of the gal-
ye was over the side, making the man fast
two other strachts. Then the negroes told
the youngest of the slaves and bunched his eye
off, and that he desired to see what was in the
air, and that a dog came round him. He re-
plunged down the ladder and disappeared into
the sea. A few bubbles rose where he sank.
Some of the other slaves peered curiously over
the side. At the prow of the galley sat a shade-
chamber, beating monotonously upon a drum.

After some time the diver rose up out of the
water, and clung panting to the ladder with a
pearl in his right hand. The negroes seized it
from him, and thrust him back. The slaves fell
asleep over their ears.

Again and again he came up, and each time
that he did so he brought with him a beautiful
The master of the galley weighed them, put them into a little bag of green leather. The young King tried to speak, but his tongue would not cleave to the roof of his mouth, and his lips refused to move. The negroes chattered at each other, and began to quarrel over a string of bright beads. Two cranes flew round and round the vessel.

Then the diver came up for the last time, and brought a pearl that he brought with him was fairer than all the pearls of Ormuz, for it was shaped like the full moon, and whiter than the morning cloud.

But his face was strangely pale, and as he drew up the deck the blood gushed from his nostrils. He quivered for a little, and then he was still. The negroes shrugged their shoulders, and threw the body overboard.

And the master of the galley laughed, and, ringed out, he took the pearl, and when he pressed it to his forehead and bowed, shall be,” he said, “for the sceptre of the King,” and he made a sign to the negroes to lower the anchor.

And when the young King heard this he gave a cry, and woke, and through the window saw the long grey fingers of the dawn clutching at the fading stars.

And he fell asleep again, and dreamed, and in his dream thought that he was wandering through a wood, hung with strange fruits and with
And the Chamberlain spake to the young King, and said: “My lord, I pray thee set aside these thoughts of thine, and put on this fair robe, and set this crown upon thy head. For how shall the people know that thou art a king, if thou hast not a king’s raiment?”

And the young King looked at him. “Is it so, indeed?” he questioned. “Will they not know me for a king if I have not a king’s raiment?”

“They will not know thee, my lord,” cried the Chamberlain.

“I had thought that there had been men who were kinglike,” he answered, “but it may be as thou sayest. And yet I will not wear this robe, nor will I be crowned with this crown, but even as I came to the palace so will I go forth from it.”

And he bade them all leave him, save one page whom he kept as his companion, a lad a year younger than himself. Him he kept for his service, and when he had bathed himself in clear water, he opened a great painted chest, and from it he took the leathern tunic and rough sheepskin cloak that he had worn when he had watched on the hillside the shaggy goats of the goatherd. These he put on, and in his hand he took his rude shepherd’s staff.

And the little page opened his big blue eyes in wonder, and said smiling to him: “My lord, I see thy robe and thy sceptre, but where is thy crown?”

And the young King plucked a spray of wild briar that was climbing over the balcony, and
itute, and a third of them lay dead. A cold
followed her, and the water-snakes ran by
side.

And when Avarice saw that a third of the
itute was dead she beat her breast and
. . . She beat her barren bosom, and cried
I. “Thou hast slain a third of my servants,”
cried; “get thee gone. There is war in the
stains of Tartary, and the kings of each side
calling to thee. The Afghans have slain
black ox, and are marching to battle. They
beaten upon their shields with their spears,
have put on their helmets of iron. What
ty valley to thee, that thou shouldst tarry
’ Get thee gone, and come here no more.”
Jay,” answered Death, “but till thou hast
me a grain of corn I will not go.”
At Avarice shut her hand, and clenched her
. . . “I will not give thee anything,” she
ered.

And Death laughed, and took up a black
stone, threw it into the forest, and out of a thicket
ild hemlock came Fever in a robe of flame.
passed through the multitude, and touched
, and each man that she touched died. The
withered beneath her feet as she walked.

And Avarice shuddered, and put ashes on
head. “Thou art cruel,” she cried; “thou art
. . . There is famine in the walled cities of India,
the cisterns of Samarcand have run dry.
. . .” is famine in the walled cities of Egypt, and
ocusts have come up from the desert. The
Nile has not overflowed its banks, and the priests have cursed Isis and Osiris. Get thee gone, those who need thee, and leave me my servants.

"Nay," answered Death, "but till thou hast given me a grain of corn I will not go."

"I will not give thee anything," said Avarice.

And Death laughed again, and he whirled through his fingers, and a woman came flying through the air. Plague was written upon her forehead, and a crowd of lean vultures wheeled round her. She covered the valley with her wings, and no man was left alive.

And Avarice fled shrieking through the sky, and Death leaped upon his red horse and galloped away, and his galloping was faster than the wind.

And out of the slime at the bottom of the valley crept dragons and horrible things with scales, and the jackals came trotting along the sand, sniffing up the air with their nostrils.

And the young King wept, and said: "Who were these men, and for what were they seeking?"

"For rubies for a king’s crown," answered one who stood behind him.

And the young King started, and turning round, he saw a man habited as a pilgrim and holding in his hand a mirror of silver.

And he grew pale, and said: "For what king?"

And the pilgrim answered: "Look in this mirror and thou shalt see him."

And he looked in the mirror, and, seeing his own face, he gave a great cry and woke, and th
ht sunlight was streaming into the room, from the trees of the garden and pleasuresance birds were singing.

And the Chamberlain and the high officers of the court came in and made obeisance to him, and the young King brought him the robe of tissued gold, and the crown and the sceptre before him. And the young King looked at them, and they appeared beautiful. More beautiful were they than any thing that he had ever seen. But he remembered his dreams, and he said to his lords: "Take these things away, for I will not wear them."

And the courtiers were amazed, and some of them laughed, for they thought that he was mad.

But he spake sternly to them again, and said: "Keep these things away, and hide them from me. Though it be the day of my coronation, I will not wear them. For on the loom of Sorrow, by the white hands of Pain, has this my robe been woven. There is Blood in the heart of the loom; and Death in the heart of the pearl." And he told them his three dreams.

And when the courtiers heard them they looked at each other and whispered, saying: "Surely he is mad; for what is a dream but a dream, and a vision a vision? They are not real things that one can heed them. And what have we to do with the visions of those who toil for us? Shall a man not read till he has seen the sower, nor drink wine unless he has talked with the vinedresser?"
his right hand and on his left were the marvelous vessels of gold, the chalice with the yellow wine, and the vial with the holy oil. He knelt before the image of Christ, and the great candles burned brightly by the jewelled shrine, and the smoke of the incense curled in thin blue wreaths through the dome. He bowed his head in prayer, and the priests in their stiff copes crept away from the altar.

And suddenly a wild tumult came from the street outside, and in entered the nobles with drawn swords and nodding plumes, and shields of polished steel. "Where is this dreamer of dreams?" they cried. "Where is this King, who is apparelled like a beggar—this boy who brings shame upon our state? Surely we will slay him for he is unworthy to rule over us."

And the young King bowed his head again and prayed, and when he had finished his prayer he rose up, and turning round he looked at them sadly.

And lo! through the painted windows came the sunlight streaming upon him, and the sunbeams wove round him a tissued robe that was fairer than the robe that had been fashioned for his pleasure. The dead staff blossomed, and bare lilies that were whiter than pearls. The dry thorn blossomed, and bare roses that were redder than rubies. Whiter than fine pearls were the lilies, and their stems were of bright silver. Redder than male rubies were the roses, and their leaves were of beaten gold.
it, and made a circlet of it, and set it on own head.

'This shall be my crown,' he answered.

And thus attired he passed out of his chamber to the Great Hall, where the nobles were waiting him.

And the nobles made merry, and some of them cried out to him: "My lord, the people t for their king, and thou showest them a gar," and others were wroth and said: "He hgs shame upon our state, and is unworthy be our master." But he answered them not ord, but passed on, and went down the bright phyry staircase, and out through the gates of nze, and mounted upon his horse, and rode wards the cathedral, the little page running ide him.

And the people laughed and said: "It is the g's fool who is riding by," and they mocked l.

And he drew rein and said: "Nay, but I am King." And he told them his three dreams. And a man came out of the crowd and spake erly to him, and said: "Sir, knowest thou that out of the luxury of the rich cometh life of the poor? By your pomp we are tured, and your vices give us bread. To toil a hard master is bitter, but to have no master toil for is more bitter still. Thinkest thou t the ravens will feed us? And what cure t thou for these things? Wilt thou say to buyer: 'Thou shalt buy for so much,' and
to the seller: ‘Thou shalt sell at this price?’ I trow not. Therefore go back to thy Palace and put on thy purple and fine linen. What hast thou to do with us, and what we suffer?’

‘Are not the rich and the poor brothers?’ asked the young King.

‘Aye,’ answered the man, ‘and the name of the rich brother is Cain.’

And the young King’s eyes filled with tears, and he rode on through the murmurs of the people, and the little page grew afraid and left him.

And when he reached the great portal of the cathedral, the soldiers thrust their halberts out and said: ‘What dost thou seek here? None enters by this door but the King.’

And his face flushed with anger, and he said to them: ‘I am the King,’ and waved their halberts aside and passed in.

And when the old Bishop saw him coming in his goatherd’s dress, he rose up in wonder from his throne, and went to meet him, and said to him: ‘My son, is this a king’s apparel? And with what crown shall I crown thee, and what sceptre shall I place in thy hand? Surely this should be to thee a day of joy, and not a day of abasement.’

‘Shall Joy wear what Grief has fashioned?’ said the young King. And he told him his three dreams.

And when the Bishop had heard them he knit his brows, and said: ‘My son, I am an old man, and in the winter of my days, and I know that many evil things are done in the wide world.
fierce robbers come down from the moun-
and carry off the little children, and sell
to the Moors. The lions lie in wait for
aravans, and leap upon the camels. The
boar roots up the corn in the valley, and
oxes gnaw the vines upon the hill. The
wolves lay waste the sea-coast and burn the
of the fishermen, and take their nets from

In the salt-marshes live the lepers; they
houses of wattled reeds, and none may
nigh them. The beggars wander through
ities, and eat their food with the dogs.

thou make these things not to be? Wilt
| take the leper for thy bedfellow, and set
beggar at thy board? Shall the lion do thy
ng, and the wild boar obey thee? Is not
who made misery wiser than thou art?
fore I praise thee not for this that thou
one, but I bid thee ride back to the Palace
ake thy face glad, and put on the raiment
besemeth a king, and with the crown
I will crown thee, and the sceptre of
will I place in thy hand. And as for
 dreams, think no more of them. The
n of this world is too great for one man;
and the world's sorrow too heavy for
tart to suffer."

I yest thou that in this house?" said the

King, and he strode past the Bishop, and
ed up the steps of the altar, and stood
the image of Christ.

stood before the image of Christ, and on
To

Mrs. William H. Grenfell

OF TAPLOW COURT
He stood there in the raiment of a king, and gates of the jewelled shrine flew open, and
the crystal of the many-rayed monstrance me a marvellous and mystical light. He
there in a king's raiment, and the Glory God filled the place, and the saints in their
niches seemed to move. In the fair
ment of a king he stood before them, and the
pealed out its music, and the trumpeters
upon their trumpets, and the singing boys
and the people fell upon their knees in awe,
the nobles sheathed their swords and did
age, and the Bishop's face grew pale, and
hands trembled. "A greater than I hath
ned thee," he cried, and he knelt before him.
and the young King came down from the
altar, and passed home through the midst
people. But no man dared look upon his
or it was like the face of an angel.

THE END OF
THE YOUNG KING
E BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA
To

Mrs. William H. Grenfell
OF TAPLOW COURT
was the birthday of the Infanta. She was just twelve years of age, and the sun was shining brightly in the gardens of the palace. Though she was a real Princess and the Infanta of Spain, she had only one birthday a year, just like the children of quite poor e, so it was naturally a matter of great restraint to the whole country that she should have a really fine day for the occasion. And a fine day it certainly was. The tall striped flags stood straight up upon their stalks, like rows of soldiers, and looked defiantly across the grass at the roses, and said: “We are quite splendid as you are now.” The purple buttercups fluttered about with gold dust on their petals, visiting each flower in turn; the little bees crept out of the crevices of the wall, and basked in the white glare; and the pomegranates split and cracked with the heat, and shed their bleeding red hearts. Even the yellow lemons, that hung in such profusion on the mouldering trellis and along the dim...
arcades, seemed to have caught a richer colour from the wonderful sunlight, and the magnolia trees opened their great globe-like blossoms of folded ivory, and filled the air with a sweeter heavy perfume.

The little Princess herself walked up and down the terrace with her companions, and played at hide and seek round the stone vases and the old moss-grown statues. On ordinary days she was only allowed to play with children of her own rank, so she had always to play alone, but her birthday was an exception, and the King had given orders that she was to invite any of her young friends whom she liked to come and amuse themselves with her. There was a stately grace about these slim Spanish children as they glided about, the boys with their large-plumed hats and short fluttering cloaks, the girls holding up the trains of their long brocaded gowns, and shielding the sun from their eyes with huge fans of black and silver. But the Infanta was the most graceful of all, and the most tastefully attired, after the somewhat cumbrous fashion of the day. Her robe was of grey satin, the skirt and the wide puffed sleeves heavily embroidered with silver, and the stiff corset studded with rows of fine pearls. Two tiny slippers with big pink rosettes peeped out beneath her dress as she walked. Pink and pearl was her great gauze fan, and in her hair, which like an aureole of faded gold stood out stiffly round her pale little face, she had a beautiful white rose.
from a window in the palace the sad melan-
King watched them. Behind him stood
ther, Don Pedro of Aragon, whom he
, and his confessor, the Grand Inquisitor
ada, sat by his side. Sadder even than
was the King, for as he looked at the
king bowing with childish gravity to the
bling courtiers, or laughing behind her fan

grim Duchess of Albuquerque who always
panied her, he thought of the young
, her mother, who but a short time before
it seemed to him—had come from the gay
ry of France, and had withered away in
ombre splendour of the Spanish court, dying
six months after the birth of her child, and
she had seen the almonds blossom twice
orchard, or plucked the second year’s fruit
the old gnarled fig-tree that stood in the
of the now grass-grown courtyard. So
had been his love for her that he had not
ed even the grave to hide her from him.
ad been embalmed by a Moorish physician,
in return for this service had been granted
fe, which for heresy and suspicion of magical
ices had been already forfeited, men said,
Holy Office, and her body was still lying
aped in a dark cloak and with a muffled
m in his hand, went in and knelt by her
side, calling out: "Mi reina! Mi reina!" and sometimes breaking through the formal etiquette that in Spain governs every separate action of life, and sets limits even to the sorrow of a King, he would clutch at the pale jewelled hands in a wild agony of grief, and try to wake by his mad kisses the cold painted face.

To-day he seemed to see her again, as he had seen her first at the Castle of Fontainebleau, when he was but fifteen years of age, and she still younger. They had been formally betrothed on that occasion by the Papal Nuncio in the presence of the French King and all the Court, and he had returned to the Escurial bearing with him a little ringlet of yellow hair, and the memory of two childish lips bending down to kiss his hand as he stepped into his carriage. Later on he followed the marriage, hastily performed at Burgos, a small town on the frontier between the two countries, and the grand public entry into Madrid with the customary celebration of high mass at the Church of La Atocha, and a more than usually solemn auto-da-fé, in which nearly three hundred heretics, amongst whom were many Englishmen, had been delivered over to the secular arm to be burned.

Certainly he had loved her madly, and to the ruin, many thought, of his country, then at war with England for the possession of the empire of the New World. He had hardly ever permitted her to be out of his sight; for her, he had forgotten or seemed to have forgotten, all grave affairs of
te; and, with that terrible blindness that past, brings upon its servants, he had failed to
ice that the elaborate ceremonies by which he
ght to please her did but aggravate the strange
ady from which she suffered. When she died
vas, for a time, like one bereft of reason. In-
, there is no doubt but that he would have
ally abdicated and retired to the great Trap-
monastery at Granada, of which he was
ady titular Prior, had he not been afraid to
e the little Infanta at the mercy of his brother,
se cruelty, even in Spain, was notorious, and
was suspected by many of having caused the
en's death by means of a pair of poisoned
es that he had presented to her on the occasion
er visiting his castle in Aragon. Even after
expiration of the three years of public mourn-
that he had ordained throughout his whole
ions by royal edict, he would never suffer
inisters to speak about any new alliance, and
the Emperor himself sent to him, and offered
the hand of the lovely Archduchess of Bohe-
, his niece, in marriage, he bade the ambassa-
tell their master that the King of Spain was
ady wedded to Sorrow, and that though she
but a barren bride he loved her better than
uty; an answer that cost his crown the rich
inces of the Netherlands, which soon after, he
Emperor's instigation, revolted against him
er the leadership of some fanatics of the Re-
ed Church.
is whole married life, with its fierce, fiery-
coloured joys and the terrible ending, seemed to come back as he watched the Infanta playing. She had all the Queen's pretty manner, the same willful way of the same proud curved beautiful same wonderful smile—indeed as she glanced up and out window, or stretched out her little hand to the stately Spanish gentlemen to kiss the shrill laughter of the children grated and the bright pitiless sunlight and sorrow, and a dull odour of strange spices such as embalmers used, seemed to taint—fancy?—the clear morning air. He buried in his hands, and when the Infanta left again the curtains had been drawn, and she had retired.

She made a little moue of disappointment shrugged her shoulders. Surely he must have stayed with her on her birthday. What a stupid State-affairs matter? Or had he that gloomy chapel, where the candles were burning, and where she was never never enter? How silly of him, when the sun was so brightly, and everybody was so. Besides, he would miss the sham bull-fi which the trumpet was already sounding, nothing of the puppet-show and the other full things. Her uncle and the Grand In. were much more sensible. They had come the terrace, and paid her nice complimen.
ossed her pretty head, and taking Don Pedro's hand, she walked slowly down the steps of a long pavilion of purple silk that had been erected at the end of the garden, the other lords following in strict order of precedence, who had the longest names going first.

A procession of noble boys, fantastically dressed as troubadours, came out to meet her, and the young marquis of Tierra-Nueva, a wonderfully handsome boy of about fourteen years of age, uncovering his head with all the grace of a born hidalgo and the pride of Spain, led her solemnly in to a little gilt ivory chair that was placed on a raised dais in the arena. The children grouped themselves all round, fluttering their big fans and whispering to each other, and Don Pedro and the Inquisitor stood laughing at the entrance.

The Duchess—the Camerera-Mayor as she was called—a thin, hard-featured woman with a wide ruff, did not look quite so bad-tempered as she had been brought to see at the Zarzuela, on the occasion of the visit of the Duke of Lema to her father. Some of the boys pranced out on richly-caparisoned hobby-horses brandishing long javelins with gay streamers of bright reds attached to them; others went on foot.
BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA
this wonderful ceremony which takes place every year at Maytime in front of the high altar of the Virgin, and in her honour; and indeed none of the royal family of Spain had entered the great cathedral of Saragossa since a mad priest, supposed by many to have been in the pay of Elizabeth of England, had tried to administer a poisoned wafer to the Prince of the Asturias. So she had known only by hearsay of "Our Lady’s Dance," as it was called, and it certainly was a beautiful sight. The boys wore old-fashioned court dresses of white velvet, and their curious three-cornered hats were fringed with silver and surmounted with huge plumes of ostrich feathers, the dazzling whiteness of their costumes, as they moved about in the sunlight, being still more accentuated by their swarthy faces and long black hair. Everybody was fascinated by the grave dignity with which they moved through the intricate figures of the dance, and by the elaborate grace of their slow gestures, and stately bows, and when they had finished their performance and doffed their great plumed hats to the Infanta, she acknowledged their reverence with much courtesy, and made a vow that she would send a large wax candle to the shrine of Our Lady of Pilar in return for the pleasure that she had given her.

A troop of handsome Egyptians — as the gipsies were termed in those days — then advanced into the arena, and sitting down cross-legged, in a circle, began to play softly upon their zithers, moving their bodies to the tune, and
ning, almost below their breath, a low
ly air. When they caught sight of Don
they scowled at him, and some of them
terrified, for only a few weeks before he
had two of their tribe hanged for sorcery
a market-place at Seville, but the pretty
ta charmed them as she leaned back peep-
ver her fan with her great blue eyes, and
felt sure that one so lovely as she was
never be cruel to anybody. So they
d on very gently and just touching the
of the zithers with their long pointed nails,
their heads began to nod as though they
falling asleep. Suddenly, with a cry so
that all the children were startled and Don
's hand clutched at the agate pommel of
agger, they leapt to their feet and whirled
round the enclosure beating their tam-
nes, and chaunting some wild love-song
eir strange guttural language. Then at
er signal they all flung themselves again
ground and lay there quite still, the dull
ming of the zithers being the only sound
broke the silence. After they had done
several times, they disappeared for a mo-
and came back leading a brown shaggy
by a chain, and carrying on their shoulders
little Barbary apes. The bear stood upon
ad with the utmost gravity, and the wizened
played all kinds of amusing tricks with two
boys who seemed to be their masters, and
it with tiny swords, and fired off guns, and
forgot to mark two whole minutes with his long shadowy finger, and could not help saying to the great milk-white Peacock, who was sunning herself on the balustrade, that every one knew that the children of Kings were Kings, and that the children of charcoal-burners were charcoal-burners, and that it was absurd to pretend that it wasn’t so; a statement with which the Peacock entirely agreed, and indeed screamed out: “Certainly, certainly,” in such a loud, harsh voice, that the gold-fish who lived in the basin of the cool splashing fountain put their heads out of the water, and asked the huge stone Tritons what on earth was the matter.

But somehow the Birds liked him. They had seen him often in the forest, dancing about like an elf after the eddying leaves, or crouched up in the hollow of some old oak-tree, sharing his nuts with the squirrels. They did not mind his being ugly, a bit. Why, even the nightingale herself, who sang so sweetly in the orange groves at night that sometimes the Moon leaned down to listen, was not much to look at after all; and, besides, he had been kind to them, and during that terribly bitter winter, when there were no berries on the trees, and the ground was as hard as iron, and the wolves had come down to the very gates of the city to look for food, he had never once forgotten them, but had always given them crumbs out of his little hunch of black bread, and divided with them whatever poor poor breakfast he had.
So they flew round and round him, just touching his cheek with their wings as they passed, and chattered to each other, and the little Dwarf was so pleased that he could not help showing them the beautiful white rose, and telling them that the Infanta herself had given it to him because she loved him.

They did not understand a single word of what he was saying, but that made no matter, for they put their heads on one side, and looked wise, which is quite as good as understanding a thing, and very much easier.

The Lizards also took an immense fancy to him, and when he grew tired of running about and flung himself down on the grass to rest, they played and romped all over him, and tried to amuse him in the best way they could. “Every one cannot be as beautiful as a lizard,” they cried; “that would be too much to expect. And, though it sounds absurd to say so, he is really not so ugly after all, provided, of course, that one shuts one’s eyes, and does not look at him.” The Lizards were extremely philosophical by nature, and often sat thinking for hours and hours together, when there was nothing else to do, or when the weather was too rainy for them to go out.

The Flowers, however, were excessively annoyed at their behaviour, and at the behaviour of the birds. “It only shows,” they said, “what a vulgarising effect this incessant rushing and flying about has. Well-bred people always stay
out delay to the Palace, where a wonderful feast had been already prepared for her, including a real birthday cake with her own initials worked all over it in painted sugar and a lovely silver flag waving from the top. The Infanta accordingly rose up with much dignity, and having given orders that the little Dwarf was to dance again for her after the hour of siesta, and conveyed her thanks to the young Count of Tier Nueva for his charming reception, she went back to her apartments, the children following in the same order in which they had entered.

Now when the little Dwarf heard that he was to dance a second time before the Infanta, as by her own express command, he was so proud that he ran out into the garden, kissing the white rose in an absurd ecstasy of pleasure, and making the most uncouth and clumsy gesture of delight.

The Flowers were quite indignant at his daring to intrude into their beautiful home, and when they saw him capering up and down the walks, and waving his arms above his head in such a ridiculous manner, they could not restrain their feelings any longer.

"He is really far too ugly to be allowed to play in any place where we are," cried the Tulips.

"He should drink poppy-juice, and go to sleep for a thousand years," said the great scarlet Lilies, and they grew quite hot and angry.

"He is a perfect horror!" screamed the Cactu
The, he is twisted and stumpy, and his head completely out of proportion with his legs. Ally he makes me feel prickly all over, and if comes near me I will sting him with my orns."

'And he has actually got one of my best oms,' exclaimed the White Rose-Tree. "I re it to the Infanta this morning myself, as birthday present, and he has stolen it from."

And she called out: "Thief, thief, thief!" the top of her voice.

Even the red Geraniums, who did not usually e themselves airs, and were known to have great many poor relations themselves, curled in disgust when they saw him, and when the lets meekly remarked that though he was tainly extremely plain, still he could not help they retorted with a good deal of justice that was his chief defect, and that there was no son why one should admire a person because was incurable; and, indeed, some of the lets themselves felt that the ugliness of the le Dwarf was almost ostentatious, and that would have shown much better taste if he looked sad, or at least pensive, instead of ping about merrily, and throwing himself o such grotesque and silly attitudes.

As for the old Sundial, who was an extremely arable individual, and had once told the e of day to no less a person than the Emperor arles V. himself, he was so taken aback by a little Dwarf's appearance, that he almost
forgot to mark two whole minutes with his shadowy finger, and could not help saying to the great milk-white Peacock, who was sunning herself on the balustrade, that every one knew that the children of Kings were Kings, and the children of charcoal-burners were charcoal-burners, and that it was absurd to pretend that it wasn’t so; a statement with which the Peacock entirely agreed, and indeed screamed out ‘‘Certainly, certainly,’’ in such a loud, high voice, that the gold-fish who lived in the basin of the cool splashing fountain put their heads out of the water, and asked the huge stone Tritons what on earth was the matter.

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exactly in the same place, as we do. No one ever saw us hopping up and down the walk, galloping madly through the grass after dragonflies. When we do want change of air, we send the gardener, and he carries us to another hill. This is dignified, and as it should be. But birds and lizards have no sense of repose, and indeed birds have not even a permanent address. They are mere vagrants like the gypsies, and should be treated in exactly the same manner.” So they put their noses in the air, and looked very haughty, and were quite delighted when after some time they saw the little Dwarf scramble up from the grass, and make his way across the terrace to the palace.

“He should certainly be kept indoors for the rest of his natural life,” they said. “Look at him, hunched back, and his crooked legs,” and they began to titter.

But the little Dwarf knew nothing of all this. He liked the birds and the lizards immensely, and thought that the flowers were the most marvellous things in the whole world, except of course the Infanta, but then she had given him the beautiful white rose, and she loved him, that made a great difference. How he wishes that he had gone back with her! She would have put him on her right hand, and smiled at him, and he would have never left her side, would have made her his playmate, and taught her all kinds of delightful tricks. For though he had never been in a palace before, he knew
eat many wonderful things. He could make the cages out of rushes for the grasshoppers to
sing in, and fashion the long-jointed bamboo to the pipe that Pan loves to hear. He knew
the cry of every bird, and could call the starlings from the tree-top, or the heron from the mere. He
knew the trail of every animal, and could track the hare by its delicate footprints, and the boar by
its trampled leaves. All the wild-dances he knew, the mad dance in red raiment with the autumn,
the light dance in blue sandals over the corn, the dance with white snow-wreaths in winter, and the
blossom-dance through the orchards in spring. He knew where the wood-pigeons built their nests, and once when a fowler had snared the parent birds, he had brought up the young ones himself, and had built a little dovecot for them in the cleft of a pollard elm. They were quite tame, and fed to feed out of his hands every morning. He would like them, and the rabbits that scurried about in the long fern, and the jays with their gleamy feathers and black bills, and the hedge-ogs that could curl themselves up into prickly alls, and the great wise tortoises that crawled owly about, shaking their heads and nibbling the young leaves. Yes, she must certainly come to the forest and play with him. He would give her his own little bed, and would watch outside the window till dawn, to see that the wild horned cattle did not harm her, nor the gaunt wolves creep too near the hut. And at dawn he would tap at the shutters and wake her,
and they would go out and dance together all day long. It was really not a bit lonely in the forest. Sometimes a Bishop rode through on a white mule, reading out of a painted book. Sometimes in their green velvet caps, and their jerkins of tanned deerskin, the falconers passed by, with hooded hawks on their wrists. At vintage-time came the grape-treaders, with purple hands and feet, wreathed with glossy ivy and carrying dipping skins of wine; and the charcoal-burners round their huge braziers at night, watching dry logs charring slowly in the fire, and roasting chestnuts in the ashes, and the robbers came of their caves and made merry with them. One too, he had seen a beautiful procession winding the long dusty road to Toledo. The monks were in front singing sweetly, and carrying bright burners and crosses of gold, and then, in silver armor with matchlocks and pikes, came the soldiers, in their midst walked three barefooted men, strange yellow dresses painted all over with wonderful figures, and carrying lighted candles in their hands. Certainly there was a great deal to look at in the forest, and when she was tired he would find a soft bank of moss for her, or carry her in his arms, for he was very strong, though he knew that he was not tall. He would make her a necklace of red bryony berries, that would be quite as pretty as the white berries that she wore on her dress, and when she was tired of them, he could throw them away, and he would find others. He would bring her acorn-cups and do
ched anemonies, and tiny glow-worms to be 

in the pale gold of her hair.

ut where was she? He asked the white 

, and it made him no answer. The whole 

ce seemed asleep, and even where the shutters 

ot been closed, heavy curtains had been 

across the windows to keep out the glare. 

andered all round looking for some place 

ich he might gain an entrance, and at 

caught sight of a little private door that was 

open. He slipped through, and found him- 

in a splendid hall, far more splendid, he feared, 

the forest, there was so much more gilding 

here, and even the floor was made of great 

ed stones, fitted together into a sort of geo-

ical pattern. But the little Infanta was not 

only some wonderful white statues that 

down on him from their jasper pedestals, 

d blank eyes and strangely smiling lips.

the end of the hall hung a richly embroidered 
ain of black velvet, powdered with suns and 

, the King’s favourite devices, and broderied 

he colour he loved best. Perhaps she was 

ng behind that? He would try at any rate. 

he stole quietly across, and drew it aside. 

there was only another room, though a 

ier room, he thought, than the one he had 

left. The walls were hung with a many-fil-

green arras of needle-wrought tapestry repre-

ng a hunt, the work of some Flemish artists 

had spent more than seven years in its com-
position. It had once been the chamber of le Fou, as he was called, that mad King who so enamoured of the chase, that he had often in his delirium to mount the huge rearing stag and to drag down the stag on which the hounds were leaping, sounding his hunting and stabbing with his dagger at the pale deer. It was now used as the council-room, on the centre table were lying the red ports of the ministers, stamped with the gold tulip of Spain, and with the arms and emblems of house of Hapsburg.

The little Dwarf looked in wonder all around him, and was half-afraid to go on. The st silent horsemen that galloped so swiftly through the long glades without making any noise, set to him like those terrible phantoms of who had heard the charcoal-burners speaking Comprachos, who hunt only at night, and if meet a man, turn him into a hind, and chase. But he thought of the pretty Infanta, and courage. He wanted to find her alone, and th that he too loved her. Perhaps she was in room beyond.

He ran across the soft Moorish carpets, opened the door. No! She was not here et The room was quite empty.

It was a throne-room, used for the rece foreign ambassadors, when the King, of late had not been often, consented to them a personal audience; the same room which, many years before, envoys had app
in England to make arrangements for the marriage of their Queen, then one of the Catholic sovereigns of Europe, with the Emperor’s eldest son. The hangings were of gilt Cordovan leather, id a heavy gilt chandelier with branches for three hundred wax lights hung down from the back and white ceiling. Underneath a great canopy of gold cloth, on which the lions and wavers of Castile were brodered in seed pearls, stood the throne itself, covered with a rich pall black velvet studded with silver tulips and elaborately fringed with silver and pearls. On the second step of the throne was placed the ceiling-stool of the Infanta, with its cushion cloth of silver tissue, and below that again, beyond the limit of the canopy, stood the air for the Papal Nuncio, who alone had the right to be seated in the King’s presence on the occasion of any public ceremonial, and whose cardinal’s hat, with its tangled scarlet tassels, y on a purple tabouret in front. On the wall, ring the throne, hung a life-sized portrait of Charles V. in hunting dress, with a great mastiff at his side, and a picture of Philip II. receiving the homage of the Netherlands occupied the centre of the other wall. Between the windows stood a black ebony cabinet, inlaid with plates of ivory, which the figures from Holbein’s “Dance of Death” had been graved—by the hand, some id, of that famous master himself.

But the little Dwarf cared nothing for all his magnificence. He would not have given
gave a curious gasp, and clutched his side. And then he fell back again, and lay quite still.

"That is capital," said the Infanta, after a pause; "but now you must dance for me."

"Yes," cried all the children, "you must get up and dance; for you are as clever as the Barbary apes, and much more ridiculous."

But the little Dwarf made no answer.

And the Infanta stamped her foot, and called out to her uncle, who was walking on the terrace with the Chamberlain, reading some despatches that had just arrived from Mexico, where the Holy Office had recently been established. "My funny little Dwarf is sulking," she cried, "you must wake him up, and tell him to dance for me."

They smiled at each other, and sauntered in, and Don Pedro stooped down, and slapped the Dwarf on the cheek with his embroidered glove. "You must dance," he said, "petit monstre. You must dance. The Infanta of Spain and the Indies wishes to be amused."

But the little Dwarf never moved.

"A whipping master should be sent for," said Don Pedro wearily, and he went back to the terrace. But the Chamberlain looked grave, and he knelt beside the little Dwarf, and put his hand upon his heart. And after a few moments he shrugged his shoulders, and rose up, and having made a low bow to the Infanta, he said: "Mi bella Princesa, your funny little Dwarf will never dance again. It is a pity, for he is so ugly that he might have made the King smile."
"But why will he not dance again?" asked the Infanta, laughing.
"Because his heart is broken," answered the Chamberlain.
And the Infanta frowned, and her dainty rose-leaf lips curled in pretty disdain. "For the future let those who come to play with me have no hearts," she cried, and she ran out into the garden.

THE END OF
THE BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA
THE FISHERMAN AND HIS SOUL
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THE BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA
E FISHERMAN AND HIS SOUL
FISHERMAN AND HIS SOUL
To H.S.H.
Alice, Princess of Monaco
EVERY evening the young Fisherman went out upon the sea, and threw his nets to the water.

When the wind blew from the land he caught nothing, or but little at best, for it was a bitter and black-winged wind, and rough waves rose up to meet it. But when the wind blew to the shore, the fish came in from the deep, and swam to the meshes of his nets, and he took them to the market-place and sold them.

Every evening he went out upon the sea, and the evening the net was so heavy that hardly could he draw it into the boat. And he laughed, and said to himself: "Surely I have caught all the fish that swim, or snared some dull monster that will be a marvel to men, or some thing of horror that the great Queen will desire," and sitting forth all his strength, he tugged at the tarse ropes till, like lines of blue enamel around a vase of bronze, the long veins rose up on his arms. He tugged at the thin ropes, and nearer and nearer came the circle
of flat corks, and the net rose at last to the top of the water.

But no fish at all was in it, nor any monster or thing of horror, but only a little Mermaid lying fast asleep.

Her hair was as a wet fleece of gold, and each separate hair as a thread of fine gold in a cup of glass. Her body was as white ivory, and her tail was of silver and pearl. Silver and pearl was her tail, and the green weeds of the sea coiled round it; and like sea-shells were her ears, and her lips were like sea-coral. The cold waves dashed over her cold breasts, and the salt glistened upon her eyelids.

So beautiful was she that when the young Fisherman saw her he was filled with wonder, and he put out his hand and drew the net close to him, and leaning over the side he clasped her in his arms. And when he touched her, she gave a cry like a startled sea-gull, and woke, and looked at him in terror with her mauve-amethyst eyes, and struggled that she might escape. But he held her tightly to him, and would not suffer her to depart.

And when she saw that she could in no way escape from him, she began to weep, and said: "I pray thee let me go, for I am the only daughter of a King, and my father is aged and alone."

But the young Fisherman answered: "I will not let thee go save thou makest me a promise that whenever I call thee, thou wilt come and sing
me, for the fish delight to listen to the song of
Sea-folk, and so shall my nets be full.”
"Wilt thou in very truth let me go, if I promise
be this?" cried the Mermaid.
"In very truth I will let thee go," said the
ung Fisherman.
So she made him the promise he desired, and
are it by the oath of the Sea-folk. And he
sened his arms from about her, and she sank
wn into the water, trembling with a strange fear.

Every evening the young Fisherman went out
on the sea, and called to the Mermaid, and
rose out of the water and sang to him. Round
round her swam the dolphins, and the wild
ls wheeled above her head.
And she sang a marvellous song. For she
ng of the Sea-folk who drive their flocks from
re to cave, and carry the little calves on their
ulders; of the Tritons who have long green
ards, and hairy breasts, and blow through
sted conchs when the King passes by; of the
ace of the King which is all of amber, with a
of clear emerald, and a pavement of bright
rl; and of the gardens of the sea where the
at filigrane fans of coral wave all day long,
d the fish dart about like silver birds, and the
mones cling to the rocks, and the pinks bour-
on in the ribbed yellow sand. She sang of the
 whales that come down from the north seas
have sharp icicles hanging to their fins; of the
ns who tell of such wonderful things that the
merchants have to stop their ears with wax lest they should hear them, and leap into the water and be drowned; of the sunken galleys with their tall masts, and the frozen sailors clinging to the rigging, and the mackerel swimming in and out of the open portholes; of the little barnacles who are great travellers, and cling to the keels of the ship and go round and round the world; and of the cuttlefish who live in the sides of the cliffs and stretch out their long black arms, and can make night come when they will it. She sang of the nautilus who has a boat of her own that is carved out of an opal and steered with a silken sail; of the happy Mermen who play upon harps and can charm the great Kraken to sleep; of the little children who catch hold of the slippery porpoises and ride laughing upon their backs; of the Mermaids who lie in the white foam and hold out their arms to the mariners; and of the sea-lions with their curved tusks, and the sea-horses with their floating manes.

And as she sang, all the tunny-fish came in from the deep to listen to her, and the young Fisherman threw his nets round them and caught them, and others he took with a spear. And when his boat was well-laden, the Mermaid would sink down into the sea, smiling at him.

Yet would she never come near him that he might touch her. Oftentimes he called to her and prayed of her, but she would not; and when he sought to seize her she dived into the water as seal might dive, nor did he see her again that day.
each day the sound of her voice became
ter to his ears. So sweet was her voice that
rgot his nets and his cunning, and had no care
s craft. Vermilion-finned and with eyes of
gold, the tunnies went by in shoals, but he
ed them not. His spear lay by his side un-
and his baskets of plaited osier were empty.
ips parted, and eyes dim with wonder, he
dle in his boat and listened, listening till the
ists crept round him, and the wandering
stained his brown limbs with silver.
one evening he called to her, and said:	le Mermaid, little Mermaid, I love thee.
me for thy bridegroom, for I love thee.”
it the Mermaid shook her head. “Thou hast
man soul,” she answered. “If only thou
dst send away thy soul, then could I love

and the young Fisherman said to himself:
what use is my soul to me? I cannot see
ay not touch it. I do not know it. Surely
send it away from me, and much gladness
be mine.” And a cry of joy broke from his
and standing up in the painted boat, he held
his arms to the Mermaid. “I will send my
away,” he cried, “and you shall be my bride,
will be thy bridegroom, and in the depth of
sea we will dwell together, and all that thou
sung of thou shalt show me, and all that thou
est I will do, nor shall our lives be divided.”
d the little Mermaid laughed for pleasure,
hid her face in her hands.
“But how shall I send my soul from me?” cried the young Fisherman. “Tell me how I may do it, and lo! it shall be done.”

“Alas! I know not,” said the little Mermaid: “the Sea-folk have no souls.” And she sank down into the deep, looking wistfully at him:

Now early on the next morning, before the sun was the span of a man’s hand above the hill, the young Fisherman went to the house of the Priest and knocked three times at the door.

The novice looked out through the wicket and when he saw who it was, he drew back the latch and said to him: “Enter.”

And the young Fisherman passed in, and knelt down on the sweet-smelling rushes of the floor, and cried to the Priest who was reading out of the Holy Book and said to him: “Father, I am in love with one of the Sea-folk, and my soul hindereth me from having my desire. Tell me how I can send my soul away from me, for in truth I have no need of it. Of what value is my soul to me? I cannot see it. I may not touch it. I do not know it.”

And the Priest beat his breast, and answered: “Alack, alack, thou art mad, or hast eaten of some poisonous herb, for the soul is the noblest part of man, and was given to us by God that we should nobly use it. There is no thing more precious than a human soul, nor any earthly thing that can be weighed with it. It is worth all the gold that is in the world, and is more
sious than the rubies of the kings. There-
my son, think not any more of this matter,
it is a sin that may not be forgiven. And
or the Sea-folk, they are lost, and they who
uld traffic with them are lost also. They are
he beasts of the field that know not good
n evil, and for them the Lord has not died.”
he young Fisherman’s eyes filled with tears
he heard the bitter words of the Priest,
rose up from his knees and said to him:
ther, the Fauns live in the forest and are
and on the rocks sit the Mermen with their
ps of red gold. Let me be as they are, I be-
thee, for their days are as the days of flowers.
 as for my soul, what doth my soul profit me,
stand between me and the thing that I love?”
The love of the body is vile,” cried the Priest,
ting his brows, “and vile and evil are the
an things God suffers to wander through
world. Accursed be the Fauns of the wood-
, and accursed be the singers of the sea! I
heard them at night-time, and they have
ht to lure me from my beads. They tap at the
dow, and laugh. They whisper into my ears
 tale of their perilous joys. They tempt me
 temptations, and when I would pray they
mouths at me. They are lost, I tell thee,
y are lost. For them there is no heaven nor
, and in neither shall they praise God’s name.”
Father,” cried the young Fisherman, “thou
west not what thou sayest. Once in my net I
red the daughter of a King. She is fairer than
the morning star, and whiter than the moon. For her body I would give my soul, and for her love I would surrender heaven. Tell me what I ask of thee, and let me go in peace."

"Away! Away!" cried the Priest: "thy leman is lost, and thou shalt be lost with her." And he gave him no blessing, but drove him from his door.

And the young Fisherman went down into the market-place, and he walked slowly, and with bowed head, as one who is in sorrow.

And when the merchants saw him coming, they began to whisper to each other, and one of them came forth to meet him, and called him by name, and said to him: "What hast thou to sell?"

"I will sell thee my soul," he answered: "I pray thee buy it of me, for I am weary of it. Of what use is my soul to me? I cannot see it. I may not touch it. I do not know it."

But the merchants mocked at him, and said: "Of what use is a man's soul to us? It is not worth a clipped piece of silver. Sell us thy body for a slave, and we will clothe thee in sea-purple, and put a ring upon thy finger, and make thee the minion of the great Queen. But talk not of the soul, for to us it is nought, nor has it any value for our service."

And the young Fisherman said to himself: "How strange a thing this is! The Priest telleth me that the soul is worth all the gold in the world, and the merchants say that it is not worth a clipped piece of silver." And he passed out of the
market-place, and went down to the shore of the sea, and began to ponder on what he should do.

And at noon he remembered how one of his companions, who was a gatherer of samphire, told him of a certain young Witch who dwelt in a cave at the head of the bay and was very cunning in her witcheries. And he set to and ran, so eager was he to get rid of his soul, and a cloud of dust followed him as he sped and the sand of the shore. By the itching of a palm the young Witch knew his coming, and she laughed and let down her red hair. With her red hair falling around her, she stood in the opening of the cave, and in her hand she held a spray of wild hemlock that was blossoming. “What d’ye lack? What d’ye lack?” she said, as he came panting up the steep, and bent over before her. “Fish for thy net, when the wind is foul? I have a little reed-pipe, and when I blow on it the mullet come sailing into the bay. But it has a price, pretty boy, it has price. What d’ye lack? What d’ye lack? storm to wreck the ships, and wash the chests rich treasure ashore? I have more storms an the wind has, for I serve one who is stronger an the wind, and with a sieve and a pail of water I can send the great galleys to the bottom of the sea. But I have a price, pretty boy, I have a price. What d’ye lack? What d’ye ask? I know a flower that grows in the valley, no one knows it but I. It has purple leaves, and
a star in its heart, and its juice is as white as milk. Shouldst thou touch with this for the hard lips of the Queen, she would fall thee all over the world. Out of the bed of the King she would rise, and over the whole world she would follow thee. And it has a price, a pretty boy, it has a price. What d’ye lack? What d’ye lack? I can pound a toad in a pot, and make broth of it, and stir the broth with a dead man’s hand. Sprinkle it on the enemy while he sleeps, and he will turn into a black viper, and his own mother will slay him. With a wheel I can draw the Moon from heaven, and in a crystal I can show thee Death. What d’ye lack? What d’ye lack? Tell me thy desire, and I will give it thee, and thou shalt pay a price, pretty boy, thou shalt pay me a price.

“My desire is but for a little thing,” said the young Fisherman, “yet hath the Priest wroth with me, and driven me forth. It is for a little thing, and the merchants have mocked at me, and denied me. Therefore am I come to thee, though men call thee evil, and what be thy price I shall pay it.”

“What wouldst thou?” asked the Witch coming near to him.

“I would send my soul away from me,” answered the young Fisherman.

The Witch grew pale, and shuddered, hid her face in her blue mantle. “Pretty, pretty boy,” she muttered, “that is a terrible thing to do.”
He tossed his brown curls and laughed. "My life is nought to me," he answered. "I cannot give it. I may not touch it. I do not know it."
"What wilt thou give me if I tell thee?" asked the Witch, looking down at him with her beautiful eyes.
"Five pieces of gold," he said, "and my nets, the wattled house where I live, and the inted boat in which I sail. Only tell me how to get rid of my soul, and I will give thee all that I possess."
She laughed mockingly at him, and struck him with the spray of hemlock. "I can turn autumn leaves into gold," she answered, and I can weave the pale moonbeams into ver if I will it. He whom I serve is richer in all the kings of this world, and has their minions."
"What then shall I give thee," he cried, "if the price be neither gold nor silver?"
The Witch stroked his hair with her thin ite hand. "Thou must dance with me, pretty y," she murmured, and she smiled at him as she spoke.
"Nought but that?" cried the young Fisherman in wonder, and he rose to his feet.
"Nought but that," she answered, and she smiled at him again.
"Then at sunset in some secret place we shall ace together," he said, "and after that we have aed thou shalt tell me the thing which I ire to know."
She shook her head. "When the moon is full, when the moon is full," she muttered. Then she peered all round, and listened. A blue bird rose screaming from its nest and circled over the dunes, and three spotted birds rustled through the coarse grey grass and whistled to each other. There was no other sound save the sound of a wave fretting the smooth pebbles below. So she reached out her hand, and drew him near to her and put her dry lips close to his ear.

"To-night thou must come to the top of the mountain," she whispered. "It is a Sabbath, and He will be there."

The young Fisherman started and looked at her, and she showed her white teeth and laughed. "Who is He of whom thou speakest?" he asked.

"It matters not," she answered. "Go thou to-night, and stand under the branches of the hornbeam, and wait for my coming. If a black dog run towards thee, strike it with a rod of willow, and it will go away. If an owl speak to thee, make it no answer. When the moon is full I shall be with thee, and we will dance together on the grass."

"But wilt thou swear to me to tell me how I may send my soul from me?" he made question.

She moved out into the sunlight, and through her red hair rippled the wind. "By the hook of the goat I swear it," she made answer.

"Thou art the best of the witches," cried the young Fisherman, "and I will surely dance with thee to-night on the top of the mountain."
uld indeed that thou hadst asked of me either
d or silver. But such as thy price is thou
It have it, for it is but a little thing.” And
doffed his cap to her, and bent his head low,
l ran back to the town filled with a great joy.
and the Witch watched him as he went, and
en he had passed from her sight she entered
cave, and having taken a mirror from a box
carved cedarwood, she set it up on a frame,
I burned vervain on lighted charcoal before
and peered through the coils of the smoke.
1 after a time she clenched her hands in
her. “He should have been mine,” she mut-
pered, “I am as fair as she is.”

And that evening, when the moon had risen,
young Fisherman climbed up to the top of the
untain, and stood under the branches of the
nbeam. Like a targe of polished metal
round sea lay at his feet, and the shadows
the fishing boats moved in the little bay. A
at owl, with yellow sulphurous eyes, called
him by his name, but he made it no answer.
black dog ran towards him and snarled. He
ack it with a rod of willow, and it went away
ning.
At midnight the witches came flying through
air like bats. “Phew!” they cried, as they
upon the ground, “there is some one here we
not!” and they sniffed about, and chattered
ach other, and made signs. Last of all came
young Witch, with her red hair streaming
in the wind. She wore a dress of gold tissue embroidered with peacocks' eyes, and a little cap of green velvet was on her head.

"Where is he, where is he?" shrieked the witches when they saw her, but she only laughed, and ran to the hornbeam, and taking the Fisherman by the hand she led him out into the moonlight and began to dance.

Round and round they whirled, and the young Witch jumped so high that he could see the scarlet heels of her shoes. Then right across the dancers came the sound of the galloping of a horse, but no horse was to be seen, and he felt afraid.

"Faster," cried the Witch, and she threw her arms about his neck, and her breath was hot upon his face. "Faster, faster!" she cried, and the earth seemed to spin beneath his feet, and his brain grew troubled, and a great terror fell on him, as of some evil thing that was watching him, and at last he became aware that under the shadow of a rock there was a figure that had not been there before.

It was a man dressed in a suit of black velvet, cut in the Spanish fashion. His face was strangely pale, but his lips were like a proud red flower. He seemed weary, and was leaning back toying in a listless manner with the pommel of his dagger. On the grass beside him lay a plumed hat, and a pair of riding-gloves gauntletted with gilt lace, and sewn with seed-pearls wrought into a curious device. A short cloak
ed with sables hung from his shoulder, and
delicate white hands were gemmed with
gs. Heavy eyelids drooped over his eyes.
The young Fisherman watched him, as one


ured in a spell. At last their eyes met, and
never he danced it seemed to him that the
as of the man were upon him. He heard the
itch laugh, and caught her by the waist, and
led her madly round and round.
Suddenly a dog bayed in the wood, and the
acers stopped, and going up two by two,
lt down, and kissed the man’s hands. As
y did so, a little smile touched his proud lips,
a bird’s wing touches the water and makes it
g. But there was disdain in it. He kept
king at the young Fisherman.
‘Come! let us worship,” whispered the Witch,
 she led him up, and a great desire to do as
besought him seized on him, and he followed
. But when he came close, and without
wing why he did it, he made on his breast
sign of the Cross, and called upon the holy
ne.
No sooner had he done so than the witches
amed like hawks and flew away, and the
lid face that had been watching him twitched
h a spasm of pain. The man went over to
little wood, and whistled. A jennet with
er trappings came running to meet him. As
leapt upon the saddle he turned round, and
ed at the young Fisherman sadly.
and the Witch with the red hair tried to fly
away also, but the Fisherman caught her by her wrists, and held her fast.

"Loose me," she cried, "and let me go. For thou hast named what should not be named, and shown the sign that may not be looked at."

"Nay," he answered, "but I will not let thee go till thou hast told me the secret."

"What secret?" said the Witch, wrestling with him like a wild cat, and biting her foam-flecked lips.

"Thou knowest," he made answer.

Her grass-green eyes grew dim with tears, and she said to the Fisherman: "Ask me anything but that!"

He laughed, and held her all the more tightly. And when she saw that she could not free herself, she whispered to him: "Surely I am as fair as the daughters of the sea, and as comely as those that dwell in the blue waters," and she fawned on him and put her face close to his.

But he thrust her back frowning, and said to her: "If thou keepest not the promise that thou madest to me I will slay thee for a false witch."

She grew grey as a blossom of the Judas tree, and shuddered. "Be it so," she muttered. "It is thy soul and not mine. Do with it as thou wilt." And she took from her girdle a little knife that had a handle of green viper's skin, and gave it to him.

"What shall this serve me?" he asked of her, wondering.

She was silent for a few moments, and a look of
for came over her face. Then she brushed her
hair back from her forehead, and smiling strangely
said to him: "What men call the shadow of
body is not the shadow of the body, but is the
shadow of the soul. Stand on the sea-shore with
your back to the moon, and cut away from around
your feet thy shadow, which is thy soul's body,
and bid thy soul leave thee, and it will do so."
The young Fisherman trembled. "Is this
true?" he murmured.
"It is true, and I would that I had not told
you of it," she cried, and she clung to his knees
weeping.
He put her from him and left her in the rank
grass, and going to the edge of the mountain he
pulled the knife in his belt and began to climb
down.
And his Soul that was within him called out
him and said: "Lo! I have dwelt with thee
for all these years, and have been thy servant.
And me not away from thee now, for what evil
have I done thee?"
And the young Fisherman laughed. "Thou
must have done me no evil, but I have no need of thee,"
answered. "The world is wide, and there is
seven also, and Hell, and that dim twilight
place that lies between. Go wherever thou wilt,
it trouble me not, for my love is calling to me."
And his Soul besought him piteously, but he
eded it not, but leapt from crag to crag, being
re-footed as a wild goat, and at last he reached
a level ground and the yellow shore of the sea.
Bronze-limbed and well-knit, like a statue wrought by a Grecian, he stood on the sand with his back to the moon, and out of the foam came white arms that beckoned to him, and out of the waves rose dim forms that did him homage. Before him lay his shadow, which was the body of his soul, and behind him hung the moon in the honey-coloured air.

And his Soul said to him: "If indeed thou must drive me from thee, send me not forth without a heart. The world is cruel, give me thy heart to take with me."

He tossed his head and smiled. "With what should I love my love if I gave thee my heart? he cried.

"Nay, but be merciful," said his Soul: "give me thy heart, for the world is very cruel, and I am afraid."

"My heart is my love's," he answered, "therefore tarry not, but get thee gone."

"Should I not love also?" asked his Soul.

"Get thee gone, for I have no need of thee, cried the young Fisherman, and he took the little knife with its handle of green viper's skin, and cut away his shadow from around his feet, and it rose up and stood before him, and looked at him, and it was even as himself.

He crept back, and thrust the knife into his belt, and a feeling of awe came over him. "Get thee gone," he murmured, "and let me see thy face no more."

"Nay, but we must meet again," said the Soul.
voice was low and flute-like, and its lips moved while it spake.

"How shall we meet?" cried the young Fisherman.

"Thou wilt not follow me into the depths of the sea?"

"Once every year I will come to this place, all to thee," said the Soul. "It may be that I have need of thee."

"What need should I have of thee?" cried the Fisherman, "but be it as thou wilt," and he plunged into the water, and the Tritons blew their horns, and the little Mermaid rose up to him, and put her arms around his neck and held him on the mouth.

1 the Soul stood on the lonely beach and watched them. And when they had sunk down in the sea, it went weeping away over the waves.

1 year later the Soul came down to the shore of the sea and called to the young Fisherman, and he rose out of the deep, and said:

"Dost thou call to me?"

"The Soul answered: "Come nearer, that I may speak with thee, for I have seen marvellous things."

He came nearer, and leaned his head upon his hand and listened.

1 the Soul said to him: "When I left thee I shed my face to the East and journeyed..."
From the East cometh everything that is wise. Six days I journeyed, and on the morning of the seventh day I came to a hill that is in the country of the Tartars. I sat down under the shade of a tamarisk tree to shelter myself from the sun. The land was dry, and burnt up with heat. The people went to and fro over the plains like flies crawling upon a disk of polished copper.

"When it was noon a cloud of red dust rose from the flat rim of the land. When the Tartars saw it, they strung their painted bows, and heeled leapt upon their little horses they galloped to it. The women fled screaming to the waggons, hid themselves behind the felt curtains.

"At twilight the Tartars returned, but few of them were missing, and of those that came not a few had been wounded. They harnessed their horses to the waggons and drove them away. Three jackals came out of a cave and peered after them. Then they sniffed up the wind with their nostrils, and trotted off in the opposite direction.

"When the moon rose I saw a camp-fire blazing on the plain, and went towards it. A company of merchants were seated round it on camels. Their camels were picketed behind them, and negroes who were their servants were pitching tents of tanned skin upon the sand, and made a high wall of the prickly pear.

"As I came near them, the chief of the merchants rose up and drew his sword, and in me my business."
answered that I was a Prince in my own
and that I had escaped from the Tartars,
had sought to make me their slave. The
smiled, and showed me five heads fixed upon
reeds of bamboo.
then he asked me who was the prophet of
and I answered him Mohammed.
Then he heard the name of the false prophet,
wed and took me by the hand, and placed me
side. A negro brought me some mare's
in a wooden dish, and a piece of lamb's flesh
ed.
t daybreak we started on our journey. I
on a red-haired camel by the side of the
and a runner ran before us carrying a
The men of war were on either hand,
the mules followed with the merchandise.
were forty camels in the caravan, and the
were twice forty in number.
we went from the country of the Tartars
the country of those who curse the Moon.
aw the Gryphons guarding their gold on
white rocks, and the scaled Dragons sleeping
air caves. As we passed over the mountains
ed our breath lest the snows might fall on
and each man tied a veil of gauze before his
As we passed through the valleys the
ies shot arrows at us from the hollows of
rees, and at night time we heard the wild
beating on their drums. When we came
e Tower of Apes we set fruits before them,
hey did not harm us. When we came to
the Tower of Serpents we gave them warm milk in bowls of brass, and they let us go by. Three times in our journey we came to the banks of the Oxus. We crossed it on rafts of wood with great bladders of blown hide. The river-horses raged against us and sought to slay us. When the camels saw them they trembled.

"The kings of each city levied tolls on us, but would not suffer us to enter their gates. They threw us bread over the walls, little maize-cakes baked in honey and cakes of fine flour filled with dates. For every hundred baskets we gave them a bead of amber.

"When the dwellers in the villages saw us coming, they poisoned the wells and fled to the hill-summits. We fought with the Magadæ who are born old, and grow younger and younger every year, and die when they are little children; and with the Laktroi who say that they are the sons of tigers, and paint themselves yellow and black; and with the Aurantes who bury their dead on the tops of trees, and themselves live in dark caverns lest the Sun, who is their god, should slay them; and with the Krimniæans who worship a crocodile, and give it earrings of green glass, and feed it with butter and fresh fowls; and with the Agazonbaæ, who are dog-faced; and with the Sibans, who have horses’ feet, and run more swiftly than horses. A third of our company died in battle, and a third died of want. The rest murmured against me, and said that I had brought them an evil fortune. I took a
ned adder from beneath a stone and let it

g me. When they saw that I did not sicken
y grew afraid.

In the fourth month we reached the city of
l. It was night time when we came to the
ve that is outside the walls, and the air was
ry, for the Moon was travelling in Scorpio.
took the ripe pomegranates from the trees,
brake them, and drank their sweet juices.
yn we lay down on our carpets and waited
the dawn.

And at dawn we rose and knocked at the
of the city. It was wrought out of red
aze, and carved with sea-dragons and dragons
have wings. The guards looked down from
battlements and asked us our business. The
rpreter of the caravan answered that we had
re from the island of Syria with much mer-
dise. They took hostages, and told us that
would open the gate to us at noon, and
us tarry till then.

When it was noon they opened the gate,
as we entered in the people came crowding
of the houses to look at us, and a crier went
ad the city crying through a shell. We
ed in the market-place, and the negroes
ordered the bales of figured cloths and opened
carved chests of sycamore. And when they
ended their task, the merchants set forth
r strange wares, the waxed linen from Egypt
the painted linen from the country of the
ops, the purple sponges from Tyre and the
blue hangings from Sidon, the cups of cold amber and the fine vessels of glass and the curious vessels of burnt clay. From the roof of a house a company of women watched us. One of them wore a mask of gilded leather.

"And on the first day the priests came and bartered with us, and on the second day came the nobles, and on the third day came the craftsmen and the slaves. And this is their custom with all merchants as long as they tarry in the city.

"And we tarried for a moon, and when the moon was waning, I wearied and wandered away through the streets of the city and came to the garden of its god. The priests in their yellow robes moved silently through the green trees, and on a pavement of black marble stood the rose-red house in which the god had his dwelling. Its doors were of powdered lacquer, and bulls and peacocks were wrought on them in raised and polished gold. The tiled roof was of sea-green porcelain, and the jutting eaves were festooned with little bells. When the white doves flew past, they struck the bells with their wings and made them tinkle.

"In front of the temple was a pool of clear water paved with veined onyx. I lay down beside it, and with my pale fingers I touched the broad leaves. One of the priests came towards me and stood behind me. He had sandals on his feet, one of soft serpent-skin and the other of birds' plumage. On his head was
of black felt decorated with silver studs. Seven yellows were woven into his tunic, and his frizzed hair was stained with wine.

For a little while he spake to me, and said him that my desire was to see the god. He is hunting,' said the priest, looking at me with his small slanting eyes. 'I will me in what forest, and I will ride with answered.

Combed out the soft fringes of his tunic and long pointed nails. 'The god is asleep,' he answered.

'I will on what couch, and I will watch,' I answered.

e god is at the feast,' he cried. the wine be sweet I will drink it with him if it be bitter I will drink it with him as my answer.

Bowed his head in wonder, and, taking the hand, he raised me up, and led me to the temple.

In the first chamber I saw an idol on a throne of jasper bordered with great earls. It was carved out of ebony, and the jaw was of the stature of a man. On its chest was a ruby, and thick oil dripped from on to its thighs. Its feet were red with blood of a newly-slain kid, and its loins girt with a copper belt that was studded with seven
"And I said to the priest: 'Is this the god?' And he answered me: 'This is the god.'

"'Show me the god,' I cried, 'or I will surely slay thee.' And I touched his hand, and it became withered.

"And the priest besought me, saying: 'Let my lord heal his servant, and I will show him the god.'

"So I breathed with my breath upon his hand, and it became whole again, and he trembled and led me into the second chamber, and I saw an idol standing on a lotus of jade hung with great emeralds. It was carved out of ivory, and in stature was twice the stature of a man. On its forehead was a chrysolite, and its breasts were smeared with myrrh and cinnamon. In one hand it held a crooked sceptre of jade, and in the other a round crystal. It wore buskins of brass, and its thick neck was circled with a circle of selenites.

"And I said to the priest: 'Is this the god?' And he answered me: 'This is the god.'

"'Show me the god,' I cried, 'or I will surely slay thee.' And I touched his eyes, and they became blind.

"And the priest besought me, saying: 'Let my lord heal his servant, and I will show him the god.'

"So I breathed with my breath upon his eyes, and the sight came back to them, and he trembled again, and led me into the third chamber, and lo! there was no idol in it, nor
ge of any kind, but only a mirror of round al set on an altar of stone.
And I said to the priest: 'Where is the ?'
And he answered me: 'There is no god but mirror that thou seest, for this is the Mirror Wisdom. And it reflecteth all things that in heaven and on earth, save only the face who looketh into it. This it reflecteth so that he who looketh into it may be wise.
y other mirrors are there, but they are ors of Opinion. This only is the Mirror of dom. And they who possess this mirror w everything, nor is there anything hidden i them. And they who possess it not have Wisdom. Therefore is it the god, and we ship it.' And I looked into the mirror, and as even as he had said to me.
And I did a strange thing, but what I did ters not, for in a valley that is but a day's ney from this place have I hidden the Mirror Wisdom. Do but suffer me to enter into : again and be thy servant, and thou shalt wiser than all the wise men, and Wisdom l be thine. Suffer me to enter into thee, none will be as wise as thou.'

ut the young Fisherman laughed. "Love etter than Wisdom," he cried, "and the little maid loves me."
Nay, but there is nothing better than Wis-
," said the Soul.
Love is better," answered the young Fisher-
man, and he plunged into the deep, and the Soul went weeping away over the marshes.

And after the second year was over, the Soul came down to the shore of the sea, and called to the young Fisherman, and he rose out of the deep and said: "Why dost thou call to me?"

And the Soul answered: "Come nearer, that I may speak with thee, for I have seen marvellous things."

So he came nearer, and couched in the shallower water, and leaned his head upon his hand and listened.

And the Soul said to him: "When I left thee I turned my face to the South and journeyed. From the South cometh everything that is precious. Six days I journeyed along the highways that lead to the city of Ashter, along the dusty red-dyed highways by which the pilgrims are wont to go. Did I journey, and on the morning of the seventh day I lifted up my eyes, and lo! the city lay at my feet, for it is in a valley."

"There are nine gates to this city, and in front of each gate stands a bronze horse that neighs when the Bedouins come down from the mountains. The walls are cased with copper, and the watch-towers on the walls are roofed with brass. In every tower stands an archer with a bow in his hand. At sunrise he strikes with an arrow on a gong, and at sunset he blows through a horn of horn."

"When I sought to enter, the guards stoppe
and asked of me who I was. I made answer
that I was a Dervish and on my way to the city
Mecca, where there was a green veil on which
the Koran was embroidered in silver letters by
the hands of the angels. They were filled with
mercy, and entreated me to pass in.

'Inside it is even as a bazaar. Surely thou
shouldst have been with me. Across the narrow
streets the gay lanterns of paper flutter like
golden butterflies. When the wind blows over
the roofs they rise and fall as painted bubbles
升入空中。

In front of their booths sit the merchants
with their silken carpets. They have straight black
hairs, and their turbans are covered with golden
robes, and long strings of amber and carved
beads. They glide through their cool fingers.
One of them sell gelbanum and nard, and curious
fumes from the islands of the Indian Sea,
the thick oil of red roses, and myrrh and
elephant-shelled cloves. When one stops to speak
them, they throw pinches of frankincense
in a charcoal brazier and make the air sweet.

I saw a Syrian who held in his hands a thin rod
of a reed. Grey threads of smoke came from it,
its odour as it burned was as the odour of the
almond in spring. Others sell silver bracelets
covered all over with creamy blue turquoise
cubes, and anklets of brass wire fringed with
pearls, and tigers' claws set in gold, and the
rights of that gilt cat, the leopard, set in gold also,
and earrings of pierced emerald, and finger-rings
hollowed jade. From the tea-houses comes the
sound of the guitar, and the opium-smokers with their white smiling faces look out at the passers-by.

"Of a truth thou shouldst have been with me. The wine-sellers elbow their way through the crowd with great black skins on their shoulders. Most of them sell the wine of Schiraz, which is as sweet as honey. They serve it in little metal cups and strew rose leaves upon it. In the market-place stand the fruitsellers, who sell all kinds of fruit: ripe figs, with their bruised purple flesh, melons, smelling of musk and yellow as topazes, citrons and rose-apples and clusters of white grapes, round red-gold oranges, and oval lemons of green gold. Once I saw an elephant go by. Its trunk was painted with vermillion and turmeric, and over its ears it had a net of crimson silk cord. It stopped opposite one of the booths and began eating the oranges, and the man only laughed. Thou canst not think how strange a people they are. When they are glad they go to the bird-sellers and buy of them a caged bird, and set it free that their joy may be greater, and when they are sad they scourg themselves with thorns that their sorrow may not grow less.

"One evening I met some negroes carrying a heavy palanquin through the bazaar. It was made of gilded bamboo, and the poles were of vermillion lacquer studded with brass peacocks. Across the windows hung thin curtains of muslin embroidered with beetles' wings and with tiny seed-pearls, and as it passed by a pale-faced
assian looked out and smiled at me. I wed behind, and the negroes hurried their and scowled. But I did not care. I felt at curiosity come over me. At last they stopped at a square white house. re were no windows to it, only a little door the door of a tomb. They set down the quin and knocked three times with a copper mer. An Armenian in a caftan of green her peered through the wicket, and when he them he opened, and spread a carpet on the und, and the woman stepped out. As she t in, she turned round and smiled at me n. I had never seen any one so pale. When the moon rose I returned to the same e and sought for the house, but it was no er there. When I saw that, I knew who woman was, and wherefore she had smiled ic.

Certainly thou shouldest have been with me. the feast of the New Moon the young Em- r came forth from his palace and went into mosque to pray. His hair and beard were l with rose-leaves, and his cheeks were pow- d with a fine gold dust. The palms of his and hands were yellow with saffron. At sunrise he went forth from his palace in be of silver, and at sunset he returned to it n in a robe of gold. The people flung them- es on the ground and hid their faces, but I ld not do so. I stood by the stall of a seller lates and waited. When the Emperor saw
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Their fat bodies swayed as they walked, and glanced curiously at me with their yellowed eyes. One of them drew aside the captain of the guard, and in a low voice whispered to him. The other kept munching scented pastilles, which took with an affected gesture out of an oval box of enamel.

After a few moments the captain of the guard dismissed the soldiers. They went back to the palace, the eunuchs following slowly behind and plucking the sweet mulberries from the trees as they passed. Once the elder of the turned round, and smiled at me with an

Then the captain of the guard motioned me to the entrance of the pavilion. I walked without trembling, and drawing the heavy in aside I entered in.

The young Emperor was stretched on a bed of dyed lion skins, and a ger-falcon perched on his wrist. Behind him stood a brass-armed Nubian, naked down to the waist, and heavy earrings in his split ears. On a table beside the couch lay a mighty scimitar.

When the Emperor saw me he frowned, and to me: 'What is thy name? Knowest thou that I am Emperor of this city?' But I hesitated no answer.

He pointed with his finger at the scimitar, and the Nubian seized it, and rushing forward struck me with great violence. The blade whizzed
give thee camels and camel drivers, and they shall do thy bidding and take thy share of the treasure to whatever part of the world thou desirest to go. And the thing shall be done to-night, for I would not that the Sun, who is my father, should see that there is in my city a man whom I cannot slay.'

"But I answered him: 'The gold that is here is thine, and the silver also is thine, and thine are the precious jewels and the things of price. As for me, I have no need of these. Nor shall I take aught from thee but that little ring that thou wearest on the finger of thy hand.'

"And the Emperor frowned. 'It is but a ring of lead,' he cried, 'nor has it any value. Therefore take thy half of the treasure and go from my city.'

"'Nay,' I answered, 'but I will take nought but that leaden ring, for I know what is written within it, and for what purpose.'

"And the Emperor trembled, and besought me and said: 'Take all the treasure and go from my city. The half that is mine shall be thine also.'

"And I did a strange thing, but what I did matters not, for in a cave that is but a day's journey from this place have I hidden the Ring of Riches. It is but a day's journey from this place, and it waits for thy coming. He who has this Ring is richer than all the kings of the world. Come therefore and take it, and the world's riches shall be thine.'

But the young Fisherman laughed. "Low
better than Riches," he cried, "and the little
maid loves me."
Nay, but there is nothing better than Riches," I the Soul.
'Love is better," answered the young Fisher-
n, and he plunged into the deep, and the Soul
it weeping away over the marshes.

And after the third year was over, the Soul
down to the shore of the sea, and called
the young Fisherman, and he rose out of the
and said: "Why dost thou call to me?"
And the Soul answered: "Come nearer, that
may speak with thee, for I have seen marvel-
s things."
So he came nearer, and couched in the shallow
ter, and leaned his head upon his hand and
wished.
And the Soul said to him: "In a city that I
of there is an inn that standeth by a river.
at there with sailors who drank of two dif-
ent-coloured wines, and ate bread made of
, and little salt fish served in bay leaves
vinegar. And as we sat and made merry,
entered to us an old man bearing a leathern
et and a lute that had two horns of amber.
When he had laid out the carpet on the
, he struck with a quill on the wire strings
lute, and a girl whose face was veiled ran
nd began to dance before us. Her face was
d with a veil of gauze, but her feet were
d. Naked were her feet, and they moved
over the carpet like little white pigeons. Nor have I seen anything so marvellous, and the city in which she dances is but a day's journey from this place."

Now when the young Fisherman heard the words of his Soul, he remembered that the Mermaid had no feet and could not dance. A great desire came over him, and he said to himself: "It is but a day's journey, and I must return to my love," and he laughed, and swam up in the shallow water, and strode towards the shore.

And when he had reached the dry shore, he laughed again, and held out his arms to his Soul. And his Soul gave a great cry of joy and ran to meet him, and entered into him, and the young Fisherman saw stretched before him upon the sand that shadow of the body that is the image of the Soul.

And his Soul said to him: "Let us not tarry, but get hence at once, for the Sea-gods are jealous, and have monsters that do their bidding.

So they made haste, and all that night they journeyed beneath the moon, and all the day they journeyed beneath the sun, and on the evening of the day they came to a city.

And the young Fisherman said to his Soul: "Is this the city in which she dances of whom thou didst speak to me?"

And his Soul answered him: "It is not this city, but another. Nevertheless let us enter..."
they entered in and passed through the
ts, and as they passed through the Street
the Jewellers the young Fisherman saw a
silver cup set forth in a booth. And his
said to him: "Take that silver cup and
it."
he took the cup and hid it in the fold of his
, and they went hurriedly out of the city.
d after that they had gone a league from
city, the young Fisherman frowned, and
the cup away, and said to his Soul: "Why
thou tell me to take this cup and hide it,
was an evil thing to do?"
t his Soul answered him: "Be at peace, be
ace."
d on the evening of the second day they
to a city, and the young Fisherman said
Soul: "Is this the city in which she dances
om thou didst speak to me?"
d his Soul answered him: "It is not this
but another. Nevertheless let us enter in."
they entered in and passed through the
, and as they passed through the Street
e Sellers of Sandals, the young Fisherman
a child standing by a jar of water. And
oul said to him: "Smite that child." So he
the child till it wept, and when he had
this they went hurriedly out of the city.
d after that they had gone a league from
ity the young Fisherman grew wroth, and
to his Soul: "Why didst thou tell me to
the child, for it was an evil thing to do?"
But his Soul answered him: "Be at peace, be at peace."

And on the evening of the third day they came to a city, and the young Fisherman said to his Soul: "Is this the city in which she danced of whom thou didst speak to me?"

And his Soul answered him: "It may be that it is in this city, therefore let us enter in."

So they entered in and passed through the streets, but nowhere could the young Fisherman find the river or the inn that stood by it. And the people of the city looked curiously at him, and he grew afraid and said to his Soul: "Let us go hence, for she who dances with white feet is not here."

But his Soul answered: "Nay, but let us tarry for the night is dark and there will be robbers on the way."

So he sat him down in the market-place and rested, and after a time there went by a hooded merchant who had a cloak of cloth of Tarts and bare a lantern of pierced horn at the end of a jointed reed. And the merchant said to him: "Why dost thou sit in the market-place seeing that the booths are closed and the bells corded?"

And the young Fisherman answered him: "I can find no inn in this city, nor have I a kinsman who might give me shelter."

"Are we not all kinsmen?" said the merchant: "And did not one God make us? Therefore come with me, for I have a guest-chamber."
the young Fisherman rose up and followed merchant to his house. And when he had through a garden of pomegranates and ed into the house, the merchant brought rose-water in a copper dish that he might his hands, and ripe melons that he might ch his thirst, and set a bowl of rice and of roasted kid before him.

After that he had finished, the merchant him to the guest-chamber, and bade him and be at rest. And the young Fisherman him thanks, and kissed the ring that was is hand, and flung himself down on the ts of dyed goat’s-hair. And when he had ed himself with a covering of black lamb’s- he fell asleep.

three hours before dawn, and while it still night, his Soul waked him and said m: “Rise up and go to the room of the hant, even to the room in which he sleepeth, slay him, and take from him his gold, for ave need of it.”

the young Fisherman rose up and crept the room of the merchant, and over feet of the merchant there was lying a d sword, and the tray by the side of the hant held nine purses of gold. And he ed out his hand and touched the sword, when he touched it the merchant started awoke, and leaping up seized himself the l and cried to the young Fisherman: “Dost return evil for good, and pay with the
shredding of blood for the kindness that I have shown thee?"

And his Soul said to the young Fisherman: "Strike him," and he struck him so that he swooned, and he seized then the nine purses of gold, and fled hastily through the garden of pomegranates, and set his face to the star that is the star of morning.

And when they had gone a league from the city, the young Fisherman beat his breast, and said to his Soul: "Why didst thou bid me slay the merchant and take his gold? Surely thou art evil."

But his Soul answered him: "Be at peace, be at peace."

"Nay," cried the young Fisherman: "I may not be at peace, for all that thou hast made me to do I hate. Thee also I hate, and I bid thee tell me wherefore thou hast wrought with me in this wise."

And his Soul answered him: "When thou didst send me forth into the world thou gavest me no heart, so I learned to do all these things and love them."

"What sayest thou?" murmured the young Fisherman.

"Thou knowest," answered his Soul, "thou knowest it well. Hast thou forgotten that thou gavest me no heart? I trow not. And so trouble not thyself nor me, but be at peace, for there is no pain that thou shalt not give away, nor any pleasure that thou shalt not receive."
And when the young Fisherman heard these words he trembled and said to his Soul: "Nay, thou art evil, and hast made me forget myself, and hast tempted me with temptations, I have set my feet in the ways of sin."

And his Soul answered him: "Thou hast not forgotten that when thou didst send me forth to the world thou gavest me no heart. Come, let us go to another city, and make merry, for we have nine purses of gold."

But the young Fisherman took the nine purses of gold, and flung them down, and trampled on them. "Nay," he cried, "but I will have nought to with thee, nor will I journey with thee anywhere, but even as I sent thee away before, so I send thee away now, for thou hast wrought no good." And he turned his back to the on, and with the little knife that had the idle of green viper's skin he strove to cut m his feet that shadow of the body which is body of the Soul.

Yet his Soul stirred not from him, nor paid d to his command, but said to him: "The ll that the Witch told thee avails thee no re, for I may not leave thee, nor mayest thou re me forth. Once in his life may a man d his Soul away, but he who receiveth back his Soul must keep it with him for ever, and is his punishment and his reward."

And the young Fisherman grew pale and shed his hands and cried: "She was a false ch in that she told me not that."

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“Nay,” answered his Soul, “but she was true to Him she worships, and whose servant she will be ever.”

And when the young Fisherman knew that he could no longer get rid of his Soul, and that it was an evil Soul and would abide with him always, he fell upon the ground weeping bitterly.

And when it was day the young Fisherman rose up and said to his Soul: “I will bind my hands that I may not do thy bidding, and close my lips that I may not speak thy words, and I will return to the place where she whom I love has her dwelling. Even to the sea will I return, and to the little bay where she is wont to sing, and I will call to her and tell her the evil I have done and the evil thou hast wrought on me.”

And his Soul tempted him and said: “Who is, thy love, that thou shouldst return to her? The world has many fairer than she is. There are the dancing-girls of Samaris who dance in the manner of all kinds of birds and beasts. Their feet are painted with henna, and in their hands they have little copper bells. They laugh while they dance, and their laughter is as clear as the laughter of water. Come with me and I will show them to thee. For what is this trouble of thine about the things of sin? Is that which is pleasant to eat not made for the eater? Is there poison in that which is sweet to drink? Trouble not thyself, but come with
to another city. There is a little city hard
n which there is a garden of tulip-trees. And
e dwell in this comely garden white peacocks
peacocks that have blue breasts. Their tails
n they spread them to the sun are like disks of
y and like gilt disks. And she who feeds them
ces for their pleasure, and sometimes she
es on her hands and at other times she dances
her feet. Her eyes are coloured with stibium,
her nostrils are shaped like the wings of a
low. From a hook in one of her nostrils hangs
wer that is carved out of a pearl. She laughs
e she dances, and the silver rings that are
her ankles tinkle like bells of silver. And so
ble not thyself any more, but come with me
his city."

ut the young Fisherman answered not his
, but closed his lips with the seal of silence
with a tight cord bound his hands, and
eyed back to the place from which he had
e, even to the little bay where his love had
wont to sing. And ever did his Soul tempt
by the way, but he made it no answer, nor
ld he do any of the wickedness that it sought
ake him to do, so great was the power of
love that was within him.
nd when he had reached the shore of the
he loosed the cord from his hands, and took
seal of silence from his lips, and called to
little Mermaid. But she came not to his
though he called to her all day long and
ught her.
And his Soul mocked him and said: "Surely thou hast but little joy out of thy love. Thou art as one who in time of dearth pours water into a broken vessel. Thou givest away what thou hast, and nought is given to thee in return. It were better for thee to come with me, for I know where the Valley of Pleasure lies, and what things are wrought there."

But the young Fisherman answered not his Soul, but in a cleft of the rock he built himself a house of wattles, and abode there for the space of a year. And every morning he called to the Mermaid, and every noon he called to her again, and at night-time he spake her name. Yet never did she rise out of the sea to meet him, nor in any place of the sea could he find her, though he sought for her in the caves and in the green water, in the pools of the tide and in the wells that are at the bottom of the deep.

And ever did his Soul tempt him with evil, and whisper of terrible things. Yet did it not prevail against him, so great was the power of his love.

And after the year was over, the Soul thought within himself: "I have tempted my master with evil, and his love is stronger than I am. I will tempt him now with good, and it may be that he will come with me."

So he spake to the young Fisherman and said: "I have told thee of the joy of the world, and thou hast turned a deaf ear to me. Suffer me now to tell thee of the world's pain, and it may
at thou wilt hearken. For of a truth pain
: Lord of this world, nor is there any one who
es from its net. There be some who lack
ent, and others who lack bread. There be
ws who sit in purple, and widows who sit in
To and fro over the fens go the lepers, and
are cruel to each other. The beggars go up
lown on the highways, and their wallets are
y. Through the streets of the cities walks
ne, and the Plague sits at their gates. Come,
go forth and mend these things, and make
not to be. Wherefore shouldst thou tarry
calling to thy love, seeing she comes not
y call? And what is love, that thou shouldst
is high store upon it?"

the young Fisherman answered it nought,
et was the power of his love. And every
ing he called to the Mermaid, and every
he called to her again, and at night-time
ake her name. Yet never did she rise out
sea to meet him, nor in any place of the
ould he find her, though he sought for her
ivers of the sea, and in the valleys that
nder the waves, in the sea that the night
purple, and in the sea that the dawn leaves

d after the second year was over, the Soul
to the young Fisherman at night-time, and
sat in the wattled house alone: "Lo! now
'e tempted thee with evil, and I have tempted
ith good, and thy love is stronger than I am.
efore will I tempt thee no longer, but I pray
in his nostrils, and there came another word into his lips, and he spake not of the wrath of God, but of the God whose name is Love. And why he so spake, he knew not.

And when he had finished his word the people wept, and the Priest went back to the sacristy, and his eyes were full of tears. And the deacons came in and began to unrobe him, and took from him the alb and the girdle, the manipel and the stole. And he stood as one in a dream.

And after that they had unrobed him, he looked at them and said: “What are the flowers that stand on the altar, and whence do they come?”

And they answered him: “What flowers they are we cannot tell, but they come from the corner of the Fullers’ Field.” And the Priest trembled, and returned to his own house and prayed.

And in the morning, while it was still dawn, he went forth with the monks and the musicians, and the candle-bearers and the swingers of censers, and a great company, and came to the shore of the sea, and blessed the sea, and all the wild things that are in it. The Fauns also he blessed, and the little things that dance in the woodland, and the bright-eyed things that peer through the leaves. All the things in God’s world he blessed, and the people were filled with joy and wonder. Yet never again in the corner of the Fullers’ Field grew flowers of any kind, but the field remained barren even as before.
Nor came the Sea-folk into the bay as they had been wont to do, for they went to another part of the sea.

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in his nostrils, and there came another word into his lips, and he spake not of the wrath of God, but of the God whose name is Love. And why he so spake, he knew not.

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And after that they had unrobbed him, he looked at them and said: "What are the flowers that stand on the altar, and whence do they come?"

And they answered him: "What flowers they are we cannot tell, but they come from the corner of the Fullers' Field." And the Priest trembled, and returned to his own house and prayed.

And in the morning, while it was still dawn, he went forth with the monks and the musicians, and the candle-bearers and the swingers of censers, and a great company, and came to the shore of the sea, and blessed the sea, and all the wild things that are in it. The Fauns also he blessed, and the little things that dance in the woodland, and the bright-eyed things that peer through the leaves. All the things in God's world he blessed, and the people were filled with joy and wonder. Yet never again in the corner of the Fullers' Field grew flowers of any kind, but the field remained barren even as before.
came the Sea-folk into the bay as they had wont to do, for they went to another part of the sea.

THE END OF
THE FISHERMAN AND HIS SOUL
THE STAR-CHILD
To
Miss Margot Tennant
THE STAR-CHILD

ONCE upon a time two poor Woodcutters were making their way home through a vast pine-forest. It was winter, and a night of utter cold. The snow lay thick upon the round, and upon the branches of the trees: the frost kept snapping the little twigs on either side of them, as they passed; and when they came to the Mountain-Torrent she was angling motionless in air, for the Ice-King had issed her.

So cold was it that even the animals and the birds did not know what to make of it.

"Ugh!" snarled the Wolf, as he limped through the brushwood with his tail between his legs, this is perfectly monstrous weather. Why wasn't the Government look to it?"

"Weet! weet! weet!" twittered the green nnets, "the old Earth is dead, and they have id her out in her white shroud."

"The Earth is going to be married, and this her bridal dress," whispered the Turtle-doves each other. Their little pink feet were quite
frost-bitten, but they felt that it was their duty to take a romantic view of the situation.

"Nonsense!" growled the Wolf. "I tell you that it is all the fault of the Government, and if you don't believe me I shall eat you." The Wolf had a thoroughly practical mind, and was never at a loss for a good argument.

"Well, for my own part," said the Woodpecker, who was a born philosopher, "I don't care an atomic theory for explanations. If a thing is so, it is so, and at present it is terribly cold."

Terribly cold it certainly was. The little Squirrels, who lived inside the tall fir-tree, kept rubbing each other's noses to keep themselves warm, and the Rabbits curled themselves up in their holes, and did not venture even to look out of doors. The only people who seemed to enjoy it were the great horned Owls. Their feathers were quite stiff with rime, but they did not mind, and they rolled their large yellow eyes, and called out to each other across the forest: "Tu-whit! Tu-who! Tu-whit! Tu-who! what delightful weather we are having!"

On and on went the two Woodcutters, blowing lustily upon their fingers, and stamping with their huge iron-shod boots upon the caked snow. Once they sank into a deep drift, and came out as white as millers are, when the stones are grinding; and once they slipped on the hard smooth ice where the marsh-water was frozen, and their faggots fell out of their bundles, and
had to pick them up and bind them together;
and once they thought that they had
their way, and a great terror seized on them,
they knew that the Snow is cruel to those
sleep in her arms. But they put their trust
in the good Saint Martin, who watches over all
dwellers, and retraced their steps, and went
farly, and at last they reached the outskirts
he forest, and saw, far down in the valley
a bath them, the lights of the village in which
 relied.
overjoyed were they at their deliverance
they laughed aloud, and the Earth seemed
hem like a flower of silver, and the Moon
a flower of gold.
and, after that they had laughed they became
for they remembered their poverty, and one
hem said to the other: "Why did we make
ry, seeing that life is for the rich, and not
such as we are? Better that we had died
old in the forest, or that some wild beast
fallen upon us and slain us."
Truly," answered his companion, "much is
n to some, and little is given to others.
ristice has parcelled out the world, nor is
equal division of aught save of sorrow."
but as they were bewailing their misery to
other this strange thing happened. There
from heaven a very bright and beautiful
. It slipped down the side of the sky, pass-
by the other stars in its course, and, as they
ched it wondering, it seemed to them to
sink behind a clump of willow-trees that stood hard by a little sheepfold no more than a stone's-throw away.

"Why! there is a crock of gold for whoever finds it," they cried, and they set to and ran, so eager were they for the gold.

And one of them ran faster than his mate, and outstripped him, and forced his way through the willows, and came out on the other side, and lo! there was indeed a thing of gold lying on the white snow. So he hastened towards it, and stooping down placed his hands upon it, and it was a cloak of golden tissue, curiously wrought with stars, and wrapped in many folds. And he cried out to his comrade that he had found the treasure that had fallen from the sky, and when his comrade had come up, they sat them down in the snow, and loosened the folds of the cloak that they might divide the pieces of gold. But, alas! no gold was in it, nor silver, nor, indeed, treasure of any kind, but only a little child who was asleep.

And one of them said to the other: "This is a bitter ending to our hope, nor have we any good fortune, for what doth a child profit to a man? Let us leave it here, and go our way, seeing that we are poor men, and have children of our own whose bread we may not give to another."

But his companion answered him: "Nay, but it were an evil thing to leave the child to perish here in the snow, and though I am as poor as
art, and have many mouths to feed, and little in the pot, yet will I bring it home
sh me, and my wife shall have care of it.”
So very tenderly he took up the child, and apped the cloak around it to shield it from harsh cold, and made his way down the hill the village, his comrade marvelling much at foolishness and softness of heart.
And when they came to the village, his com-
de said to him: “Thou hast the child, therefore re me the cloak, for it is meet that we should are.”
But he answered him: “Nay, for the cloak neither mine nor thine, but the child’s only,” d he bade him Godspeed, and went to his n house and knocked.
And when his wife opened the door and saw at her husband had returned safe to her, she t her arms round his neck and kissed him, d took from his back the bundle of faggots, d brushed the snow off his boots, and bade n come in.
But he said to her: “I have found something the forest, and I have brought it to thee to ve care of it,” and he stirred not from the reshold.
“What is it?” she cried. “Show it to me, for a house is bare, and we have need of many ings.” And he drew the cloak back, and owed her the sleeping child.
“Alack, goodman!” she murmured, “have we t children of our own, that thou must needs
bring a changeling to sit by the hearth? And who knows if it will not bring us bad fortune? And how shall we tend it?" And she was wroth against him.

"Nay, but it is a Star-Child," he answered; and he told her the strange manner of the finding of it.

But she would not be appeased, but mocked at him, and spoke angrily, and cried: "Our children lack bread, and shall we feed the child of another? Who is there who careth for us? And who giveth us food?"

"Nay, but God careth for the sparrows even, and feedeth them," he answered.

"Do not the sparrows die of hunger in the winter?" she asked. "And is it not winter now?" And the man answered nothing, but stirred not from the threshold.

And a bitter wind from the forest came in through the open door, and made her tremble, and she shivered, and said to him: "Wilt thou not close the door? There cometh a bitter wind into the house, and I am cold."

"Into a house where a heart is hard cometh there not always a bitter wind?" he asked. And the woman answered him nothing, but crept closer to the fire.

And after a time she turned round and looked at him, and her eyes were full of tears. And he came in swiftly, and placed the child in her arms, and she kissed it, and laid it in a little bed where the youngest of their own children was
And on the morrow the Woodcutter took the curious cloak of gold and placed it in a great chest, and a chain of amber that was around the child’s neck his wife took and set it in the chest also.

So the Star-Child was brought up with the children of the Woodcutter, and sat at the same board with them, and was their playmate. And every year he became more beautiful to look at, that all those who dwelt in the village were ed with wonder, for, while they were swarthy and black-haired, he was white and delicate as in ivory, and his curls were like the rings of a daffodil. His lips, also, were like the petals of a red flower, and his eyes were like violets. A river of pure water, and his body like a narcissus of a field where the mower comes.

Yet did his beauty work him evil. For he was proud, and cruel, and selfish. The children of the Woodcutter, and the other children of village, he despised, saying that they were mean parentage, while he was noble, being sprung from a Star, and he made himself master of them, and called them his servants. No y had he for the poor, or for those who were old or maimed or in any way afflicted, but he cast stones at them and drive them forth to the highway, and bid them beg their bread somewhere, so that none save the outlaws came cease to that village to ask for alms. Indeed,
he was as one enamoured of beauty, and would mock at the weakly and ill-favoured, and make jest of them; and himself he loved, and in summer, when the winds were still, he would lie by the well in the priest's orchard and look down at the marvel of his own face, and laugh for the pleasure he had in his fairness.

Often did the Woodcutter and his wife chide him, and say: "We did not deal with thee as thou dealest with those who are left desolate, and have none to succour them. Wherefore art thou so cruel to all who need pity?"

Often did the old priest send for him, and seek to teach him the love of living things, saying to him: "The fly is thy brother. Do it no harm. The wild birds that roam through the forest have their freedom. Snare them not for thy pleasure. God made the blind-worm and the mole, and each has its place. Who art thou to bring pain into God's world? Even the cattle of the field praise Him."

But the Star-Child heeded not their words, but would frown and flout, and go back to his companions, and lead them. And his companions followed him, for he was fair, and fleet of foot, and could dance, and pipe, and make music. And wherever the Star-Child led them they followed, and whatever the Star-Child bade them do, that did they. And when he pierced with a sharp reed the dim eyes of the mole, they laughed, and when he cast stones at the leper they laughed also. And in all things
ruled them, and they became hard of heart, as he was.

Now there passed one day through the village a beggar-woman. Her garments were torn ragged, and her feet were bleeding from the path road on which she had travelled, and she was in very evil plight. And being weary she lay down under a chestnut-tree to rest.

But when the Star-Child saw her, he said to his companions: "See! There sitteth a foul beggar-woman under that fair and green-leaved tree. Come, let us drive her hence, for she is an ill-favoured." So he came near and threw stones at her, and she cried her, and she looked at him with terror in her eyes, nor did she move her gaze from him. Then the Woodcutter, who was cleaving in a haggard hard by, saw what the Star-Child was doing, he ran up and rebuked him, said to him: "Surely thou art hard of heart, knowest not mercy, for what evil has this woman done to thee that thou shouldst do her in this wise?"

And the Star-Child grew red with anger, and stamped his foot upon the ground, and said: "Do art thou to question me what I do? No son of thine to do thy bidding."

Thou speakest truly," answered the Woodcutter, "yet did I show thee pity when I found thee in the forest."

And when the woman heard these words she
gave a loud cry, and fell into a swoon. And the Woodcutter carried her to his own house, and his wife had care of her, and when she rose up from the swoon into which she had fallen, they set meat and drink before her, and bade her have comfort.

But she would neither eat nor drink, but said to the Woodcutter: "Didst thou not say that the child was found in the forest? And was it not ten years from this day?"

And the Woodcutter answered: "Yea, it was in the forest that I found him, and it is ten years from this day."

"And what signs didst thou find with him?" she cried. "Bare he not upon his neck a chain of amber? Was not round him a cloak of gold tissue broidered with stars?"

"Truly," answered the Woodcutter, "it was even as thou sayest." And he took the cloak and the amber chain from the chest where they lay, and showed them to her.

And when she saw them she wept for joy, and said: "He is my little son whom I lost in the forest. I pray thee send for him quickly, for in search of him have I wandered over the whole world."

So the Woodcutter and his wife went out and called to the Star-Child, and said to him: "Go into the house, and there shalt thou find thy mother, who is waiting for thee."

So he ran in, filled with wonder and great gladness. But when he saw her who was wait-
there, he laughed scornfully and said: "Why, re is my mother? For I see none here but vile beggar-woman."

and the woman answered him: "I am thy her."

Thou art mad to say so," cried the Star-Child
ily. "I am no son of thine, for thou art a gar, and ugly, and in rags. Therefore get hence, and let me see thy foul face no more."

Nay, but thou art indeed my little son, m I bare in the forest," she cried, and she on her knees, and held out her arms to him.

he robbers stole thee from me, and left thee lie," she murmured, "but I recognised thee n I saw thee, and the signs also have I gnised, the cloak of golden tissue and the er chain. Therefore I pray thee come with for over the whole world have I wandered search of thee. Come with me, my son, for we need of thy love."

ut the Star-Child stirred not from his place, shut the doors of his heart against her, nor there any sound heard save the sound of woman weeping for pain.

nd at last he spoke to her, and his voice hard and bitter. "If in very truth thou art mother," he said, "it had been better hadst stayed away, and not come here to bring to shame, seeing that I thought I was the l of some Star, and not a beggar's child, as tellest me that I am. Therefore get thee e, and let me see thee no more."
der and said: "What doth it matter if thou lost thy comeliness? Stay with us, and I not mock at thee."

"Nay, but I have been to my mother, and as a punishment has evil been sent to me. Wherefore I must ence, and wander through the world till I her, and she give me her forgiveness."

he ran away into the forest and called out i's mother to come to him, but there was no er. All day long he called to her, and the sun set he lay down to sleep on a bed aves, and the birds and the animals fled him, for they remembered his cruelty, and as alone save for the toad that watched and the slow adder that crawled past.

d in the morning he rose up, and plucked bitter berries from the trees and ate them, ook his way through the great wood, weep- rely. And of everything that he met he made ry if perchance they had seen his mother.

said to the Mole: "Thou canst go beneath arth. Tell me, is my mother there?"

d the Mole answered: "Thou hast blinded eyes. How should I know?"

said to the Linnet: "Thou canst fly over eps of the tall trees, and canst see the whole . Tell me, canst thou see my mother?"

de the Linnet answered: "Thou hast clipt ings for thy pleasure. How should I fly?"

te to the little Squirrel who lived in the fir-tree, was lonely, he said: "Where is my mother?"
“Nay,” he cried, laughing, “but we will sell the foul thing for a slave, and his price shall be the price of a bowl of sweet wine.”

And an old and evil-visaged man who was passing by called out, and said: “I will buy him for that price,” and, when he had paid the price, he took the Star-Child by the hand and led him into the city.

And after that they had gone through many streets they came to a little door that was set in a wall that was covered with a pomegranate tree. And the old man touched the door with a ring of graved jasper and it opened, and they went down five steps of brass into a garden filled with black poppies and green jars of burnt clay. And the old man took then from his turban a scarf of figured silk, and bound with it the eyes of the Star-Child, and drove him in front of him. And when the scarf was taken off his eyes, the Star-Child found himself in a dungeon, that was lit by a lantern of horn.

And the old man set before him some mouldy bread on a trencher and said: “Eat;” and some brackish water in a cup and said: “Drink,” and when he had eaten and drunk, the old man went out, locking the door behind him and fastening it with an iron chain.

And on the morrow the old man, who was indeed the subtlest of the magicians of Libya and had learned his art from one who dwelt in the tombs of the Nile, came in to him and
ed at him, and said: "In a wood that is
to the gate of this city of Giaours there are
pieces of gold. One is of white gold, and
other is of yellow gold, and the gold of the
one is red. To-day thou shalt bring me
piece of white gold, and if thou bringest it
ack, I will beat thee with a hundred stripes.
hee away quickly, and at sunset I will be
ng for thee at the door of the garden. See
thou bringest the white gold, or it shall go
thee, for thou art my slave, and I have
it thee for the price of a bowl of sweet
" And he bound the eyes of the Star-
with the scarf of figured silk, and led him
gh the house, and through the garden of
es, and up the five steps of brass. And
g opened the little door with his ring he
m in the street.

d the Star-Child went out of the gate of
ity, and came to the wood of which the
ian had spoken to him.

this wood was very fair to look at from
ut, and seemed full of singing birds and of
-scented flowers, and the Star-Child entered
dly. Yet did its beauty profit him little,
herever he went harsh briars and thorns
up from the ground and encompassed him,
vil nettles stung him, and the thistle pierced
with her daggers, so that he was in sore
ss. Nor could he anywhere find the piece
ite gold of which the Magician had spoken,
though he sought for it from morn to noon, and from noon to sunset. And at sunset he set his face towards home, weeping bitterly, for he knew what fate was in store for him.

But when he had reached the outskirts of the wood, he heard from a thicket a cry as of some one in pain. And forgetting his own sorrow he ran back to the place, and saw there a little Hare caught in a trap that some hunter had set for it.

And the Star-Child had pity on it, and released it, and said to it: “I am myself but a slave, yet may I give thee thy freedom.”

And the Hare answered him, and said: “Surely thou hast given me freedom, and what shall I give thee in return?”

And the Star-Child said to it: “I am seeking for a piece of white gold, nor can I anywhere find it, and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me.”

“Come thou with me,” said the Hare, “and I will lead thee to it, for I know where it is hidden, and for what purpose.”

So the Star-Child went with the Hare, and lo! in the cleft of a great oak-tree he saw the piece of white gold that he was seeking. And he was filled with joy, and seized it, and said to the Hare: “The service that I did to thee thou hast rendered back again many times over, and the kindness that I showed thee thou hast repaid a hundred-fold.”

“Nay,” answered the Hare, “but as thou dealt with me, so I did deal with thee,” and it ran
say swiftly, and the Star-Child went towards city.

Now at the gate of the city there was seated who was a leper. Over his face hung a cowl grey linen, and through the eyelets his eyes named like red coals. And when he saw the Star-Child coming, he struck upon a wooden vi, and clattered his bell, and called out to 1, and said: "Give me a piece of money, or I must die of hunger. For they have thrust me of the city, and there is no one who has any on me."

'Alas!' cried the Star-Child, "I have but one piece of money in my wallet, and if I bring it to my master he will beat me, for I am his slave."

But the leper entreated him, and prayed of 1, till the Star-Child had pity, and gave him a piece of white gold.

And when he came to the Magician's house, the Magician opened to him, and brought him and said to him: "Hast thou the piece of gold?" And the Star-Child answered: "I have it not." So the Magician fell upon him, beat him, and set before him an empty platter, and said: "Eat," and an empty cup, said: "Drink," and flung him again into the dungeon.

And on the morrow the Magician came to 1, and said: "If to-day thou bringest me not piece of yellow gold, I will surely keep thee my slave, and give thee three hundred stripes."
thou give me love. Mother, I rejected thee.
Receive thy child now." But the beggar-woman
answered him not a word.

And he reached out his hands, and clasped
the white feet of the leper, and said to him:
"Thrice did I give thee of my mercy. Bid
my mother speak to me once." But the leper
answered him not a word.

And he sobbed again, and said: "Mother,
my suffering is greater than I can bear. Give
me thy forgiveness, and let me go back to the
forest." And the beggar-woman put her hand
on his head, and said to him: "Rise," and the
leper put his hand on his head, and said to him
"Rise," also.

And he rose up from his feet, and looked at
them, and lo! they were a King and a Queen.

And the Queen said to him: "This is thy
father whom thou hast succored."

And the King said: "This is thy mother
whose feet thou hast washed with thy tears."

And they fell on his neck and kissed him, and
brought him into the palace, and clothed him
in fair raiment, and set the crown upon his head,
and the sceptre in his hand, and over the city
that stood by the river he ruled, and was its
lord. Much justice and mercy did he show to
all, and the evil Magician he banished, and to
the Woodcutter and his wife he sent many rich
gifts, and to their children he gave high honour.
Nor would he suffer any to be cruel to bird or
beast, but taught love and loving-kindness and
But the leper entreated him sore, so that the Star-Child had pity on him, and gave him the piece of yellow gold.

And when he came to the Magician’s house, the Magician opened to him, and brought him and said to him: “Hast thou the piece of yellow gold?” And the Star-Child said to him: have it not.” So the Magician fell upon him, beat him, and loaded him with chains, and put him again into the dungeon.

And on the morrow the Magician came to him, and said: “If to-day thou bringest me the piece red gold I will set thee free, but if thou bringest not I will surely slay thee.”

So the Star-Child went to the wood, and all long he searched for the piece of red gold, nowhere could he find it. And at evening sat him down, and wept, and as he was weeping there came to him the little Hare.

And the Hare said to him: “The piece of red that thou seekest is in the cavern that is behind thee. Therefore weep no more but be glad.”

“How shall I reward thee,” cried the Star-child, “for lo! this is the third time thou hast succoured me.”

“Nay, but thou hadst pity on me first,” said the Hare, and it ran away swiftly.

And the Star-Child entered the cavern, and its farthest corner he found the piece of red gold. So he put it in his wallet, and hurried to
THE HAPPY PRINCE
thou give me love. Mother, I rejected thee. Receive thy child now.” But the beggar-woman answered him not a word.

And he reached out his hands, and clasped the white feet of the leper, and said to him: “Thrice did I give thee of my mercy. Bid my mother speak to me once.” But the leper answered him not a word.

And he sobbed again, and said: “Mother, my suffering is greater than I can bear. Give me thy forgiveness, and let me go back to the forest.” And the beggar-woman put her hand on his head, and said to him: “Rise,” and the leper put his hand on his head, and said to him “Rise,” also.

And he rose up from his feet, and looked at them, and lo! they were a King and a Queen.

And the Queen said to him: “This is thy father whom thou hast succoured.”

And the King said: “This is thy mother whose feet thou hast washed with thy tears.”

And they fell on his neck and kissed him, and brought him into the palace, and clothed him in fair raiment, and set the crown upon his head, and the sceptre in his hand, and over the city that stood by the river he ruled, and was its lord. Much justice and mercy did he show to all, and the evil Magician he banished, and to the Woodcutter and his wife he sent many rich gifts, and to their children he gave high honour. Nor would he suffer any to be cruel to bird or beast, but taught love and loving-kindness and
rity, and to the poor he gave bread, and to naked he gave raiment, and there was peace plenty in the land.
et ruled he not long, so great had been his ering, and so bitter the fire of his testing, after the space of three years he died. And who came after him ruled evilly.

THE END OF
THE STAR-CHILD
AND OF
A HOUSE OF POMEGRANATES
THE HAPPY PRINCE
To
Carlos Blacker
HIGH above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for he had two bright sapphires, and a large red plume of gold on his sword-hilt.

He was very much admired indeed. "He is beautiful as a weathercock," remarked one of the Town Councillors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; "only not quite useful," he added, fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?" asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the Moon. "The Happy Prince dreams of crying for anything."

I am glad there is some one in the world who is quite happy," muttered a disappointed man as he gazed at the wonderful statue.

He looks just like an angel," said the Charity Children as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks and their clean white shoes.
“How do you know?” said the Master, “you have never seen one.”

“Ah! but we have, in our dreams, the children; and the Mathematician frowned and looked very severe, for he approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city of Swallow. His friends had gone away six weeks before, but he had stayed; he was in love with the most beautiful girl. He had met her early in the spring, flying down the river after a big year and had been so attracted by her spirit that he had stopped to talk to her.

“Shall I love you?” said the Swallow liked to come to the point at once. Reed made him a low bow. So he and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. The courtship, and it lasted all through the year.

“It is a ridiculous attachment,” thought other Swallows; “she has no money, and many relations;” and indeed the river was full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came, they all flew away.

After they had gone he felt lonely, to tire of his lady-love. “She has no notion,” he said, “and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with others. And certainly, whenever the wind blew, she made the most graceful curtseys. “I she is domestic,” he continued, “but I
my wife, consequently, should love; also.”

you come away with me?” he said her; but the Reed shook her head, she tached to her home.

have been trifling with me,” he cried. off to the Pyramids. Good-bye!” and way.

y long he flew, and at night-time he at the city. “Where shall I put up?”

“I hope the town has made preparations.”

he saw the statue on the tall column.

I put up there,” he cried; “it is a fine with plenty of fresh air.” So he alighted veen the feet of the Happy Prince.

re a golden bedroom,” he said softly to as he looked round, and he prepared to ep; but just as he was putting his head wing a large drop of water fell on him.

“curious thing!” he cried; “there is not a oud in the sky, the stars are quite clear at, and yet it is raining. The climate in of Europe is really dreadful. The Reed like the rain, but that was merely her s.”

another drop fell.

is the use of a statue if it cannot keep off?” he said; “I must look for a good -pot,” and he determined to fly away.

dore he had opened his wings, a third , and he looked up, and saw—Ah! he sec?
The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.

"Who are you?" he said.

"I am the Happy Prince."

"Why are you weeping then?" asked the Swallow; "you have quite drenched me."

"When I was alive and had a human heart, I answered the statue, "I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was!"

And now that I am dead they have set me here so high that I can see all the ugliness of all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot choose but weep."

"What! is he not solid gold?" said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud.

"Far away," continued the statue in a musical voice, "far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open and through it I can see a woman seated at a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she..."
red hands, all pricked by the needle, he is a seamstress. She is embroidering
flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of all the Queen's maids-of-honour to wear at the Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the other room, her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying.

"Now, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not help her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are stoned to this pedestal and I cannot move." I am waited for in Egypt," said the Swallow. His friends are flying up and down the Nile, alighting among the large lotus-flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King.

King is there himself in his painted coffin, wrapped in yellow linen, and embalmed with resin. Round his neck is a chain of pale green stone, and his hands are like withered leaves."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the boy, "will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so sad, and the mother so sad."

"Don't think I like boys," answered the Swallow. "Last summer, when I was staying by the river, there were two rude boys, the King's sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows are too big for that, and besides, I come of a famous family for its agility; but still, it was a great deal of disrespect."

The Happy Prince looked so sad that the
rious,” he remarked, “but I feel quite warm; although it is so cold.”
That is because you have done a good action,”
the Prince. And the little Swallow began to
sit, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always
le him sleepy.
Then day broke he flew down to the river
had a bath. “What a remarkable phe-
omenon,” said the Professor of Ornithology as
was passing over the bridge. “A swallow in-
ter!” And he wrote a long letter about it to
local newspaper. Every one quoted it, it was
of so many words that they could not under-
d.
To-night I go to Egypt,” said the Swallow, he was in high spirits at the prospect. He
ved all the public monuments, and sat a long
on top of the church steeple. Wherever
ent the Sparrows chirruped, and said to each
er: “What a distinguished stranger!” so he
eyed himself very much.
Then the moon rose he flew back to the Happy
ice. “Have you any commissions for Egypt?”
ried; “I am just starting.”
Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,” said the
ice, “will you not stay with me one night
er?”
I am waited for in Egypt,” answered the
low. “To-morrow my friends will fly up to
Second Cataract. The river-horse couches
among the bulrushes, and on a great granite
e sits the God Memnon. All night long he
watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "far away across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are red as a pomegranate, and he has large and dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre, but he is too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the grate, and hunger has made him faint."

"I will wait with you one night longer," said the Swallow, who really had a good heart. "Shall I take him another ruby?"

"Alas! I have no ruby now," said the Prince; "my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India a thousand years ago. Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweller, and buy food and firewood, and finish his play."

"Dear Prince," said the Swallow, "I cannot do that;" and he began to weep.

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "do as I command you."

So the Swallow plucked out the Prince's eye.
The Happy Prince

Far away to the student's garret. It was rough to get in, as there was a hole in it. Through this he darted, and came to room. The young man had his head in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of bird's wings, and when he looked up he saw beautiful sapphire lying on the withered

"A beginning to be appreciated," he cried; "from some great admirer. Now I can fly play," and he looked quite happy.

The next day the Swallow flew down to the mast on the mast of a large vessel. The sailors hauling big chests out of hold with ropes. "Heave a-hoy!" they called each chest came up. "I am going to stay," cried the Swallow, but nobody minded, and the Moon rose he flew back to the Prince.

"I come to bid you good-bye," he cried.

"Good-bye, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince. "Will you not stay with me one night more this winter," answered the Swallow, "and I shall come, and the snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun warms the green palm-trees, and the birds lie in the mud and look lazily about. My companions are building a nest in the branches of Baalbec, and the pink and white doves are tending them, and cooing to each other. But now, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back two
metal. "We must have another statue, of course," he said, "and it shall be a statue of myself."

"Of myself," said each of the Town Councillors, and they quarrelled. When I last heard of them they were quarrelling still.

"What a strange thing!" said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. "This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away." So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

"Bring me the two most precious things in the city," said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

"You have rightly chosen," said God, "for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me."

THE END OF
THE HAPPY PRINCE
THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE
And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue, as if something had broken. The fact that the leaden heart had snapped right in two certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the Mayor was walking in the square below in company with the Town councillors. As they passed the column he looked up at the statue: “Dear me! how shabby the Happy Prince looks!” he said.

“How shabby indeed!” cried the Town Councillors, who always agreed with the Mayor; and they went up to look at it.

“The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer,” said the Mayor; “in fact, he is little better than a beggar!”

“Little better than a beggar,” said the Town Councillors.

“And here is actually a dead bird at his feet!” continued the Mayor. “We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to be here.” And the Town Clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. “As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful,” said the Art Professor at the university.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the Mayor held a meeting of the Corporation to decide what was to be done with the
metal. "We must have another statue, of course," he said, "and it shall be a statue of myself."

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THE END OF
THE HAPPY PRINCE
THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE
THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE

She said that she would dance with me if I brought her red roses," cried the young slent; "but in all my garden there is no red e."

From her nest in the holm-oak tree the Nightinge heard him, and she looked out through the ves, and wondered.

'No red rose in all my garden!' he cried, and beautiful eyes filled with tears. "Ah, on what le things does happiness depend! I have read that the wise men have written, and all the rets of philosophy are mine, yet for want of a rose is my life made wretched."

'Here at last is a true lover,' said the Night-ale. "Night after night have I sung of him, ough I knew him not; night after night have oll his story to the stars, and now I see him. hair is dark as the hyacinth-blossom, and his are red as the rose of his desire; but passion made his face like pale ivory, and sorrow has her seal upon his brow."'

'The Prince gives a ball to-morrow night,'
murmured the young Student, “and my love will be of the company. If I bring her a red rose, she will dance with me till dawn. If I bring her a red rose, I shall hold her in my arms, and she will lean her head upon my shoulder, and her hands will be clasped in mine. But there is no red rose in my garden, so I shall sit lonely, and she will pass me by. She will have no heed of me, and my heart will break.”

“Here indeed is the true lover,” said the Nightingale. “What I sing of, he suffers: what joy to me, to him is pain. Surely Love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and precious stones cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the market-place. It may not be purchased of the merchants, nor can it be weighed out in the balance for gold.”

“The musicians will sit in their gallery,” said the young Student, “and play upon their string instruments, and my love will dance to the sound of the harp and the violin. She will dance so lightly that her feet will not touch the floor, and the courtiers in their gay dresses will throng round her. But with me she will not dance, for I have no red rose to give her;” and he flung himself down on the grass, and buried his face in his hand and wept.

“Why is he weeping?” asked a little Green Lizard, as he ran past him with his tail in the air.

“Why, indeed?” said a Butterfly, who was fluttering about after a sunbeam.
THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE

Why, indeed?” whispered a Daisy to his
bou, in a soft, low voice.
He is weeping for a red rose,” said the Night-
dle.
For a red rose!” they cried; “how very
culous!” and the little Lizard, who was some-
g of a cynic, laughed outright.
Ut the Nightingale understood the secret of
Student’s sorrow, and she sat silent in the
-tree, and thought about the mystery of Love.
uddenly she spread her brown wings for flight,
soared into the air. She passed through the
re like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed
as the garden.
In the centre of the grass-plot was standing a
iful Rose-tree, and when she saw it she flew
: to it, and lit upon a spray.
Give me a red rose,” she cried, “and I will
you my sweetest song.”
Ut the Tree shook its head.
My roses are white,” it answered; “as white
he foam of the sea, and whiter than the snow
n the mountain. But go to my brother who
round the old sun-dial, and perhaps he will
: you what you want.”
Ut the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree
was growing round the old sun-dial.
Give me a red rose,” she cried, “and I will sing
my sweetest song.”
Ut the Tree shook its head.
My roses are yellow,” it answered: “as yellow
he hair of the mermaid who sits upon an
amber throne, and yellower than the daffodil that blooms in the meadow before the mower comes with his scythe. But go to my brother who grows beneath the Student's window, and perhaps he will give you what you want."

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose tree that was growing beneath the Student's window.

"Give me a red rose," she cried, "and I will sing you my sweetest song."

But the Tree shook its head.

"My roses are red," it answered, "as red as the feet of the dove, and redder than the great fans of coral that wave and wave in the ocean cavern. But the winter has chilled my veins, and the frost has nipped my buds, and the storm has broken my branches, and I shall have no roses at all this year."

"One red rose is all I want," cried the Nightingale, "only one red rose! Is there no way by which I can get it?"

"There is a way," answered the Tree; "but it is so terrible that I dare not tell it to you."

"Tell it to me," said the Nightingale, "I am not afraid."

"If you want a red rose," said the Tree, "you must build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with your own heart's-blood. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your life-blood must flow into my veins, and become mine."
"Death is a great price to pay for a red rose,"

said the Nightingale, "and Life is very dear to me. It is pleasant to sit in the green wood, and watch the Sun in his chariot of gold, and the Moon in her chariot of pearl. Sweet is the scent of the hawthorn, and sweet are the blue-bells at hide in the valley, and the heather that grows on the hill. Yet Love is better than Life, and what is the heart of a bird compared to the heart of a man?"

So she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She swept over the garden like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed through the grove.

The young Student was still lying on the grass, where she had left him, and the tears were not yet dry in his beautiful eyes.

"Be happy," cried the Nightingale, "be happy; you shall have your red rose. I will build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with my own art's-blood. All that I ask of you in return is that you will be a true lover, for Love is wiser than philosophy, though she is wise, and mightier than wer, though he is mighty. Flame-coloured are his wings, and coloured like flame is his body. His lips are sweet as honey, and his breath is like incense."

The Student looked up from the grass, and listened, but he could not understand what the Nightingale was saying to him, for he only knew things that are written down in books. But the Oak-tree understood, and felt sad, for
and, as in this age to be practical is everything, I shall go back to Philosophy and study Metaphysics.”

So he returned to his room and pulled out a great dusty book, and began to read.

THE END OF
THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE
THE SELFISH GIANT
en he put on his hat, and ran up to the
essor’s house with the rose in his hand.
the daughter of the Professor was sitting in-
orway winding blue silk on a reel, and her
dog was lying at her feet.
ou said that you would dance with me if
ought you a red rose,” cried the Student.
e is the reddest rose in all the world. You
ear it to-night next your heart, and as we
together it will tell you how I love you.”
t the girl frowned.
’m afraid it will not go with my dress,”
swered; “and, besides, the Chamberlain’s
ow has sent me some real jewels, and every-
knows that jewels cost far more than
s.”
ell, upon my word, you are very ungrate-
said the Student angrily; and he threw
ose into the street, where it fell into the
r, and a cart-wheel went over it.
grateful!” said the girl. “I tell you what,
re very rude; and, after all, who are you?
a Student. Why, I don’t believe you have
got silver buckles to your shoes as the
berlain’s nephew has;” and she got up from
air and went into the house.
hat a silly thing Love is,” said the Student
walked away. “It is not half as useful
ogic, for it does not prove anything, and
ways telling one of things that are not
to happen, and making one believe things
are not true. In fact, it is quite unpractical,
and, as in this age to be practical is everything, I shall go back to Philosophy and study Metaphysics."

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THE END OF
THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE
THE SELFISH GIANT
THE SELFISH GIANT

VERY afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant’s garden.

It was a large lovely garden, with soft greens. Here and there over the grass stood stufiful flowers like stars. and there were trees that in the springtime broke into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds on the trees and sang so sweetly that theiren used to stop their games in order to n to them. “How happy we are here!” cried to each other.

One day the Giant came back. He had been visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had ed with him for seven years. After the n years were over he had said all that he to say, for his conversation was limited, he determined to return to his own castle. In he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.
"We don't know," answered the children; "he has gone away."

"You must tell him to be sure and come here to-morrow," said the Giant. But the children said they did not know where he lived, and had never seen him before; and the Giant felt very sad.

Every afternoon, when school was over, the children came and played with the Giant. But the little boy whom the Giant loved was never seen again. The Giant was very kind to all the children, yet he longed for his first little friend, and often spoke of him. "How I would like to see him!" he used to say.

Years went over, and the Giant grew very old and feeble. He could not play about any more, so he sat in a huge armchair, and watched the children at their games, and admired his garden. "I have many beautiful flowers," he said, "but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all."

One winter morning he looked out of his window as he was dressing. He did not hate the Winter now, for he knew that it was merely the Spring asleep, and that the flowers were resting.

Suddenly he rubbed his eyes in wonder, and looked and looked. It certainly was a marvellous sight. In the farthest corner of the garden was a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were all golden, and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved.
garden,” they cried, “so we will live here all year round.” The Snow covered up the grass his great white cloak, and the Frost painted the trees silver. Then they invited the North wind to stay with them, and he came. He was dressed in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney-pots down. “This delightful spot,” he said; “we must ask the Hail on a visit.” So the Hail came. Every day three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle; he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round the garden as fast as he could. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was ice.

“I cannot understand why the Spring is so in coming,” said the Selfish Giant, as he at the window and looked out at his cold garden; “I hope there will be a change in the weather.”

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, to the Giant’s garden she gave none. “He is selfish,” she said. So it was always Winter, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.

One morning the Giant was lying awake in when he heard some lovely music. It sounded sweet to his ears that he thought it must be King’s musicians passing by. It was really a little linnet singing outside his window, but so long since he had heard a bird sing in
THE DEVOTED FRIEND
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ONE morning the old Water-rat put his head out of his hole. He had bright beady eyes and stiff grey whiskers, and his tail was like a long bit of black india-rubber. The little ducks were swimming about in the pond, looking just like a lot of yellow canaries, and their mother, who was pure white with real red legs, was trying to teach them how to stand on their heads in the water.

"You will never be in the best society unless you can stand on your heads," she kept saying to them; and every now and then she showed them how it was done. But the little ducks paid no attention to her. They were so young that they did not know what an advantage it is to be in society at all.

"What disobedient children!" cried the old Water-rat; "they really deserve to be drowned."

"Nothing of the kind," answered the Duck, "every one must make a beginning, and parents cannot be too patient."

"Ah! I know nothing about the feelings of parents," said the Water-rat; "I am not a family
THE DEVOTED FRIEND
NE morning the old Water-rat put his head out of his hole. He had bright beady eyes, stiff grey whiskers, and his tail was like a long f black india-rubber. The little ducks were ming about in the pond, looking just like a f yellow canaries, and their mother, who was white with real red legs, was trying to teach them how to stand on their heads in the water.

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"What disobedient children!" cried the old Water-rat; "they really deserve to be drowned." Nothing of the kind," answered the Duck, "very one must make a beginning, and parents cannot be too patient."

"Oh! I know nothing about the feelings of its," said the Water-rat; "I am not a family
man. In fact, I have never been married, and I never intend to be. Love is all very well in its way, but friendship is much higher. Indeed, I know of nothing in the world that is either nobler or rarer than a devoted friendship.

"And what, pray, is your idea of the duties of a devoted friend?" asked a Green Linnet, who was sitting in a willow-tree hard by, and had overheard the conversation.

"Yes, that is just what I want to know," said the Duck, and she swam away to the end of the pond, and stood upon her head, in order to give her children a good example.

"What a silly question!" cried the Water-rat.

"I should expect my devoted friend to be devoted to me, of course."

"And what would you do in return?" said the little bird, swinging upon a silver spray, and flapping his tiny wings.

"I don't understand you," answered the Water-rat.

"Let me tell you a story on the subject," said the Linnet.

"Is the story about me?" asked the Water-rat.

"If so, I will listen to it, for I am extremely fond of fiction."

"It is applicable to you," answered the Linnet; and he flew down, and alighting upon the bank, he told the story of "The Devoted Friend."

"Once upon a time," said the Linnet, "there was an honest little fellow named Hans."
THE DEVOTED FRIEND

he very distinguished?" asked the Linnet.

answered the Linnet, "I don't think distinguished at all, except for his kind
and his funny round good-humoured face.

in a tiny cottage all by himself, and

by he worked in his garden. In all the
side there was no garden so lovely as his.

illiam grew there, and Gilly-flowers, and

b's-purses, and Fair-maids of France.

ere damask Roses, and yellow Roses, lilac

and gold, purple Violets and white.

ne and Ladysmock, Marjoram and Wild

Cowslip and the Flower-de-luce, the

and the Clove-Pink bloomed or blos-

in their proper order as the months went
flower taking another flower's place, so
ere were always beautiful things to look at,
sant odours to smell.

Hans had a great many friends, but

devoted friend of all was big Hugh.

Indeed, so devoted was the rich Miller

Hans, that he would never go by his

without leaning over the wall and plucking
nosegay, or a handful of sweet herbs, or

pockets with plums and cherries if it

fruit season.

al friends should have everything in

the Miller used to say, and little Hans

and smiled, and felt very proud of having

with such noble ideas.

etimes, indeed, the neighbours thought
it strange that the rich Miller never gave little Hans anything in return, though he had a hundred sacks of flour stored away in his mill, and six milch cows, and a large flock of woolly sheep; but Hans never troubled his head about these things, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to listen to all the wonderful things the Miller used to say about the unselfishness of true friendship.

"So little Hans worked away in his garden. During the spring, the summer, and the autumn he was very happy, but when the winter came, and he had no fruit or flowers to bring to the market, he suffered a good deal from cold and hunger, and often had to go to bed without any supper but a few dried pears or some hard nuts. In the winter, also, he was extremely lonely, as the Miller never came to see him then.

"There is no good in my going to see little Hans as long as the snow lasts," the Miller used to say to his wife, 'for when people are in trouble they should be left alone, and not be bothered by visitors. That at least is my idea about friendship, and I am sure I am right. So I shall wait till the spring comes, and then I shall pay him a visit, and he will be able to give me a large basket of primroses, and that will make him so happy.'

"You are certainly very thoughtful about others," answered the Wife, as she sat in her comfortable armchair by the big pinewood fire; 'very thoughtful indeed. It is quite a treat to hear you talk about friendship. I am sure the clergyman himself could not say such beautiful things
you do, though he does live in a three-storied house, and wears a gold ring on his little finger.'

'But could we not ask little Hans up here?' I the Miller's youngest son. 'If poor Hans is trouble I will give him half my porridge, and with my white rabbits.'

'What a silly boy you are!' cried the Miller; really don't know what is the use of sending you to school. You seem not to learn anything. Try, if little Hans came up here, and saw our room fire, and our good supper, and our great krook of red wine, he might get envious, and envy is most terrible thing, and would spoil anybody's ure. I certainly will not allow Hans' nature to spoiled. I am his best friend, and I will always look over him, and see that he is not led into temptations. Besides, if Hans came here, might ask me to let him have some flour on lit, and that I could not do. Flour is one ing, and friendship is another, and they should be confused. Why, the words are spelt differently, and mean quite different things. Everybody can see that.'

'How well you talk!' said the Miller's Wife, ring herself out a large glass of warm ale; illy I feel quite drowsy. It is just like being church.'

'Lots of people act well,' answered the ler; 'but very few people talk well, which ws that talking is much the more difficult og of the two, and much the finer thing also; he looked sternly across the table at his little
son, who felt so ashamed of himself that he hung his head down, and grew quite scarlet, and began to cry into his tea. However, he was so young that you must excuse him."

"Is that the end of the story?" asked the Water-rat.

"Certainly not," answered the Linnet, "that is the beginning."

"Then you are quite behind the age," said the Water-rat. "Every good story-teller nowadays starts with the end, and then goes on to the beginning, and concludes with the middle. That is the new method. I heard all about it the other day from a critic who was walking round the pond with a young man. He spoke of the matter at great length, and I am sure he must have been right, for he had blue spectacles and a bald head, and whenever the young man made any remark, he always answered 'Pooh!' But pray go on with your story. I like the Miller immensely. I have all kinds of beautiful sentiments myself, so there is a great sympathy between us."

"Well," said the Linnet, hopping now on one leg and now on the other, "as soon as the winter was over, and the primroses began to open their pale yellow stars, the Miller said to his wife that he would go down and see little Hans.

"'Why, what a good heart you have!' cried his wife; 'you are always thinking of others. And mind you take the big basket with you for the flowers.'"
So the Miller tied the sails of the windmill together with a strong iron chain, and went up the hill with the basket on his arm.

'Good morning, little Hans,' said the Miller.

'Good morning,' said Hans, leaning on his side, and smiling from ear to ear.

'And how have you been all the winter?'

'Well, really,' cried Hans, 'it is very good you to ask, very good indeed. I am afraid I had rather a hard time of it, but now the spring is come, and I am quite happy, and all my flow- ers are doing well.'

'We often talked of you during the winter, as,' said the Miller, 'and wondered how you were getting on.'

'That was kind of you,' said Hans; 'I was afraid you had forgotten me.'

'Hans, I am surprised at you,' said the Miller; 'friendship never forgets. That is the splendid thing about it, but I am afraid you don't understand the poetry of life. How lovely the primroses are looking, by the bye!'

'They are certainly very lovely,' said Hans, 'it is a most lucky thing for me that I have many. I am going to bring them into the ket and sell them to the Burgomaster's wife, and buy back my wheelbarrow with money.'

'Buy back your wheelbarrow? You don't mean to say you have sold it? What a very sad thing to do!'
little time, and listen to the birds singing. Do you know that I always work better after hearing the birds sing?'

"'Well, I am glad of that,' said the Miller, clapping little Hans on the back, 'for I want you to come up to the mill as soon as you are dressed, and mend my barn-roof for me.'

"Poor little Hans was very anxious to go and work in his garden, for his flowers had not been watered for two days, but he did not like to refuse the Miller, as he was such a good friend to him.

"'Do you think it would be unfriendly of me if I said I was busy?' he inquired in a shy and timid voice.

"'Well, really,' answered the Miller, 'I do not think it is much to ask of you, considering that I am going to give you my wheelbarrow; but of course if you refuse I will go and do it myself.'

"'Oh! on no account,' cried little Hans; and he jumped out of bed, and dressed himself, and went up to the barn.

"He worked there all day long, till sunset, and at sunset the Miller came to see how he was getting on.

"'Have you mended the hole in the roof yet, little Hans?' cried the Miller in a cheery voice.

"'It is quite mended,' answered little Hans coming down the ladder.

"'Ah!' said the Miller, 'there is no work so delightful as the work one does for others.'

"'It is certainly a great privilege to hear you talk,' answered little Hans, sitting down as
elbarrow is worth far more than the plank, true friendship never notices things like that. I get it at once, and I will set to work at my this very day.'

'Certainly,' cried little Hans, and he ran the shed and dragged the plank out.

'It is not a very big plank,' said the Miller, ing at it, 'and I am afraid that after I have ded my barn-roof there won't be any left you to mend the wheelbarrow with; but, of se, that is not my fault. And now, as I have 1 you my wheelbarrow, I am sure you would to give me some flowers in return. Here is basket, and mind you fill it quite full.'

'Quite full?' said little Hans, rather sorrow-, for it was really a very big basket, and he t that if he filled it he would have no flowers for the market, and he was very anxious to his silver buttons back.

'Well, really,' answered the Miller, 'as I have 1 you my wheelbarrow, I don't think that it uch to ask you for a few flowers. I may be ng, but I should have thought that friend- true friendship, was quite free from selfish- of any kind.'

'My dear friend, my best friend,' cried little s, 'you are welcome to all the flowers in my en. I would much sooner have your good ion than my silver buttons, any day;' and an and plucked all his pretty primroses, and l the Miller's basket.

'Good-bye, little Hans,' said the Miller, as
he went up the hill with the plank on his shoulder and the big basket in his hand.

"'Good-bye,' said little Hans, and he began to dig away quite merrily, he was so pleased at having the wheelbarrow.

"The next day he was nailing up some creeper against the porch, when he heard the Miller's voice calling to him from the road. He jumped off the ladder, and ran down the garden, and looked over the wall.

"There was the Miller with a large sack of flour on his back.

"'Dear little Hans,' said the Miller, 'would you mind carrying this sack of flour for me to market?'

"'Oh, I am so sorry,' said Hans, 'but I am really very busy to-day. I have got all my creepers to nail up, and all my flowers to water, and all my grass to roll.'

"'Well, really,' said the Miller, 'I think considering that I am going to give you the wheelbarrow, it is rather unfriendly of you to refuse.'

"'Oh, don't say that,' cried little Hans. 'I wouldn't be unfriendly for the whole world;' and he ran in for his cap, and trudged off with the sack on his shoulders.

"It was a very hot day, and the road was terribly dusty, and before Hans had reached the sixth milestone he was so tired that he had to sit down and rest. However, he went bravely on, and at last he reached the market. A
I waited there some time, he sold the sack for a very good price, and then he ran home at once, for he was afraid that if he stopped too late he might meet some robbers on the way.

"It has certainly been a hard day," said little to himself as he was going to bed, "but glad I did not refuse the Miller, for he is my friend, and, besides, he is going to give me a wheelbarrow."

early the next morning the Miller came to get the money for his sack of flour, little Hans was so tired that he was still in bed.

"Upon my word," said the Miller, "you are lazy. Really, considering that I am going to use my wheelbarrow, I think you might work harder. Idleness is a great sin, and I don't like any of my friends to be idle or shirk. You must not mind my speaking quite harshly to you. Of course I should not dream of asking you if I were not your friend. But what is the use of friendship if one cannot say exactly what one means? Anybody can say charming things and try to please and to flatter, but a true friend always says unpleasant things, and he is not mind giving pain. Indeed, if he is a true friend he prefers it, for he knows that he is doing good."

"I am very sorry," said little Hans, rubbing his eyes and pulling off his night-cap, "but I was so tired that I thought I would lie in bed for a while."
little time, and listen to the birds singing. Do you know that I always work better after hearing the birds sing?"

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"'Ah!' said the Miller, 'there is no work so delightful as the work one does for others.'

"'It is certainly a great privilege to hear you talk,' answered little Hans, sitting down and
ing his forehead, 'a very great privilege. But I am afraid I shall never have such beautiful as as you have.'

'Oh! they will come to you,' said the Miller, t you must take more pains. At present have only the practice of friendship; some you will have the theory also.'

'Do you really think I shall?' asked little is.

'I have no doubt of it,' answered the Miller; t now that you have mended the roof, you better go home and rest, for I want you drive my sheep to the mountain to-morrow.'

Poor little Hans was afraid to say anything this, and early the next morning the Miller aught his sheep around to the cottage, and as started off with them to the mountain. took him the whole day to get there and k; and when he returned he was so tired t he went off to sleep in his chair, and did wake up till it was broad daylight.

'What a delightful time I shall have in my len,' he said, and he went to work at once. But somehow he was never able to look r his flowers at all, for his friend the Miller always coming round and sending him off long errands, or getting him to help at the. Little Hans was very much distressed times, as he was afraid his flowers would k he had forgotten them, but he consoled self by the reflection that the Miller was best friend. 'Besides,' he used to say, 'he
THE REMARKABLE ROCKET
am afraid you don't quite see the moral of tory,” remarked the Linnet.
"He what?” screamed the Water-rat.
"He moral.”
"Do you mean to say that the story has a l?"
"Certainly,” said the Linnet.
"Well, really,” said the Water-rat, in a very 7 manner, “I think you should have told rat before you began. If you had done so, tainly would not have listened to you; in I should have said ‘Pooh,’ like the critic. ever, I can say it now;” so he shouted Pooh” at the top of his voice, gave a whisk his tail, and went back into his hole.
"And how do you like the Water-rat?” asked Duck, who came paddling up some minutes wards. “He has a great many good points, or my own part I have a mother’s feelings, I can never look at a confirmed bachelor ut the tears coming into my eyes.” am rather afraid that I have annoyed him,” red the Linnet. “The fact is, that I told story with a moral.” h! that is always a very dangerous thing,” said the Duck.
I quite agree with her.
THE REMARKABLE ROCKET
THE REMARKABLE ROCKET

The King's son was going to be married, so there were general rejoicings. He had waited a whole year for his bride, and at last she arrived. She was a Russian Princess, and driven all the way from Finland in a sledge drawn by six reindeer. The sledge was shaped like a great golden swan, and between the swan's wings lay the little Princess herself. Her long silken cloak reached right down to her feet, on her head was a tiny cap of silver tissue, and she was as pale as the Snow Palace in which she had always lived. So pale was she that as she drove through the streets all the people wondered. "She looks like a white rose!" they cried, and they threw flowers on her from the balconies.

At the gate of the Castle the Prince was waiting to receive her. He had dreamy violet eyes, his hair was like fine gold. When he saw her he sank upon one knee, and kissed her hand. Your picture was beautiful," he murmured, "but you are more beautiful than your picture;" the little Princess blushed.
“She was like a white rose before,” said a young Page to his neighbour, “but she is like a red rose now;” and the whole Court was delighted.

For the next three days everybody went about saying: “White rose, Red rose, Red rose, White rose;” and the King gave orders that the Page’s salary was to be doubled. As he received no salary at all this was not of much use to him, but it was considered a great honour, and was duly published in the Court Gazette.

When the three days were over the marriage was celebrated. It was a magnificent ceremony, and the bride and bridegroom walked hand in hand under a canopy of purple velvet embroidered with little pearls. Then there was a State Banquet, which lasted for five hours. The Prince and Princess sat at the top of the Great Hall and drank out of a cup of clear crystal. Only true lovers could drink out of this cup, for if false lips touched it, it grew grey and dull and cloudy.

“It is quite clear that they love each other,” said the little Page, “as clear as crystal!” and the King doubled his salary a second time. “What an honour!” cried all the courtiers.

After the Banquet there was to be a Ball. The bride and bridegroom were to dance the Rose-dance together, and the King had promised to play the flute. He played very badly, but no one had ever dared to tell him so, because he was the King. Indeed, he knew only two airs, and
“A person who, because he has corns himself, always treads on other people’s toes,” answered the Roman Candle in a low whisper; and the Cracker nearly exploded with laughter.

“Pray, what are you laughing at?” inquired the Rocket; “I am not laughing.”

“I am laughing because I am happy,” replied the Cracker.

“That is a very selfish reason,” said the Rocket angrily. “What right have you to be happy? You should be thinking about others. In fact, you should be thinking about me. I am always thinking about myself, and I expect everybody else to do the same. That is what is called sympathy. It is a beautiful virtue, and I possess it in a high degree. Suppose, for instance, anything happened to me to-night, what a misfortune that would be for every one! The Prince and Princess would never be happy again, their whole married life would be spoiled; and as for the King, I know he would not get over it. Really, when I begin to reflect on the importance of my position, I am almost moved to tears.”

“If you want to give pleasure to others,” cried the Roman Candle, “you had better keep yourself dry.”

“Certainly,” exclaimed the Bengal Light, who was now in better spirits; “that is only common sense.”

“Common sense, indeed!” said the Rocket indignantly; “you forget that I am very un-common, and very remarkable. Why, anybody
world is an enormous place, and it would take you three days to see it thoroughly."

"Any place you love is the world to you," exclaimed a pensive Catherine Wheel, who had been attached to an old deal box in early life, and prided herself on her broken heart; "but love is not fashionable any more; the poets have killed it. They wrote so much about it that nobody believed them, and I am not surprised. True love suffer, and is silent. I remember myself once— But it is no matter now. Romance is a thing of the past."

"Nonsense!" said the Roman Candle, "Romance never dies. It is like the Moon, and lives for ever. The bride and bridegroom, for instance, love each other very dearly. I heard all about them this morning from a brown-paper cartridge, who happened to be staying in the same drawer as myself, and knew the latest Court news."

But the Catherine Wheel shook her head. "Romance is dead, Romance is dead, Romance is dead," she murmured. She was one of those people who think that, if you say the same thing over and over a great many times, it becomes true in the end.

Suddenly, a sharp, dry cough was heard, and they all looked round.

It came from a tall, supercilious-looking Rocket, who was tied to the end of a long stick. He always coughed before he made any observation, so as to attract attention.

"Ahem! ahem!" he said, and everybody lis-
ed except the poor Catherine Wheel, who
s still shaking her head, and murmuring:
tomance is dead.”
“Order! order!” cried out a Cracker. He was
nothing of a politician, and had always taken a
ominent part in the local elections, so he knew
a proper Parliamentary expressions to use.
“Quite dead,” whispered the Catherine Wheel,
d she went off to sleep.
As soon as there was perfect silence, the Rocket
ughed a third time and began. He spoke with
very slow, distinct voice, as if he was dictating
memoirs, and always looked over the shoulder
the person to whom he was talking. In fact, he
d a most distinguished manner.
“How fortunate it is for the King’s son,” he
arked, “that he is to be married on the very
y on which I am to be let off. Really, if it
d been arranged beforehand, it could not have
med out better for him; but Princes are always
ky.”
“Dear me!” said the little Squib, “I thought it
quite the other way, and that we were to be
off in the Prince’s honour.”
“It may be so with you,” he answered; “indeed,
have no doubt that it is, but with me it is
ferent. I am a very remarkable Rocket, and
me of remarkable parents. My mother was the
ost celebrated Catherine Wheel of her day, and
s renowned for her graceful dancing. When she
ide her great public appearance she spun round
eteen times before she went out, and each
time that she did so she threw into the air seven pink stars. She was three feet and a half in diameter, and made of the very best gunpowder. My father was a Rocket like myself, and of French extraction. He flew so high that the people were afraid that he would never come down again. He did, though, for he was of a kindly disposition, and he made a most brilliant descent in a shower of golden rain. The newspapers wrote about his performance in very flattering terms. Indeed, the Court Gazette called him a triumph of Pyrotechnic art.

"Pyrotechnic, Pyrotechnic, you mean," said a Bengal Light; "I know it is Pyrotechnic, for I saw it written on my own canister."

"Well, I said Pylotechnic," answered the Rocket, in a severe tone of voice, and the Bengal Light felt so crushed that he began at once to bully the little Squibs, in order to show that he was still a person of some importance.

"I was saying," continued the Rocket, "I was saying— What was I saying?"

"You were talking about yourself," replied the Roman Candle.

"Of course; I knew I was discussing some interesting subject when I was so rudely interrupted. I hate rudeness and bad manners of every kind, for I am extremely sensitive. No one in the whole world is so sensitive as I am, I am quite sure of that."

"What is a sensitive person?" said the Cracker to the Roman Candle.
"A person who, because he has corns himself, ways treads on other people's toes," answered the Roman Candle in a low whisper; and the Cracker nearly exploded with laughter.

"Pray, what are you laughing at?" inquired the Rocket; "I am not laughing."

"I am laughing because I am happy," replied the Cracker.

"That is a very selfish reason," said the Rocket grily. "What right have you to be happy? You should be thinking about others. In fact, you should be thinking about me. I am always thinking about myself, and I expect everybody else to do the same. That is what is called sympathy. It is a beautiful virtue, and I possess it in high degree. Suppose, for instance, anything happened to me to-night, what a misfortune that would be for every one! The Prince and Princess would never be happy again, their whole married life would be spoiled; and as for the King, I know he would not get over it. Really, when I begin to reflect on the importance of my position, I am most moved to tears."

"If you want to give pleasure to others," cried the Roman Candle, "you had better keep yourself dry."

"Certainly," exclaimed the Bengal Light, who was now in better spirits; "that is only common sense."

"Common sense, indeed!" said the Rocket indignantly; "you forget that I am very uncommon, and very remarkable. Why, anybody
can have common sense, provided that they have no imagination. But I have imagination, for I never think of things as they really are; I always think of them as being quite different. As for keeping myself dry, there is evidently no one here who can at all appreciate an emotional nature. Fortunately for myself, I don't care. The only thing that sustains one through life is the consciousness of the immense inferiority of everybody else, and this is a feeling that I have always cultivated. But none of you have any hearts. Here you are laughing and making merry just as if the Prince and Princess had not just been married."

"Well, really," exclaimed a small Fire-balloon, "why not? It is a most joyful occasion, and when I soar up into the air I intend to tell the stars all about it. You will see them twinkle when I talk to them about the pretty bride."

"Ah! what a trivial view of life!" said the Rocket; "but it is only what I expected. There is nothing in you; you are hollow and empty. Why, perhaps the Prince and Princess may go to live in a country where there is a deep river, and perhaps they may have one only son, a little fair-haired boy with violet eyes like the Prince himself; and perhaps some day he may go out to walk with his nurse; and perhaps the nurse may go to sleep under a great elder-tree; and perhaps the little boy may fall into the deep river and be drowned. What a terrible misfortune! Poor people, to lose their only son! It is really too dreadful! I shall never get over it."
it they have not lost their only son," said
woman Candle; "no misfortune has happened
never said that they had," replied the
"I said that they might. If they had lost
were spilt milk. But when I think that they
lose their only son, I certainly am very
ou certainly are!" cried the Bengal Light.
ct, you are the most affected person I ever
you are the rudest person I ever met," said
Rocket, "and you cannot understand my
they, you don't even know him," growled
woman Candle.
never said I knew him," answered the
"I dare say that if I knew him I should
be his friend at all. It is a very dangerous
to know one's friends."
ou had really better keep yourself dry," said
re-balloon. "That is the important thing."
ry important for you, I have no doubt,"
red the Rocket, "but I shall weep if I
;" and he actually burst into real tears,
owed down his stick like rain-drops, and
drowned two little beetles, who were just
ng of setting up house together, and were
g for a nice dry spot to live in.
must have a truly romantic nature," said.
the Catherine Wheel, "for he weeps when there is nothing at all to weep about;" and she heaved a deep sigh, and thought about the deal box.

But the Roman Candle and the Bengal Light were quite indignant, and kept saying: "Humbug! humbug!" at the top of their voices. They were extremely practical, and whenever they objected to anything they called it humbug.

Then the moon rose like a wonderful silver shield; and the stars began to shine, and a sound of music came from the palace.

The Prince and Princess were leading the dance. They danced so beautifully that the tall white lilies peeped in at the window and watched them, and the great red poppies nodded their heads and beat time.

Then ten o’clock struck, and then eleven, and then twelve, and at the last stroke of midnight every one came out on the terrace, and the King sent for the Royal Pyrotechnist.

"Let the fireworks begin," said the King; and the Royal Pyrotechnist made a low bow, and marched down to the end of the garden. He had six attendants with him, each of whom carried a lighted torch at the end of a long pole.

It was certainly a magnificent display.

Whizz! Whizz! went the Catherine Wheel, as she spun round and round. Boom! Boom! went the Roman Candle. Then the Squibs danced all over the place, and the Bengal Lights made everything look scarlet. "Good-bye," cried the Fire-balloon, as he soared away, dropping tiny blue-
Bang! Bang! answered the Crackers, re enjoying themselves immensely. Every is a great success except the Remarkable

He was so damp with crying that he not go off at all. The best thing in him was powder, and that was so wet with tears that of no use. All his poor relations, to whom ld never speak, except with a sneer, shot the sky like wonderful golden flowers with as of fire. Huzza! huzza! cried the Court; little Princess laughed with pleasure.

Suppose they are reserving me for some occasion," said the Rocket: "no doubt that it means," and he looked more supercilious er.

The next day the workmen came to put every- dy. "This is evidently a deputation," said ket; "I will receive them with becoming ," so he put his nose in the air, and began n severely as if he were thinking about very important subject. But they took no f him at all till they were just going away. he of them caught sight of him. "Hallo!" , "what a bad rocket!" and he threw him wall into the ditch.

"Rocket? Bad Rocket?" he said, as led through the air; "impossible! Grand that is what the man said. Bad and sound very much the same, indeed they e the same;" and he fell into the mud.

not comfortable here," he remarked, "but ot it is some fashionable watering-place,
and they have sent me away to recruit my health. My nerves are certainly very much shattered, and I require rest."

Then a little Frog, with bright jewelled eye and a green mottled coat, swam up to him.

"A new arrival, I see!" said the Frog. "We after all there is nothing like mud. Give me rain weather and a ditch, and I am quite happy. Do you think it will be a wet afternoon? I am sure hope so, but the sky is quite blue and cloudless. What a pity!"

"Ahem! ahem!" said the Rocket, and he began to cough.

"What a delightful voice you have!" cried the Frog. "Really it is quite like a croak, and croaking is of course the most musical sound in the world. You will hear our glee-club this evening. We sit in the old duck-pond close by the farmer's house, and as soon as the moon rises we begin. It is so entrancing that everybody lies awake to listen to us. In fact, it was only yesterday that I heard the farmer's wife say to her mother that she could not get a wink of sleep at night on ac count of us. It is most gratifying to find oneself popular."

"Ahem! ahem!" said the Rocket angrily. It was very much annoyed that he could not get a word in.

"A delightful voice, certainly," continued the Frog: "I hope you will come over to the duck pond. I am off to look for my daughters. I have six beautiful daughters, and I am so afraid th
ay meet them. He is a perfect monster, could have no hesitation in breakfasting off.

Well, good-bye: I have enjoyed our con-

versation, indeed!” said the Rocket.

have talked the whole time yourself. That conversation.”

obody must listen,” answered the Frog,
I like to do all the talking myself. It time, and prevents arguments.”

t I like arguments,” said the Rocket.

ope not,” said the Frog complacently.

ents are extremely vulgar, for everybody I society holds exactly the same opinions.

e a second time; I see my daughters in tance;” and the little Frog swam away.

u are a very irritating person,” said the , “and very ill-bred. I hate people who out themselves, as you do, when one wants about oneself, as I do. It is what I call ess, and selfishness is a most detestable especially to any one of my temperament, m well known for my sympathetic nature.

, you should take example by me; you ot possibly have a better model. Now that ve the chance you had better avail yourself or I am going back to Court almost imme-

. I am a great favourite at Court; in fact, ance and Princess were married yesterday in our. Of course you know nothing of these s, for you are a provincial.”

ere is no good talking to him,” said a.
else for a whole year." And he certainly did explode. Bang! Bang! Bang! went the gunpowder. There was no doubt about it.

But nobody heard him, not even the two little boys, for they were sound asleep.

Then all that was left of him was the stick, and this fell down on the back of a Goose, who was taking a walk by the side of the ditch.

"Good heavens!" cried the Goose. "It is going to rain sticks;" and she rushed into the water.

"I knew I should create a great sensation," gasped the Rocket, and he went out.
POEMS IN PROSE
POEMS IN PROSE

THE ARTIST

ONE evening there came into his soul the desire to fashion an image of *The Pleasure that abideth for a Moment*. And he went forth into the world to look for bronze. For he could only think in bronze.

But all the bronze of the whole world had disappeared, nor anywhere in the whole world was there any bronze to be found, save only the bronze of the image of *The Sorrow that endureth for Ever*.

Now this image he had himself, and with his own hands, fashioned, and had set it on the tomb of the one thing he had loved in life. On the tomb of the dead thing he had most loved had he set this image of his own fashioning, that it might serve as a sign of the love of man that dieth not, and a symbol of the sorrow of man that endureth for ever. And in the whole world there was no other bronze save the bronze of thi
And he took the image he had fashioned, and set it in a great furnace, and gave it to the fire. And out of the bronze of the image of The Sorrow that endureth for Ever he fashioned an image of The Pleasure that abideth for a Moment.

THE DOER OF GOOD

It was night-time and He was alone. And He saw afar-off the walls of a round city and went towards the city. And when He came near He heard within the city the tread of the feet of joy, and the laughter of the mouth of gladness and the loud noise of many lutes. And He knocked at the gate and certain of the gate-keepers opened to Him.

And He beheld a house that was of marble and had fair pillars of marble before it. The pillars were hung with garlands, and within and without there were torches of cedar. And He entered the house.

And when He had passed through the hall of chalcedony and the hall of jasper, and reached the long hall of feasting, He saw lying on a couch of sea-purple one whose hair was crowned with red roses and whose lips were red with wine.

And He went behind him and touched him on the shoulder and said to him: "Why do you live like this?"

And the young man turned round and recognised Him, and made answer and said: "But I
POEMS IN PROSE
pineyard, passed down from the hill into the valley. For he had business in his own home.

And kneeling on the flint stones of the Valley of Desolation he saw a young man who was naked and weeping. His hair was the colour of honey, and his body was as a white flower, but he had wounded his body with thorns and on his hair had he set ashes as a crown.

And he who had great possessions said to the young man who was naked and weeping: "I do not wonder that your sorrow is so great, for surely He was a just man."

And the young man answered: "It is not for Him that I am weeping, but for myself. I too have changed water into wine, and I have healed the leper and given sight to the blind. I have walked upon the waters, and from the dwellers in the tombs I have cast out devils. I have fed the hungry in the desert where there was no food, and I have raised the dead from their narrow houses, and at my bidding, and before a great multitude of people, a barren fig-tree withered away. All things that this man has done I have done also. And yet they have not crucified me."

THE HOUSE OF JUDGMENT

And there was silence in the House of Judgment, and the Man came naked before God.

And God opened the Book of the Life of the Man.
And God said to the Man: "Thy life hath been evil, and thou hast shown cruelty to those who were in need of succour, and to those who lacked help thou hast been bitter and hard of heart. The poor called to thee and thou didst not hearken, and thine ears were closed to the cry of My afflicted. The inheritance of the fatherless thou didst take unto thyself, and thou didst send the foxes into the vineyard of thy neighbour's field. Thou didst take the bread of the children and give it to the dogs to eat, and My lepers who lived in the marshes, and were at peace and praised Me, thou didst drive forth on to the highways, and on Mine earth out of which I made thee thou didst spill innocent blood."

And the Man made answer and said: "Even so did I."

And again God opened the Book of the Life of the Man.

And God said to the Man: "Thy life hath been evil, and the Beauty I have shown thou hast sought for, and the Good I have hidden thou didst pass by. The walls of thy chamber were painted with images, and from the bed of thine abominations thou didst rise up to the sound of flutes. Thou didst build seven altars to the sins I have suffered, and didst eat of the thing that may not be eaten, and the purple of thy raiment was broidered with the three signs of shame. Thine idols were neither of gold nor of silver that endure, but of flesh that dieth.
a leper once, and you healed me. How should I live?"
and He passed out of the house and went into the street.
and after a little while He saw one whose face raiment were painted and whose feet were l with pearls. And behind her came, slowly, hunter, a young man who wore a cloak of colours. Now the face of the woman was as fair face of an idol, and the eyes of the young were bright with lust.
and He followed swiftly and touched the l of the young man and said to him: "Why you look at this woman and in such wise?"
and the young man turned round and recog- nised Him and said: "But I was blind once, and gave me sight. At what else should I look?"
and He ran forward and touched the painted sent of the woman and said to her: "Is e no other way in which to walk save the of sin?"
and the woman turned round and recognised , and laughed and said: "But you forgave ny sins, and the way is a pleasant way."
and He passed out of the city.
and when He had passed out of the city He sat by the roadside a young man who was weeping.
and He went towards him and touched the locks of his hair and said to him: "Why you weeping?"
and the young man looked up and recognised.
about God. He who giveth away wisdom robbeth himself."

And after the space of some hours his disciples came near him and bowed themselves to the ground and said: "Master, talk to us about God, for thou hast the perfect knowledge of God, and no man save thee hath this knowledge."

And he answered them and said: "I will talk to you about all other things that are in heaven and on earth, but about God I will not talk to you. Neither now, nor at any time, will I talk to you about God."

And they were wroth with him and said to him: "Thou hast led us into the desert that we might hearken to thee. Wilt thou send us away hungry, and the great multitude that thou hast made to follow thee?"

And he answered them and said: "I will not talk to you about God."

And the multitude murmured against him and said to him: "Thou hast led us into the desert, and hast given us no food to eat. Talk to us about God and it will suffice us."

But he answered them not a word. For he knew that if he spake to them about God he would give away his treasure.

And his disciples went away sadly, and the multitude of people returned to their own homes. And many died on the way.

And when he was alone he rose up and set his face to the moon, and journeyed for seven moons, speaking to no man nor making any answer.
And when the seventh moon had waned he reached that desert which is the desert of the Great River. And having found a cavern in which a Centaur had once dwelt, he took it for his place of dwelling, and made himself a mat of reeds on which to lie, and became a hermit. And every hour the Hermit praised God that He had suffered him to keep some knowledge of Him and of His wonderful greatness.

Now, one evening, as the Hermit was seated before the cavern in which he had made his place of dwelling, he beheld a young man of evil and beautiful face who passed by in mean apparel and with empty hands. Every evening with empty hands the young man passed by, and every morning he returned with his hands full of purple and pearls. For he was a Robber and robbed the caravans of the merchants.

And the Hermit looked at him and pitied him. But he spake not a word. For he knew that he who speaks a word loses his faith.

And one morning, as the young man returned with his hands full of purple and pearls, he stopped and frowned and stamped his foot upon the sand, and said to the Hermit: “Why do you look at me ever in this manner as I pass by? What is it that I see in your eyes? For no man has looked at me before in this manner. And the thing is a thorn and a trouble to me.”

And the Hermit answered him and said: “What you see in my eyes is pity. Pity is what looks out at you from my eyes.”
sought to knock at the gate. And as he did so
the Hermit ran forward and caught him by the
skirts of his raiment, and said to him: “Stretch
torth your hands, and set your arms around my
neck, and put your ear close to my lips, and I
will give you what remains to me of the knowledge
of God.” And the young Robber stopped.
And when the Hermit had given away his
knowledge of God, he fell upon the ground and
wept, and a great darkness hid from him the city
and the young Robber, so that he saw them no
more.
And as he lay there weeping he was aware of
One who was standing beside him; and He who
was standing beside him had feet of brass and
hair like fine wool. And He raised the Hermit
up, and said to him: “Before this time thou hadst
the perfect knowledge of God. Now thou shalt
have the perfect love of God. Wherefore art
hou weeping?” And He kissed him.

THE END OF
POEMS IN PROSE
sought to knock at the gate. And as he did so the Hermit ran forward and caught him by the skirts of his raiment, and said to him: "Stretch forth your hands, and set your arms around my neck, and put your ear close to my lips, and I will give you what remains to me of the knowledge of God." And the young Robber stopped.

And when the Hermit had given away his knowledge of God, he fell upon the ground and wept, and a great darkness hid from him the city and the young Robber, so that he saw them no more.

And as he lay there weeping he was aware of One who was standing beside him; and He who was standing beside him had feet of brass and hair like fine wool. And He raised the Hermit up, and said to him: "Before this time thou hadst the perfect knowledge of God. Now thou shalt have the perfect love of God. Wherefore art thou weeping?" And He kissed him.
NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

8 Page 195—With a profusion of pearls strewed, scattered or studded all over it.
9 Page 196—"Madam, I am supremely happy."
10 Page 232—"Of a murderer still unpunished for his crime."
11 Page 232—"Faun claws."
12 Page 233—"In an ascending scale,
    Her bosom dripping with pearls,
The Venus of the Adriatic
    Comes out of the water, her body pink and white.

    "The domes rising from the azure billows,
    Assuming a pure contour,
    Swell like round throats
    Which heave a sigh of love.

    "The skiff arrives and I land,
    Casting a rope round a post,
    In front of a pink façade,
    Upon the marble of a staircase."

13 Page 280—Quick retort.
14 Page 308—White lilac.
15 Page 322—Pure gold.
16 Page 325—"The world was made thus."
17 Page 325—The extreme end of the wrist, just where it is joined on to the hand.
18 Page 330—Usual manner.
19 Page 342—Of diminutive stature and build.
20 Page 346—An awkward and annoying occurrence.
21 Page 348—I had them foolish about me once.
22 Page 353—Brilliancy.
23 Page 359—Blind alley.
24 Page 403—For the second time.
25 Page 429—My handsome unknown one.
26 Page 439—Dull blockheads.
27 Page 439—A "find," my dear.
28 Page 442—Each to his or her own calling.
NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

5—As originally published in "Lippincott's Monthly Magazine" (vol. XLVI, No. 271, July [June 20] 1890, pp. 3–100), "The Picture of Dorian Gray" contained only thirteen chapters and there was no preface. "The Preface" was not published until nearly a year afterwards, when it appeared in "The Fortnightly Review" (vol. XLIX, No. 291, March 1891, pp. 480–481). As printed in the "Fortnightly" it consisted of twenty-three aphorisms, but when it was included in the first edition of the novel in book form (published in 1891 by Ward Lock and Co., London), the ninth aphorism was divided into two, and another was added after the twelfth, making twenty-five in all. In this present edition seven more chapters are included, making in all twenty chapters; it also contains "The Preface," giving the whole of the twenty-five aphorisms; and besides "The Artist's Preface," as well as many additions, variations and corrections which were made by the author in the text.

16—Succinct summary of and information about.
16—Ordinarily the word salon may be translated as "drawing room," in this instance it means a meeting-place where artists, musicians, actors, literary characters, and such like congregated.

29—Pout.
70—"Make-up" and wit.
74—The old folks are always in the wrong.
91—Stage effect.
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