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TAUCHNITZ EDITION

COLLECTION OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN AUTHORS

VOL. 4845

**WE FORGET
BECAUSE WE MUST**

BY

W. B. MAXWELL

IN ONE VOLUME

LEIPZIG: BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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W. B. MAXWELL

AUTHOR OF

"THE RAGGED MESSENGER," "GABRIELLE," ETC.

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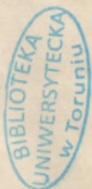
LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1928

But each day brings its petty dust
Our soon-choked souls to fill,
And we forget because we must
And not because we will.

MATTHEW ARNOLD



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WE FORGET BECAUSE WE MUST

PART I

A WINTER'S NIGHT

ON a certain February night in the year 1897, Charles Derwent and his wife Enid thought that their infant son was dying of pneumonia.

Till now they had been courageous. Now they feared. They had said to each other that he could not die, that these two doctors would pull his tiny recumbent form away from the dark entry and give him back to their smiles and kisses and happy tears. But now it seemed to them as if the implacable enemy of mankind, the grim lord of the eternal castle, had come down to his outer gates; as if, invisible but irresistible, he was pulling against the doctors; he was drawing the victim slowly, inch by inch, over his threshold into his lampless halls. With this fear the iron bands that encircled their foreheads contracted a little more, the red-hot wires that had pierced them tore at their hearts, and a great sword entered and rent their very souls.

Enid looked round wildly and Charles Derwent followed her eyes. A fire blazed and crackled in the grate, reddening the electric light queerly. The room had become fantastic and unreal, like the imagination of a dream, an incredible sort of battle-chamber or a court of judgment. Notwithstanding the bitter cold of the night the windows were opened to admit as much air as possible. Iron cylinders lay upon the floor and one of them had just given forth its oxygen. At the moment the doctors and the nurse were busy by a side-table. Something more was about to be done to the child.

In this pause Enid dropped on her knees by the bed and burst into noisy sobbing.

Her husband stood behind her, and for a minute or so they were left alone there. After that convulsion of grief she had dried her eyes and raised her head. She was looking at her son.

They both looked at him, so small, so weak, so helpless, being consumed before their eyes, exhausting himself in the fatally rapid breaths that alone kept him alive, becoming no more than a flame that leaps for a little while ere it goes out. Only a year ago they had never seen him. He had not learnt to speak to them; probably he did not really know either of them by sight; he was without thought, reasoning power, or will; and yet already he had so won their love that to both of them nothing in the universe now mattered except the life of this undeveloped atom of humanity, this vibrant morsel of their own flesh that had been detached from them while remaining so mysteriously united to them.

Dr. Laurie asked them to leave the room for a little while. With an arm round her waist Charles Derwent took his wife along the corridor to the top of the stairs and they waited there, she listening for any sound that might come from the door that had just been closed upon them, and he holding her to him, trying to comfort her.

"Enid, my poor girl, it is dreadful, isn't it? Still, you know, I have confidence in Sir William—great confidence in Sir William."

His voice sounded strange; its proper note was broken; its tone had gone. But indeed everything was strange and unnatural. This house in which he had been born and had lived for thirty-five years possessed a totally unfamiliar aspect. He himself was different. He had ceased to be Charles Derwent, junior partner of a shipping firm, the comfortable well-to-do person of assured position, of social importance, respected by the whole residential population of this vast suburb of Tudor Green. He was merely one of two agonised people—the one who was talking while the strange wild woman clung to him or writhed in his arms, moaning, wailing, raving.

Yes, Mrs. Charles Derwent had gone too. The consort of

his good fortune, that smiling smooth-faced girl, that jolly creature who could use a punt-pole on the river, who liked hard sets at tennis and would walk ten miles on end if you asked her, had been dissolved, swept away by the tempest of elemental woe. Never before had he seen this tragic mask with its rigid lines, its distortions, its quiverings, and never had he heard the voice or felt the strength of the tortured woman behind the mask. She gripped his hand, crushing the fingers; she gasped, shook from head to feet, and speaking as if to herself rather than to him, said cruel and startling things, inexplicable things.

"God knows I have never been a happy woman. But if my darling is taken from me I can't go on with it. I shall have nothing left."

"Enid!"

She released herself from his arms and ran back along the corridor. She had seen the nurse come out of the room. The nurse let her go into the room again.

He moved about the house softly, as if wandering through a pitiless dream. Except for the shock given to him by his wife's unreasoning outburst just now, all these minutes that slowly became hours had one salient quality of dreams: nothing in them surprised him. He accepted the unaccountable without any mental effort to account for it. Thus, it was, as he knew, the middle of the night, and yet he saw without surprise that the whole house was lit up; there was lamp-light everywhere; apparently none of the servants had gone to bed.

He turned out the light in his dressing-room and stood with his face against a pane of the window. Even outside the house everything had an abnormal, a fantastic air. Spots of light flitted beneath the bare trees or on the carriage drive as men passed with lanterns. There was more light at the stables, where the horses of the London doctor were resting after their feeds and recovering energy for the nine miles of the return journey to Cavendish Square.

He went downstairs into the dining-room and found it brilliantly lighted, with a dazzling, white cloth on the table, shining silver, glasses, plates, knives, and forks. The table had been laid for the doctors; supper, breakfast, a meal of

some sort would be ready for them whenever they felt hungry and had a few minutes to spare. The footman was at the sideboard. The butler, in the act of replenishing the fire with logs, looked round and upward quickly; and Charles Derwent answered this look of his as though it had been an inquiry uttered in words.

"No change, Wilding . . . No change yet."

Charles Derwent gave a gulp, made a noise in his throat, and went out into the hall again. There he saw, without the least surprise, a person in a bonnet and cloak coming through the door that led to the servants' part of the house. It was Peckham, not one of his own servants at all, an old housemaid who used to live here, but who was now with his mother in Acacia Road.

"Oh, is that you, Peckham? . . . Well, there hasn't been any change. They say there must be a change, you know, or——" He could not go on with it. He made a gesture instead, signifying, as the old woman perfectly understood, that the doctors said things could not continue much longer as they were. If one did not soon recognise a change for the better, all would be over.

"But you mustn't give up hope, Mr. Charles. That's what Mrs. Derwent said. 'He must keep up hope;'" and old Peckham drew closer to him and dropped her voice to a whisper. "Mrs. Derwent told me to tell you she's praying for you. She says she won't stop praying all night."

Charles was unable to reply to this promptly. He made throat noises. Then, pulling himself together, he spoke with great deliberation and sufficient firmness. "Peckham—if you please—tell my mother I thank her . . . And tell her I am hoping. I shall not abandon hope." He became silent, and after a long brooding pause said something more. "Yes, Peckham, say it has comforted me to know——"

But looking round, he saw that Peckham had gone. He was alone in the hall.

Time passed, the torture continued, they remained on the rack.

He could not help his wife, he could only pity her. She was in the room and they said it might be better for him to

keep away. He roamed and brooded, feeling her pain as well as his own, understanding too well the unspeakable sorrow of motherhood, but incongruously and irrelevantly being attacked sometimes by unexpected thoughts—as when he said to himself: “This day week is the Cliftons’ dinner-party. We can’t go, of course . . .” Or, “I must tell them at the office they’ll have to do without me for a bit.” Then he asked himself why Enid had spoken of being unhappy. What did she mean by it? Unhappy before she married him? Not afterwards? Dozens of questions, rapid as machine-gun fire, uncontrollable as lightning flashes, assailed him. “Was it true what his mother had said in the beginning? What did Enid mean by saying there would not be anything left? Had he no value except as the father of her child? . . .” Then in a moment he felt that it was disloyal, mean, most horrible to have such thoughts when she lay bleeding to death at his feet. She had meant nothing. She was half mad. Her words were merely cries of pain.

He went into his dressing-room and wept.

Here Enid joined him, and it was the final breakdown of resistance, the collapse under the unremitting tension.

“Oh, can God be so wicked? . . . My little boy! . . . *Is there a God?* Then why does he do it . . . Oh, why, why? What have I ever done to be punished like this?”

Torn to pieces by her pain, he rocked her in his arms, he groaned, he mingled his tears with hers, and the great sword cut and slashed his soul. Yet, even now, his mind went on working, invincibly compelling him to consider his own case as well as hers, forcing him to review the situation although the survey might be merely on the surface and leaving the depths untouched.

He felt rather than thought, “This is the sort of thing that ages a man.”

Then mercifully relief came. About an hour before dawn the longed-for, prayed-for, blessed relief was granted to them. There had been an unquestionable change for the better. The crisis had passed. Their child was going to live.

"He's asleep," said Enid, with a wonderful expression in her face. "Roddy is sleeping—qui—quietly."

They assembled in the dining-room. The order had been given to harness those London horses. The two doctors, looking tired and spent, would not sit down, but stood by the table drinking a little wine and nibbling biscuits. The great and famous physician was elderly, rather fragile, with something of the air of a priest; the other, Laurie, the general practitioner, was youngish, healthy, and robust, not brilliant but painstaking, very self-reliant in the solid foundations of his mediocrity. Both said that it would now be all right.

Charles stood on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire. Enid, near him, was crying gently and refreshingly, not checking her tears, letting them flow, and smiling through them when anyone spoke to her.

They heard a clatter outside. The carriage had come to the front door. The butler, who had delicately withdrawn, returned to the dining-room and announced it. The footman, in the hall, was ready with the gentlemen's overcoats and hats.

"Sir William," said Charles Derwent, on the threshold, "I have no words to thank you."

"None are needed," said Sir William politely; and he stepped into his brougham and drove away.

"Laurie, my dear fellow," said Charles, "your care and attention—well——"

"Don't mention it," said Dr. Laurie. "Good night. Or I suppose I ought to say good morning," and he laughed cheerily. "I'll look in again about ten."

A year and four months passed; and one summer afternoon Enid sat among the cushioned chairs upon the terrace of their garden. A writing-table had been placed beside her, and, as fast as she could, she was scribbling letters on local business with the newest sort of automatic fountain pen.

There was a white bench round a plane tree beyond the nearest lawn, and here in the shade a little camp for Master Roderick had been established. One could see his enormous perambulator and some of his toys—a grey elephant, a red

and green ball, a yellow one. And Roddy himself, refreshed by his afternoon meal, was slowly progressing towards this place of delight, meaning to have a good time with the elephant, and all oblivious of the daily doom that condemned him to an hour and a half's sleep in the perambulator between tea and bed.

Roddy could talk now and he unerringly addressed his parents as Mummy and Daddy. He could walk too—after a fashion. Large-headed, thin-legged, his skirts tucked into the seat of holland knickerbockers, a little hand at the end of an upstretched arm held firmly by his lavender-clothed nurse as he staggered along, he looked rather like a preposterous drunken man being escorted home by a giant policeman. He shouted lustily for release when a pair of white butterflies chasing each other danced up and down in the sunshine. He watched them with serious eyes, then, chuckling, slowly brought his hands together, opened them as slowly, and seemed astounded to find that he had not caught either butterfly.

"Not quick enough, darling," said Enid, coming from the terrace. "You aren't quick enough, my precious."

"But he can be quick too sometimes if he wants, ma'am," said the nurse fondly.

And at the same moment, as if to support the vaunt, Roderick gave a demonstration of his powers. He darted away, the drunken man escaped from authority, ran at least five yards, tripped, fell at full length, and howled. He ceased howling directly he was picked up. But he howled again and more loudly when they put him into the perambulator. For a minute he struggled fiercely, filling the garden with clamour then very soon he succumbed to the inevitable and fell asleep.

Enid went back to her chair on the terrace and resumed work. She had so much to do that she gave a little sigh. Nevertheless she tackled it staunchly. "Dear Mrs. Burroughes, the next meeting of the Guild will take place here (at Bolton Lodge), at 3 p.m. on Monday next." There were exactly twelve such letters to write. She had written seven and she finished the other five. . . . "Dear Madam, when consenting to act on the sub-committee of the hospital, I did not understand that I should be expected to take an active part in the

street collections on Hospital Sunday . . ." She liked making herself useful, she enjoyed the continually increasing prestige or status that was given to her, but really people behaved as if there could be no limit to her energy and good-nature! Nevertheless this was a difficult letter to write. During a pause for meditation, she treated the fountain pen as if it had been a lead pencil, and put it in her mouth and licked the end of it.

"Oh, how *beastly!*"

She was still wiping the violet ink from her lips and making wry faces when Charles Derwent came out of the house and approached.

Oddly enough, he too had an unpleasing expression. As usual, he had changed from his London clothes into a suit of grey flannels and a straw hat, but instead of displaying his ordinary gay and debonair aspect he looked fretful, annoyed, disgusted.

"What is it?" asked Enid, after turning her head and spitting decorously.

"Look here," said Charles, flourishing a small document, "I have been frightfully upset by that fellow Laurie. He has sent me a quite monstrous bill. See for yourself. 'To medicine and attendance, twenty-one guineas!'"

"Twenty-one guineas! But nobody has been ill."

"I know. Either Laurie must be cracked; or else it is simply a barefaced try-on." And Charles, who was in fact a naturally generous person rather than a niggard, said that a legend of his prosperity had been started by all the fools of the neighbourhood, and now he was considered as fair game for imposition. But he wouldn't put up with it. He should tell Dr. Laurie to furnish full details or to go to blazes.

Then he noticed that the bill went back to the time of the flood, as he expressed it—at least for two years; and they both considered if perhaps it included attendance on the servants. The cook had been bad, with laryngitis. But no, Hopkins refused to be physicked by Dr. Laurie. Hopkins said that Dr. Laurie's manner was brusque and unsympathetic.

Then at last Enid had an inspiration.

"Charles, I'll tell you what it is. If it goes back all that way, it includes Roddy's illness."

"Roddy's illness! But what did that amount to? The little chap was down and up again before one could look round."

"Oh, no. He was seriously ill. They all said so."

"For one night. I remember it perfectly. We sat up. Sir William What's-his-name came. . . Of course I paid *him*. I wrote a cheque—at the time."

Enid had ceased to listen. Her eyes became introspective, and she shivered.

"Roddy was very, very ill," she murmured in a whisper, and again she had a little trembling or quivering of her facial muscles. She had made an effort and evoked the past. But it was difficult, here in this pleasant garden with the bright flowers, the sunlight, and the warmth, to think clearly of a winter night, bitter cold, unplumbed darkness, and deadly fear. It was more than difficult, almost impossible, when she glanced across the lawn towards the boy himself, asleep in his perambulator, safe in his little camp, the toys upon the ground and the lavender-dressed nurse calmly doing her crochet work at his side.

Charles presently decided that he would pay the bill without asking for details, and they talked of other things.

"Oh," said Enid, "I want to tell you. I have had Mrs. Lacey here."

"About her infernal theatricals, I suppose," said Charles, smiling.

"Yes. They're determined to have them, and they all want you to take the leading part."

"Have they chosen their play?"

"Not yet," said Enid. "But they want something new and really good. They think of one of Pinero's comedies—if they can get permission to do it . . ."

And she and her husband went on talking.

PART II

ENID

I

BEFORE her marriage Enid had been badly treated by a man. In that year of 1895 she was already twenty-three, a very healthy and natural sort of girl, well liked throughout the narrow circle of her friends, who valued her little jokes and pleasant laughter, yet nevertheless carrying with her often, even when she joked and laughed, a sense of underlying sadness which she could trace to the feeling that the future held no definite place for her, that there was not on the whole earth anybody who really loved her, and that, adopting the description of a young lady in a favourite novel, she was neither more nor less than "a starved heart." One Sunday at the church of S. Barnabas, while the anthem was being sung, the sweetness of the music and the melancholy of this cardiac starvation working together brought a lump into her throat and tears into her eyes. The sudden distress was so great that she nearly made a fool of herself by bursting into one of her violent crying fits. She sat down and used her invalid sister's smelling salts. Her other sister eyed her severely, and then listened to the anthem more strenuously than before, as though now doing it for the three of them.

If you speak of 1895 as a date it sounds faint and remote to the mental ear, if you think of it as a year through which you yourself lived it seems like yesterday; but, however you regard it, there is no doubt that there have been many superficial changes between now and then.

In 1895 women wore immense leg-of-mutton sleeves and large flat hats, and they lifted their skirts out of the mud or dust as they walked along the streets. Golf was a game, not a religion. The Yellow Book and Mr. Aubrey Beardsley had

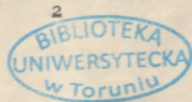
made a stir. Lord Randolph Churchill was lately dead. Bismarck, Henry Irving, Gladstone, and Oscar Wilde were alive and well. The Duke of Cambridge still commanded the army. Motor-cars had been invented, but were not yet in use. Garden seats had taken the place of "the knife-board" on omnibuses, but these vehicles were still drawn by horses. The means of communication between London and the suburbs was so feeble that it divided them rather than linked them together. All trains ran under steam. There was no tube railway. If you wanted to go up into the sky, you still had to employ the most imbecile of all human contrivances, a balloon.

Of course life essentially was much the same. The bulk of womankind were perhaps a little more feminine than they are nowadays, more preoccupied certainly with problems of sex, more incessantly conscious of which sex they belonged to. In spite of such rousing tales as *The Woman who Did* and the scornful labels of *The New Woman*, *The Revolting Woman*, and so forth, that had been attached to ladies of advanced opinions, together with much excited talk of equal rights, the notion of any serious love-making that had not a wedding for its conclusion was not accepted. The average girl's career was still considered to be marriage.

To this end the humbler maidens of Tudor Green hunted men artlessly and unashamedly. So to speak, at the word "Trousers" they all started in pursuit. Their mothers abetted, urged them to the chase with loud view holloas, followed breathlessly, and if the quarry was struck down were quick to aid with knife or spear in despatching him. "He has proposed, mater . . ." "Yes, I heard him. He can't deny it . . ." But these huntresses were only the daughters of clerks, subordinates in business houses, shop managers, and they shaded off into the actual shopgirl class.

Far above these were the well-behaved daughters of real gentlefolk—a word by no means shirked in Tudor Green—girls like Enid Benyon, who were not allowed to sit on the Parade or walk in the Chase unaccompanied. Chaperone—with the e—was the watchword of their relatives. Enid belonged to the highest circle of local society. She lived with

We Forget because We Must



her two half-sisters, both much older than herself, in one of the smaller houses of Ellington Road, and they kept the house very neat and tidy, a single maid-servant helping them. They had extraordinarily little money, but putting it all together they somehow managed. In Enid's life every penny counted.

For some time she had admired Mr. Harold Wood without ever being able to get him introduced to her. After the custom of the place he went to London in the morning and returned from it at night. He wore beautiful clothes. Then, at the tennis-club ball, they were officially made known to each other. At close range she saw his long eyelashes, his dark hair, his olive complexion; she heard his gentle voice, his frequent little coughs; she felt a hint of his physical delicacy as something that rendered him the more interesting and attractive. He seemed to her romantic, splendid. They danced together, and before the evening was over she had danced herself into ardent love with him.

As he put her into the hired fly that was to take her round the corner to Ellington Road, he asked if he might call upon her.

"Yes, I wish you would," said Enid with fervour; and then she blushed in the darkness of the cab. It would be dreadful if she had betrayed her secret.

She did not guard it long.

When he paid his ceremonious call her elderly sisters spoiled everything for her and soon frightened him away, and that same night, in fear lest he might disgustedly throw up the enterprise, she wrote him a little note suggesting that they should meet and go for a walk in the Chase. From the local point of view this overture of hers was an enormity. But already the ravaging disease of love had gone too far to allow tradition to keep her within bounds. She was not even blushing as she slipped the letter into the pillar-box.

The Chase, that great expanse of wild parkland which is the special glory of Tudor Green and makes it majestic among all suburbs, was a realm of wonder and enchantment to her in the soft evening light. To walk with him under the great trees was like going to church. As a mere experience it thrill-

led her with solemn emotion. A glimpse of a familiar and hitherto unnoticed vista showing afar off the white thread of the river was so exquisite in its loveliness that it almost took her breath away.

On that very first evening they exchanged kisses and vows; and when they parted, Enid felt as if she had fallen into the Ellington Road straight out of high heaven.

After this she made it a terribly intense affair, warm as the summer weather, absorbing as religious faith. They met every evening. Soon he gave her a love gage.

"See," he said, putting it into her hand as they sat on a bench in an unfrequented part of the Chase. "I want you to have it because it belonged to my sister Catherine, who died."

It was a trumpery little gold locket with a tiny flower in coloured enamel as its decoration.

"Oh, it is too lovely," said Enid. "How can I thank you?"

"Do you recognise the flower? Myosotis! Forget-me-not, you know . . . Poor dear Catherine wore it—right up to the very last."

He went on talking about his family and home; and Enid was overwhelmed by love, reverence, and gratitude, seeing in imagination all that he spoke of—the clergyman father, the Suffolk landscape, the brothers and sisters, including the original owner of her lovely present, beautiful foredoomed Catherine.

"Dear Harold," she said, touching his hand.

He sighed. "Anyhow I wanted *you* to have it;" and brightening he spoke with increased fatuity. "It is emblematic—the flower, you know. It will make you think of me. While you have it, you won't forget me—will you?—whatever happens."

"It isn't needed for *that*," said Enid fervently. "Oh, I shan't forget you, Harold. I couldn't, my dearest, not if I lived to be a hundred."

They talked of the future then. Why had he used that ominous phrase, "whatever happens"? Why should anything happen?

"Well, it all seems rather hopeless," said Harold feebly, and he coughed.

"Hopeless!" As she echoed the word the naturally bright colour of her cheeks lessened and her frank blue eyes had fear in them. "Oh, Harold, what do you mean?"

He reassured her at once. He stopped coughing. He became bright, cheerful, full of hope.

But now Enid sat frowning; not at him, only at the difficulties or exigencies of fate.

"You know, I have a little money of my own, Harold dear. But if I took it away from them, I don't see how my sisters could possibly manage;" and in her turn she spoke of home and family. "They are only *half*-sisters, Harold, and of course two halves don't make a *whole* sister. And being so much older—well, of course we have misunderstandings. But they have been awfully good to me—really bringing me up—and I do feel I owe them everything. And, you see, Adelaide is a confirmed invalid."

"Is that so?" said Harold. "I noticed, when I paid my call, that she had her legs on the sofa all the time."

Enid bought a yard of thin silk ribbon and wore the locket under her garments, next the skin.

She told only one person the great secret of her engagement to Harold. This widowed Mrs. Grenville had come from India with her little girl and taken a small furnished house on the Parade. Reputed rich, obviously very elegant and well-behaved, she was welcomed by Tudor Green's promptly opened arms. An acquisition. Perhaps about thirty-three, or even a little more, she had a pleasant vivacious manner, strong eyebrows, white teeth, and flashing eyes, but the dull complexion and the thinness that are usual in people lately arrived from hot climates. Enid, admiring her enormously, without delay became devoted to the new-comer.

"Bring him to see me," said Mrs. Grenville; and when this had been done she said, "He is charming—*quite* charming. Yes, I think you are to be congratulated."

Enid gave her an affectionate hug on receiving so generous an endorsement of her own opinion.

A friend in need is a friend indeed, and this was exactly what Mrs. Grenville at first appeared to be, with her lively sympathy and quick offers of assistance. She said that the engaged couple might meet in her garden and thus escape the public eye. Then she said they could have the garden to themselves for the whole of one Saturday afternoon, since she herself must be in London till late, and her servants would provide them with tea.

The first hour and a half in that quiet secluded garden were delicious, but then Enid's enjoyment tailed off badly. To her surprise Mrs. Grenville emerged from the house just as the servants were bringing out the tea-things. It was Mrs. Grenville who poured out the tea, and not Enid. Mrs. Grenville, most beautifully dressed, more elegant and at the same time more vivacious than Enid had ever seen her till now, had an extraordinarily stimulating effect on Harold Wood. She made him vivacious too. She drew him out; she showed him off, finishing lame sentences for him, supplying appropriate little jokes when he had merely groped for them, and then praising him for his ready wit.

He was still animated as he escorted Enid home, and he repaid the compliments he had secured by praising the praiser.

"What a wonderful woman! Really, what a tip-topper! Isn't she splendid, Enid?"

Enid remained silent and thoughtful.

In the evening of that same day she went round to Mrs. Grenville's house again, and laughingly warned her friend not to be too attractive and fascinating when giving hospitality to Harold.

"Don't overdo it. Play fair."

"You silly girl," cried Mrs. Grenville gaily, "what on earth do you mean?"

"Well, of course you are so awfully brilliant and clever, and all that, and you know so much about men. I don't want him to begin to make contrasts, and perhaps find poor me very dull and common-place in comparison."

Enid said all this in her usual frank laughing way, yet not without uncomfortable tremors; and something in Mrs. Grenville's manner of answering completely frightened her.

"These things are decided by destiny and not by ourselves, my dear Enid. It would seem that you are the destined one."

Then came a few wretched anxious weeks, during which she struggled against recognising the treachery of those other two. She could not, she would not believe it possible. It seemed too monstrous, too hideously disgusting. But on a Saturday afternoon when Harold had broken an appointment by writing to say that he was prevented from going out with her, some impulse of suspicion, or an unacknowledged but intuitive certainty, made her snatch up a straw hat and go to pay a call at that house on the Parade.

The servant said Mrs. Grenville was not at home; but Enid, announcing that if that was so she would go and wait in the garden, forced the entry.

They were there, the treacherous friend and the false sweetheart, seated in two comfortable garden chairs beneath the shade of an acacia. Mr. Wood scrambled to his feet looking perturbed and foolish, while Mrs. Grenville remained seated, without pity or remorse, smiling at the red-faced quivering-lipped intruder.

"May I ask for an explanation?" said Enid shakily.

"Hal, you had better go," said Mrs. Grenville; and Mr. Wood, like the nincompoop that he really was, departed.

"Now, sit down, and try to be reasonable," said Mrs. Grenville, when he had gone.

Enid sat in the vacant chair and burst into tears. She knew it was undignified, but her anguish was too great for her to prevent it. Neither pride nor anger could sustain her. The desertion of the lover at the command of her rival, the sight of Harold's back as he went up the steps into the house, his hang-dog acquiescent air, broke down all power of resistance.

When she recovered the use of her voice she piteously pleaded for mercy. She implored Mrs. Grenville to play fair even at the last moment, to leave the neighbourhood, to give her a chance of regaining Harold. Mrs. Grenville, as she urged, was rich, free, able to do what she liked. The expense of moving would be nothing to her. Nor could Harold really matter to Mrs. Grenville, who must have been admired and

courted by a hundred men, who could get as many men as she wanted, one after another. Whereas there was only one man in the world of Enid, and she wanted him so desperately. The whole thing could be little more than a joke to Mrs. Grenville. But it was life or death to Enid.

Mrs. Grenville, however, defending herself, said it was no joke. The matter was settled. She had instructed Mr. Wood to write and say so. "I am sorry—but these events are governed by destiny in all cases. They happen. No one is to blame. It is useless to blame either of us in this case. It has just happened."

"It hasn't—it hasn't," sobbed Enid. "You have taken him from me, stolen him—and you meant to all along."

Then presently drying her eyes, she rose from the low chair and denounced Mrs. Grenville with tragic vigour for her atrocious betrayal of friendship and decency. She said that as long as she lived she would hate and despise her. She said Mrs. Grenville was a wicked woman and her baseness would bring her no luck. For her part Enid hoped it would bring her every possible misfortune.

"Oh, dear, dear," said Mrs. Grenville, trying to maintain her smile but failing, "how very vindictive we are, aren't we?"

Enid thought she would die of it, but nevertheless she went on living. She had neither comfort nor hope in her distress. The sisters at this crisis were both of them unkind, one actively, the other passively, and her wounded heart was made to ache a little worse by the confirmation of the knowledge that, although doing their duty to her, they had never been really fond of her.

"Let Kate be the spokeswoman on this occasion," said Miss Adelaide Benyon from the sofa on which she habitually reclined because of her invalidism. It was a favourite phrase of hers. She appointed her elder sister as spokeswoman whenever there were nasty things to say—to the servant-maid, the tradesmen, or anybody else.

Miss Benyon then, speaking to her cue, said that Enid had disgraced herself and them too by running after that worth-

less young man Wood as she had done. Of course all the world knew of her promenadings in the Chase, the secret meetings, the whole shameful abandonment of propriety. She had made herself so cheap that she had invited the entire male sex to treat her as of no account. And now all the best people in Tudor Green were laughing at her.

That was not true, but Enid believed it.

Tudor Green's attention was in fact fastened on the marriage itself. It was said that the young man had done very well. Mrs. Grenville's opulence began to be exaggerated enormously. She possessed some sort of business house in Calcutta, left to her by her first husband, and now her second husband was going out there as manager. In that gorgeous East they would live like princes—merchant princes. The climate should be good for Mr. Wood's chest. The dear fellow was delicate, very far from strong.

Enid never had any real explanation or apology from him. After waiting a little while she sent him the famous locket, and was old-fashioned enough to add to the parcel his letters. These were not many and he retained them; but he sent her back the locket, with a lamely piteous note imploring her to keep it and not to think too badly of him.

Judging that dignity forbade her sending it to him again, or seeming to attach further importance to that which certainly had little intrinsic value, she put it away at the bottom of her small trinket-box. But she fetched it out of its hiding-place on the day of his wedding and wept over it. Alone in her room she could hear the bells of S. Barnabas ringing joyously, and she felt that her faith in God as well as her faith in man was going from her. The dull empty future stared at her red tear-stained face. Large and busy as the universe was, it had no use for her, no need of her. Life was too, too cruel. She thought of death as kinder.

Years ago when she was a girl of fourteen and her father had just died, she had been haunted with thoughts of suicide, thinking of it then not so much as an easy way out of all one's troubles, but as a temptation to which, if one were not on one's guard, one might at any time yield. Then came confirmation, the first communion, and the awakening of a re-

ligious ardour that, although growing less violent, had ever since strengthened. She was horrified by the memory of those very impious meditations.

But to take one's life is one thing, to allow one's life to go is surely another. Weeks passed and her wounds were not healed, her wretchedness and hopelessness continued. They took their usual economically managed holiday in lodgings at a small unfashionable watering-place, where this year as on previous years Enid walked by Adelaide's Bath chair, did the marketing, listened to the band—and bathed.

As she and everybody else knew well, bathing here was a by no means undangerous amusement. Because of the strong tides and the racing currents the utmost caution had to be practised, and a dozen notice boards reminded one of the peril in the plainest language and the largest type.

One blazing warm day about noon Enid swam out on the ebbing tide, letting herself go, meaning to drown, and mutely asking God to forgive her. She could see the sunlit tents, the sparkling sand, the myriad little people, as they slipped by, backward, fast and faster; and with the sensation of an overwhelming and unpardoning force to which she had surrendered herself, she drifted on. Faintly came the sound of men's voices shouting; she gasped, and the abominable salt water filled her mouth.

Then some fiercer stronger Enid inside her rebelled. She turned and struggled to swim back. Vainly she fought against the quiet deadly tide, and with wild eyes saw the shore, the hurrying human figures, and life itself, still gliding from her. She screamed and nearly choked. She was panic-stricken now, exhausted, racked with such a primeval despair as drowning women may have felt when washed out of their lake-dwellings in the midst of a dark and stormy night, every cell and fibre, every atom of her body crying for aid to save her.

A boat had put out and she was rescued. The agitated crowd on the shore saw the men pull her into the boat, looking at this distance like an enormous pink and white fish. She disappeared over the gunwale. But she was in full view after they had landed their catch, walking in the midst of a happy and attentive crowd, being congratulated, criticised for

her hardiness, vigorously photographed by many Kodaks, and at last reaching her tent. No one had thought of bringing a wrapper or a big towel down to the water's edge.

Her elder sister said it was very regrettable, this exhibition of bare thighs and skin-tight bathing-dress, and Miss Adelaide seemed to imply that it would have been better to be drowned.

II

In the year 1895 Charles Derwent celebrated his thirty-third birthday with a large bachelor dinner-party at Bolton Lodge, and twice in the evening ran upstairs to his widowed mother, who had surrendered the whole of the spacious ground floor for this masculine festival, in order to assure her that things were going well and that he was thoroughly enjoying himself.

Subject to queer little fits of pessimism, but naturally light-hearted, sociable, fond of innocent amusement, Charles was the sort of person who never walks in the opposite direction when a procession is passing, but rather one who will go to its appointed route in good time and get a front place to see it all. This indeed was his attitude to the whole pageant of life. On the emotional side his mother provided him with a full outlet. His love for her was altogether the largest thing in his universe. The mere thought of being left alive without her shook him to his foundations. Long after he had perhaps really ceased to believe in God he used to pray for her, and for himself too in this connection—praying for strength to guard her from pain, for wisdom and fortitude to watch over her, so that she might be made happy to the very end.

He said nothing of this deep feeling to anybody. But of course the whole of Tudor Green knew. Chaperones said it was very, very beautiful, but rather a pity. That devotion to his mother had rendered him inimical to the delightful bond of marriage. A lucky girl who could open his eyes and make him change his mind!

Now it seemed that Enid Benyon was to be the lucky girl.

The first time he noticed her particularly, or at any rate the first time he became conscious that he admired her, was

END

on an abnormally warm afternoon at the end of Sep
 He and that other indurated bachelor, Mr. Gregory
 walking together on the Parade, met her and stopped to say
 a few words. She was still limp from the Harold Wood
 agony; the hot weather had made her pale; her face looked
 extraordinarily refined, and the shadow of a violet parasol
 fell upon her neck and the shoulder of her white muslin
 frock, delicately tinting them. Her manner showed embar-
 rassment; and at something excessively polite said to her by
 Mr. Lake, she gave both of them a shy distressed little smile
 and walked away. The splendid, beautifully dressed Mr. Lake,
 who was one of the kindest if not the wisest creatures that
 ever breathed, had several times of late appeared to offer
 her the chivalrous courtesy which kindness of heart keeps
 always ready for anybody in trouble or disgrace. Whether
 or not she had correctly interpreted Mr. Lake's politeness,
 she was disturbed by it. She did not want to be pitied by
 Mr. Lake, and she thought after turning her back on him,
 "Of course he is talking about me to Mr. Derwent. I wish
 he wouldn't."

Charles Derwent, before reaching the end of the Parade,
 with some pretext or other shook off good kindly Lake and
 rapidly retraced his steps, feeling as he hurried along that
 he was acting strangely, in fact doing something that he him-
 self would not have expected Charles Derwent to do. He
 found Miss Benyon sitting on an otherwise empty bench.
 In spite of all her grievous lesson she was again breaking a
 rule, since, as has been said, it was not considered quite "the
 thing" for young ladies to sit on the Parade alone; but Enid,
 tired and languid, had now defied convention merely for the
 purpose of resting herself. Charles asked if he might sit
 down too.

"Oh, yes," said Enid, with a startled glance, and adopting
 in her embarrassment the sprightly semi-facetious tone that
 belonged more to the middle world of Tudor Green than its
 most exclusive circle. "There's nothing to pay. These seats
 are public, you know."

They sat talking, and it seemed to her that Charles's
 manner was slightly unusual. Knowing him very little, she

ertheless always liked him, and had thought that if by his air and tone were those of the spoilt child of fortune, he was not really and truly spoilt. She liked his open direct style of speech, his simple undecorated personal aspect, his way of screwing up his eyes and touching his long big nose with the back of a finger when he said anything funny. He had humour of a whimsical sort. Talking very pleasantly now, he soon made her laugh. It was her first genuine laughter for many a day.

Charles felt gratified by her responsiveness. Looking at her with screwed-up eyes, he thought as well as talked, and asked himself in effect several questions—as, for instance, “Have I always known what a nice jolly girl she is, or am I only at this moment making the discovery? She really is awfully nice—all to nothing the best girl in the place—the *only* girl worth stopping to speak to;” and one of his fanciful amusing notions formed itself in his mind and then evaded precise analysis. The rough outline of it, while it lasted, was to the effect that if they were living under some frightful and absurd tyranny, instead of in a sensible free country where one can do what one likes and refrain from doing anything one doesn’t care about, and if the ruling tyrant issued an edict that every unmarried man over thirty must take a wife within a fortnight or die by the executioner’s axe, then he would have to say “Give me the youngest Miss Benyon.” Such fancies as these are of course warnings or premonitions. They are impalpable straws that show which way the wind is going to blow to-morrow.

He spoke to her of lawn-tennis, and of the Doherty brothers and Miss Shaw und Miss Clarence.

“They are wonderful, aren’t they?” said Enid. “They make ordinary people despair;” and she added that she had never known any girls who could really play well.

“I have often thought,” said Charles, now very grave, “that lawn-tennis ought to be taken more seriously. Why shouldn’t there be professionals for lawn-tennis just as for other games? . . . Do you play croquet?”

Enid made a grimace and said “Oh, no.”

"I suppose you are aware that croquet is becoming more and more fashionable?"

"But I'm not fashionable," said Enid.

"What a good thing! I hate fashionable people. I don't mean the upper ten—the smart set—and all that—because I don't know any of them. But I mean the people to whom fashion is law—who would rather break every one of the ten commandments than refuse to give in to the latest fad, whatever it is. Sheep, Miss Benyon—silly sheep following the tails in front of them, too far back themselves even to see who is their leader."

Enid opened the violet parasol, which had been furled on her muslin knees, and said she must be going.

"Why?"

"Do you want to know really?" And she had her frank natural smile. "Because our servant is out, and I have to get tea ready for my sisters."

"May I walk with you?"

She laughed and resumed the suburban manner. "You compel me to hint again. How should I prevent you? The streets are public as well as the seats, you know. We make no charge for the use of Ellington Road, beautiful and entrancing as it is."

Exactly as Mr. Wood had done, he soon paid a ceremonious call; but, oh, how different was the reception accorded to him by the elder Miss Benyons. At his entrance Miss Adelaide brought her legs off the sofa, and in a very few minutes she was moving about unaided for the purpose of showing him such small family treasures as the miniature portraits of the father that all three sisters shared in common and of the mother that belonged to only two of them. Meanwhile Miss Kate was putting forth some gracious chat about well-born relatives, better times, and the considerable drop in circumstances that they had suffered so cheerfully. Although it was early, they insisted that he should stay to drink tea with them, and, consenting without solicitation, he made himself very pleasant and agreeable. But whether examining the miniatures, or handing tea-cups, or

answering questions, he was glowingly conscious of Miss Enid. She seemed rather large and solid in this small room, almost statuesque, with a calm of manner and reposefulness of attitude that he admired very much. She scarcely spoke to him at all. But he did not mind that. He felt dimly that his presence there was not unpleasant to her.

Two days later, still earlier in the afternoon, he came splashing down the road with a large waggonette, two big fiery horses, and a liveried groom. A prodigious clatter announced to every member of the Benyon household that he had pulled the equipage to a standstill outside their door and windows. The maid-servant fetched Enid with his compliments and a request that she would be so very good as to speak to him at the door.

"He wants to take me for a drive," said Enid, coming into the sitting-room with a pink face and excited manner, and looking at her sisters appealingly. "I would like to. But can I?"

"Can you?" said the eldest Miss Benyon. "Of course you can. Why in the name of reason shouldn't you?"

"Well, I thought—But if you say I may——" Enid, mindful of the cruel things that had been said to her in this very room, and such a little while ago, with regard to granting her company to representatives of the other sex, seemed still to doubt if they were really giving their permission. "Oh, all right, then."

The sisters made no pretence of not knowing what was in her mind, and Miss Kate said that Enid must be crazy not to see the difference between the two cases. Mr. Derwent, the son of Mrs. Derwent, the future owner of Bolton Lodge, quite an old friend—"There, be quick. Get your hat and cloak. Don't keep him waiting."

Charles mounted the high box and assisted Enid to climb up to the seat beside him; the groom came from the horses' heads and entered the back of the vehicle; away they went. He drove her through the Chase up the hill to Wind-Mill Common, down again, across the river and home by Tide End. She enjoyed the drive, loving the wind upon her face, the sight of objects flying past, the exhilarating sense of rapid

motion; for on every level stretch the big strong horses attained a speed of at least eleven miles an hour.

Only one exciting incident occurred. They were rather deep in talk and she was finding him easy to get on with, very *companionable*, when all at once the watchful groom stood up behind them and said agitatedly, "Look out, sir. Here's one of them beastly things coming."

It came towards them, small, black, terrible, filling the quiet road with smoke and noise—the beastly thing, a mechanical carriage, a so-called motor-car or automobile. Charles raised his whip in the air; and, obedient to this authoritative signal, the conductor of the moving nuisance drew to the side of the road and stopped. But the horses now could see it and smell it; they trembled and snorted; they seemed to crouch and plunge at the same instant. Enid held her breath. They got past it somehow, the groom running by the offside horse, crying "gently" and "so-ho," and Charles with set face, stern, masterful, using both whip and rein. Directly they were past, the absurd animals tried to run away; but Charles overcame them, and soon they jogged again sedately.

"You feel safe with me, don't you?" he said, smiling after his successful efforts.

"Oh, yes," said Enid. She felt safe; and the thought was in her mind that she could always be safe with him, for the rest of her life—safe, but alas, nothing else.

Shortly after this excursion the three Miss Benyons were ceremoniously invited to tea by Mrs. Derwent, and two of them went, leaving the other one on the sofa at home.

The outside of Bolton Lodge was impressive in the twilight of the autumn day as Enid and Miss Kate approached it over the smooth gravel. Internally it had an air of great comfort as well as grandeur. The big hall with the attentive butler and footman; the sitting-rooms through which they passed, each with a fire in it; and finally the drawing-room with several tea-tables set out and Charles in the background rubbing his nose diffidently, while Mrs. Derwent, wearing black and a widow's cap, rose majestic to receive them—all these rapidly succeeding experiences fluttered Enid and rendered her tongue-tied. During the meal itself Charles waited

upon her, and several times his mother looked very hard at her. It seemed to Enid that Mrs. Derwent, although polite, was awe-inspiring, if not forbidding. The strain of it was relieved by the arrival of other visitors—Mr. and Mrs. Burroughes, and lastly Mr. Gregory Lake.

In the act of departure, almost when they had already gone, Miss Benyon gave Enid a prompting that was sharp as an order although whispered discreetly.

"Say something to her," Miss Benyon whispered.

Enid went back across the room and shyly thanked their hostess for the entertainment.

"You must come again," said Mrs. Derwent, politely, but without warmth.

Once more at home with the invalid in that poky little Ellington Road house, Miss Benyon showed immense elation of spirit and talked to Enid firmly but genially.

"Well, miss, you needn't be mock-modest about it. For I suppose you know exactly what all this means. It is obvious to *me*, anyhow. We are to have a wedding in the family—at *last*. Charles Derwent intends to make you his wife . . . Now what have you got to say to that?"

For some while Enid said nothing at all.

"Allow me," said Miss Adelaide, scrambling off the sofa. "If you please, let me be the spokeswoman on this occasion;" and she delivered a brief but strong discourse for Enid's guidance. "Take it from me," she said in conclusion. "There are women who need not marry, who probably are happier unmarried, but you are not one of them. You are hot-blooded, amazingly reckless, quite unable to control yourself. You are a person of violent passions—whether you are aware of it or not. You need a husband to look after you. Otherwise you will certainly go a cropper before you have finished. Believe me, you may thank your stars that in all the circumstances this excellent and entirely eligible young man wants you . . . Now, I beg, let there be no more rubbish about it."

But at this point an odd cessation of proceedings intervened and Enid was thus given time for quiet thought, while her half-sisters underwent considerable anxiety. Mr. Der-

went's aloofness and delay seemed inexplicable to them. Right in supposing that he wanted Enid, they did not realise that he would never ask for her without his mother's consent.

Mrs. Derwent said what many mothers have said in analogous situations—that she was not selfish, she had never dreaded his getting married; if only she could see him in good hands, his marriage would make her happier. But not Miss Benyon. Anybody except Miss Benyon. And she made at least one dreadful shattering criticism.

"If there were no other objection, Charles, my instinct tells me that she is not sufficiently fond of you to justify your taking the step."

"Oh, mother!"

She spoke too of reports as to the young lady's past history. Friends on whose word she could rely had told her of carryings-on no later than this very summer. But Charles said that their tale did not frighten him; he knew all about it; there was nothing in it.

Scenes of great tenderness ensued between the mother and the son, protracted discussions that tore Charles almost to pieces. The sight of pain in that beloved face was more than he could bear; but the renunciation of this new strange longing for quite a different sort of love which had suddenly possessed him was so bitterly hard as sometimes to appear impossible. He was miserably unhappy. Yet all through it he never wavered in his vows of fidelity to his mother.

Then Mrs. Derwent relented. She told Charles that she would accept Miss Benyon as a daughter, and herself staunchly determined somehow or other to make a large comfortable place in her heart for the intruder.

Within an hour, if not within five minutes, Charles became oblivious of all that had been said to dissuade him. His light-heartedness returned. He spoke as if he were now to act on his mother's behalf, with a view to gratifying her plainly stated wish; he behaved as if she had charged him to secure her future welfare with the least possible delay; he seemed both to think and feel that Enid had been her choice as well as his own from the very beginning. Gay and debonaire, he presented himself at the house in Ellington Road

as the open and avowed suitor for the hand of the youngest Miss Benyon.

Soon everybody in the place had heard of his magnificent proposal. Oh, the lucky, lucky girl! But Enid declared that congratulations were premature. In sober fact she had not said either yes or no to Charles's reiterated offers, but she would have been less than human if she had not felt a very warm gratitude to him for making them. She had been depressed, in humiliation and shame, and Charles had lifted her on high. He had opened before her a prospect of peaceful grandeur. She liked him, she found solace and quiet contentment in his company; but still she hesitated, still she talked hypothetically, as if nothing was settled between them.

"You know, if we did," she said abruptly, "you would have to take me without a penny—as an absolute pauper."

Charles replied that he was not daunted by her poverty, but he added sensibly enough that he had always understood she possessed an income of a few hundreds a year and he now wondered what had happened to it. She explained that it was still there, but she could not take it away from her sisters—one an invalid, and so on. She wanted at least to give it to them for their lifetime.

This talk was at sunset in the Chase. They were coming back from a brisk walk. All round them the ruined foliage glowed and flamed with the last bright tints of autumn; the sound of carriage-wheels and horses' hoofs grew faint upon patches of the roadway where dead leaves lay thick, and then rang sharply again on the gravel that was beginning to harden itself beneath a touch of frost; far ahead, the vast expanse of the western sky seemed full of fire-lit smoke. The world looked beautiful, but a little sad. Charles said again that it was all right about the money. He admired her beneficence, and then, as if to change the subject, he asked about Miss Adelaide's maladies. What was the matter with her exactly?

"That's not easy to answer," said Enid.

"Then don't try," said Charles, with his humorous tone. "Perhaps it is a family secret. . . . But just tell me this. Is there *anything* the matter with her?"

Enid laughed. "It's funny your saying that, because I

have sometimes wondered myself. She *thinks* there is. She firmly believes she is an invalid. And Dr. McGrigor once said it really comes to the same thing. Can you understand that?"

"Yes," said Charles; and humorously he rattled off some echo of popular scientific theories. "The mind reacts on the body, and the body on the mind. The thing goes backwards and forwards. It goes round and round. It becomes a vicious circle... But I oughtn't to have used such an adjective in relation to Miss Adelaide."

"No," said Enid, laughing, "there's nothing vicious about Adelaide. I'm the only one of the family with any vice in her."

"Are you a vicious woman?" he said fondly, and his voice began to vibrate with intense feeling. "Have you a guilt-stained soul? Are you really steeped in crime, my pretty adorable Enid? For you are going to be my Enid, you know, whatever you think about it—that is, unless you wish me to send myself round to your front door as a corpse one day;" and he rubbed his nose and looked at her with his whimsical smile, as if ashamed of having shown so much emotion. "Now, Miss Benyon, do you see the obstinate wall you are up against in your devoted Mr. Derwent?"

"Stop," she said, touched to the heart; and she blurted out all about Harold Wood, saying she could not keep back the fact that she had deeply loved Mr. Wood and he had not requited her love.

"More fool he," said Charles, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Well, of course *I* didn't fall in love with Wood, but honestly I love and bless him now."

"What do you mean?"

"He has done me the greatest service one man ever did another, by being such an ass and getting out of my way."

"Thank you," said Enid. She was overcome. "That is generous. Yes, that is something that I shall remember to my dying day."

"Enid—don't." He thought she was going to cry; and he put his arms round her and drew her close to him. "My precious one, trust me. Don't be afraid. I'll make you love me all right before I have done with you."

Enid lost no time in assuring the sisters that her marriage should not cause any reduction in their narrow means; but they flatly refused to avail themselves of her liberality. They said it was not to be thought of for a moment. Dignity, family pride, considerations of what was right and proper, forbade the notion of a Miss Benyon going to a husband unprovided with at least a little pin money.

Besides, as Kate said firmly, they did not need any help from her. The marriage meant freedom for them. They had maintained this burdensome house chiefly on her account. Now they would travel—all over the world—living very cheaply, and if necessary roughing it a bit.

"But Adelaide!" said Enid. "Will she be able—in her state of health?"

"A good deal has been fancy on the part of Adelaide," said Kate, even more firmly. "It will be the making of Adelaide."

Adelaide herself, alone with Enid, declared that she felt quite ready for it. "Kate has always thought I needed rousing. It will be kill or cure." She said this very cheerfully. "It is such a great chance. We are both so tired of Tudor Green. And we had the feeling that we were tied down here—prisoners. Now, thanks to you . . ."

The discovery of their immense pleasure in being rid of her was a last touch of sadness for Enid.

She was united to Charles at the church of S. Barnabas, and she was glad that the ceremony took place there, because this particular church had meant so much to her for so many years. The bells rang out their peals of joy loud and clear through the crisp wintry air, seeming to say, if not to her, to everybody else in the neighbourhood, "Lucky girl—lucky girl—lucky girl."

Three days later the two elderly sisters left for the continent of Europe, one leaning on the other's arm as they crossed the steamer's gangway at Dover, but as if more for the sake of appearance than from any real need of support.

III

WHEN the Derwents returned after a month's honeymoon tour in the South of France and North Italy Enid already felt that she had been living with Charles for many years.

She knew him now more intimately than she had believed any one human being could know another. Hitherto she had often been oppressed by considering the inscrutability of the outward shapes of all mankind; the invisible impalpable streams of thought that flow close by us, but never mingle with our own stream; the impenetrable barrier which divides mind from mind, and in which neither love nor faith, neither joy nor sorrow, can piece a loophole. But Charles made of himself a clear white glass through which she seemed to be able to see all that was going on inside him. Evidently he meant never to keep anything from her, whether sacredly important or utterly trivial. Thus his manner was as open when he spoke of his religious doubts as when he cut a round piece of court plaster to put on a chafed toe. The only difference was that he showed her the corn plaster as well as talking about it.

She knew that he not only rubbed his nose after making a joke, but also in moments of perplexity; that he was generous and large as to money matters, and yet subject to queer little meannesses or failures where quite small sums were at stake; that indigestion was principally the cause of those little fits of unreasoning gloom when he felt as if the bottom of his universe had fallen out with a crash; that he was extraordinarily unselfish, and yet often stupidly adopting an attitude of sheer egotism; that his two contradictory sins of temperament were procrastination and impulsive unconsidered action; that he was nevertheless quite a good man of business, and, although the youngest partner of the shipping firm, steadily becoming its actual chieftain. Lastly she knew that he was altogether dependent on her. This thought never failed to touch her heart. She knew that, mysteriously, his sudden love for her had been a recognition of the truth that she was the one woman in the world who could absolutely

satisfy his desires. The sight of her was joy to him; close contact with her was delirious rapture.

Yet she, who had been accused of possessing hot blood and unavowable instincts, remained with passions still quiescent and pulses unstirred by crossing over the threshold from conjecture to knowledge. She was calmer after partaking of the mysteries of wedlock than before. This tremendous experience (of which she had thought so much, believing that it left its impression even in an altered aspect of the face, so that a married woman could tell almost at a glance if another woman was wife or spinster) had not changed her in the slightest degree. She simply fulfilled her duty as laid down in the words of the prayer-book. It was a duty and no more than that, a submission which she achieved without repugnance, but of which the highest thrill could be only a sort of quiet altruistic happiness in pleasing some one else.

She said to herself in effect, "How odd, how surprising," and tried not to think of the real reason. But of course she knew that too. She did not love him as lovers love. She liked him, she was very grateful to him. He had banished care and sadness from her life.

Things being as they were, she gave him all except that which she could not give—making his wishes her laws, doing whatever he fancied from hour to hour, going for a row in a boat or a tramp along the lake side, dining à la carte in the restaurant or joining the crowd in the table d'hôte room, going early to bed when not sleepy and sitting up late with him when rather tired.

It had been arranged that they were to live at Bolton Lodge temporarily; but Charles in secret hoped that the arrangement might become permanent.

It worked very smoothly at first. Mrs. Derwent begged her daughter-in-law to treat the house as if it belonged to her; but of course it didn't belong to her and Enid was very careful never to assume the slightest air of ownership. She was a guest in the house, nothing more. An immense effort was made by the older and the younger woman to accom-

moderate themselves to an impossible situation. Then inevitably antagonism began to arise.

Mrs. Derwent continued to say charmingly kind things; but she winced when Enid wore a low-necked dress for the family dinner or smoked a cigarette after it, and she could not conceal the pain caused by Enid's going to the ritualistic church of S. Barnabas instead of taking her place in the family pew at humdrum St. Luke's. Enid was, religiously, "high" and the other "low"; she was young and the other old; one was a wife and one a mother. In thought and emotion alike, they clashed. Enid respected her mother-in-law, admired her good qualities, tried hard to be fond of her, and failed utterly.

Soon the very amenities and comforts of Bolton Lodge depressed her spirits. The good food was dust and ashes, the air of the well-warmed rooms became suffocating; her married life was a hollow sham, a hideous travesty of what she had anticipated. Finally Charles himself suspected that things had gone wrong.

"It amounts to this," he said, rubbing his nose. "You are not happy here."

Enid confessed that she was not.

"I have never been a very happy woman," she said, with tears in her eyes, "and perhaps I wasn't intended to be by Providence."

Charles was aghast.

"You didn't talk like that in Italy."

"No," she said, "Italy was different. I had you to myself—without somebody always between us. Oh, it's no use mincing matters;" and she said much more. "You will have to make your choice. That is, if you haven't made it already. It must be your mother or me. It can't be both. But listen. I am quite prepared to do what you like—to retire into the background once for all. Then I shall know where I am."

"Oh, don't be absurd," said Charles warmly. "Don't talk rubbish."

Next minute they were having their first quarrel. They said dreadful unpardonable things to each other.

He went out bursting with resentment. He walked by

himself, and after a very little while all his anger had gone and he was in despair. He thought that never had any one been so completely miserable.

Stung to action he acted impulsively. That same afternoon he committed himself to the purchase of a house in Acacia Road. It was newly built, detached, possessed of a garden behind it; not bad from a suburban point of view, but altogether a humble, mediocre affair when compared with the grand and spacious Bolton Lodge. Enid, however, declared herself to be enraptured with it. Directly after writing a cheque for the deposit and signing a contract at the agent's office he brought her to look at it.

"Yes, I feel we shall be happy here," said Enid, hurrying from one small room to another. "So cosy and *homy*..." And she went on to tell him how she would like to decorate the different rooms. "This one ought to have a lot of colour. We won't be afraid of colour, will we? You will let me have my own way, won't you, Charles?"

Her eyes were bright, her face pink. She was full of animation.

"Yes," said Charles, gratified by her pleasure, yet a little rueful. "Don't let mother see how delighted you are to get away. It would wound her dreadfully."

Enid promised to be very careful and to hide her joy.

When he told his mother of the purchase she asked if he had not been a little premature, and perhaps not quite kind in concluding a matter of such importance without a word to her.

Charles apologised for his hastiness.

Next day Mrs. Derwent drove with him alone to the house, and they two went over it from its basement to its roof-tree. The old lady, looking solemn and rather sad in her black dress, had none of the cries of admiration that were uttered yesterday by Enid, but she announced that on the whole it satisfied her.

"Yes," she said firmly, "it will do. It will do all right, Charles... And now," she continued, "you must instruct the solicitors to complete the purchase in my name. I do not think the price is unreasonable. I will provide it."

Charles said he would not hear of this. It was too good and generous, but he could not consent. He had plenty of money.

Mrs. Derwent overruled him. She and not he was to be the real purchaser. "You and Enid require a house. Well, I intend to give you one."

Then, before going out again to the carriage, she said she had a single favour to ask. It was that she should be allowed to do up the house exactly as she pleased.

"What," said Charles blankly, "without consulting Enid?"

"Yes, without consulting Enid or anybody else."

"But, mother, don't you see," said Charles, rubbing his nose hard, "I'm afraid that poor Enid would be badly wounded—to have everything taken out of her hands. In fact, only yesterday——"

"No," said old Mrs. Derwent, and she was so firm as to appear stern, "I will explain to Enid and then Enid will not object. I have my reasons for not explaining now. I am not like you, Charles. I avoid premature action—even when I have quite made up my mind. I go on looking before I leap." Then her rather hard face relaxed, the wrinkles gathered round her eyes, her whole expression softened. "Dear boy," she said gently, "You can trust me to do what is best. I have not forgotten Enid's claims for consideration—far from it."

They embraced, and then he led her down the front steps to her carriage.

"Are you coming for a turn with me?" she asked.

But he said no, and she drove away in solitary state, while Charles hurried back to talk with his wife, feeling, not for the first time, that two different duties were pulling him in opposite directions.

He told Enid of his mother's lavishly generous wish; but he refrained from telling her that the choosing of wall-papers, window-blinds, and paint was to be taken from her. He simply could not bring himself so soon to disclose this hard condition; and indeed there seemed to be no hurry, for weeks must pass before the lawyers had performed their always slow task and thereby obtained possession of the house.

As events worked out, that old habit of procrastination proved a useful friend to him in his discomfort and perplexity. One morning Enid was sick, and after that she did not care where she lived or what colour people painted her walls. Each day brought the same abominable distress. She was going to have a baby.

In a month or so old Mrs. Derwent made an announcement that filled Charles with wonder, admiring reverence, some little elation, and a good deal of pain. Perhaps she had waited until the fact of Enid's approaching motherhood should become certain. Anyhow she told her son that she had resolved to hand over to them Bolton Lodge, and she herself, not they, would go to live in Acacia Road. Charles felt and said that he could never allow her to do so. It was not to be thought of. This house was more than her dwelling-place, it was bound to her by innumerable associations; it had become, if not a part of herself, the dignified frame of her life; to the entire neighbourhood she was Mrs. Derwent of Bolton Lodge. All the inhabitants would denounce him if he took it from her.

But Mrs. Derwent said that what she had decided upon was quite right and proper. "You would have it at my death, and there is no necessity that any of us should wait for that." Besides, the matter was settled. The lawyers had prepared the deed of gift. She was going to sign it to-morrow. After to-morrow Bolton Lodge and all that it contained would belong to him and his wife. She would be merely their visitor. "For, of course," she said, "you will let me stay until my new home is ready for me—and you'll let me take any furniture—any things that I don't care to part with."

"Mother!" cried Charles, wrung to the heart.

"Just so," said Mrs. Derwent. "Mr. Ansell said there ought to be a schedule of such things. But I said 'No, my son and I understood each other;'" and she nodded her grey head and smiled at him.

On a spring evening about dusk she drove away in her brougham accompanied by Peckham, the only one of the servants that she took with her. Her horses and carriages were

to remain at Bolton Lodge, as there were no stables in Acacia Road; but except for this she left no trace of her long reign behind her. It was the abdication of the dowager queen, accomplished by her with enormous dignity, but no fuss, as though it were an occurrence natural to the order of things and therefore not calling for either thanks or comment.

But to Charles, now that it actually happened, it seemed most dreadful. He stood outside the house watching the brougham roll away down the drive and out of sight. He reproached himself very bitterly. He should not have allowed it. His throat burned, his eyes smarted; yearning affection, suffusive tenderness, aching regret, possessed his whole body. His mind was a picture-hall filled with a thousand memories. As he stood there bareheaded he was a little boy again, holding his mother's hand, clinging to her, looking to her for protection as well as that unfailing love. For a minute or so the whole past, year after year of it, was alive in him. Hundreds and hundreds of times he had sworn that nothing on earth should ever separate them. And now, as he felt, when she was old and grey, and most of all needing him, he had betrayed her. He turned towards the house she had given him feeling ashamed and miserably unhappy.

Enid was upstairs in her room resting. Her absence from the quiet ceremony of the departure implied no lack of respect but a physical disability. Mrs. Derwent had said good-bye to her an hour and a half ago. Charles came into the room and stood looking at her, stretched on the bed, her face flushed, her hair untidy, rugs shrouding her to the chin.

"Is that you, dear?" she murmured. She had just awakened from sleep.

"Yes," he said. "I don't want to disturb you. It was only to say that mother has gone . . . How are you feeling?"

"Not very well, dear . . . Aren't I a nuisance? I'm afraid I seem to make heavy weather of my interesting condition. It must be horrid for you;" and she tried to cheer him with one of her little jokes. "I tell Dr. Laurie that with me the sickness and everything else seems to be on such a large scale. Will you mind very much if it's twins—or even triplets?"

"How hot your hand is." Automatically she had brought a hand from under the rugs and he held it, gently caressing it. As he stood there, this other most tremendous tenderness imperiously asserted itself. He looked at her, and waves of mingled love and compassion flowed right through him. She was his wife, his poor little wife—his Enid, the jolly healthy girl that he had reduced to such a pitiable state. His portion had been bliss and hers was to be pain. He had loved her more and more, but in this new and lacerating manner, ever since he had known that she was going to make him a father. Oh, if she could only be spared the inevitable, atrocious torture that she would have to suffer before long on his account! For a little while they both remained silent.

Then she spoke deprecatingly.

"Charles, will you think me very selfish if I ask to have my food up here and not go down to dinner? I suppose I ought to make another effort. But I do feel so utterly rotten to-night."

Charles said of course she must dine upstairs. It would be better, wiser, altogether correct. And then with a sudden idea he brightened perceptibly.

"I really think, if you feel sure you'll be comfortable up here, I'll go round and dine with the mater. I think I would like to—on her very first night. She couldn't help being a bit lonely all by herself."

Enid begged him to do this.

"I will then. That is, if you won't feel that I am deserting my post. On your honour?"

"On my honour. I'd like you to. I *want* you to."

"Bless you, darling."

Charles stooped over her, kissed her forehead, put her hand back under the rug, and then bustled off.

Thus, when the baby had been born and Enid as a convalescent went downstairs for the first time, it was a descent into a new realm over which she was to reign absolutely.

The sense of ownership made her see everything with different eyes. She had always known that the house was large and imposing; but she had not till now seen that it was beauti-

ful as well as magnificent. She looked at the broad shallow staircase, at the panelled walls, the columned bay of the big dining-room, the old Georgian presses of carved oak in the library, and felt an admiration that was swollen with pride. Her first walks were taken not out of doors, but inside the house. The servants, who accepted the change of proprietorship with perfect equanimity, showed her more and more of its opulence and perfection—bedrooms she had not guessed at, domestic offices beyond belief, storerooms, cupboard after cupboard full of lovely unused linen, glass, and china. It was a treasure-house.

Her intense satisfaction enabled her to realise the magnitude of old Mrs. Derwent's voluntary surrender. She thought of this now as an unparalleled act of unselfishness. As soon as possible she went with her baby to Acacia Road, and offered heartfelt thanks.

Her mother-in-law was grand and kind, making nothing of the sacrifice, begging that no more should be said about it. But Enid continued to overflow with gratitude. They kissed each other many times. Mrs. Derwent lavished praises on her dear little grandchild, and Enid said she prayed he might inherit his grandmother's noble nature. Then they kissed again.

But still they did not really like each other.

House pride and the joys of home were of course subsidiary to all that concerned the infant. Her baby filled the world of strong emotion. He *was* that world. Then came the terrible ordeal of his illness, and the tranquil raptures of his complete recovery.

Months of peace and prosperity followed. She was busy all day and every day. She had begun to take up the important position in the social life of the suburb that she was destined to occupy for many years. Then in the midst of her activities she fell sick again, but not so badly as the first time. Another child arrived, a girl that they christened Margaret after Charles's mother. And once more Enid was ill. On this occasion a second boy was born to them. They called

him Charles. His father had always said that he did not want to have two Charles's about the place. But Enid insisted.

"He shall be *Charlie*," she said, "and you will continue to be *Charles*. So there can be no confusion, ever."

IV

THEY were going to give one of their big dinner-parties and Enid had sent out invitations to the very grandest people in Tudor Green. As she tore open envelopes and read replies she felt pleasing little thrills of satisfaction.

Mr. and Mrs. Castleton, of the Nuns' House, accepted. Captain Ford, R.N., of Ivy Lodge, had the pleasure to accept. "Sir Geoffrey and Lady Adela Thorne have much pleasure in accepting the very kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Derwent..." Once, although she might venture to address them at charity bazaars or on other public occasions and they would greet her civilly, these people had been as remote from the realm of close personal intercourse as the dukes and duchesses that one read about in *The Morning Post*. She had shily considered them all as old, rich, overwhelming. Potentates. Now they came to her house unhesitatingly whenever she asked them. Unless they were otherwise engaged, it was an absolute certainty that they would come.

How marvellous is life. Who can foresee or predict? Tomorrow is like a magician's box. Small as it seems it may hold giants and fairies, dark pine woods with snow-capped mountains, cities as splendid as Constantinople, as distant as Peru. Such thoughts as these were often with her now.

The acceptances were all written in the third person; the rigmoroles with "I's" and "you's" meant that the writer could be knocked off the list. Enid saw at a glance which were which. "Alas, and alas," wrote Miss Berwick of St. Luke's Road. Miss Berwick could not come. Frankly Enid did not mind. Miss Berwick when she enjoyed herself—and she had a great capacity for enjoyment—was apt to become much too talkative and a little too noisy. Lady Adela had confessed that Miss Berwick bored Sir Geoffrey Thorne. The party would be better, or at least *safer* without Miss Berwick.

The vicar and his wife could not come. Mrs. Hopkinson wrote to express her husband's poignant regret. She went rigmaroling on about it, and Enid with rapid eye merely seized scraps. "He says that you know he is always happy at Bolton Lodge... The flow of reason and the feast of wit... Besides, to one compelled to see much sadness and want, the sumptuous nature of your entertainments... A refreshing change... The Bishop... But a Bishop is a Bishop... So fear unavoidable... Now I take my courage in both hands..."

"Oh, damn," said Enid, out loud, and frowning.

Mrs. Hopkinson was coming without the vicar. The dullest person in Tudor Green, aggressively simple as to costume, insinuatingly complicated as to manner, impelled to contradict people on principle, unable to allow it to pass without entering her protest if people spoke facetiously of serious things, Mrs. Hopkinson was only tolerable when the vicar was there to keep her in order. He had a controlling influence over her... And now she would be there unmastered, spreading herself as she pleased. It really was rather irritating.

Enid instantly determined to invite Mr. Piers Markham, the local poet. Mr. Markham was inclined to give himself airs, assuming importance both as the grandson of a peer and as a maker of unrhymed verse. His pose was atheism. He mocked and scoffed. He had his faults, but the paramount virtue of being male outweighed them at the moment. Another man had become necessary to balance the company.

Weeks passed, for in regard to such solemn festivities long invitations were the rule at Tudor Green, and then two days before the event Charles greatly startled and upset her by an untoward meddling.

"Who do you think I met on the Parade this afternoon?" said Charles. "You'd never guess. The Woods."

"The Woods! What Woods?"

"Why, the late Mrs. Grenville and that chap Harold Wood."

"No?"

"Yes," said Charles, smiling and nodding his head. "They are at the Crown and Sceptre. They have brought the little girl home and they want to find a good school for her."

I said I'd consult you. But she'll consult you herself. I asked them to come to dinner."

"And did they accept?"

"Jumpingly."

"Very well. Then I'm sorry to disappoint them." Enid's face had become hard, her nicely shaped nostrils widened as if she was drawing deep breaths, and she spoke with quite unusual force. "You have asked them to dinner. Now you will please ask them to stay away."

"Oh, but why?"

"Because I refuse to have that woman inside this house."

"Again why?"

"Because I very much dislike her. If I met her in the street I should cut her dead. I mean it, Charles. You must really put them off. Or if you are set on providing them with a dinner, have them to the Regent restaurant—or the club."

"How can I," said Charles, "when of course my presence is required here?"

Enid, aghast, stared at him.

"What night did you ask them for?"

"Thursday."

He had invited them to the grand party.

"You must be mad," she said angrily. "You must have gone raving mad."

"No," he said, with no less anger, "I think it is you who are unreasonable—proving yourself deficient in all sense of proportion." And it seemed that one of their bad old quarrels was about to burst forth between them. But then after a struggle with himself he recovered his ordinary manner, and as he continued speaking he used one or two arguments of special significance. "Harold Wood was never a great friend of mine, but I used to know him quite well. Now he comes into the neighbourhood again. Well, I have to do the civil to him. He has been ill, and he seems to be rather sorry for himself."

"I am not interested either in him or his state of health."

"Just so. I didn't expect you to be. But I expect you to back me up in the fulfilment of ordinary social obligations. What more natural than that I should ask them—and ask

them to a party rather than have them here in a more intimate and friendly style—I mean, to feed with us alone? I thought you'd see it at once. I wanted you to support the invitation by sending her a little note."

"I won't."

"You are mistress here," said Charles, with another change of manner and employing the stately air that, as she knew well, always became apparent when he was on the point of being seriously offended. "Your word is law. I have the greatest contempt for the vulgarity of mind that finds expression in words of command from a husband to a wife—no matter what the circumstances. But, taking all things into consideration, and remembering that this is and ought to be a most trifling question—of no real consequence to either of us—aren't you putting me in a rather false position?"

"I'm sorry," said Enid quietly, "but I can't help it." And she went out of the room.

Nevertheless in the course of the evening she withdrew all objections. Charles was right no doubt. Directly one thought about it calmly one saw.

"What the devil do I care for forty thousand Woods?" she said to herself with a last touch of wrath. "But fancy their *wanting* to come!"

She licked the addressed envelope, put in the brief letter, and with her firm white hand gave a bang that made Charles look up from the book he was reading.

"There," she said, "I have done it."

"Done what?"

"Written to the Wood woman as you wished."

Charles was grateful. "That's my sensible old Enid;" and he came across to the writing-table and kissed her. "Thank you."

"All the same, they'll spoil our party."

"No, no," he said, striking his whimsical note. "Our parties are unassailable—high above the range of ruinous accidents. We should have been eighteen without them. We shall be twenty with them. That's the only difference they'll make."

"Indeed, ma'am," said the lady's maid, "I've never seen you do yourself more justice."

Enid, surveying a red-robed reflection in the cheval glass, was glad she had decided for the velvet dress, and she wondered what her guests would be wearing.

"Your fan, ma'am."

It was ten minutes to eight. Just time enough to show herself to the nurses in the nursery and peep at the already sleeping children. Then she went downstairs, calling to Charles gaily as she passed his dressing-room.

The whole house was blazing with light. Wilding the butler, Edward the footman, and certain hired men who always augmented the staff in these hours of splendour and pressure, were all in attendance. She passed on through the rooms and into the big drawing-room—that room out of which she had crept so shily after her first entrance to it on an autumn afternoon six years ago. She had been oppressed, borne down by its solemn pompfulness, its chillingly polite atmosphere, its subdued but heavy colours. Now it was her room, arranged as she pleased, with selected pieces of furniture, pretty flowers, new lamps for old. She stood in it proudly content, excited with the imminence of the party, but assured of success, knowing that the people who were coming liked her as well as paying her homage.

Charles came bustling, and at the same instant she heard the sound of wheels. It was two minutes to eight. "The Thornes," she whispered to him, smiling. "I bet you sixpence it's the Thornes."

"Sir Geoffrey and Lady Adela Thorne," said Wilding, making his first announcement.

"Not late, I think," said Sir Geoffrey.

"No," said Enid, with her frank and jolly air. "You are always punctual."

"Dear lady, you know the proverb. Punctuality is the politeness of princes."

Sir Geoffrey often reminded himself that he had been governor of a crown colony; and the proper answer to his last remark, the answer he relished, was: "Yes, Sir Geoffrey,

and you yourself were once something more than a prince, a deputy king."

Enid gave him the correct answer, and, gratified and cordial, he began to speak of elephants and gun salutes when Wilding made his second announcement.

"Mr. and Mrs. Castleton."

They came then quickly, one after another, these important residents; for it should be understood that in Tudor Green people took rank not so much by birth or titular distinction as from the size of the houses that they owned and occupied. The Thornes lived in a vast Georgian barrack with twenty acres of walled grounds; the Castletons had that large and handsome building of the Regency period known as the Nuns' House. Mr. and Mrs. Burroughes held one of the gems of the neighbourhood, a portion of the Precincts generally supposed to date from Tudor times.

Big as the room was, it soon seemed to be almost full, and conversation of the sedate before dinner order prevailed widely. Among later arrivals were Mrs. Hopkinson and Mr. Markham, condemned by Enid's decision to sit side by side at dinner. There next appeared that most amiable of living creatures, Charles's old and devoted friend, Mr. Gregory Lake. Handsome, simple of mind, beaming good naturedly, he paid Enid a few discreet and deferential compliments, and then withdrawing became only a figure in the background.

It was ten minutes past eight. Everybody seemed to be assembled.

Enid anxiously expected Wilding's announcement of dinner. She saw the punctual Sir Geoffrey furtively consult his watch. Mr. Castleton put on spectacles to scrutinise the card that had been given him in the hall and make quite sure as to his taking Mrs. Burroughes in to dinner. Enid, conscious of having rapidly adopted a very new fashion, took pride in those little cards. They saved so much trouble. But what had happened to the dinner? Oh, why was Wilding so slow to-night?

Then suddenly she remembered the Woods. The Woods were flagrantly late. Those intruders, those two insignificant

undesirables, were making all these important friendly solid personages wait for them.

"Mr. and Mrs. Wood," announced Wilding.

Dressed in black and silver, unquestionably looking very smart, glittering confidently, smiling affectionately, Mrs. Wood advanced and shook hands with her hostess. She was followed by her husband, a tall thin man with a beard, slightly bald, stooping slightly—Harold Wood, but not Harold Wood—a stranger.

Yet at sight of him Enid felt a totally unexpected little shock of distress, if not of pain. She felt it—or else her incredibly rapid thoughts seemed to be no more than a feeling. It was as if Wilding in opening the door had thrown wide the hitherto rigorously locked gates of the past, and something that had been dead for centuries had now assumed a semblance of life and was stalking towards her. She vibrated, there was a queer physical commotion inside her, as it approached nearer.

"So awfully glad," he murmured as he took her hand.

In the moment that he stood close to her she observed, as if recognising things that she had read of in a book or heard people talk of on a railway journey, the length of his dark eyelashes, the ivory colour of his thin cheeks above the disfiguring beard, and the gentle fatuousness that his smile and his voice seemed immediately to emit, pervading the space all round him. He was nothing to her now, less than nothing. Nevertheless during that moment or two, standing solid and unshakable in the limitless security of her married life, she underwent a discomfort that she knew was caused merely by his presence. The sight of him made her sad in the midst of happiness. He was a stranger, yet he had somehow exercised this queer power of melting her heart in swiftly poignant compassion, of stirring her to almost violent pity, not for him, although he looked feeble and ill enough to invite pity, but for herself, for her own dead self, the long-vanished girl who had once passionately loved him.

Almost the next minute dinner was announced.

In good order, like well taught troops, the company marched away with Charles and Lady Adela at the head of

the imposing procession. Enid remaining at the back of the room watched them contentedly. Sir Gregory close by waited to offer his arm.

But now Harold Wood with unparalleled stupidity came gliding up to offer *his* arm, in the belief that it was he who would escort her to the dining-room.

"Oh, do I not have the honour?" he asked fatuously.

"No," said Enid, looking round with anxious eyes. "Let me see. You had a card, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did. Only, I fear I dropped it outside."

"Ah, Miss Lacey! You take in Miss Lacey."

Miss Lacey was standing forlorn and solitary near the fireplace.

Harold Wood glided to her, smiled, coughed, and led her away.

That dinner was a triumphant success. From start to finish everything went well. Again far ahead of her period, Enid had abolished the practice of giving many wines—sherry with the soup, hock with the fish, and so on. Champagne bubbled in their tall glasses as soon as the guests sat down, and tongues thus promptly stimulated at once set to work. Peals of laughter came from the distant end of the table where Charles was being delightfully facetious. Enid spoke to people three or four places away from her, drawing them out, making them join in. Twice the conversation was general—as when Mr. Castleton spoke of the dangerous feeling in South Africa consequent on the Jameson Raid, and when Mrs. Burroughes said that certain young women who had *demonstrated* in favour of the vote ought to be smacked. She added that she, Mrs. Burroughes, would like to smack them.

Laughter, lively gesture, voices raised to secure a hearing—oh, it *was* going well. They were joyous. You couldn't mistake. They praised the food. They said flattering things about the cook.

But it was Enid who made it a success—Charles knew that, he felt her beneficent influence all the time. All these people responded to her efforts because they had become fond of her. All his old friends had adopted her as their

friend, even as their leader. He thought of what his very best friend, Gregory Lake, had said. "Making herself beloved by high and low." She had a kindness, an open-hearted geniality that could not be resisted. A word alone described it. She was jolly. He had used it as the word for her from the beginning of things. Jolly.

She herself was so happy now. From minute to minute her happiness increased. She liked them. She was grateful to them for liking her. It was lovely to see them all enjoying the little treat. They were such dears—all of them. Such absolute dears—if you took them the right way and tried to understand them instead of half fearing them.

She felt glad that those poor Woods had come—strangers to England, aliens, lost in a stuffy hotel after a weary sea voyage. The Bolton Lodge vol-au-vents and agneau farci would be a pleasant change from Madras curries and Bombay ducks. The aspect of Mrs. Hopkinson, even without the vicar, was pleasant to her. She wished now that Miss Berwick could have been here too, noisily enjoying herself. Noise! Miss Berwick's noise would scarcely have been perceptible. Enid laughed gaily.

There came a minute towards the end of dinner when she herself was silent while all the others were talking, and as will often happen to a good hostess in such a cessation of personal strain she seemed to have a preternatural power of listening to and hearing the varied talk, not only as a whole, but in its component parts.

Quite distinctly she heard Charles, although so far off, say to Lady Adela, "This is an anecdote that Enid never allows me to tell."

"Is it improper?" said Mrs. Burroughes. "We had better have it, Lady Adela. Go ahead, Mr. Charles . . ."

At the same time she heard Sir Geoffrey narrating how he had "taken the wind out of the sails" of a native agitator. "He said he appealed to Cæsar. Nothing would satisfy him but speech with His Excellency. 'Well,' I said, 'I happen to be His Excellency. Now what about it? . . .'"

Also and as clearly she could hear the poet and Mrs. Hopkinson. "Egoism," said Mr. Markham. "Neither more nor

less. This dream of a hereafter is the egoist's invention to solace his——”

“Sorry to interrupt,” said Mrs. Hopkinson. “But aren't you talking rather sillily about sacred matters? I enter my protest. I cannot let it pass.”

Gregory Lake, large and magnificent, with jewelled stud in his excessively stiff shirt and a big gardenia in the shining black satin lapel of his perfectly made coat, was a little flushed, but not unbecomingly so. Good nature flowed from him as he applauded something that Mrs. Lacey had been saying . . . “Quite agree. Couldn't do it. What I mean is, don't you know—There are limits. Must play the game or else—But you have put it so neatly yourself, Mrs. Lacey.” That was how the dear fellow always talked. Hardly ever finishing a sentence. Enid smiled tolerantly.

Thinking of him in the flash of time before she thought of somebody else, she again felt grateful. A chivalrous interest on Mr. Lake's part that once went near to wounding her had changed after her marriage to an unflinching deference, an unceasing kindness. She could not doubt that he genuinely admired her intelligence and valued her judgments. “No one equal to Mrs. Charles. So quick to— You know what I mean. Well, if I was in trouble, or puzzled— Tell her the facts, and straight away she'll— On my honour.” As the wife of his dearest friend, she was grateful to Mr. Lake for his good opinion, and it was one more source of comfort to her that she had not in any way come between those two or in the slightest degree spoilt their old-established friendship. A feather in her cap. For don't people say that a wife invariably causes a man to lose his favourite bachelor friends?

It was time for the women to leave the men. She sought and presently caught Lady Adela's eye—or rather, to be accurate, since the distance was really too great for actual eye-catching, she mysteriously conveyed to Lady Adela the sense of uneasiness and the watchfulness that are necessary to produce simultaneous movement. She and Lady Adela rose, together, as if their two chairs had suddenly pushed them upward.

Mr. Gregory Lake had swiftly attended to the dining-

room door, and he stood by it with his gold cigarette-case wide open and one cigarette protruding. Enid took the cigarette and Mr. Lake lit a match.

"Bless you," said Enid, smilingly emitting a puff of smoke. "You always remember;" and she hurried after her female flock.

That cigarette of Enid's, smoked by her in no spirit of defiance, but with a supreme confidence, was the most strikingly imaginable evidence of her dominant and unquestioned position in Tudor Green. It had been accepted. None of these ladies made the slightest objection. They spoke laughingly about it.

"Ah, I thought we should soon see the cigarette," said Mrs. Burroughes, laughing.

They never offered any criticism of Enid herself, but they often spoke of smoking as a habit or custom.

"I cannot think it a *pretty* habit . . . I have heard doctors say it is *good* for the nerves, while others maintain that it is *bad* . . . My husband of course is a chimney—but then he is a *man* . . . In Ireland the old women smoke *pipes* . . . It is no temptation to *me*, for I believe I should be sick."

To-night Mrs. Lacey summed up their mental attitude.

"We don't mind *you* doing it, dear Mrs. Derwent, but I do hope that the practice will never become general—especially among unmarried girls;" and she looked at her daughter threateningly.

Miss Lacey hung her head, as if caught in the act.

The rest of the evening showed no decrease of animation. Nobody seemed in any hurry to go. That is the best of all signs.

Once for a few minutes Enid found herself calmly seated on a sofa alone with Mrs. Wood. While Mrs. Wood related many things concerning life in India, her husband's illness, and her plans for the future, Enid noticed a little artificial blackness on her strong eyebrows and some questionable red on her sun-dried cheeks. Her eyes seemed to flash in accord with her vivacious chatter just as they used to do. She was wearing well. She must be nearly forty.

“. . . Yes,” said Enid, “please let your little girl—I have forgotten her name, but I remember it was a nice one.”

“The same as mine—Hélène.”

“You must let Hélène come to tea—a nursery tea. My three are too young for her, of course, really.”

And as Enid talked so kindly and politely, she thought again of how strange, how fantastic life is. She had vowed that if she lived to a hundred she would never forgive this woman. Yet now, at this minute, she did not even dislike her. How wonderful. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Wood was in the slightest degree redoubtable. Except for that one jerk of the nerves, that throb of an old pain, when Harold came into the room, stooping, with a beard, she had not felt anything akin to emotion in regard to either of them.

But she was conscious of a growing amazement as the talk progressed and Mrs. Wood made no slightest allusion to the past. To omit all reference to old times seemed too audacious, too impossibly impudent. Then Enid ceased to be surprised and began almost to admire. She thought that Mrs. Wood perhaps had adopted the only tactful method. By totally ignoring that ancient episode she delicately implied the obviousness of the fact that Enid could not have any regrets.

“I cannot allow you to monopolise Mrs. Wood any longer. Ha, ha. No.”

It was Sir Geoffrey Thorne. Enid ceded to him her place on the sofa, and he revelled in Mrs. Wood’s society till the end of the party. Mrs. Wood had already told him that he ought to have been viceroy of India, and he hoped she would say it again. He found Mrs. Wood seductive, bewitching, and yet with all her charm a hard-headed clear-thinking person—one who knows what’s what.

The last wheels sounded on the gravel drive. It was over. Host and hostess met in the library, to tell each other that everything had been all right.

Charles was radiant. “Darling, I felt so proud of you. You kept it going so splendidly.”

“Dear old boy, so did you. I heard you making them laugh.”

"And own that I didn't spoil it by having the Woods."
"Not a bit."

"I thought *she* was a real acquisition. Sir Geoffrey raved about her. I had quite forgotten how attractive she can make herself."

Next Sunday Mr. and Mrs. Wood came to luncheon. Enid met them on the Parade after church and she issued her invitation automatically. They walked home with her.

In the afternoon they were taken for a stroll in the garden. The time of year was early April, and rainy nights with sunny mornings had brought sharp spikes of green all along the herbaceous borders and caused the great sticky buds of a chestnut tree to explode prematurely. Many small birds were singing among the great lilac bushes. The earth in newly dug beds was warm and soft, and a languid breeze seemed to flap one's face with a light damp cloth.

Mrs. Wood and Charles leading the way soon disappeared, for Harold Wood walked slowly and occasionally stopped to rest himself. Enid as she listened to him heard now and then the voices of the other two sounding gaily from a distance. He talked gloomily of his health. He was sorry for himself. His doctors advised a long sea voyage, not like the voyage to India, but an extended trip to the South Seas.

"Perhaps I shall have to finish my days on one of those islands. It is very depressing to think of."

Then Mrs. Wood and Charles were overtaken in the walled kitchen garden, both of them laughing immoderately.

"What's the joke?" said Enid.

"This husband of yours is too amusing for words," said Mrs. Wood. "Positively he has made me laugh till I have a pain in my side."

Charles appeared to be gratified by this praise. But Enid was not quite pleased by it, or by his excessive merriment. Somehow it seemed undignified.

Returning to the house the two men walked together and Hélène Wood spoke to Enid with smiling enthusiasm, also with what was possibly a hint at memories of the past.

"I do indeed congratulate you. It is the greatest pleasure

to me—to both of us—to see that your lot has fallen in pleasant places. As to your husband, *all* my congratulations. He is quite charming. So full of fun and yet so completely sympathetic. He has promised to help me with advice about ships—for Harold." And she repeated her eulogy. "Yes, truly a delightful man, that husband of yours—quite, quite charming."

Enid had listened, looking hard at Héléne, and with raised eyebrows as though to give more room to her staring eyes. At the end of the speech she burst into a mirthful little laugh.

"Thank you so much. May I tell Charles of your good opinion?"

"Oh, do please," said Mrs. Wood, and she was archly gay. "But I think he knows. I haven't hidden it from him."

"Splendid," said Enid, still laughing.

Intentionally or not, Mrs. Wood had set Enid's memory working strongly, but there was only amusement in the recollection of exactly such compliments evoked by the charm of Harold Wood. Surely those were the very words. "I congratulate you. He is quite charming."

She thought, with amused contempt, "Are there no limits to the woman's impudence and effrontery where men are concerned? It really would be funny if she means to go for Charles. 'That husband of yours.' Oh, the *cheek* of it. Ye gods! Does she really think that because she was able to steal my fiancé she can do the trick again, and by throwing herself bang at his head make my husband disloyal to me?"

Before a week was over it seemed to Enid that, however preposterous the notion, this was precisely what Héléne Wood did think.

Palpably, shamelessly, the woman was laying siege to Charles, and with intense annoyance Enid saw that Charles was not repulsing the enemy as promptly and resolutely as would have been desirable.

One afternoon about tea-time Charles's lack of ordinary common sense let her in for a boring interview with Harold Wood. He presented himself, he said, because Charles had told him to go and ask for a cup of tea. Enid gave him tea,

ministered to his comforts, and listened resignedly to his gloomy recital. He talked only of himself.

" . . . Of course I have always been weak in the chest. It began when I was a little kiddie . . . There's no reason I shouldn't get over it—but it has to be taken in time. The bother is there has been tuberculosis in the family. My eldest sister—and such a beautiful girl—Catherine—she died of it. My father and mother were so proud of her. Perhaps she might have been saved if she had done the sort of sea voyage they are sending me . . . But it is very disappointing, isn't it? . . . Poor Hélène will have to go back to India and look after things. We had to get another manager. She has found but a broken reed in me."

He lamented himself at inordinate length, and Enid listened with the utmost patience. But then, having finished the story, he would not go. At last she frankly told him that she had a lot of letters to write.

"Oh, yes," and he rose languidly. "I'm sorry, but I was really waiting for the others."

"What others?"

"Hélène and Charles."

Then Enid learned that Charles and the Woods had met in the train from London. Charles had invited them to tea, sending Harold on ahead and taking Mrs. Wood for a walk up the hill to look at the sunset. Enid did not like it. She did not like it at all.

Notwithstanding her displeasure she was mistress of herself when a few minutes later the promenaders arrived.

"Did you have a good walk?" she asked briskly. "Won't you take off your fur? They'll bring some more tea directly."

That was the sort of thing that happened now frequently. One day Charles said that Mrs. Wood had been at the London offices. He had shown her over his own place and she had been greatly interested in the pictures and models of ships. He had taken her round to see some shipping agents, and afterwards given her some food at one of the famous old city restaurants.

"How very odd!" said Enid, and she moved across the room and abruptly opened a bookcase, keeping her back to-

wards him so that he should not see that her face had reddened. She felt that her cheeks were on fire.

"What's odd?" said Charles carelessly.

Enid had to wait before she could trust herself to speak.

"Do you know that I myself have never once set foot in the offices? You have never asked me to go there. Well then, isn't it a little odd that you should invite somebody who is not, after all, a close friend of ours—and do the honours—and fête her?"

"She came on business," said Charles imperturbably, and he added something to the effect that Enid would be welcome to go to the offices whenever she liked. But she would not think much of them. They were old-fashioned and comparatively small. However, big premises did not always mean big trade—"or the other way round."

Enid would not say any more. If he refused to see how strangely he was behaving she was too proud forcibly to open his eyes.

She wrapped herself in her pride as in a mantle; but she needed something thicker than a mantle, a suit of armour, to protect her from these continued pin-pricks. The pins were so large and so sharp. Week after week Charles betrayed less judgment and greater infatuation.

So the thing went on until the early summer. Enid resolutely tried to make light of it in her mind, but could not. She was annoyed, mortified, irritated, angry, disgusted. Finally she became very unhappy.

In June she received an unexpected visit from her mother-in-law.

After talk upon various local matters, old Mrs. Derwent observed that at the present time there was a person in Tudor Green to whom she very much objected. Enid knew what was coming, but she pretended not to know. She therefore asked who was the person.

"Mrs. Wood . . . I heard a great deal about her last time she was here, and nothing to her credit. Now I very much object to the manner in which she is running after Charles. You will forgive me for speaking openly. I have wondered

why you encouraged her. If I were you, I should give her a very plain hint."

"No, I can't do that, Mrs. Derwent."

"Then I should say a word to Charles."

"Nothing on earth," said Enid in her hardest tone, "would ever make me speak of it to Charles."

"Then don't you mind?"

"I mind most horribly. Charles has made me very miserable."

"Oh, but it is *her* fault."

"I am not sure."

"Oh, my dear," said Mrs. Derwent with solicitude. "Never doubt Charles's devotion."

Enid shrugged her shoulders and laughed.

"His devotion to me or to Mrs. Wood?"

"My dear Enid . . . please. Not even in joke. No, no. Charles *adores* you."

"He is showing it, isn't he?"

"But what one has to remember is that men act sillily without thought. The fact is men *are* silly . . . this way. *All* men."

Then Mrs. Derwent spoke of the promised departure of the Woods. Was it true that they were leaving in three weeks?

"They say so."

"Good," said Mrs. Derwent cheerfully. "She will be gone in three weeks. So at any rate we know when it will be over."

"Yes. Unless Charles goes with her."

"My dear! . . . Will you let *me* say a word to Charles? . . . No? You would not think it wise . . . Very well . . . You know, I have tried very hard never to interfere—never to come between you and Charles. I haven't ever done so?"

"No, Mrs. Derwent, you haven't—you haven't."

Enid had sustained her tone of granite firmness, but she was nearly crying.

She had declared that nothing would make her speak of it to Charles, but she was not able to adhere to this resolution.

For the thing became worse and worse. It was as though Charles could not exist without the hateful woman's company. He played bridge with her at the Thornes' and other houses. He was always suggesting her presence at his own house. At last, on a certain occasion, he said, "Couldn't we get her to come in after dinner and sing? You know, she sings beautifully. And she's so modest about it. It was a complete surprise to me."

"When did you hear her sing?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

"May I ask where?"

"In their sitting-room at the hotel. She accompanied herself, you know, and even with that rotten piano——"

Enid cut him short.

"Was Harold there?"

"No, he had gone to London—or somewhere. I don't know where he'd gone."

"But you were there—by appointment, I suppose?"

"Yes, by appointment. If you mean, she had given me permission to go. She promised to sing to me just the songs I like, you know . . . Enid!" He had seen her face and he recognised that she was in a distress altogether inexplicable to him. "Enid, what's the matter?"

Then Enid let herself go. Her grief, her anger, her sense of outrage and betrayal at last found relief in a hot outpouring of words. Yet she was not undignified. She was not loud or violent, but strong in a just resentment, and a hundred miles away from breaking down in tears.

"The matter! You ask me what's the matter. Don't you realise what you are doing? Don't you understand all you have made me suffer—and how cruelly you have humiliated me? Now I simply ask how it is going to end. What lengths have you been to already? What lengths do you mean to go with her?"

"Enid, my dear girl."

Either he had acted astonishment exceedingly well or it had been his real feeling.

"At first," she went on, "I thought it was only your vanity. You enjoyed the fussing and flattery. She flattered

you of course—as she flatters every man that she wants to get hold of. But now what *can* I think?”

“Enid, do stop.” He was grave and gentle; he put out his hand wanting to take one of hers, but she would not let him. “I am frightfully sorry. You know, I hadn’t an idea. On my honour it never occurred to me that you——”

“Oh, don’t be absurd. The time for that is over. Heaven knows I’m not jealous by nature—or exacting—or stupidly trying to keep you with *me* for ever. But no one who ever lived could stand by quietly and see her husband take up with another woman as you have done with that hateful creature.”

“I haven’t—I haven’t,” said Charles desperately. “Please listen to me.”

“Yes, if you’ll tell me the truth. She has absolutely fascinated you? You are madly in love with her?”

“Nonsense. Now really *you* are being absurd . . .”

Then he spoke very finely. “You said something about humiliation. But I feel more humiliated than I can say—because evidently I have somehow failed you—failed you, when honestly I would rather die any day than do that. The mere fact of making you unhappy is a shame and a disgrace to me. Enid dear, I own my fault and beg and pray you to forgive me. But as to Mrs. Wood—or Mrs. Anybody Else—you mustn’t, you really and truly mustn’t suppose that I have the slightest feeling for her that in any way could injure my love for you. In my world, in my whole life, there are only two women—you and my mother. There never have been, there never could be any others. On my honour! Do you believe me?”

And Enid believed him. It would have been impossible to disbelieve him. She knew that he was not unfaithful, either in deed or in thought.

With complete candour he told her that he had been greatly amused by Hélène Wood; he liked being with her; he thoroughly enjoyed her sharp talk, her cynical jokes. He had swallowed the flattery without mistaking it for substantial food.

Enid in her turn begged him to stop. She understood

everything. He had been silly. His mother had said so. Men can't help being silly. But who minds mere silliness?

She was weeping now, all relaxed, but happy, like a child when the aching tooth has been extracted; clinging to him, cherishing him, her man—the man that no one should take from her.

Finally they discussed the only question that remained. Mrs. Wood? Charles, following his mother's line of thought, suggested that Enid should give her a hint to drop off.

"No, I can't do that, Charles. You must do it. I have kept a stiff lip—to *her*. I have never let her see. I can't now spoil it by letting her guess that I have been afraid. I can't let her think that I am *protecting* you from her attacks."

Charles rubbed his nose.

"How shall I choke her off?"

"Tell her you are busy. Pressure of work at the office."

"All right."

Enid had a brief outburst of rejoicing. After this explanation she would never, could never doubt or worry again. "In future I shall feel you are like a rock beneath my feet. And you don't know what that means to a woman."

Charles solved his problem and evaded difficulties in a characteristic manner.

"Those people are going soon," he said to Enid next day. "You spoke of work. Well, it happens to be a very slack time. Let's do a bolt from Mr. and Mrs. Wood. Let's pack our traps and slip away to Paris."

They went to Paris, to Biarritz, and home by Arcachon and the old towns of northern Provence. It was like a second honeymoon—an infinitely better honeymoon than the first one.

V

THERE came an *annus mirabilis* for Bolton Lodge. In it so many delightful things happened, and right to the end of it there was not a shadow on life.

It began with a fantastic but altogether pleasing event. Enid's two elderly sisters won a prize of thirty thousand pounds in a French lottery. Hitherto they had wandered

about the continent of Europe living in the cheapest hotels and pensions, but now, as Miss Benyon said in the letter which conveyed the surprising news, they would be able to afford the best accommodation and travel all over the world. Enid rejoiced exceedingly in their good fortune, and applauded a proposal that they should come to Tudor Green in order to ask the advice of Charles as to investment of the money.

They stayed at Bolton Lodge for three weeks, during which Charles assisted them to put out their capital at as high a rate of interest as could be obtained with unimpeachable security.

They did not look a day older, and yet to Enid's eyes they had changed utterly. They were both of them thinner, more alert, more alive, with sunburnt faces and sharpened features. Adelaide had completely dropped her invalidism. "There was always a great deal of imagination about it," said Kate, the elder sister. Kate was still the spokeswoman on ordinary occasions; and her manner, developed by holding her own in debate at many hundreds of table d'hôte dinners, had become just a little too dictatorial. She would give way to Adelaide, however, when Adelaide desired to speak at length—as for instance in narrating the lottery adventure. Adelaide had made a kind of recitation or entertainment of this. She told it always in the same words—to the Derwents and to all old friends in Tudor Green. It amused Charles. He was never tired of hearing it. He listened as children listen to a favourite fairy story, and if she left out anything he prompted her.

"... It is not as if we had ever been gamblers. But Kate said, 'Somebody must win the prize.' I said at once, 'That is a ridiculous argument. The odds will be at least five hundred thousand to one.' 'Never mind,' said Kate. 'We may be that one.' So we bought it—ten francs each, share and share alike—from the Mentone banker. Kate asked him, 'How shall we know if we have won?' He just laughed—as if she had made a joke. But she forced him to answer properly. 'In such an event,' he said, 'you will receive a telegram immediately after the draw. I am sending them your address. The Hôtel Mirabeau. That is correct, is it not?' 'Parfaitement,' said Kate.

"I thought no more about it. No, that is not true. I did

think about it—day dreaming, you know—what we would do if we drew the lucky number. As the day came nearer I felt quite sure that Kate had it in her mind just as much as I. But we never said a single word about it to each other—not one single word. Rather comic! Well, the day came—and passed. That night at dinner we just looked at each other. I said, ‘You don’t seem to have much appetite, Kate.’ ‘Nor you either,’ said Kate. Of course we knew that everything was over—drawn at noon—in Paris, you know. But next morning—would you believe it—the very first thing—a telegram—”

“You have forgotten ‘Tap, tap on the door,’” said Charles, laughing.

“So I have. I should have told you that our hotel—the Mirabeau—is a common shabby place—one of the worst hotels in Mentone—and that is saying a great deal. If the postman has a registered letter or anything to deliver, he marches straight up to your bedroom, and before you can answer his knock he comes marching straight in. Very embarrassing—sometimes.

“Well then. Kate and I were half-dressed—and, oh, so glum, not even looking at each other. Tap, tap on the door. In stalked the postman. ‘Un télégramme, mademoiselle.’ A telegram. Kate seized it and opened it—and just sat down on her bed. I seized it from her, and down I sat on *my* bed. First prize won by our number!”

The tale concluded with a description of the nervous excitement, the doubts, the fears experienced by the Miss Benyons, and the manner in which they harassed the Mentone banker until the “versement de fonds” was actually made. “Et voilà,” said Adelaide, “toute l’histoire de notre bonne chance.”

They both of them talked the fluent bad French that such people acquire by practice without ever studying the language.

In their general ideas they prided themselves on being very much up to date, and they reproached Charles for still using horses or railway trains as a means of locomotion instead of having a nice swift motor-car to take him to his business every day.

"Yes, the *convenience* it would be," said Enid. "But you'll never persuade Charles. He sets his face against them."

And indeed the attitude of Charles towards motor-cars was one of extreme obstinacy. He stated his objections to them with force. They stank, they made a noise, they rattled the teeth out of your head. You could not rely on them because they were always breaking down; there had so far been little improvement in them, and they had no future before them.

"There you are wrong, Charles," said Kate, with her dictatorial manner. "You are simply behind the times—as I find so many people in England *are* behind the times. Believe me, the world is progressing very rapidly. England will be left at the post—she will lose the race—if she isn't careful. That is the considered opinion of some of the cleverest people that we meet on the Continent."

What touched Enid's heart in regard to these two strangely recovered sisters was the warmth of their affection for herself. It was obviously genuine. They had altogether forgotten their unkindness in the past, and Enid was now well pleased to forget it too. They had not liked her while she was with them, but it seemed that as soon as they were removed from her they had begun to value her and to care for her. They reminded her of her sayings, her jokes, her little characteristic ways in those pleasant old times when they all three "pigged it together" at the little house in Ellerton Road.

"Yes, we did miss you awfully," said Adelaide. "At first it was dreadful. Twenty times a day we used to say, 'Oh, if we only had Enid here. How she would quizz these young Frenchmen. How that old Scotch lady would have made Enid laugh!'"

They gave lavishly handsome presents to the children, with whom they had been on excellent terms throughout the visit, and then at the end of the stipulated three weeks they departed. Neither Charles nor Enid could persuade them to stay longer. Enid felt sad.

"For I doubt if we shall ever come back again," said Miss Kate.

"No," said Miss Adelaide, gaily and brightly, "we do feel that the world is calling us. So many things to see while we can still get about comfortably without aches and pains. Globe-trotters. That is what we shall be. Globe-trotters."

Winter was the season for those ceremonious dinner-parties, and throughout the summer numberless informal gatherings, with tennis, croquet, light refreshments, and a babel of youthful voices, were the rule. But old and young alike frequented Bolton Lodge. For Mr. and Mrs. Charles Derwent had now reached a sort of local apotheosis. No social enterprise was attempted without consulting them and obtaining their countenance. Beyond being a place of games, their house was the local centre of light and culture. Mr. Markham, the local poet, read his unpublished poems there. Mr. Fielding, the local playwright, had an unactable play acted there, with Charles as the principal man and Enid as stage manager or producer.

Enid enjoyed it all. She liked the sensation of her popularity with young boys and girls, and did all that lay in her power to help them. She liked the deference that she received in the local shops, and would have considered herself as treacherous had she supplied the household from big London stores. She liked the way in which important tradesmen of the High Street came out and stood at the carriage door. She liked their habit of drawing her aside in the shop and asking her advice about possible careers for sons and daughters. The respectful homage of such substantial citizens as Mr. Barrett, the old-established chemist at the corner of Parade Crescent, made her feel almost regal.

She felt quite regal when she opened the grand bazaar at the Crown and Sceptre Hotel. There had been talk about a royal princess, and somebody said he could get one. But the Committee most flatteringly decided that local prestige was what mattered and they would rather have Mrs. Charles Derwent.

"I declare the bazaar open."

That was Enid's speech. She had prepared and intended to deliver a great deal more; but her main statement evoked such thunderous applause that she saw herself confronted with an orator's worst bugbear, the anti-climax, and she dis-

creetly stopped short. A little girl ran forward with a bouquet. Enid stooped and kissed her, the band began to play, the shutters of a dozen cameras clicked.

Two days later Mrs. Derwent's photograph appeared in a London newspaper.

Charles Derwent derived voluminous satisfaction from his wife's success in these matters. He also was deeply gratified when he detected evidences of the admiration that her personal appearance sometimes aroused.

To conceal his pride he chaffed her.

"Do you know what it is, Enid? You are developing a very dangerous sort of fascination."

People did admire Mrs. Charles quite patently. She was better worth attention at thirty than she had been at twenty-three. She would probably be worth still more at thirty-five. At the present time she had become a rather large, but certainly a very handsome woman, with soft kind eyes, a friendly mouth, and a vivid complexion. She had expanded physically as well as mentally. She glowed in complete health after the lowering effect of those matronly illnesses. Female critics described her as *striking*. Male observers often seemed willing to behave as if they had been struck.

"But be circumspect," said Charles, with whimsical smiles. "Don't encourage them. Always remember your fatal charm."

"What about *you*?" said Enid.

"Oh, I am falling into the sere and yellow leaf;" and he used the very latest bit of slang. "I never get the 'glad eye' nowadays. I am like Alexander Selkirk. The girls that roam over the plain my form with indifference see."

"Don't you believe it," said Enid, laughing. "If you beckoned them, all the girls in the place would be ready to follow you. You might be like the pied piper of Hamelin, if you wanted to, and lead them dancing over the hill after you."

The defeat of Mrs. Wood, the explanation, and the complete renewal of confidence had cleared the air between them so thoroughly that they were able thus to make a jest of that which, with many husbands and wives, becomes an increas-

ingly delicate matter. They often indulged in these facetious references to the attractive powers which each alleged that the other possessed.

Once Enid, speaking as seriously as artlessly, confessed that a year or two ago she had recognised how necessary it was for every youngish married woman to keep her masculine acquaintance at a distance. Otherwise they were so quick to play up, and would even try to be rather horrid.

"You mean Piers Markham," said Charles, grinning.

Innocent blushes mantled in Enid's firm cheeks. She laughed heartily.

"Fancy you having noticed it. I never thought you did."

"Very little escapes my eagle eye. Besides, Markham is such an ass that he almost told me what he was about. He wanted you to be his Egeria—to stimulate him to higher poetic flights."

"Yes, he is an ass, isn't he?" said Enid. "But, mind you, he wasn't the only one who——"

"Don't boast, my dear. It's bad form. Never count your scalps."

"I know. But, really and truly," said Enid, guileless and earnest, as she closed the subject, "you have to be continually on your guard with ordinary men, whatever their age. The only one of your friends that I felt absolutely comfortable with—from the very first—and able to say just what I like to without ever being misunderstood—is Gregory Lake."

"Well, you stick to old Gregory," said Charles, grinning again. "If I can be sure there's nobody else I shall go on sleeping peacefully at night."

Perhaps the real history of all this prosperous time had been the growth of her love for Charles.

At first it was a group of feelings rather than an emotion, a habit of thought, an increasing dependence on him in all things. She could not have analysed it had she tried. Perhaps it had its source and its stimulus in her absorbing love of the children. Without doubt maternal sensations and instincts mingled with it. She thought of him often in much the same way as she thought of the children. Several times he had

appeared to her in dreams as actually one of them. He was Roderick or little Charlie mysteriously changed into a man, and yet still being a boy. In the dreams he was naughty, troublesome, causing her pain, and it was said that for his own good she ought to punish him, take away his toys, deal harshly with him. But she could not do it. In the dream, he kissed her and caressed her, and then she said he was her favourite child, more dear to her even than Roddy.

This maternal feeling came strongly upon her one evening when she met him by chance outside the church of S. Barnabas.

The month was April again. The whole day had been bright, warm, full of the tremulous beauty that had always moved her in springtime. She and the children had been for a long drive; she had had tea in the nursery with them; then, coming out of a lighted house on the hill where kind friends had made much of her, she found the shadowiness of dusk; with familiar buildings looking grey and mysterious and the budded trees rapidly darkening against the yellow splendours of an almost cloudless sky. Her heart overflowed with quiet happiness.

She walked along the Parade thinking of the present and the past. Such a little while ago, as it seemed, she had taken evening walks here utterly alone—alone spiritually as well as materially,—so much so that if she had prolonged her walk until she came to the river and had there drowned herself, nobody would have cared. She had been of no use to anybody, unable to help, serve, or please anybody. Now she was never really alone. Solid links held her to the foundations of life, and hundreds of light threads or attachments bound her to its wide surface. Behind her, wherever she went, there stood that large house which contained four people who adored her and could not do without her, together with about ten other people who were genuinely fond of her. Many more people, neighbours, friends, tradesmen, continued to esteem her.

As she turned the corner of the Parade she heard the bell of S. Barnabas ringing for vespers. She went straight into the church, and while the curate asked blessings for the King,

the Queen, the Houses of Parliament then assembled, and other important bodies engaged in public affairs, she made fervent petitions for the unbroken welfare of four private personages, not scrupling to give them their names—Roderick, Margaret, Charlie, and Charles.

She offered thanks too, with candid explicitness, for boons already vouchsafed—for Margaret's escape from threatened chicken pox, the cessation of Dr. Laurie's warning notes about the elder boy, the robust health of the younger, the lessening of Charles's bilious headaches and the longer intervals between them; also for the favourable condition of freights and rates, and what Charles called the upward curve of British shipping. She was on the point of submitting thanks for the disabling illness of old Mr. Halford, the senior partner, and the consequent promotion of Charles; but she checked herself.

Then, throughout a short address from the pulpit, she was thinking only of her husband. "Am I doing enough for him?" she asked herself. "Do I fail him in anything?"

And then, coming away from the church, she met him. It was dark now, and he came towards her in the light of a street lamp. At sight of him she felt an immense tenderness.

He was going to Acacia Road. She linked her arm in his, and walked with him.

All at once, while he was talking of the day's news, she interrupted him and spoke eagerly.

"You do know that I'm grateful to you?"

"Grateful! What about?"

"Everything."

"Oh, what nonsense." He laughed, but he pressed her arm against his side affectionately; and she spoke again, with more evident emotion.

"Why, Enid, what's the matter? Has anything gone wrong? Anything happened to upset you?"

"No, no," she said. "It's only that I'm so happy—all day long—and just now . . ."

"Honour bright?"

"Yes."

"Glorious. I am too, Enid. And all because of you. There."

They had reached his mother's house and she disengaged her arm.

"Won't you come in and see mother?"

"No," she said gently. "But give her my love . . . Don't be late."

"No, I won't, I won't." He had entered the front garden, and he stopped and turned towards her again. "Enid! I forget to say I asked Gregory Lake to come in to dinner."

"Oh, what a bore!"

"A bore! Why? You like him, don't you?"

"Yes, of course I like him. But . . . Well, I wanted you to myself, to-night."

Charles laughed cheerfully, delightedly. "That's the first real compliment you have ever paid me. Want me to yourself! My dear, you can still have me. Telephone and put Gregory off."

"May I? Do you mean it? . . . No, I suppose I'd better not . . . He wouldn't like it. *You* wouldn't like it."

"I *would*. He can come to-morrow—any day."

"Then I will," said Enid, with sudden resolution. "There are things I want to say to you while they're still in my mind."

She kissed her hand, and hurried away to send the message of excuses that should postpone entertainment of her husband's faithful friend.

Very often on his return from London Charles used in this manner to visit the house in Acacia Road and sit with his mother for an hour or so. Mrs. Derwent had always been content and happy in her new home, and she understood more clearly than he did that by separating from him she had retained him, whereas if she had clung to him she would have lost him.

After sending the telephone message to Mr. Lake, Enid felt a sudden impulse. She had thought, "Did Charles want me to go in just now? Could he think it unkind of me—or disrespectful to his mother?" Acting on her impulse she went back to Acacia Road.

The servant admitted her with smiles of welcome, and

from the hall she heard Charles's voice in a quiet steady flow. He was reading to his mother.

"Stop," she said. Another impulse, of shyness and doubt, had suddenly made her want to go away again. She would be disturbing them, intruding upon them. But it was too late to beat a retreat. The servant had opened the door of the sitting-room.

They presented an intimately homelike picture, those two, in the pleasant little room. A small wood fire gave cheerfulness to its aspect. The old lady sat on one side of the hearth with hands clasped in her lap as she listened, while Charles with a reading lamp at his elbow had one hand supporting his forehead and the other holding the book. You could not see them thus without understanding how much they were to each other, how closely the bond of almost adoring love still held them together. Yet Enid did not feel the slightest spasm of jealousy. She would not have wished it otherwise. All that she felt, and this very strongly, was that it had been a great mistake to blunder in upon them. They could not possibly want her there.

But they soon showed her how wide of the mark her last thought had been. Their faces were lit with pleasure when she stammered out an apology and explained in reply to inquiries that she had come on no errand of business, that she had no communication to make to Charles, that she had come merely to see Mrs. Derwent.

"How nice of you—how very nice," said Mrs. Derwent, holding her hand and giving it a squeeze. "Dear Enid, I am indeed glad. Sit down here by me . . . No, indeed, you do not interrupt. Charles can read to me any time, but it is not often I get you unexpectedly and delightfully like this."

They were sweet to her, both of them.

"Always busy, aren't you?" said Mrs. Derwent. "Charles tells me of your work—all the committees—and the guild—and the hospital."

"She does too much," said Charles, looking at her fondly. "She is always thinking of others, and never of herself."

"Oh, Mrs. Derwent, that isn't true. I only wish it was."

"But I think it *is* true," said the old lady, bending in her

chair and lightly touching Enid's knee. "Charles tells me everything;" and she smiled. "Charles is very proud of your unselfishness—and so he ought to be."

Enid felt the swelling of emotion. Never till now had Mrs. Derwent spoken to her in this voice of trustful affection. It was as though in a minute of time they had been drawn together until they were infinitely more to each other than they had ever been. Sitting there, and presently chattering at her ease, making little jokes even, she felt that the barrier between them—the cold wall originally built of doubts, misconceptions, and enforced reticences—had either been torn down or had tumbled of its own accord.

Charles and Enid dined alone very happily, and had the unfettered communion that people at this period were beginning to describe as a heart-to-heart talk. The night being fine they walked out after dinner, back to the Parade, where the scattered lights of the valley looked like fallen stars, and where there was a continuous soft murmur of voices as couples of other walkers, sweethearts nearly all of them, passed to and fro. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Derwent passing by with linked arms and low-toned words might themselves have been mistaken for a pair of sweethearts.

A day or two later Mrs. Derwent senior, paid a return visit to Bolton Lodge. She brought with her a box containing jewellery, the beautiful but old-fashioned things that had been given to her by Charles's father, a diamond necklace, bracelets of emeralds and rubies. These, the treasures of by-gone days, she now begged Enid to accept.

"Yes, dear, I want you to have them. It would be foolish of me to go on hoarding them. I have told Charles about it, and of course you can have them reset and made just as you would wish them to be."

Enid protested, but vainly. Mrs. Derwent was resolute in this fresh demonstration of her generosity. Enid thanked her effusively and kissed her gratefully.

The barrier was completely down. Slowly but irresistibly the younger woman had won the heart of the older woman, and henceforth Enid would have no supporter more steadfast than her husband's mother.

In fact Mrs. Derwent had long regarded Enid with approval as one of those most improbable young women who eventually blossom into very good wives. It was obvious to her that Charles had unceasingly drawn strength from the peace and comfort of his married life. He had escaped dangers too. The possibility of light conduct, or should one say the tendency to flightiness which, as she could not disguise from herself, is latent in the natures of the very best men, might easily have become manifest in a too-long protracted bachelorhood; but wife and family had given magnificently solid ballast to keep him upright and steady, no matter what winds of fancy might blow. The rapid termination of that little scare about Mrs. Wood proved this. Marriage had stimulated him to harder work and wider purpose. But for Enid and those beautiful children, he would never have achieved control of the shipping house at the amazingly early age of forty-three. Lastly, her one strong objection had been removed. She said and knew that in the beginning Enid had not really been fond enough of Charles. That was true no longer. Instinctively she had seen and understood the changing states of Enid's feelings.

She spoke of this to-day openly.

"I could never thank you adequately for the way you love Charles. I have seen it with such joy. It was not always there. But it is there now, Enid."

Then she asked diffidently if Enid could bring herself to call her mother instead of Mrs. Derwent.

"Yes, I should like to," said Enid.

They kissed again.

On a cold December evening between tea-time and dinner Charles abruptly asked her to wrap up and come into the porch.

"There's somebody's car out there."

"Somebody's car?" said Enid, following him through the hall. "Whose?"

"As far as I can make out," said Charles, with something of excitement in his voice, "it's quite the latest model. I

don't profess to be an expert, but it certainly strikes me as rather classy."

It was the most lovely motor-car that anyone's imagination could conceive. A closed carriage, with the chauffeur seated solemnly at the wheel as if waiting for orders, it sent forth beams of vivid light that made the wide gravel sweep and the walls of evergreen shrubs in front of it bright as day. There was light inside it too, an electric lamp that showed the beauty of its pale upholstery, its clock, its place for card-cases, visiting-book, and so on. It throbbed or purred gently, peaceful and quiet yet conscious all the while of its vast capacity of strength, speed, space-devouring magic.

"But *whose* is it?" asked Enid.

"It is Mrs. Charles Derwent's," said Charles.

"No?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Charles!"

She could say no more. She was overwhelmed.

She finished the marvellous year riding in her horseless carriage as if it had been a car of triumph.

For the new year she made certain resolutions, and month by month she faithfully kept them.

It seemed to her that now for the first time she was seeing life and its purposes in due proportion. Self should be rigorously controlled, instead of being allowed to spread and enlarge in directions opened by mere chance. We should trace our own lines of conduct, instead of going down paths of pleasure that lead nowhere in particular, or that may even end with a notice that trespassers will be prosecuted and beyond this point there is no thoroughfare.

Humbly recognising the bounties showered upon her by fate, upon her who had done so little to deserve them, while so many more worthy were getting scarce any benefits at all, she made her vows—saying to herself "I will not merely take, I will repay; I will not be the centre of my universe, nor think that I have no duties except to those I love; I will give myself freely, and never again hold back because of idleness, carelessness, or slowness of sympathy."

She threw herself, then, into the benevolent work of the

neighbourhood with greatly increased energy. Beyond this organised toil she took one or two broken-down people in charge, personally aiding them, heartening them, re-establishing them on their none too strong legs, and standing ready to aid them again if they fell. In order to do these deeds she made sacrifices of inclinations and wishes; for she felt that it would be a sorry affair if she were charitable only at her husband's expense. She saved money when she would have liked to spend it. She wore an old dress when to wear a new one would have been very pleasant. She turned her eyes from the bright lure of London shop windows, saying in effect, "Those pretty things are not for me. I cannot spare six guineas for a Paris hat while somebody that I know in that horrid dirty lane by the river needs bed-clothing from Manchester and cooking utensils from Leeds."

Her character strengthened, or rather she began to show strong character. Everybody with whom she was in close contact recognised her goodness of heart and breadth of aim. She had been a favourite. She became an influence.

Her doctrine was unquestioning kindness. She had abandoned sharp-tongued jokes. If you cannot be funny without being unkind, it is better to be dull. When a jest has a sting in its tail it ceases to be a real jest. She would not laugh when people unkindly indulged in stereotyped humour to the disparagement of curates, old maids, or charwomen, and with special reference to existent persons. Like Mrs. Hopkinson, she made a protest. She could not let it pass.

Once she rebuked Gregory Lake in this manner and afterwards spoke to him gently about it, explaining her views.

"Mrs. Charles, you are absolutely right," said Mr. Lake, giving the queer little blink of the eyes that was an unconscious habit of his. "It isn't cricket. Rely on me to back you up in stopping it."

Thus she endeavoured to fulfil her modest mission. Her happiness deepened. She had only one trouble—the days were not long enough.

Meanwhile the greater wheel of national life went on revolving. Innovations became familiarities, changes that star-

tion ceased even to surprise. All those who, being like Charles Derwent and other magnates of Tudor Green conservative to the marrow of their bones, tried to retard the movement of the wheel utterly failed; all those of radical mind who tried to make the movement faster failed no less completely. The former applauded what seemed like delay; the latter rejoiced in anything that appeared to be acceleration. But always the wheel itself kept the same pace—just turning as it had always done.

To Charles's regret full independence had been granted to our late foes in South Africa. To his satisfaction (and that of Mrs. Burroughes) Miss Bertha Cave, having duly qualified, was refused admission to Gray's Inn. The Lord Chancellor said there was no precedent for ladies being called to the English Bar, and the tribunal of Judges was unwilling to create one. "Well done," thought Charles and Mrs. Burroughes.

War broke out between Russia and Japan. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain addressed a large gathering at the Guildhall on Tariff Reform. Lord Roberts addressed a small gathering at the Mansion House on Imperial Defence. Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander, the Revivalists, addressed a fabulously large assembly at the Albert Hall. On a dark night the Russian fleet mistook our North Sea fishing boats for the enemy in force and opened fire on them. Mr. Whitaker Wright received sentence and evaded it two minutes afterwards by taking cyanide of potassium. President Roosevelt gained an overwhelming election victory. St. Amant won the Derby.

Death the scythesman in one busy eighteen months mowed down some big stalks among the lesser blades of grass—the Duke of Cambridge, H. M. Stanley, Sir William Harcourt, ex-President Krüger, Mr. Guy Boothby, Jules Verne, George Macdonald, Dr. Barnardo, Henry Irving. The King accompanied by the Queen opened the new thoroughfare of Kingsway and Aldwych. Lady Bancroft opened the New Scala Theatre. Mr. Arthur Balfour resigned and the King sent for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Port Arthur fell. Sweden and Norway became two kingdoms instead of one. Cicero won the Derby. Peace was signed between Japan and Russia.

Charles was reading in the *Pall Mall Gazette* how a statue of Gladstone had been unveiled by Mr. John Morley, when Enid spoke to him.

"Charles, shall I tell you something about next Wednesday?"

"What about next Wednesday?"

"On Wednesday, as ever is, we shall have been married ten years."

"Impossible," said Charles.

"Nineteen hundred and five!" said Enid. "No getting away from the date, old boy."

PART III

CHARLES

I

CHARLES was famous at nursery games. Everybody said so. While his children were still quite young they used to clamour for his company as a make-believer. "Daddy, daddy, do please come. Oh, daddy, do be 'n ogre that was as eep by the fire."

But of course they were not so young now, and one summer evening after tea when he had been playing in the garden with them and some friends of theirs he discovered that they did not really want him. Already he had once or twice of late had a suspicion that he was spoiling their sport rather than improving it. Now he felt sure. They had all drifted away, leaving him alone at the far end of the kitchen garden. He smiled good-humouredly, yet with something of faint discomfort behind the smile, and sauntered towards the house, where, as he knew, he would find Gregory Lake talking hospitals to Enid.

As he went down a grass path through the espalier fruit trees a girl came running to him. This was Gwendolen Heathfield, much older than the others, a slim tall thing of sixteen, with dark timid eyes and a soft hesitating voice. She

and her mother were rather humble people if measured by Tudor Green standards, and Enid had been kind to them as she was to all the world. Gwendolen frequented Bolton Lodge.

She had come to fetch its owner back into the new game that they were just starting, and as if with an intuition riper than her years she answered his unspoken thought.

"Don't desert us," she said, uttering the words slowly but not drawlingly and looking at him. "We all want you . . . I do."

Then somebody called her name from the other side of the wall. "Gwendolen . . . Gwen-do-len . . . Gwen."

"Excuse me," she said, turning her head; and she ran away along the grass path, fawnlike, graceful, with the quick light movements of youth, her long legs springing, her black stockings seeming to dance as she disappeared.

It is often said that when we reach middle-life we have lost the capacity to learn. At middle-life the mind and the muscles are alike set. It is too late to take up any new exercise or study with the expectation of mastering it. Men of forty have taken up golf and achieved a low handicap. But have they been really good at it? Charles was over forty, and he had taken up an even bigger thing than golf—philosophy.

He had been started on the untravelled line by something that Dr. Laurie had said to him after an observation of his own. "You know, you are quite a philosopher." Charles had modestly demurred, but Laurie had amplified the compliment. "You go from the particular to the general. You seek laws where they are not apparent." Charles thereupon obtained erudite books from the Free Public Library, and gradually assumed a philosophical manner. Enid encouraged the new phase. Gregory Lake followed it admiringly. In the last year Charles had established his reputation for philosophy.

The thing had one solid effect. It made him look into himself; it made him think about himself in relation to time.

He thought of a saying in that brilliant play *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* to the effect that after a man is forty he must be either a saint or a satyr. Charles knew that he wasn't

either, but the great author's maxim gave a finger-post to his meditations. He was forty-five; yet inside him he was still young, absurdly young, childish, and he realised that this is a common tragedy of life. Few people are able to *synchronise*. The young behave as the old; the old feel what only the young should feel. Synchronisation! This struck him as rather good. It is what we *ought* to aim at all through life—to be of the same age as the number of our years, to keep the range of thought down to the potentialities of action, to hold the internal and external worlds in strict harmony or balance . . . “Oh, distinctly good, that!”

He regularly called philosophy to his aid in combating the vague regrets that began to assail him. Time stands still for no man. He gave a ruefully facetious turn to thoughts that might otherwise have been tinged with gloom. “I am not old,” he said to himself, “nor in any immediate danger of oldness, but I had better admit the gross and unflattering truth that I am no longer young.” He modified his attitude to those about him; becoming paternal with all young people, calling grown-up girls, “my dear,” and trying not to flinch when adolescent lads called him “Sir.”

“Well, child, how are you to-day?” he said to that humble frequenter of the house, long-legged, dark-eyed Gwendolen Heathfield. Enid was entertaining a few substantial matrons to tea on the terrace, and the girl was helping her shily and prettily. She had brought Charles his cup of tea to the outskirts of the group, where he stood feeling bored and heavy.

“Why do you call me a child?” she said. “I’m ever so much more than that;” and she had a queer little smile of mirth, of mischief, of revolt. “Mother says I’m on the threshold—ready to step over it, and take up a woman’s responsibilities . . . That means going into a shop—or something beastly.” Then she gave a soft low-toned little laugh and repeated her question. “Why do you say I’m a child?”

Charles explained that she deserved that name only in comparison with a venerable person like himself.

“Don’t be silly,” said Gwendolen. “You’re not old.”

“I’m afraid I am.”

She moved a little further from the others, and sat down, at the same time indicating by a gesture that Charles was to occupy the vacant chair beside her. She did this with an air that would not have been inappropriate to a woman of fifty. Just such invitations were given to him by large and important Mrs. Burroughes when she said "Now Mr. Charles let you and I have a quiet chat about it." He was amused by Gwendolen.

"If you were old," she said, looking at him as if she were taking his case into studious consideration and speaking gravely—"If you were *really* old, I shouldn't think about you as I do."

"How do you think of me, Gwendolen?"

"Very nicely," and she smiled. The smile was merely a flicker, and in an instant her face was once more composed. "I feel you would never take sides with the old people and be unkind. You would understand. If I got into a row with mother, I'd sooner ask your advice than anybody I know."

"Yes, but you mustn't get into a row with your mother. You must always behave properly and do what your mother tells you to."

Gwendolen laughed. "That's easily said. You don't know mother as I do . . . Well, I think every girl ought to be able to have somebody she can go to and get him to advise, and ask him to——"

"Must it be a *him*?" said Charles, laughing. "Why not a *her*?"

"Don't be silly," said Gwendolen again. "That's the whole point. You can't trust other girls; and women—mothers and people like that—are hopeless. Nice men—men like you—know how complicated . . . Excuse me. I think Mrs. Derwent wants me."

She got up and went back to the group round the tea-table. Charles was thoroughly amused. During the whole of their brief conversation he had felt young. She had *made* him feel young. He sniggered in recalling some of her gravely spoken words. "Don't be silly . . ." "Wouldn't take sides with the old people." Very funny.

He did not see Gwendolen Heathfield again, and when he

asked what had happened to her Enid said that her mother had sent her to a school in Belgium to learn French.

Once he asked if Gregory Lake ever felt any sorrowful yearnings for his vanished youth. Greg said no, never, not in the least. He did not feel his age either. But of course late hours were avoided by him. No loss in that. "Far better to go to bed early and get your beauty sleep. What?"

They were driving to the golf club drawn by the horses which Charles still persisted in using for his own journeys, and amidst the joltings and rattlings of the waggonette he propounded his theory of synchronisation.

Old Greg, as he confessed, could not get the hang of it. At first he thought that Charles was discussing actual time-pieces and he spoke of the synchronised clocks all over Paris, once pneumatic, now worked by electricity. Every one of them marking the same time, "to the tick." Then he said it was altogether too deep for him. "Very clever, my dear fellow, not a doubt—and I'm thick. Mrs. Charles would get it in a minute. I always say—you two—can't beat you—you for deepness and Mrs. Charles for quickness."

But he tried again as they were approaching the first tee. "Well, Charles, old boy, half a crown as usual, and if I can only keep my eye on the ball and go through it . . . *Timing*, eh? Isn't that pretty much what you were saying? Synchronise your swing. Hands behind the club head at moment of impact. Well timed? What?"

Charles laughed, and philosophising again, he thought without the slightest self-glory that Gregory was not and never had been notable intellectually, and yet nevertheless Charles liked him better than any man on earth. Although there could be no real communion of minds between them, he was the chosen, the always desired companion. The mere sight of him was pleasant; his absence never failed to create a void. Why? Why do we like one another? Certainly not for our *cleverness*. Not because Gregory was handsome, strong, healthy, nor even because he overflowed with amiability, had a high sense of what was just and proper, could never do a mean or shabby thing—not for these estimable

attributes and qualities did one place so great a value on his companionship. It was the man himself. Unavoidable if you knew him intimately. Enid, Charles thought, was getting almost as fond of old Greg as he himself.

Still philosophising as time passed, but for his own behoof and propounding no difficult theories that others might not comprehend, Charles entered into a period of baseless sadness. Ugly thoughts about death incessantly returned to him. He slept badly and suffered from tormenting dreams. Often, as he sat at his desk in London conducting affairs, he had a sense of the unreality, the futility of it all. Outwardly he showed no signs of this trouble. As Carlyle long since ordained for the correct behaviour of every manly man, Charles was consuming his own smoke.

A saying in Samuel Butler's note-book assisted him. "If life is an illusion, then so is death—the greatest of all illusions. If life must not be taken too seriously—then so neither must death." Charles had not felt any fear of death, but he feared the narrowing and lessening of life. It was perhaps the sense of the inevitable that oppressed his spirit. From boyhood onwards he had had his own way in so many things that to find himself, even in thought, right up against this unbending, unyielding, immutable thing that neither Charles Derwent nor anybody else may overcome or dodge or get round, was more than annoying. However, he faced it resolutely, although he could not smile at it. He said to himself "If I live to over ninety, half my life is already gone—how much the better half won't bear estimating."

He emerged then from his first protracted dark fit with a very definite realisation that only two principal interests in life remained to him—his family and his work. From now on he must devote himself to these two.

He thought of the new generation rising so rapidly to take the place of the henceforth decreasing multitude to which he belonged. We are a crowd to-day, a few stragglers to-morrow, and the day after that not one of us is left! He loved his children, and could not without pain think of them

slipping away from him. But it would be his own fault if he lost them. Well-to-do people like Enid and himself, with big houses and many servants, are apt, he thought, to treat their children at first as sources of pleasure for themselves, providers of happy emotion and healthful amusement—as delightful toys for grown-up people. Such parents may not understand quickly enough that they are infinitely more than that. They are *minds*—expanding, growing minds that need a constant nourishment of sympathy and comprehension. Not to understand your children is to betray them. You must make friends with them even before they have ceased to be your playthings. You must think of them and for them as you would for adult friends. The future is theirs, not ours. We should look ahead, for them and not for us.

Charles consolidated his friendship with the new generation.

The boy Roderick had passed his tenth birthday. He was going to a preparatory school on the south coast, and his mother, who adored him, dreaded but would not shirk the necessary separation. She had merely postponed it. Roddy had a high forehead, dark tumbling hair, and very remarkable eyes. Sometimes they seemed to look through and through you; sometimes they became dreamy, shadowy; sometimes all the light or vitality seemed to go out of them and they had almost the appearance of artificial eyes, blank as pieces of glass, thoughtless as polished pebbles. Then his whole face would seem dull, stupid. Enid never saw this transitory expression or lack of expression without an inward tremor, because it linked itself with ancient anxieties and apprehensions. In the past, at the time when Roddy stammered so badly, Dr. Laurie had hinted at mental confusion and the danger of an arrest in development. But, thank heaven, all had gone happily. Roddy stammered no more, except when he talked with too great an eagerness; he was precociously intelligent, quite possibly possessed of the varied powers that go to make up genius.

Nevertheless he could not learn his lessons. At the day school he was outclassed by little boys of seven and eight. Miss Rogers, the home governess, who helped him at home

with his school work, treated him and spoke of him as if he were half-witted.

Charles had many quiet talks with Roddy. They became close friends, and the boy amazed the father by the complete openness of his disposition.

Charles asked him what he would like to do when he grew up. Would he care to come into the shipping business? Ships are rather jolly things.

"Have you any sailing ships, Daddy?"

Then when he heard that there were none he thought that his father's occupation would not appeal to him.

"One must do something, you know," said Charles.

"Yes," said Roddy, "but I think I'd like to do other things. Could I be an author?"

Charles talked learnedly but disparagingly of authorship as a trade. Then, at the boy's earnest request, he described the present situation of the firm. They were about to obtain a controlling interest in another firm. It would be an amalgamation, and they would form a private company instead of being a business owned by partners. Later Charles wanted to buy two more concerns on which he had had his eye for several years. Then he would launch the whole thing as a public company.

"Thank you, Daddy. I'm glad to know—and I understand it. I do really." The boy had a serious air as he gave this assurance, and next moment his seriousness increased. "There's something I'd like to tell you about poetry and pictures. But I can't. It's a secret between mum and me . . . You don't mind us having secrets?"

"No," said Charles, "but I don't think it's necessary."

Roddy looked at him with intent deep-piercing eyes, and spoke with a queer mingling of apology and resolution. "You see, I do love mum so tremendously that I can tell her things I couldn't to anybody else. You were fond like that of granny, weren't you?"

"Yes—I am still."

"Then I think when you feel like that it makes you a little different from other people. They say I'm different. Well, I want to be different."

Charles was inexpressibly touched by this. It played upon his deepest chords of feeling with pleasure and with pain. He went to Enid and talked to her of their son's unquestionable brain power. Then he spoke of that horrid word *different*, used by somebody offensively, and quoted by the boy with such dignity and as if in self-defence. He asked Enid if she had ever observed anything unusual, abnormal about Roddy.

Enid hesitated a moment and said no. She did not really know whether Dr. Laurie had spoken of his doubts to Charles or only to herself. Nor was she clear as to exactly what Dr. Laurie had said to her. It was all over and done with.

"No," she said firmly. "Certainly not."

"Then find out who told him he was different."

It proved to be Miss Rogers, the governess.

"Very well," said Charles curtly. "Sack her."

Enid pleaded for Miss Rogers—a good sort, the other two so fond of her, getting on so splendidly with her—but Charles was obdurate.

In fact his decision hardened under opposition. Miss Rogers was to go now, at once, with salary in lieu of notice. Miss Rogers went.

No one so far could accuse those other two of being unlike ordinary children.

Margaret, slim and precise, with a couple of tawny pig-tails, used to hold up her face to be kissed and ask a favour languidly. "Daddy, can I have a favour? May I do so and so?"

"Yes," said Charles always, kissing her; and it sometimes came out afterwards that Enid had refused the favour.

"Oh, but daddy says I may," said Margaret, with languid tone, but the aspect of one justly offended.

The little boy Charlie, stout and robust, had only one phrase—"Me too." When he saw anybody kissed or given money, or offered food, he uttered his cry. "Me too!" He was dark, with thick eyebrows. It had been predicted that he would grow into considerable physical strength.

In due course Roddy went to the preparatory school, and

days passed before the anxiously expected arrival of his first letter. It was addressed to Enid.

"If you don't mind," she said, "I won't show it to you."

"No—certainly," said Charles. "But does he say he's all right?"

"Yes, he—he's all right. Very unhappy. But he'll stick it. It's not the school. He misses—us." Her face seemed to twitch all over, and she spoke jerkily. "We won't belittle it, will we? It's the worst fight in his life. And he's very brave." She stopped and Charles saw her lips trembling. He knew that every minute of Roddy's fight was dreadful to her. "Think," she went on, "think how small—how young—and *such* love!" Then after a silence she said, "I shall go down and spend the day with him on Saturday."

"Is that wise?"

"Yes, quite wise," she said firmly.

"Don't you think it'll upset him?"

She shook her head negatively.

She started for the seaside place very early, and on her return late in the evening she said, "I have had a wonderful day with him." She could hardly speak for emotion. "Oh, that boy. All love. The things he says;" and she spoke with a gasp. "He wants you to go down. Can you?"

Charles went at the end of the week and they spent a long day together.

"Isn't mum an angel? And so lovely! The boys all said so . . . Now tell me about yourself, Daddy. Everything I know about you helps me."

And Charles talked to him exactly as if he had been a man, describing how in spite of unforeseen difficulties the amalgamation of the two firms was accomplished, and how he intended, although there were certain risks, to push on to the conclusion of the larger scheme.

Home again at Bolton Lodge, and eating supper in the lamp-lit dining-room with Enid attending to him instead of the servants, he almost had an illusion that he was still sitting in sunshine on a bench high above the sea, an arm round his boy's thin shoulders, and the sound of his boy's marvelous words now freshly falling on his ear.

"I won't tell you all he said."

"No," said Enid, "don't. It's sacred—isn't it?—what he says to you and what he says to me. He loves us both so perfectly."

Of a truth there dated from that day a wider, deeper love, to be felt by the father for his son thenceforward always.

At the end of the term Roderick's reports were distressing—as to mathematics, "tries but without ability;" French, "bad;" English, "poor;" and so on. The only food for parental pride was furnished in the accompanying letter from the schoolmaster. He said that Roddy had great courage. He was reckless of danger. This echoed what nurses and everybody else had always said. "Master Roddy does not know what fear is."

Charles strenuously followed that other great remaining interest, his work. He absorbed himself in it, he exhausted himself in it. His ambition grew with that on which it fed. He overcame the *vis inertiae* of traditions, he conquered the resistance of his assistants, he smashed or leaped over every obstacle that was put in his way by opponents.

After his scheme had been accepted, the satisfying of all the proprietors and the flotation of the big company took nearly a year, and throughout that year the strain upon him was severe.

"I am tired," he said in a letter to Roddy, "but now I can take things easier. I have been hard at it since I last wrote, and I am glad to say we are going strong. The combined enterprise owns a fleet of 37 vessels with an aggregate tonnage of 108,000. Some of them are very small—as your arithmetic will tell you. At last we have some sailing ships. They are three old tubs in the Baltic that belonged to the Dutch company I mentioned to you. They made us pay for their concern through the nose. Do you know the old rhyme? I do not myself. But it's something about always has been the fault of the Dutch, giving too little and asking too much. Anyhow, I was looking at the map yesterday, and, leaving out the North Atlantic, there is not a sea whose surface our

keels do not furrow. Is not that poetical for prosaic old daddy? . . ."

To this letter he added a postscript—"I have been obliged to buy a motor-car myself, to get about quick, for I am always in a hurry."

His work did not lessen as soon as he had expected. All was going well, but he wanted it to go better. He carried the burden of a success that might shrink and dwindle if he put it down in order to rest himself. He was very successful, and many people thought him lucky as well. They invited him to accept directorships of other companies. Docks, coal, iron knew about Charles Derwent as well as ships. Tudor Green, always local, did not guess how large he was bulking in the adjacent city of London.

He never gave himself any airs.

And all this longish while he did not think distressingly of time. Yet he had a full consciousness that it was progressing—like an incurable disease that one has contracted and that will make further and further ravages, no matter what palliatives one may employ. He knew that the progress was rapid. Days, weeks, months were flying. Important dates that seemed far ahead came rushing towards him and were upon him.

To a certain extent his home life had become vague, unsubstantial, rather like a panorama moving behind a stage that is occupied with incessant action. Bolton Lodge was the place where he slept and ate his evening meal, a meal often eaten long after the proper hour. Sometimes his thoughts did not come home with him. They stayed in London.

"That girl is an enigma to me," said Enid, almost bitterly.

"What girl?" asked Charles.

"Margaret."

Their daughter Margaret, now nearly eleven years of age, had ceased to hold her face up to be kissed in the old way; and Enid declared that, although she used to be such a loving little thing, she now seemed devoid of all natural affection, at any rate where her mother was concerned. She avoided caresses. When embraced she gave no response; she seemed

to wriggle away as quickly as possible. "It wounds me," said Enid.

"Shall I speak to her about it?"

"I wish you would. But don't let her play us off one against the other. She's clever at doing that."

Charles took an opportunity for tactful discourse with Margaret, and was surprised by the promptness of her answer. She spoke primly and quietly, but in a decided manner.

"Mother only cares for Roddy."

"Oh, no, she loves you all equally."

"I don't think so. After Roddy she likes Charlie. I am the one that has always been left out in the cold. Well, I have got accustomed to the cold."

Charles assured her that the very warmest feelings had been and always would be at her disposal.

"Oh, if I thought so. Daddy, if I really thought that mother—But I don't think so. I know *you're* fond of me;" and she suddenly threw her arms round him, hugged him, and held up her face to be kissed.

He advised Enid to disregard Margaret's frigid manner; to go on as if she did not notice any lack of reciprocity in the affectionate demonstrations. Margaret needed thawing.

After a few, or perhaps after a good many of those racing months which swept past him so fast that he could not count them, Enid reported that all had come right again. Margaret was now perfect—absolutely sweet—brimming over with sympathy—even trying to save her mother trouble in household affairs—continually wanting to be with her. Enid rejoiced in the restoration of the girl's love.

Then came Roddy's failure at the public school, his father's old school. He had not been able to pass the usual entrance examination; but as a compliment to Charles, who was one of the school governors as well as an old ally of the headmaster, he had been admitted with a sort of probationary status. After a week however he said that he was utterly miserable and he entreated that he might be taken away. This time he could not stick it.

Charles said he must remain. It is impossible to leave a

public school. In fairness to the boy himself one must keep him there.

"I suppose you are right," said Enid sadly.

Then Charles in London discovered that work lay beyond him. The thought of Roddy was continuously with him. If Roddy's anguish prevented him from sticking it, his father could not stick the thought of Roddy's anguish. That afternoon, quite early, he ordered his car. Roddy came back in it with him to Bolton Lodge.

"Bless you," said Enid. "You'll never regret what you've done."

Charles said, and perhaps believed, that he had not intended to fetch the boy away. But the headmaster declared that there are a few boys in the world for whom the manifold delights and advantages of public school life are useless, and he rather thought that Roddy was one of them.

Eventually they sent Roddy to an expensive clergyman who made a speciality of backward boys.

Charlie was at the south coast preparatory school and quite happy there. Enid said that Charlie would get on well anywhere. Of an equable disposition, he had no great likes and dislikes, but lived in amity with all the world. People said that he was clever. He made things—little models of ships, darts, and catapults. "Bags I" was now his cry. If he saw any article of dubious or unclaimed ownership, an illustrated catalogue, a box of preserved fruit, a vacant chair, he cried "Bags I" and seized it.

One evening when Dr. Laurie had come to the house to see one of the servants he had a little talk with Charles in the library. Charles and he were on very friendly terms. Laurie had continued to take pleasure in Derwent's boldly philosophic generalisations, and Derwent valued the solidity of the other's grip on facts. Everything that Laurie knew was known so thoroughly.

"I have told Mrs. Derwent that there's nothing really wrong with that maid," said Dr. Laurie, sitting down and bringing out his pipe. "But I say! What's wrong with you?" And he put the pipe back in his pocket and sat staring hard at Charles.

Charles said there was nothing in the least wrong with him. He had had a heavy day. He was feeling a little tired.

"You are overdoing it, and if you don't knock off you'll have a breakdown," said Dr. Laurie, solid, rocklike, not to be pooh-poohed any more than if he had stated an irrefutable fact, such as that there are sixteen ounces in a pound avoirdupois. "You can get another opinion. But all Harley Street will tell you the same;" and he went on to say that if Charles could not leave his business and have a proper rest, he must decrease the pressure by short holidays. "Take two days at a time . . . Very well, then take the whole of Saturday and Sunday . . . Play golf. Keep out of doors."

Charles was slightly scared. He said to himself "If I cracked up now it would be the devil." He acted on the advice that he had received.

That autumn his work slackened of its own accord; on many days that he went to the offices he knew he was not really required there. He could have stayed at home and transacted the small amount of actual business by talking on the telephone. Often now he turned to Enid for company.

But Enid in her own way was still as busy as he had been in his. When he wanted her most he could not get her. Once he reproached her for this excessive preoccupation, and he echoed some of Laurie's wisdom, saying that if people overdo it they are liable to a breakdown, a collapse, a snapping of all their energy. "Nec semper tendit arcum Apollo."

"What does that mean?"

"It means that one shouldn't keep one's nerve-strings always on the stretch. You allow yourself no relaxation. You never have any leisure."

"Oh, my dear, I assure you I have *heaps* of leisure."

"Well, you never have any for *me*," said Charles, gently but ruefully.

"Charles! Have I been neglecting you? How horrid of me! I never thought— What's to-day? Tuesday!"

There and then she cancelled several important engagements in order to enable her to go down to the golf club at four o'clock and have tea with Charles and Mr. Lake after their round.

She was waiting for them, established at a table on the lawn behind the club house, and they had a pleasant hour there. Other people enjoying the fine weather made groups at tables all round the lawn, and several of them came to pay their respects to Enid, so that at one time she was holding a little court. She looked very grand in a dress of biscuit colour, with an enormous hat round which ostrich feathers, black and white, curled and hung magnificently. The jacket of the dress thrown open displayed a black satin blouse richly ornamented with silver and pearl embroidery. Fitting close to her hips, the skirt swelled out lower down and trailing widely over the grass entirely concealed her feet.

Anybody of the present day seeing this beautiful costume and the clothes worn by the other ladies would feel as if looking at a picture in an old number of *Punch*, and perhaps smile at what must necessarily seem outlandish and grotesque. But nevertheless Enid was in the very height of the fashion, and her friends were not far behind her.

It was a glorious October day, bright and warm as summer, but with a fullness of colour, a softness of shadow that summer does not know. The foliage of the trees beyond the long borders of glowing autumn flowers was still rich and green, and only here and there in the distance a few oaks began to show dark leafless heads and orange-clad limbs. Charles, always susceptible to seasonal influences, felt again the mingled pleasure and regret that is evoked so easily by the last days of autumn. He had been in high spirits half an hour ago; gladdened by the presence of Enid, thinking how jolly it was to have her there to pour out tea, and determining that somehow or other they would contrive to be more often together. Now in a moment these thoughts about autumn made him feel a little sad.

He looked at her across the tea-table, with an admiration in which there entered something of that very same regret. She was a beautiful woman to-day; but it was the beauty of autumn, mature and soft, marvellously kind, but inexorably doomed to pass away. As yet the years had touched her only with their ripening hand; their cold breath, their cruel destroying grip, their merciless obliterating force were all

to come. She had not a line on her smooth face; her eyes were as clear as in youth; her neck, hidden by the prodigious high collar, was firm and round, without a single crease or hollow.

"Enid," he said abruptly, "I must have your portrait painted."

Enid laughed, told him not to be absurd, and yet was gratified.

"How can you talk such nonsense? Painted! At my age. You're ten years too late, Charles."

But Charles was thinking "No, I am just in time;" and he obstinately insisted that he would commission a real good artist, one of the swells.

"He's quite right," said Gregory Lake, blinking his eyes. "And anyone of 'em 'd be proud— Of course I don't pretend to— But good sitters give inspiration."

They talked of artists then, running over the names. Charles spoke especially of that American chap Sargent that everybody praised. There was Frank Dicksee—always splendid. Dicksee, lofty-minded, dipping his brushes in poetry as well as oil colour! Holl, Long, Cope? Orchardson, too, sometimes painted smaller portraits. But Charles wanted something life-size, in the grand style. Netherby! Worth considering, Netherby—the coming man!

"You aren't serious?" said Enid.

"I was never more serious in my life," said Charles.

His spirits had risen again. The notion of a magnificent portrait hanging in the dining-room delighted him. Roddy would jump for joy. The other two when they grew up would have it there, the picture of their mother as she used to be, in the splendour of health and strength. And he himself would see her always as the painter had recorded her. He would refuse to recognise change or deterioration. She should still be Enid at thirty-five, the handsome gracious creature of to-day, the dear comrade, the dear wife, without whom he would have missed half the meaning of existence.

"Greg, old boy," he said gaily, "when am I to give you your revenge? Shall we have a return match to-morrow afternoon?"

"He can't play to-morrow," said Enid. "It's the hospital audit meeting."

"Well, I'm hanged," said Charles.

"I obey orders," said Gregory, looking from one to the other. "Wednesday—ah, yes, that is so, Mrs. Charles. I had booked the meeting. But of course——"

Charles rubbed his nose and grinned. It really was rather amusing, if a shade irritating. Nowadays there was this sort of competition between him and Enid for the use of Gregory Lake. She had made him her lieutenant in some of her labours, putting him on two committees and entrusting him with clerical work of a not too difficult nature. More than once Charles had been deprived of him because he was wanted by Enid.

"If it was anything but the audits I would let him off," said Enid. "But to-morrow we really can't do without him."

Gregory Lake was one of those men who improve in appearance as they grow older.

Very careful about his clothes, never wearing trousers that were not neatly pressed or shoes that had not been well-treed and assiduously polished, he was at one time famous as the local fop or swell, but he had always possessed style, an air and manner very distinctly above the level of the suburbs. Nowadays, with his dark hair turning grey on each side of his forehead, his moustache trimmed to the small dimensions of the new mode, his straightness of back and fine carriage of the head entirely unimpaired by a bodily increase of weight, he really was a person of very distinguished aspect. Strangers meeting him were impressed, feeling instinctively that he was somebody of importance and wishing to be told of the big things that he had done in life.

But truly he had done nothing. As well as being the most amiable of mankind he had been one of the idlest. From the time long ago when he retired from a militia regiment he had not done a stroke of work, or even thought of working, until Enid took him in hand and forced him into subordinate service as a philanthropist. He submitted meekly to the new régime. Whatever Mrs. Charles said was right.

"Not playing the game to be such a slacker—what! Command me. Proud and honoured."

In Tudor Green there were many of these sheltered lives. The sons and daughters of parents with money were left comparatively well-off, but not rich. They lingered in the place where they were born and where they had grown up. The Thames Valley was their world. Its gentle but not invigorating airs kept them in health without giving them energy. Gregory Lake belonged to a good London club, but never used it. He could have afforded a house, but preferred a modest little flat in a building near the bridge with the view over the river that he had looked at contentedly from childhood's days. He had means to travel, but he stayed at home. With scarcely any relatives, he possessed innumerable friends—not counting the friend of friends, Charles Derwent.

As has been indicated, everybody liked him. His very simplicity attracted, for he had remained extraordinarily simple-minded.

Even with intimates he was no great conversationalist. In general society he rarely said anything straight out, but all the time he was speaking modestly apologised with vague phrases, such as "If my surmise is correct" or "So it would seem to me." "That's how it struck me, but I am the worst possible judge—so profoundly ignorant of all these matters. A literary fellow could tell you in a moment." Then he would smile, while his eyelids blinked over his rather prominent blue eyes in the little spasmodic trick that had become habitual to him, and relapsing into silence he sometimes gave an impression that he continued talking to himself, having nothing that other people would find worth listening to. Nevertheless on occasions he would speak with unexpected strength and directness—especially when people had entered the realm of ethics. "Oughtn't to have done so. It is tosh and piffle to pretend the contrary." But indeed he was always strong on what could be done and what couldn't be done.

His consideration for the feelings of other people, whether friends, acquaintance, or merely humble dependents such as valet and charwoman, was unailing. He gave evidence of this delicate altruistic care in a brief interview with Enid

one winter afternoon. There was to be a committee meeting, and he had written a note asking if she could spare him a few minutes before she went to the meeting. He duly presented himself at Bolton Lodge and was received by its mistress in her own pretty sitting-room.

"You look mighty solemn," she said, smiling at him. "What's up now?"

Certainly he seemed unusually grave, and a little embarrassed too. Instead of meeting her frank gaze he stood looking down at the fire. She had risen and she did not sit down again. Standing on the other side of the fireplace, she watched him with vague but increasing apprehension.

"It is about something," he said hesitatingly. "Just heard it myself—and I thought, don't you know, perhaps I'd be the first to mention it—so that, as it were, my dear Mrs. Charles, you would be prepared. It is known, you see. They'll be talking about it at the meeting."

Then she divined that he was doing that which from time immemorial has been known as breaking bad news, and she took alarm.

"Oh, what is it?" she said anxiously. "Tell me."

"You remember Harold Wood." He spoke slowly, still not looking at her. "The poor fellow. You know how ill he was. Yes, Mrs. Sadler has had a telegram. He—he is dead."

"Oh!" And she very nearly said "Is that all?" There had come such a strong sense of relief in the knowledge that the misfortune did not closely concern herself or her dear ones. "I'm sorry," she said, after a silence. "Where did he die?"

"At Honolulu."

"Oh, I am so sorry. Poor Harold!" And her face was sad. She thought of his beard. Had he let it grow longer and longer? Somewhere she had read that consumptive people always have long smooth hair. She imagined him dressed in white, wasted to nothing, stooping, with an immense beard; and she repeated her last two words. "Poor Harold."

Then she rang the electric bell by the fireplace. The maid brought her fur coat, her hat, her gloves, and helped her to

put them on. Her car was at the front door. She gave Mr. Lake a lift in it to the meeting.

As they drove swiftly up the hill she burst into a ripple of laughter.

"You know you really are rather an old donkey. Oh, I mustn't laugh;" and she checked herself. "It seems wicked and heartless. But I was only laughing at you—you and your preparations . . . No, it was kind of you to tell me."

"Well, my dear Mrs. Charles, I thought——"

"Never mind what you thought. You meant well. You always do. But I wish you weren't quite so thick—sometimes . . . What will Mrs. Wood do?"

"Oh, marry again," said Lake promptly. "I'd bet any money."

"I don't take the bet," said Enid. "I thought she was hateful to him. Utterly callous . . . Here we are."

II

THE portrait of Mrs. Derwent painted by Netherby was hung on the line in the Royal Academy exhibition. In a dress of red velvet, of the loose flowing order that is classical rather than belonging to any fixed period, she looked forth from the canvas calmly and grandly, a noble sort of woman with untroubled brow and soft full lips and eyes that followed you as you moved on to look at something else. In this year 1910 there were some notable pictures at Burlington House—including among portraits Mrs. Hayes Sadler by Charles Sims, the Duchess of Buccleuch by J. J. Shannon, an unnamed lady by John Collier, Mrs. Arthur Herz and Lady Inverclyde by Frank Dicksee. But E. F. Netherby's Mrs. Charles Derwent held its own with the best of them.

Enid herself dared not examine it closely at the private view, to which they had received cards of invitation. It made her shy and self-conscious. But its flattery from a distance warmed her heart.

"Are you pleased, Charles?" she whispered.

"Oh, yes, enormously."

"Better than you were on show Sunday in the studio?"

"Yes," he said, with a queer dullness of tone. "I'm delighted. I think it's splendid—everything I wanted."

He was pleased, and yet he had no adequate sense of pleasure. Things real were losing their hold upon him, and in their place he struggled with unrealities. A week ago the beginning of his second dark fit of depression had fallen upon him. It was worse than the first one.

During the month that followed the opening of the exhibition Enid detected that there was something amiss with her much valued, much loved Charles. He had stopped playing golf. He was moody, taciturn, and occasionally he snapped at her. He slept badly at night.

After observation of these outward signs her diagnosis of his case was the same as that which she had many times previously made with success. It could be contained in one word—indigestion. She uttered the word and was snapped at.

"I'm sure you can't be well," she said very gently, "or you wouldn't be so irritable."

"I'm not irritable—or if I am, it's because you have irritated me by ridiculous suggestions when I tell you I'm all right and never better."

She remained of the same opinion. Bilioussness. Liver. She was especially careful about his food, instructing the kitchen that no fancy dishes would be required until further notice. There was of course nothing new to her in a transient gloominess. Years ago she had figuratively described the state of mind that she now attributed to him as a feeling that the bottom of his universe had fallen out with a crash. She did not know, she could not guess, that now for the first time such a phrase was really justified and almost literally correct.

Yet, so finely adjusted are the chances that govern human lives, he had been on the point of enlightening her when the use of that one unlucky word locked the gates of confidence and stopped the flow of a confession. Words and moments! It is their appropriate combination that will sometimes triumphantly lead people out of morasses of doubt and upward to the high firm ground of courageous faith; it is their mutual unsuitability that divides men and women for ever, that loses great causes, that makes a genius or a saint seem no better

than a doorkeeper. If a man is unhappy you cannot safely advise him to cure himself by taking a pill. Charles would have told her that the trouble was spiritual, not bodily. He *wanted* to tell her. He wanted to appeal to her for sympathy and aid. He might have said in effect: "I am foolish and ashamed but powerless. I am a prey to yearnings and cravings for impossible things. I am a moth trying to reach the stars on poor little worn-out wings, a child asking for the world behind the looking-glass, a lunatic imploring fate to give him back yesterday, a famished dog dropping an enormous solid bone for a small vague shadow. I am anything you like that is undignified, reprehensible, absurd—but help me. Blame me, laugh at me—but for God's sake help me."

Perhaps if chance had been kind and allowed them to have this conversation, several events which were now beginning to draw near would never have occurred.

The sleeplessness continued. On some nights he scarcely slept at all, and this meant that Enid also slept very little; for he turned on the light and endeavoured to read, he got up and walked about, he made a persistent quite deadly disturbance. Then he saw that it was not fair to her. At his own request a bed was prepared in his dressing-room, and he lay awake there instead of in the other room.

He felt lonely and deserted in the dressing-room. He knew, however, that this had been the only proper arrangement and that his sense of having a grievance was totally unreasonable. But except during those matronly illnesses there had never till now been a nocturnal separation from her. The break in established custom upset him still further. He missed the little talk that they used to have before bidding each other good night, and the longer talk that they had in the morning when their tea was brought to them.

After his bath one morning he went to the room in which for so long he had been an honoured tenant if not a joint proprietor. The desire for a few words with her was strong upon him. But opening the door he heard a sound of voices and laughter. Enid was drinking her tea with another visitor. Margaret in a Japanese dressing-gown, her tawny hair tumbling loose about her face, had perched herself on the edge

of the bed and was chattering merrily to her mother, only pausing now and then to steal a lump of sugar from the tea-tray and crunch it with her strong young teeth.

"Is that you, Evans?" said Enid, without looking round. "Come in."

Charles closed the door and went away. He understood that she had thought it was the maid. It had not even occurred to her that it might be her husband. He felt wounded, aggrieved.

Slowly dressing for the long dull toilsome day that seemed to stretch interminably before his tired footsteps, he gave himself to a deliberate self-pity. "It amounts to this," he thought. "I am alone in my own house. I have a home that is not really a home, because I find neither comfort nor peace in it. My wife has become merely the mother of my children. The supporting friend, the companion, the help-mate has abandoned me. I have to fight the battle absolutely alone."

He was lonely at quiet Tudor Green, he was lonely in the throbbing tumult of London, and a new kind of restlessness took possession of him. He must have company, if not friends, then casual acquaintances, but people who would talk to him, who would go on talking and thereby make a distraction of the mind. Anyone who consented to come between him and his thoughts was welcome.

Without giving adequate notice to Enid he asked men to dinner—just any men—men who had never before crossed the threshold of Bolton Lodge—Mr. Hume the solicitor, Jackson of the Bank, Colonel Mayhew from the club—talkative men—two or three of them together. This new trick of his proved a severe trial to Enid's good temper. She did her best. But no household or housekeeper can stand such practices with equanimity.

"It is *too* inconsiderate of you."

"Sorry, old girl . . . Oh, damn and blast, what a fuss you make about nothing. Give them a potato each. I said it was pot luck."

"You never used to do it."

"Well, perhaps I wasn't so bored as I am now."

"That's not very polite to me," said Enid, indignantly.

It was many years since they had quarrelled badly. In the old days they used to ask each other's forgiveness. Now when there were sharp words between them they took it for granted afterwards that they remained just as good friends. There were no apologies, no reconciliations.

"Well," said Charles, "you gave us an excellent dinner. Those cutlets were quite up to Paris form."

"Yes," said Enid. "Colonel Mayhew had three of them. The crême caramel too! I do think Mrs. Ballard deserves a word of praise—getting it ready in such a hurry. She always rises to the occasion, doesn't she?"

The desire for incessant dinner guests passed as abruptly as it had manifested itself; but the restlessness of mind showed other symptoms.

Then suddenly Charles adopted Enid's notion of ill health, and enlarged it greatly now that it belonged to him. Perhaps unconsciously he wished to think himself ill. At any rate he felt considerable alarm as to his general condition. A deep-seated physical cause might explain everything mental. Not indigestion! Something organic. The valves of the heart! He thought "If I am liable to drop dead at any moment, I had better know it." His affairs were in order, but he could not be too careful in safeguarding the future for Enid and the children. There might be need of the addition of codicils to his will. He was a much richer man than when he made it.

He spoke lightly of his fears to Enid, but her anxiety was roused in a moment. She implored him to consult without delay the best London doctor, and herself summoned their faithful Laurie to tell them who was the best doctor and what was his address.

Laurie quite agreed that it would be advisable now to get a second opinion. He said, however, that they need not go to London for it. Here in Tudor Green there was a man who knew more than half the famous physicians with handles to their names. Dr. McGrigor, the clever Scot, partner of Dr. Cunningham, would run his yard measure over Charles in his shabby surgery behind the Playing Fields, and tell him all

that human science could tell. As usual, Laurie was quite positive about it.

Charles, then, visited Dr. McGrigor by appointment one day after tea and underwent a rigorous examination.

The verdict was of a most cheering nature. Dr. McGrigor pronounced him to be a singularly healthy person for his age. Heart, lungs, blood pressure, and everything else were in the most superior condition. In fact McGrigor paid him compliments, saying that he had not a superfluous ounce of flesh, he was made of whipcord and wire, his vitality and power of resistance were both high. Not only could he be conscientiously reported to any insurance society as a good life, but, "barring accidents," he ought to live to a hundred.

"Thank you," said Charles, when he had apologised for giving trouble without cause. "I see. I have been what in the French language is called a *malade imaginaire*."

"Yes," said clever Dr. McGrigor, "and the French have another expression. *On ne doit pas trop s'écouter*. You have been listening to yourself too much. Don't do it. By the way, Laurie mentioned overwork, as though you had taken great liberties in that direction."

"But I'm not working hard now. I haven't been for some time."

"Perhaps you have felt the reaction . . ."

Charles walked away slowly, meditating. Was he glad or sorry? At any rate he knew now what was the matter with him. "Nor poppy nor mandragora," he murmured to himself.

Enid was waiting for him inside the iron gates at Bolton Lodge. She had been too anxious to remain in the house.

"Oh, thank heaven," she cried, when he told her the satisfactory result of his interview. "Oh, Charles, I *have* been so frightened."

"I am simply a fraud," he said to her a few days later. "Please don't waste another thought on me;" and he rubbed his nose and grinned.

He looked just the same humorous careless Charles that he had always been. But this was acting. He often acted now, saying the things he used to say, doing the things he

used to do, merely to prove that he had not become in any essential way different.

He understood and accepted the truth. He was unhappy because his youth had gone; because he was middle-aged and soon to be elderly, then old, infirm, dead.

Already the chances and opportunities of wide strong life had passed from him. Henceforth all would be tame and dull. No violent pleasure, adventure, glamour, no excitation of quick hopes and fears could ever come now. Only vain regrets were left. He thought of the things that he and Enid might have done together while she was still a robust energetic game-playing girl, while they were both of them still comparatively young—travels, journeys with the sting of delight that belongs to peril, trekkings across desert places, campings in wild untrodden forests. The sea! That vast silver plain that has no pathways visible and yet leads everywhere! His ships went freely about the world, even to its farthest ends, but he himself had stayed at Tudor Green. And yet he knew that a love of adventure had lain in him not dormant, but repressed, frustrated, all through the wasted years.

His work, his success, the increasing money, were as nothing to him when he thought of these other things that might have been his if he had cared to take them.

Dressing of a morning he looked at himself in the glass, and if he had been a once beautiful actress who has been told that she cannot any longer play those youthful parts in which she won her fame, the scrutiny could not have been more searching, more grievously solicitous. He stared at the familiar face, with its long nose and intent questioning eyes. It was the face of yesterday and of a thousand previous yesterdays, and yet, indelibly stamped upon it, as though with a mysterious hieroglyphic language that everybody but himself could read, there was the record of all the passing years. Although to him the signs of change were so trifling, so difficult to detect even when as now he unflinchingly sought for them, they were sufficient in their combined effect to announce to a stranger at a first glance "This is the face of a man of nearly fifty." They told the cruel tale as accurately

and as brutally as the rings in the trunk of a tree when you have cut it down and it lies sprawling and dying at your feet.

Thus imperceptibly decades, lustres, years do their work. Thus youth and manhood go and age comes, and every man will be unhappy unless he pulls himself together, takes stock, and recognises each stage of life as it arrives. One *must* synchronise; otherwise one cannot escape misery. But Charles was beyond the medicine that is afforded by philosophy. When he thought now of his theory of synchronisation it was with the awakening of a sharper regret. What is the good of saying that each stage brings its compensations, its interests, its possibilities, if one has not begun to synchronise soon enough? The things one has missed doing, not the things one wishes one could go on doing, are what make the bitterness and pain.

He had many unselfish thoughts. One that left a long pang concerned his mother. If time was affecting him, how much more her? He went round to sit with her. And every afternoon now he contrived to do this, silently upbraiding himself for past neglect, aching with love as he looked at her white hair and lined face and frail body, flooding the quiet room with his tenderness. She was so happy, so perfectly happy, while she had him there day after day.

"No one like you, Charles. Nothing changes you."

He winced.

Of an evening he walked alone with sadness. It had become his nightly companion. On these warm June evenings all the windows of the rooms stood open to the dark garden, and there floated in faint murmurs of sound; as of people moving with soft footsteps and speaking with low voices. He looked at Enid seated at a desk immersed in labour, scribbling letters, going through accounts, temporarily oblivious of his presence, not likely to be aware of his absence until he had been gone half an hour. Without a word he left the house and strolled up the hill towards the empty silent Chase or down the hill towards the silent gliding river.

A band had been playing near the gates of the Chase; the crowd was melting away in shadowy groups that seemed to move and to fade as one watched them; on the numberless

benches of the Parade, detected rather than seen in the gloom beneath the trees, there were motionless couples who whispered and squeezed and sighed after the manner of lovers well accustomed to do their love-making more or less in public. The men never spoke, but every now and then he heard the voice of a girl, light as a bird's, thrilling the nerves, wounding the heart with the music of fresh young life. He left all these people and made for the solitude of the lower ground. But there was sadness everywhere in this perfect summer night. Sadness walked beside him and yet came to meet him too. It came to him from the darkened masses of the foliage, from the grey indistinct curves of the river, from little isolated lights that twinkled and disappeared in the wide stretches of the valley. Those specks of far-off lamp-light seemed like human hopes that glow and fade and die unnoticed by the rest of mankind.

He thought of things near and remote, and seemed to have a strange new consciousness of the vast forces that are at work whether one wakes or sleeps—the tides and the winds, electric storms, light and heat, the attraction of bodies; great stars turning as they roll, planets that swing obedient on their invisible chains, a hot white sun that sends its ray through dark cold space to touch an atom of dust that we call the earth and give a moment's life to the impossibly small insects that we call men—forces and still more forces. Then the most stupendous force of all, time—time unceasing, un pitying, resistless! If you wish to bring the immensity of its power to some figure of speech that falls within the measure of common imagination, you may say that in regard to men's lives it is a grinding machine that eventually grinds them into fine dust. Or, if you prefer to think of it so, you can say that it is like the dripping of water on stone, each drip a second of time falling on the live stone that is one's heart, obliterating the marks upon it, making it smoother and smaller every day—until at last the stone is gone.

III

RETURNING from London about seven o'clock one evening he dismissed his car near Tudor Green railway station and walked. It was too late to visit old Mrs. Derwent. Black-coated men in top hats and bowlers thronged up the steps and darkened the roadway as they crossed the railway bridge. Further on in quiet humble little roads there came one or two men at a time, going into the little houses on each side, and whistling or giving some signal to the home folk as intimation that the bread earner had returned. This was the final limit of that great wave of humanity that an hour ago had flooded the approaches to London railway stations.

Charles went along the lower riverside road, where already young men who had reached home by earlier trains and thrown off the livery of toil, emerged in white flannels and rubber shoes. Girls in coloured frocks and straw hats quickly joined them. With gay chaffing talk and pleasant laughter they hurried on together to the river or the tennis courts.

He noticed presently the easy swinging gait and graceful figure of a tallish hatless girl who was walking by herself. In lieu of a hat she carried a Chinese parasol. She was on the pavement opposite to his; her quick light footsteps had brought her abreast of him, then she was passing him. But she looked across the road, slackened her pace, and gave him a timid little bow.

He went over to her, and she offered her hand smiling at him shily.

"Don't you know me, Mr. Derwent?"

"Of course I do," he said, shaking hands with her. It was true only in the sense that everything about her seemed strangely familiar—her large dark eyes, her pretty pointed chin, her soft curly hair, above all her voice. She was like somebody that he had associated with in a dream. But he did not happen to know who she was in ordinary life. She promptly supplied the information.

"I'm Gwendolen Heathfield."

"Of course you are. But, Gwendolen, my dear, it is too wonderful. You have grown up."

"Yes, you can't call me a child now, can you?" And she laughed.

At once he remembered everything. She was that older friend of the children who had always been so amiable to him their father. He remembered quite well the timid glances of those dark eyes and the habitual shyness of her manner—a shyness that made such a contrast with the amazing self-possession and confidence that she could show on rare occasions. Once she had talked queerly to him. She had amused and interested him.

They stood talking now for a minute or two. He asked her friendly questions about herself, and she told him she had not only learned French, but was busily engaged learning typewriting and shorthand. In fact she had almost mastered these allied arts. Her mother said she was lazy, or she would have been earning a livelihood before now.

"How is your mother?"

"Oh, mother is all right, thank you," said Gwendolen, looking towards the boat-house further down the road. "Excuse me. I'm going on the river."

He remembered this too. She used to say "Excuse me." He said good night to her, and she walked swiftly away. Just before she disappeared into the boat-house she turned and waved her hand, with exactly the gesture that she might have employed in the garden at Bolton Lodge when bidding farewell to one of his children.

On the very next day he happened to meet her again at the same hour and in the same place. She was going on the river again.

"I do most evenings," she said. "It's nice getting a little exercise after stuffing indoors."

"Who are you going with, Gwendolen?"

"No one. All by my little lonesome;" and she had her shy smile. "I suppose I daren't ask you to come with me?"

"I wish you would."

She laughed gaily. "Oh, you *are* a dear. Come along. Come quick before you change your mind."

A highly varnished and spick-and-span little dinghy with cushions and sculls complete was waiting for her and they

got into it, she as the rower and he as the passenger. With a few quick strokes she pulled out into mid-stream, and then paused in order to roll up the sleeves of her pink cotton frock before settling down to real business.

"I admire your boat, Gwendolen."

"Oh, it isn't mine. Jack has lent it to me while he's away."

"Who is Jack?"

"Jack Hilbert. He's quite a nice boy."

"Are you fond of him?"

"Not particularly . . . I don't think I'm going to have a lot more to do with him."

"Why?"

"He's silly. He'd become a nuisance."

"I see."

She had given her head a jerk and the pretty hair shook loose.

There were many other boats, all moving in a sort of wide procession through the warm sunlight on the flooding stream. The click and grate of punt poles, the dip and sweep of sculls, the sound of voices near and far came pleasantly over the water. It was peaceful, beautiful, and as he looked at the moving shore, the flat meadows with the last of the hawthorn still in bloom, the tall trees that seemed to go slowly backwards while those behind advanced, the ridge of the wooded hill faintly blue against a blue sky, he thought "Why haven't I done this of late? When did we give up using the river."

She rowed well, so easily and steadily. He observed her smooth sunburnt arms and the little fists with pink fingernails coming towards him and going away again in unbroken tireless rhythm. Although slightly built for her height, she was strong. She seemed to him a sudden incarnation of youthful grace and vigour—almost a symbolic figure—or a mysterious messenger bringing an unfathomable message, and sent to him from nowhere in response to some of his recent thoughts. But he felt no distress in her company. His mind was at least temporarily at peace, as if a long continued strain upon it had been relieved.

"Now," he said, "let me have a go. Remember, I have been stuffing indoors too."

They changed places, and they talked and laughed while he sculled.

"Fancy your thinking it was my boat."

"Why not?"

Her answer to this and other questions was entirely frank. She spoke slowly, with the slight hesitation of utterance that was neither a stammer nor a drawl, and she used the sort of girl language that can convey vast meanings and colossal implications with two or three words. Thus in a few short sentences she told him that her father had been a drunkard as well as an unfaithful husband. He had spent her mother's money, and at his death had left them very hard up. They had just enough to live on, but no money for larks and fun or frocks and frills, much less for boats that cost "thirty of the best."

"Very hard on you, Gwendolen. I think you ought to have all the fun and pretty things you ever want."

"Don't be silly," she said gently, and then gave a little sigh. "I'm no worse off than others."

"I know. But I think it of the others too. The pretty things of life ought to come quickly, before one gets tired of waiting for them. It is while you're young that you *want* things, and it is the want that gives them their value and their charm. We can't want in that way—we can't go on with it too long. Then the time may come when nothing has any value any more."

"You're terribly sweet, you know."

She said this slowly and thoughtfully, and in the most natural manner. "You have said exactly what I often think myself;" and as she looked at him he saw her eyes all soft, her face all brightly tender. "Yes, you *do* understand. You always did."

She shook her head and laughed before she spoke again.

"I was never afraid of you."

"Why should you be afraid of me?"

"Well, everybody else was. You are so grand. Mother was always talking about how grand you were."

"What nonsense."

"Well, compared with *us*."

So she prattled on. It was girl language. It was music to his ears.

"Shall I tell you something?"

"Yes," he said, "please do."

"I wanted you for my unknown friend."

"What on earth do you mean by that? How could I be a friend if I was unknown? Besides, you know me quite well."

"I mean—for it to be unknown to others how well I knew you."

"A secret bond."

"Yes."

Charles took two or three strokes in silence, with something hovering near his lips that he had decided not to say. Then he said it.

"Has the chance utterly gone, Gwendolen? Is it altogether too late for any such interesting arrangement?"

"I wonder." And as she said these two slow words the expression of her face was enigmatical. She seemed grave, as if thinking of a serious matter, and there was something unexpectedly dignified in her very quietness.

He did not break the silence for a little while, and when he spoke it was lightly and smilingly.

"How would your original notion of unknown friendship appeal to Mrs. Heathfield? Do you think your mother would have quite approved?"

"Oh, mother!" she said with fine contempt. "You needn't worry about mother."

"I wish," said Mrs. Heathfield plaintively, "you'd tell me what I'm to do with that girl of mine."

"Oh, you *spoil* her, Mr. Derwent," she said on another occasion. "You'll make her so conceited there'll be no holding her. She'll want to go on the stage. But, no, I do put my foot down about *that*."

He had judged it proper to visit them, and he repeated the visit.

They lived at the very bottom of the hill, in one of the short and devastatingly ugly roads near St. Luke's church. Built at the most degraded architectural period and of the worst possible materials, the small close-packed houses were falling into a miserable shabby decrepitude, as of old men and women who had always suffered from bad health and never been properly cared for. The front door had panels of crudely stained glass, the stone window-sills were many of them broken, the paint on the woodwork was but a blistered shadow. Instead of an electric bell there was an old-fashioned thing with a handle that you pulled. Charles pulled it. There followed a perceptible pause while the long, tired wires did their work, and then came a dismal little clanging as the far-off bell agitated itself on its stalk. Immediately he heard a scuffle or a scamper; then light quick footsteps danced out of the sitting-room or raced down the stairs. The door opened widely, showing him a serge skirt, a coloured blouse, and a girl's face full of light and life.

"I knew it was you," she said, stretching out her hand and touching him. "I had a presentiment that you'd come this evening. I wanted you to come."

One day he told Enid that he had given that girl Gwendolen Heathfield a job at the offices. For the three previous days he had been intending to say this, but each day he had failed to say it, as if he felt an inexplicable reluctance in making the very simple communication.

Enid praised him for his goodness. "How splendid of you. Oh, I *am* so glad. I had Gwendolen in my mind;" and she went on to say that she had met and talked with Gwendolen's mother about a month ago. Poor Mrs. Heathfield had seemed depressed and careworn, as though the world were not using her too well. She had said it was necessary to find something for the daughter to do. "And now you have found it. Bless you, Charles. Tell Gwendolen to come and see me. Better say on a Sunday—any Sunday."

That was all. He had made the announcement and no questions had been asked. But then Enid began again.

"What's she like nowadays? I always thought she might grow into prettiness. Would you call her good looking?"

Charles said he certainly would. She had struck him as a rather remarkable sort of girl, so extraordinarily graceful and refined.

"Refined!" Enid echoed the word as if in surprise. "I shouldn't have expected that. No one could accuse her mother of refinement. No, I oughtn't to have said that. It was unkind of me. Poor soul, what has life ever done to refine her? . . . Well, give Gwen my love—and all good wishes."

At the office she sat at a typewriter in a room with other girls and sometimes he passed through the room talking to a head clerk or a manager. He saw her smooth dark head bent on the slender neck. She wore a black silk blouse with one of those soft white collars folded down over a bit of ribbon in the fashion that had been borrowed from America. He could not of course speak to her, and nothing in the day's business could possibly bring them together.

But freedom came when the office closed. He could drive her home in his car, provided that they did not leave the building together. By arrangement she walked on and stood waiting at a corner in Cannon Street. He stopped the car and spoke to her through the opened door.

"Miss Heathfield, would you care for a lift?"

She hopped in, nestled close to him, and they laughed and chattered. Then it was back to Tudor Green—or away to anywhere else. Shall we have some fun, a lark? Dinner at a roadside hotel in the depths of Surrey, or in the garden of that club high up the Thames? They had but to stop the car again, at a post office this time, and send a telephone message saying that Bolton Lodge must not expect its lord. Mrs. Heathfield didn't matter—at least she didn't matter until eleven o'clock. If it came to be after eleven, "she would make a devil of a row."

Over the hills and far away! The car—the convenient modern machine at which he had foolishly scoffed—swept them on together. A fading sun, a brightening moon, wonderland.

"I'm sorry you couldn't get home to dinner last night," said Enid. "Had you forgotten that Gregory Lake and Miss Lacey were coming? They missed you badly. But Miss Lacey

was in great form. It is wonderful how she has come out of her shell in the last few years. She made us die of laughter with an imitation of Mrs. Burroughes at the Army and Navy Stores. It was really funny without being in the smallest degree unkind."

He had wished to buy her some of the pretty things about which they had spoken, but she would not allow this. She would take no presents from him. "No, *please*. I don't want to be paid for what I like doing. It's *you* I'm fond of, not your money."

Each word was a magic nostrum, driving away sadness, bringing him back joy, making dark thoughts impossible.

The weeks passed, but no longer quickly, because there was so much in them. The world had renewed itself, it was fresh and bright as with the birth of a new and stronger sunshine, and Charles was young again in a rejuvenated universe. How could he feel old when there was somebody who treated him as if he was of her own age, who looked at him, talked to him, thought about him as she might have done with Jack Hilbert or any other boy of twenty-one? How could he act as the old act, cautiously, wisely, with quiet pulses and steady heart-beats, when he carried with him in every minute of his working hours the glamour and the sweetness of the tall slim radiant creature who had made him her unknown friend?

July came, blazingly gracious, overpoweringly rich, yellow as gold, heady as wine, and their affairs tended towards a crisis or explosion. They went about more freely, taking greater liberties and fewer precautions as to the "unknownness" of their intercourse. Many people must have seen them together. Amongst others Gregory Lake saw them. Gregory unexpectedly presented himself at the office a little before closing time, and being shown into Charles's room talked very earnestly about things that can be done and can't be done.

Charles sent Gwendolen away in the car, and having at last shaken off old Greg went home by train from Waterloo. Sitting in a corner of the railway carriage with an unopened newspaper on his knees, he thought of what old Greg had

said. "Easily put yourself in a false position. The, ah, young lady is apparently attractive." Oh, these words, these words! Is she good-looking? Is she attractive? Was Helen of Troy worth fighting for, had Cleopatra charm, were the wood nymphs pretty, could the sirens sing? Once he had heard Venice described as "a nice place," and a man at the local club used to ask whether the genius of Shakespeare and Dante was not greatly overrated. This girl had made him understand poetry and use a poet's tongue when talking of her to himself. The other men in the carriage read their newspapers. They were to get out at stations short of Tudor Green, and they were not acquainted with him; but they would have had no difficulty in guessing his social status, in "placing him," as we say now, in "sizing him up" as we said then. Wearing a frock-coat suit of grey, patent leather boots with brown tops to them, a black satin tie of the order called polo scarf, its folds held neatly by a pearl pin, its surface protected from the margin of the waistcoat by a thin line of starched white piqué, a white top hat with a black band on his grizzled head—thus attired, and with an outward aspect of personal dignity and quiet worth, Charles Derwent looked exactly what he had been until some little while ago, that is to say, a prosperous middle-aged man, a city man, a family man. But he was not that now. He was neither more nor less than a love-sick boy.

A madness descended on him, and yet he still had lucid intervals. "I am walking on the edge of a precipice," he thought. He struggled with himself—a losing battle. "Oh, Gwen," he said to her, "oh, my Gwen, what are we to do? We must be good . . . We *can't* go on with it." He had realised the full danger to both of them from the hour of their first kisses, the hour in which she had for ever shattered the pretence of mere friendship. It was a danger that should not have confronted him, and he tried to blame fate, accident, a combination of unfortunate circumstances. He thought "If Margaret were grown-up I shouldn't feel as I do. Margaret grown-up would save me. Or perhaps if Roddy had only been a little older. Then I couldn't look him in the face and go on like this . . . Or if Enid hadn't let me down.

She withdrew her support just when I needed it most : : ." But that wouldn't do. It was not all chance. He recognised the falseness of such self-defence, such feeble excuses. He had gone to meet the danger. He had sought it. If not, why had he come back early on that second day, that fatal second day when she took him on the river? Why had he changed to grey flannel costume not altogether unsuitable for boating, as would have been a top hat and London clothes? Why had he gone down the lower road and hung about, waiting till she came? His intentions had been innocent enough; but after that water promenade he must have known that, so far as he was concerned, he had begun to play with fire. Now she was alight too.

Towards the end of the month he gave many evidences of an insane recklessness. He did things that were likely to bring discovery upon them, and either ignored or did not see the risk. Nothing seemed to matter. He walked with her of an evening instead of driving with her. He kept her out late at night.

One night when at last he had let her go back to that sordid road and watched her unlocking the door and creeping into the darkness of the crumbling box of bricks that was her home, he walked by himself alone but not alone, with the loved memory of her warm and fresh in his heart, with the revived sensation of her face against his, and the whisper of her marvellous words echoing through and through him. In his dressing-room at Bolton Lodge he moved about aimlessly, taking off a garment and then allowing minutes to elapse before he took off another one. The large looking-glasses on each side of the room offered their undimmed reflections, showing a familiar commonplace picture of the master of the house going to bed. There he could see himself, standing in shirt sleeves and braces, Mr. Derwent of Tudor Green, acting chairman of the local Conservative Association, vice-president of the local club, member of the governing board of the local hospital, also a magistrate for the county of Surrey, an ordinary solid highly respected personage who has won the respect of his fellow-citizens in the usual manner by an unflinching good behaviour during a long course of years.

But he was not really this. He was different from all other human beings. When he got into bed and turned out the lights he lay entranced—a dreamer whose dreams have come true, a child who has talked to a fairy, young Endymion lying on the hill-side when the sweet goddess of the night has untwined her arms and glided homewards to the silver skies after filling him with supernal joy.

He fell asleep, and slept like a dead man.

Miss Heathfield did not go to her work at the offices next day, and in the evening he had a letter from her. He went up to his dressing-room, locked the door, read the letter, and as he read he quivered. "I am on the very edge of the precipice," he thought. A glance showed him that the mother had become troublesome. There had been "the devil of a row." Then as he read on, his strength, the traditions of his life, the power to go on struggling, the sense of duty, and everything else, went out of him. Perhaps any other man could have withstood it. It was girl-language, the language of dreams from which one wakens too soon, and devastating, soul-melting to him Charles Derwent, because he was forty-nine, because he was himself—the queer bundle of impulses and procrastinations, of fancifulness, whimsicality, practical knowledge, of large hopes and little miseries, of romantic yearnings and conventional repressions, of kindness, affection, love of pleasure and hatred of pain, of goodness, foolishness, obstinacy, and weakness, that formed the actual veritable Charles. She said, "I don't wish you to count the cost on my account. It's too late. You can't hurt me now, except by leaving me alone. I'm not ashamed, I'm not afraid. Darling, I want to see your brown hands, I want to feel them holding me . . ."

That letter swung him over. The precipice didn't matter. Nothing mattered.

IV

EARLY one day in August Enid, the family, and the servants were busily engaged packing up for the seaside. Roddy and the other two young people in fact did no packing themselves, but they supervised their willing assistants and agitated

them by almost preposterous demands for trunk space. Every minute Enid was appealed to for decisions. "Master Charlie wants to take all his railway engines and boats, ma'am . . ." "Miss Margaret has put about fifty books on the floor in her room, and says they are all to go." Moreover Wilding the butler kept asking for directions about the plate. How much silver was to be locked up and how much should travel with them? And hadn't they better take more glass than was put down in yesterday's list? "You never know what you'll find in a furnished house, ma'am." They were going to a house near Eastbourne that Charles had hired for a couple of months.

In the midst of all this agreeable bustle and excitement Mrs. Heathfield presented herself and urgently requested to see Enid. Wilding, too well aware that she was a person of little or no social weight, and betraying a snobbishness from which even the best servants are not free, left her standing in the hall after he despatched to the upper floor an announcement of her presence and urgency.

"Oh, good morning, Mrs. Heathfield. Come in here;" and Enid led her into her own sitting-room. "What is it?"

Obviously Mrs. Heathfield was in a condition of anxiety and perturbation. She admitted as much—"Worried to death." And she said in effect that her daughter Gwendolen was missing. Gwendolen went to friends yesterday afternoon for tennis, or something, and she did not return at night. Possibly she might be staying with other friends. "Girls are so selfish and thoughtless. But I thought you might know."

Enid knew nothing about it, of course, and Mrs. Heathfield then asked if Mr. Derwent was in the house, because he might advise her. Enid replied no; unfortunately Charles left yesterday. He was called away with business people to look at some docks somewhere.

"Oh, that is unfortunate," said Mrs. Heathfield. "Oh, I am worried . . . May I sit down?"

"Please do," said Enid. She was full of sympathy and friendliness. She kept on saying "But how extraordinary. And how wrong of Gwendolen. I know what girls are. As you say, thoughtless; but really—" Then she had an idea

bright with the lustre of common sense. At this hour the girl ought, anyhow, to be at her work in the London offices. She would telephone to the offices.

"No," said Mrs. Heathfield, "she isn't there—hasn't been for a week;" and hesitatingly, in an embarrassed manner, Mrs. Heathfield said that the girl had behaved queerly during the last few days. As a mother she had had occasion to reprove her, and they had rather quarrelled . . . "But p'raps I oughtn't to have said that . . . Well, thank you."

Mrs. Heathfield rose from her chair and went away, followed to the porch by Enid's sympathetic good wishes and assurances of willingness to do anything that lay in her power.

An hour or two later a note came from Mrs. Heathfield to say that it was all right. She had heard from her daughter. Her little anxiety was at an end, and she was so sorry to have disturbed Mrs. Derwent.

Enid thought no more about it.

There are exceptions to most rules. The darkest backgrounds usually show at least a few bright spots. Thus, in that road of shabby neglected houses near St. Luke's church, there was one, at the far end, that had almost a pleasing aspect. Instead of being miserable and ruinous, it displayed fresh clean paint, neatly pointed brickwork, pretty flowers in bright green window-boxes. It was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Fenn, an old couple who were very well known throughout Tudor Green and held in high esteem by its older inhabitants.

Mr. Fenn had owned the busy newsagent and stationer's shop in Palace Street, and retiring with a competence he could have afforded to live in a more eligible district, but the vicinity of the church kept him contented where he was. He was a sidesman at St. Luke's, and as well as carrying round the offertory bag he helped Mr. Latimer, the incumbent, in many other ways. The "lowness" of the service at St. Luke's exactly suited him. Throwing himself with fervour into seasonal devotions, his face used to reflect the character and meaning of the day. On Ash Wednesday and all through

Lent he marched up the aisle looking preternaturally stiff and grave. At Easter and at Christmas he came along his allotted pews with lively tread, beaming, smiling, collecting the money joyously.

But he and his wife were genuinely religious, God-fearing people in the fullest sense, and as sure of ultimate severe punishment as of heavenly rewards, paying little attention to scientific revelations and still attributing the creation of all things to a supreme personal effort exerted once and once only. For the rest, Mr. Fenn was quite well educated. He quoted poetry with satisfaction, provided that it was good moral poetry. He had no use for inflammatory literature, whether in prose or verse. Both of them were fond of the ripened beauties of a world originally made in six days. They travelled together every summer, gladly availing themselves of such modern inventions as cheap circular tickets, semi-educational tours, books of hotel coupons, and so forth. On his return Mr. Fenn would tell friends of his feelings when contemplating great mountains, etc. "How mighty are *Thy* works," he had said to himself.

This August, then, found them high up in an Alpine valley. The hotel, a wooden structure with external galleries and vast echoing saloons, was the only guest-house. No other accommodation was obtainable. Any staying visitors to the valley must be at the hotel.

Honest white-haired Mr. and Mrs. Fenn revelled quietly in the glorious landscape. Between tea and dinner they nearly always walked up their favourite path and sat on their favourite bench. Far below them lay the lake, seen with sparkles and flashes through the pine trees, and on the far side rose the huge hills, their barren summits all aglow in the golden sunlight, while behind these ramparts, splendid and serene, one saw inaccessible grandeurs clad in eternal snow. Higher up the path a mass of tumbled rocks, brown, orange, black, amidst moss and stunted shrubs, impeded progress. People came down through the rocks slowly and carefully, helping one another or uttering warnings as they led the way—Germans, Swiss, English, all alike redly sunburnt, they passed the Fenns on their bench at short intervals of time.

In the light pure air one could hear their voices long before they appeared.

"Very refreshing," said Mr. Fenn, as he bared his white head in the gentle air. "Soothing to the senses, elevating to the mind;" and he quoted poetry with relish. "Where every prospect pleases and only man is vile."

"Oh, but he isn't vile," said Mrs. Fenn cheerfully. "Man is at his best up here."

"Yes, we can surely throw off dull care in such scenes as these—far from the madding crowd—the world forgetting by the world forgot."

They sat listening to voices at a distance, faint, musical, mingling with the notes of cowbells that tinkled and moved in the pinewood above the path.

Presently two more people—a man and a girl—were coming down through the rocks. The man had the girl's jacket over his shoulder and her hat in his hand. They seemed to dance among the rocks. They jumped from the smooth ledges and ran along the sloped descent, laughing, more like two happy romping children in a garden than adult travellers in foreign parts.

They were that Heathfield girl, Gwen, daughter of a neighbour of the Fenns, and Mr. Derwent of Bolton Lodge.

Mr. and Mrs. Fenn recognised them at once and would have called out to one of them, but then they were arrested by the queer fact that they themselves received no word of greeting, no sign of recognition. This summer they had twice seen Mr. Derwent in their road. They had also seen his big motor-car deposit Gwendolen at her door. They had seen and wondered. Now they wondered more.

"I do not quite like it," said Mr. Fenn, looking grave.

"No more do I," said his wife. "Mrs. Heathfield said she had a holiday engagement at that school in Belgium. Then why is she here in Switzerland?"

They decided to think no harm and make no further conjectures. If Mr. Derwent had come to the hotel, doubtless his family would be there also.

But that evening those two ate alone at a table in a corner of the great dining-room. They went out after dinner. The

hotel was very full. If they wished to avoid a close encounter with fellow guests it was easy for them to do so. Next morning they were gone.

As a matter of duty Mr. Fenn made inquiries at the place he called the booro and was shown an entry in a book—"Mr. and Mrs. Derwent for Mürren, one night, room Nr. 231." Room without an s. Room in the singular.

He returned to Mrs. Fenn in the lounge, wearing his Good Friday face.

"This," he said, "is something that we had better not mention in Tudor Green."

"I quite agree," said Mrs. Fenn. "But of course I shall speak to her mother."

"Yes, and I shall discuss it with Mr. Latimer. Mr. Latimer must necessarily be informed. The son of his oldest friend!"

Enid and the family were very comfortable at the seaside place, and the notion had been that Charles would join them fairly soon; but he did not appear.

However, in the first week of September he came tearing back to Tudor Green.

Night had fallen when he arrived there, and his agitation was very great as the cab brought him round the corner of Acacia Road and into sight of his mother's house. There were lights in the windows. He had dreaded that it might be dark and lampless, with blinds drawn. His mother had telegraphed to him, through the channel of the London office, asking him to come to her at once. He had come as fast as trains and boat would allow him; but the telegram was already three days old when it reached his hands.

The urgency of the message made it impossible to doubt that she was dangerously ill, and all through the long journey he had been tortured by remorse and fear. She was dying perhaps, longing for him, looking for him in her pain, yet struggling to keep alive at least till he came to close her eyes. She might already be dead. The distress that lay in all his thoughts of her increased from hour to hour. She was so old—nearly seventy-five—so frail now. He had seen it, while refusing to see it—the lessened frame, the bent shoulders, the

loss of elasticity. Instead of the strong erect bearing that she had preserved so long, she now had the feeble, almost tottering gait of age. No power of resistance was left in her. It did not need a malignant disease to kill her. Any slight ailment would be sufficient to cause a fatal exhaustion. As the flame of a candle goes out, a puff of cold wind might blow her away.

Peckham, her faithful servant, was in the hall—herself old, but still vigorous. “Oh, I’m glad you’ve come, sir . . .” And she pointed to the drawing-room door. “In there.”

“What, is she downstairs?”

“Yes,” said Peckham, looking up at his face anxiously. “Don’t go against her, sir. Don’t let her work herself up. I’ve been afraid these last few days. Dr. McGrigor says we’ve got to be careful, or she might have a heart attack.”

Charles opened the door, went into the room, and saw her white and bowed, sitting beside a fireless hearth. The room seemed cold and dimly lighted.

“Mother!”

She rose from her chair and looked at him, with an effort standing rigid and straight. She did not kiss him or even offer her hand, and either some gesture that she made or the strangeness and unexpectedness of her manner stopped his advance towards her. He stood silent, looking at her.

“Now, Charles,” she said at last, “I will try to be calm. They tell me I must be calm. So perhaps you will listen to me quietly. Remember, I am your mother.”

“Am I likely to forget it?”

“I don’t know. This is the end of the world to me. Do you know what my first thought was when Mr. Latimer came and told me about it . . . Why have I lived so long? Why could not I have died without knowing this—but still thinking of my boy as I used to do?”

Then she began to reproach him. She was not ill. It was not her state of health but his disgrace that had made her summon him.

The interview was most terrible for him.

She said that she had at once gone to see Mrs. Heathfield. “A foolish worthless woman—not fit to have the name of

mother. But that is no excuse to you. All the blame is yours. As to her daughter—well, I have heard enough about the new generation, and I wouldn't believe. Now I would believe anything. But again, that's no excuse to you. You took a hitherto unsullied girl and destroyed her for your pleasure—for your profligate wicked pleasure."

"Mother!"

"I can't help it. I am bound to say it. It was not the act of a gentleman, Charles; it was not the act of a Christian—but it has been the act of my son."

A cough stopped her for a few moments, and still standing she held the back of her chair for support. She cleared her throat once or twice, and then spoke with far greater energy than before. Her voice seemed incredibly strong and firm.

"Well, now I will say little more—except as to what must be done. It must finish, of course. You must separate from her. It must be over and done with at once and for ever."

"Mother, you're asking me more than you know."

"I am asking you nothing," said Mrs. Derwent loudly and sternly. "I am telling you what you will do. It is not a request but an order—an order that you will disobey at your peril." Then her voice quavered. "Charles, this is not an idle phrase. I feel its truth. Unless you wish to send me in sorrow to my grave you will do all that I say."

The mixture of strength and weakness was pathetic to see. Suddenly she sat down, breathing fast, gasping, holding a hand to her shrunken chest. He went to her.

"No," she said, "give me a minute, and I'll be all right."

They both remained silent. Then Mrs. Derwent asked a question.

"Where is she?"

"I left her at Basle. She is in Paris by now."

"There she can stay—and you will never see her again."

"No, I'm afraid——"

"Her mother can join her. They are going to leave this place. I have arranged everything."

Then she spoke of making a provision for the girl. "It

must be sufficient—handsomely sufficient.” Fortunately there could be no difficulty in that direction. Immediately after her visit to Mrs. Heathfield she had put the whole business in the hands of their family solicitors. Mr. Ansell had seen Mrs. Heathfield several times. The terms had been settled. Mrs. Heathfield had expressed herself as satisfied.

Saying this she made a gesture as if finally dismissing that part of the subject.

“As to yourself, Charles. Well, you must live it down. That is what lies before you—to live it down.”

Then she spoke of Enid.

“The thing of paramount importance is to prevent her from hearing a word about it. At all costs. I think it would literally break her heart. I doubt if Enid would ever get over it;” and once again she reproached him. “When you gave way to your passions and became blind to all sense of decency, did you think of your wife—one of the best and most devoted wives that ever lived—your poor faithful affectionate Enid? Oh, Charles, with such a wife, how *could* you?”

And she continued to talk of Enid.

After a time he sat beside her, drew one of her hands in his, and held it. It was an old, old woman’s hand, weak and quivering as a wounded bird. He held it lightly and reverently, and talked to her in a quiet gentle voice.

“I have no defence, mother. Much that you have said to me I said again and again to myself—before it happened. I thought of Enid. I thought of you. But people have their breaking point. I reached mine. Of course I realise now the great injury I have done to Gwendolen. She gave me everything, and I suppose I knew really that I had nothing to give her in exchange—nothing permanent. But I was very fond of her. Gwendolen and I were in love.”

“Don’t use that word.”

“There is no other. I loved her very deeply. I do still . . . Mother dear, don’t, please, say any more. I am going to do what you advise. I don’t see what else I can do. But I am not going to do it coldly or brutally. I promised to go back to her. I shall keep my promise.”

Three weeks later Charles returned again to Tudor Green. It was over now. He had parted with her, and it was as though he had parted with life itself. Yet so strange is the human mind that in the last days before the parting, and even in the parting itself, he had felt a desire for freedom—although wrung with grief and remorse he had wanted the end to come. It was afterwards—not the first day, or the second, or even the third day—that the real pain began.

Enid and the family came back full of health, exuberant in their affection. Roddy went away to his crammer's; Charlie to his school. Margaret resumed her studies with governesses at home. The ordinary routine of work, leisure, sleep, was once more established. On Sundays, weather permitting, Charles took the air, walking about the place alone or with Gregory Lake. But whether alone or in company, whether walking or sitting down, he felt crippled, broken, a man with shame like an iron crown round the top of his head and despair like a vulture tearing at his bleeding heart.

He was aware that he had occasioned a grievous scandal, and that the best people in Tudor Green were not getting over it quickly. His own consciousness of their feeling towards him was as rapid as accurate. He recognised without gratitude the overdone cordiality of those who took a tolerant view. With them by-gones were to be by-gones. At the board of the hospital governors he saw members already assembled give a little start as he entered the room. They had not expected that he would attend the meeting. His presence made them uncomfortable. In the High Street a certain Mrs. Whitford with two fattish pudding-faced daughters drew those young ladies across the roadway at the risk of getting them run over, so as to avoid any greeting or exchange of civilities. "That's right. Take them out of danger," he said to himself bitterly. "I am the ravening wild beast seeking whom he may devour."

He spoke about it to Gregory. "Damn all these people. How many, do you suppose, know of my mucker?" Between themselves they spoke of it so. Charles had gone a mucker.

"Well, I gather it is rather widespread," said Gregory.

"But Enid has heard nothing?"

"Not a whisper."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive," said Greg, becoming very solemn. "Besides, if she knew, she'd let you know;" and he added, in his gravest manner, but with something of fatuity in the words, "Ah, Mrs. Charles would be bound to speak to you about it. One must be prepared for her feeling strongly, don't you know."

She was in fact almost the last person of any local consequence to hear the story. Somebody told her the facts of it as what was being said all over the place.

She went straight home and found Charles, just back from London, alone in the library. Her face was flushed; she was very angry, but burning only with a noble sort of indignation.

"I have had a quarrel with Mrs. Grey. I'll never speak to her again. But it's this. People are saying disgusting things about you and Mrs. Heathfield's daughter. What are we to do? Can't they be prevented? We simply *must* stop it."

"I'm afraid we can't," he said, with his eyes on her face. "I don't know how much or how little they have told you. But about Gwendolen and me—well, it's true."

"Are you trying to be funny?" she said harshly, and the blood began to ebb from her red cheeks. "You're joking. Though how you can think— Oh, for God's sake don't look at me like that. Say something." Then he saw her raise her hands to her head, with the piteous gesture of a defenceless child who has been struck and who fears another blow. "N-n-no," she muttered stammeringly, as her arms fell. "Y-y-you needn't say anything else;" and she went away.

He followed her after a minute or so. She had gone up to her bedroom and locked herself in. She was weeping noisily, sobbing, moaning, gasping, choking. The noise of it was dreadful, reaching down the corridor. Anyone downstairs could hear it—this storm of elemental sorrow, this limitless abandonment to a grief too cruel for thought, too big for articulate speech. As certainly as if he could see

through the door he knew that she was lying face downwards on her bed, that her hands gripped and clung to the bed coverings, that her whole body quivered and writhed.

She did not answer him when he called to her, either then or at any later hour. She opened the door to no one. Silence descended on the locked room. Night came and darkness filled it. He knew that she was motionless now. She lay there, alone in the darkness, a warm-hearted loving creature wounded almost to death by the trusted, loved companion who had sworn to cherish and protect her.

V

ANOTHER day had passed.

To-night there were not many of its faithful congregation assembling at the church of S. Barnabas for vespers, and of these nearly all seemed to be women. The bell was ringing a minute ago and now one could not hear it. When Enid came in, the church had been almost dark, with only some lamps at the door and those lighted candles on the altar, above which there loomed pale and gigantic the cross and the stabbed figure, that symbol of supreme torment and sacrifice. Then in a moment the silver and ivory at the base of the crucifix flashed and whitened, the gold and rich colours of the altar cloth glowed warmly. More lamps. They were turning on the electricity; they were lighting up as at an old-fashioned theatre when the musicians begin to troop into the orchestra. Still more lights. The organ was playing. Boys and two men in white surplices. Everybody stood up.

Enid remained kneeling, her face hidden in her hands. She did not notice that the service had begun. She had come here not for prayer but for an hour's rest, for an hour during which no one would speak to her. And she wanted to think too. But her thoughts every minute became vague and confused. They had been like that all day, in a muddle, working in circles just beyond her control, ceasing to work and starting again, with only one big solid thought running behind and through them all the time, the thought that was no longer a thought, but a resolution, a purpose. Yet even

that, tremendous as it was, would lose form, convincingness, even significance sometimes. She mislaid it. Or it changed its real name and called itself failure. Yes, the recognition of failure and the refusal to submit.

As the other people sank to their knees it came back to her, strong, clear, overwhelmingly big, making her shiver spasmodically. She had made no sound with her lips. Yet the words of it had been said plainly in her mind. She seemed to hear them echoing.

"By this time to-morrow I may be dead . . . I can't go on with it. I'm too tired."

Then all grew vague again, as if she were falling into those circles of perplexities and intricacies that had tormented her towards the end of her sleepless night, when her head began to ache and throb so cruelly. She might really have been dead for many hours of the night, but for the active torture of her failure, the awakening sting of her disgrace.

"Yes," she thought, "all my life—all my life. Oh, why are people so unkind to me? Always. Yet God—if there is a God—and that too seems all muddled and confused . . . Yes, once I believed—I seemed to *know*—but it has gone from me. Everything goes from me. Well, let life go too. God ought to understand. Oh, why am I bothering about God like this? What is it I'm trying to think of? This place—the house of God—God's house. Yes, that's what I am saying to myself. Why should I be hated and disgraced? God knows I have never wanted to hurt a living creature. I have wanted them to be happy. God knows I have tried to do right—all my life . . .

"That old chemist—what's his name—Mr. Barrett—his shop will be open. I'll buy some poison there . . . No, he died. It's his son—Edward Barrett, junior. On the top of their bills—established—I don't remember . . . He won't let me buy what I need . . . Not for old lang syne. His father seemed to like me . . . No, I'll drown myself. I'll throw myself into the river. To-morrow as soon as it's dark I'll walk along the tow-path by the meadows nearly to the ferry. It will look like an accident . . . Mrs. Derwent must have slipped and fallen. The nights are so dark."

It was the third time that she had courted and played with the idea of suicide as a means of release from pain. Once she had made an attempt to die, asking death to take her, and then at the first terrific clutch of the eternal enemy of mankind, she had struggled and fought for escape. Afterwards, when the horror of it had been averted, she had continued to quail. Her attempt had seemed to be folly, madness, the outcome of a despair that had no sufficient cause. Now, although the reason for holding life as valueless seemed real and true, that recurrent shiver of cold fear implied a physical recoil which must again defeat the mental plan and refuse to obey the mental command. Deeper than thought there must throughout her misery and hopelessness have been an instinctive certainty that the end of things was not near but immensely far away.

"Yet if I don't do it? . . . How can I go on? I can't go on. I'm too tired."

Her children would be able to live without her. Charles will be good to them. It is only to their mother that he is cruel.

The fabric of her life had crumbled, its foundations had collapsed. She had said that he was the solid rock beneath her feet. Oh, how cruel, how bitterly cruel of him. Charles, the man she respected as better and higher than other men, holding him aloft in her thoughts, believing him clean and good through and through—then for him to do what the commonest beasts of husbands do when their wives grow older and lose the early charm—throw them over—desert them; and to do it in such an atrocious fashion, seduce a typist—one of the typists in his office—the friend of his children, a girl that he had seen grow up and that now was placed under his care by her mother.

But all that did not matter really. If he was false to her, Enid, it was of no consequence who the accomplice might be. One girl or another. It was the injury to her that mattered, the slight, the rejection. It was the deep, the intolerable outrage to her pride, her love, her personal dignity and self-respect. She had been proud, as well-loved women should be, and he had made her feel an abject failure. She had

thought herself all the world to him, and he had shown her she was nothing.

She stood up and then sat down. The priest had begun to read a lesson from the New Testament.

That dreadful muddled feeling was passing away. She could think logically now, following each new thought step by step until it led somewhere, instead of returning on itself.

She thought "If we are to be betrayed by those we love let it be soon. The longer we trust people and believe in them, the more devastating is the harm we suffer when they turn traitor to us. Because then, even if we tear the love out of our hearts, we cannot cut ourselves free from the thralldom of habit and resume an independence, the power to stand alone, that we renounced long ago."

He had bound her to him so irrevocably. She had watched his outgoing with regret, and welcomed his incoming with pleasure, waiting and listening for him as an affectionate dog listens for the master's footstep. The sound of his voice at a little distance, recognised by her among all other voices, had cheered her and enlivened her hundreds of times. If she shut her eyes when he was far away, she could see him as plainly as if he stood before her—every hair on his forehead, the dark hairs and the grey hairs, the movement of the muscles by his mouth, the wrinkling round the eyes as he smiled. Custom, the shared emotions, differences of opinion that left mutual sentiments untouched, even the fierce quarrels, the tender reconciliations, even the naggings, squabbings, and sharp answers of a later date, the talk, grave words and light words, but each word another thread of union spun out on the loom of the unceasing days—all had combined to make her his prisoner as well as his wife. It is a cruelly, tyrannously close imprisonment, a fettering and incarcerating of the very soul, this bond of marriage when it lasts long.

Suppose he had wronged her in the same manner before she had been forced to love him. Would it have mattered very much? Would it have mattered at all? She did not know. She could not put herself back into those earlier years. But she knew that faithlessness then would have been

as easy on her side as on his. At that time almost every man she met seemed to admire her. If she had wanted lovers—lovers to choose from—she could have found them in an hour. But never had she entertained a single disloyal fancy. Never had she thought "I wish he were handsome, like So-and-so; or brilliantly clever and fascinating, like the hero of a novel; or magnetic, sense-disturbing, irresistible, like the chief personage in a play." Always he had been her man, the one man that she cared for or thought about—just as at the beginning she had been his woman, the only woman he wanted for love and joy.

She stood up again. The organ was playing, the choir boys were singing. "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace . . ."

Depart in peace. Oh, not for her that smooth gliding departure of the meek submissive spirit . . . The voices of those boys, shrilly sweet, loud but harmonious, only stirred her pain, only gave thrills of anguish to what had been a dulling ache.

But she knew now that her life was safe at her own hands. It would go on—it would go on. The obliteration of self by death is the boon that is vouchsafed to so few. It is obliteration of self in life that is demanded of so many. Even the unskilled and unwanted worker must continue his work till the appointed hour of respite. Troops on a pitiless march to the zone of danger, sheep being driven along a dusty road to the slaughter-house, men and women hacking their way through the dark entangled forest of the years and each one doomed to hew out a path that none has trod before—it would be too kind, too easy to let them off the bitter toil of the long journey that has death at the end of it. They must struggle on, unless their hearts burst, and wait for the stab of the bullet, for the butcher's knife, for the hiccough and the dropped jaw.

Oh, those singing boys! Their voices pierced, searched, and probed again. They had made her think now of her own boy. Could Roddy do without her? Their secrets, the things about him that she cannot tell— "No one has ever really valued me or understood me, except Roddy. I could

not let him know why I am unhappy, but if he found out, he would understand all my thoughts, he would try to bring me comfort." And as if in a vision Roddy stood before her, framed with an open doorway, his face white and blank, just as it used to be, frightening her because it looked like a lamp when the flame goes out—or a mask behind which there is no intelligence, no mind. "I must never be left alone." He had actually said those words to her . . . Roddy!

She followed the service now, to the extent of doing what the others did. They had all been standing. Now they knelt and she knelt with them.

"O Lord show thy mercy upon us," said the priest, and automatically she murmured the response.

"And grant us thy salvation."

"O Lord save the King."

"And mercifully hear us," whispered Enid, "when we call upon thee."

"Endue thy Ministers with righteousness."

"And make thy chosen people joyful . . ."

Then for a little while she ceased to think. Her tired brain was resting.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore."

The service was over. She waited until nearly everybody had gone out. The church was growing dark again. They had turned off the electricity, and a man in a black cassock began to extinguish the candles on the altar, bowing as he did so. The crucifix grew pale and large, seeming to loom bigger and bigger as the light of each candle died. Enid looked at it without awe, without reverence. All that age-old story had become too full of mysticism, too remote from the vital tragedies of the hour. She bowed her head, in politeness, as to somebody of temporal importance at a distance—King Edward passing in a carriage, Queen Alexandra leaving a bazaar.

It was always thus with her at times of crisis. The religious faith that ordinarily seemed so strong, so absorbing as to be

a part of herself, weakened, wavered, disappeared. At this moment it had gone as if never to return.

More days passed, and the estrangement between her and her husband could not but be obvious to all the household. Margaret was unhappy. Considered old enough nowadays to join them at late dinner two or three times a week, she sat at the table silent, watchful, troubled in mind. Gregory Lake dined with them nearly every night. He kept up some sort of conversation and he was useful as a medium of communication. For Enid never addressed Charles directly.

One evening, when Margaret had gone to bed and Charles had purposely left them alone together, Gregory spoke to her about her attitude.

"Aren't you being a little too hard on him?"

"No. Do you think he has dealt very softly with me?"

Gregory said certainly not. Rather the contrary. No one could condone Charles's conduct. Charles himself did not condone it. But was not Enid's stony ice-cold punishment being a shade overdone? Anyhow, Charles was taking it to heart frightfully.

"So, my dear Mrs. Charles, I have ventured. He seemed to wish me . . . Otherwise I wouldn't. I'm so sorry for you . . . And what I keep thinking is that in time, you know. Very remarkable—time! Charles made me see the point of *that* long ago. And I put it to you, dear Mrs. Charles, I do hope you don't feel quite so strongly as you did a week ago."

"I feel more strongly—or just the same. I shall always feel what I feel now."

"Honestly I think it's a pity. I would suggest, don't you know——"

She let him go on talking. The sound of his kind voice was pleasant to her weary ears. She knew, she could not help knowing, that he was intensely sorry for her. His chivalrous sympathy, his genuine distress at seeing her unhappiness, had been very evident day after day. She looked at him, and scarcely listened to what he said. There was some faint comfort in the sight of him, standing there so solid and big, with

his blue eyes and handsome friendly face. In the ruin of existence he seemed to represent all that had remained quite unchanged—the tower that stands erect and firm, no matter how great the storm, the good strong tower that the winds cannot shake, that the wild fierce waves will never undermine and bring down.

He regretfully told Charles the unsatisfactory results of his embassy.

“So there it is, old chap. It’s no good saying it isn’t. Mrs. Charles is, ah, still rather badly upset;” and he added, with a blink or two, “The impression made was painful to me. I should not like to try it again.”

Their life continued. She refused to see old Mrs. Derwent, but wrote to her as affectionately as ever. She stayed much in the house, dreading to meet her friends if she went out. Those who perhaps had envied her were gratified by her downfall; and, torturing herself with imaginations, she thought of what all Tudor Green had said about her and what they were probably still saying.

“Pride will have a fall. She gave herself such airs—quite the reigning beauty. I never liked her, but I *pity* her. It is dreadful to have a libertine for a husband. I know a woman—Mrs. Harcourt Jones—who could never keep a decent-looking maid-servant . . . Still waters run deep. He has been found out, but no doubt he has often done it before . . . But she has not left him. His mother told Mrs. Burroughes that there has never been any question of her leaving him. She has swallowed the pill—a nasty one to swallow.”

On his return from London one afternoon Charles came into her sitting-room and spoke abruptly yet deprecatingly.

“Enid, how long is this to go on? Can’t you forgive me?”

“No,” she replied sadly. “Supposing that I said it—‘I forgive you’—it would mean nothing.”

And then for the first time she spoke to him openly, looking at him, letting him see that her grief was immensely greater than her indignation and resentment. She said touch-

ing things, things that penetrated deep. "Oh, can't you understand what you have done to me? I thought I was sure of your love—that I should always be sure. All my happiness depended on it. It was never out of my mind for a moment—not for a single moment. I took the greatest care of myself—for your sake. 'Shall I not take care of all that I think, yea, even of wretched meat and drink, if I be dear—if I be dear.' And I felt such pride in wearing well—not losing my looks—not getting fat and ugly—a woman you'd feel ashamed to be seen with. Then when you insisted on having my portrait painted! Oh, Charles, you'd never know—no words—nothing could make you know what exquisite pleasure it gave me. Not because I was vain and stupid about it, but because it seemed to show that your love was quite unchanged... And all the time you were sick and tired of me, longing for someone else—anyone younger, prettier—anyone that wasn't *me*."

"No," he said quietly, "that isn't so. I am as fond of you as I ever was—more, and in a better, higher way. You may refuse to believe it, but it's true. This other thing never touched my love for you really."

"No, because it had ceased."

"It hadn't. But it was different—entirely different. If I explained you couldn't possibly follow the explanation. But there were reasons—psychological reasons."

"Oh, we can all of us give grand names to our bad actions."

"Enid, be kind, be generous, be like yourself. At least I am not a liar. Of course I cared for Gwendolen—cared for her so horribly much that the memory of her is taking the last drop of life out of me. That's why I need your help. You mustn't go on withholding it. Listen. Two days ago I very nearly threw in my hand and chucked the game. I was on the point of blowing my brains out and finishing everything."

"Charles—no?"

"Yes."

She was looking at him with scared eyes. He had frightened her and made her tremble. He too had thought of sui-

cide. And he might have done it. He was not like her, who would never do it.

"It was wicked and wrong of you," she began. "The children. Your mother would——"

He stopped her, and his manner had altered. He spoke authoritatively, if not angrily.

"I can't stand any more of it. Do you see? I am not going to be treated as a guilty wretch who deserves no consideration or regard. I told my mother I reached my breaking point. Well, I warn you that I am at breaking point again. If it continues—your way of treating me—I shall leave you. I shall go right away."

"To Gwendolen, I suppose?"

"No. You know very well that I shan't. I shall be driven from my home because my wife has made it impossible for me to remain there."

"You speak as if I were the guilty party—not you."

"I speak as a man who has got to the end of his tether. I have tried—and once I failed. I grant I have made you suffer. But haven't I suffered too?"

"What is it you want me to do?" she said slowly.

"To wipe it out—forget it."

"I can't forget it—I shall never forget it."

"Then cease to think about it. Behave as if it hadn't happened."

"But I *am* doing so. I complain to nobody. I keep up appearances."

"That isn't enough." Then he told her explicitly that he did not ask for a renewal of marital relations, but he wanted and must have the close friendship, the unclouded companionship that had subsisted between them till this summer.

"Enid, my dear, can't you see—don't you feel that I am down and out? I am ill. I don't sleep. I am miserably in need of help. . . There, that's all I have to say."

He did not appear at dinner, and a servant told her that he was spending the night in London and might not be back for a day or two.

Some time after dinner Mr. Gregory Lake arrived and was ushered into her room, where she had been sitting alone

and very unhappy. She had cried, as her swollen eyelids and the reddened orbits of her eyes would have told the visitor, even if the sadness of her whole face and the limp and weary poise of her body when he entered the room had not already conveyed the information. These signs of her continued distress affected him most painfully. He endeavoured to look and speak cheerily, but did not succeed well. He said that it was a cold night, and that he felt glad she had a good fire.

They stood before it, she in a characteristic attitude of hers, one hand pressing on the chimney shelf, the other hand held behind her back; he upright and rather stiff, close to her.

"Well," he said, still struggling to be cheerful, "I hear that you had a long quiet talk with him to-day, and on the whole—as I gather—things are distinctly on the mend. That is, taking a better turn."

She shook her head negatively.

"No? Charles hoped that you were relenting. He asked—well, would have it—that I should drop in, and as it were *clinch* it."

"He had no right to trouble you."

"Trouble! Not a bit. But reluctance. Delicacy. Not liking to venture for the second time. No, I assure you, Mrs. Charles—and I hope and trust you don't mind."

"No, I don't mind. I don't mind anything you say, because you have always been so good to me—from the very first. A true friend." Saying this she brought out the hand that had been hidden, offering it to him. He clasped it, gave it a slight pressure, and would have released it; but she held his hand, seeming to cling to it as a child clings to any human being within reach during its time of sorrow. Presently, as she went on talking and became moved, he felt her fingers grip and relax spasmodically. These grippings, like punctuations of her forlorn discourse, filled him with a responsive distress.

"Yes, I know—it would be horrid and ungrateful if I didn't know—how you have sympathised. But even you, kind as you are, don't really understand."

"I do—I do. Dear Mrs. Charles, I do."

"He asked me to forget. Forget! How *can* I? He doesn't forget, himself. Even while he was saying it he showed that she—you know—his girl—oh, how I hate her name—that she was still always in his thoughts... Then when I think, as I do night and day, that he will be the father of her child."

"She is not going to have a child," said Gregory Lake, almost spluttering in his earnestness. "No, I give you my word of honour. Nothing of that sort is anticipated by anybody."

"It doesn't make much difference. He might have been."

"Ah, yes. To that I must agree. I will not deny."

She had taken away her hand, and it joined the other hand on the chimney-piece. She leaned her forehead against them and began to cry again, quietly, despairingly. The tears ran down her face, they sounded in her voice, they affected Gregory Lake unbearably.

"Don't—Mrs. Charles, I beg. Don't."

"I have always thought that I wasn't intended to be a very happy woman. Fate has never really been kind to me. It has seemed to give me things; but it has taken them away—the things it gave and a little more with it... Every one who likes me at first turns against me—except Roddy. Margaret did. And she will again. I know it. Those people at the Hospital Committee. They're all tired of me. Oh, why can't I make anyone go on liking me?" And she sobbed. "What is there about me that repels—that wears out love—that throws it back at me—forcing me always back, back to myself and the old lonely disgraced thoughts?"

But Gregory Lake could not bear it any longer. Two tears came into his own eyes, and he seemed choking. His protests had grown incoherent, almost inarticulate. He had been saying again and again "Mrs. Charles—don't—I beg. Never belittle yourself." Now for a few moments he spoke with explosive energy. "I have always worshipped the ground you tread on—only loyalty prevented—proper feeling... Had to play the game—or I would have allowed you to see

it. Perhaps you did—but never by word of mouth.” Then he told her that he had been in love with her and quite resolved to propose to her when Harold Wood came upon the scene and caused him to lose his chance if he ever had one. He had been too slow. He was only waiting to propose later when Charles stepped in, and he had to stand aside. But he had gone on loving her, adoring her. “More—more.” And he became again inarticulate. “Oh, yes—” Then he took her in his arms, kissed her, choked over her.

She let him do it. This declaration of unchanging fidelity warmed her poor cold heart, gave her a sense of comfort, if not of consolation. She was like a child lost, in darkness, suddenly feeling a human touch, hearing a friendly voice, seeing the lamp-lit windows that mean shelter, peace.

But presently she used gentle force and pushed him away from her.

“Gregory, we mustn’t. It’s dreadful. Oh, we mustn’t.”

“Dry your dear eyes,” he said. “Where’s your handkerchief? Mine’s too big. Not pretty enough, is it? There then.” He had pulled out lengths of white silk from his breast pocket, and he enveloped her face, tenderly wiping it. “Dear sweet thing. Adored creature. Dearest, dearest beautiful woman;” and his arms were round her again.

He was giving her the one thing she needed, the assurance that she was still lovable and desirable in men’s eyes. It was balm to her wounded heart, a gentle anæsthetic to her tired brain, numbing the cruel anguish, soothing her, comforting her. She submitted to his embrace, she yielded herself sobbing to his kisses.

PART IV
THE NEW GENERATION

I

BOLTON LODGE had entered into a new era of peace and comfort. The wheels of life ran smoothly, and, as there was no friction in any part of the complicated machine, one felt that never again would accidents jolt it and shake it off its balance. This happy state of affairs took about ten months to establish, beginning with the intimation of Enid's forgiveness, a forgiveness more complete than Charles had dared hope for. Now it continued year after year.

The initial and its sustaining cause was the increased intimacy with Mr. Gregory Lake. Always a close friend of Charles, he had become admittedly the close friend of Enid and the whole family. He fetched and carried, he planned and devised, he saved trouble, he avoided annoyance. Charles relied on him more and more; the help he gave to Enid, as amanuensis, accountant, deputy caterer, surpassed belief; he was also extraordinarily useful to the young people. They must have been conscious if they ever thought of it, that Mr. Lake had brought a wonderfully soothing influence into the house; that he not only kept them in good humour, but that, as it were, he held things together for all of them. He did not actually live with them; but he was always there or near at hand, available, and indeed he occasionally stayed under their roof for a few weeks at a time—for instance, while his flat was being redecorated, and during the winter of the floods when Enid and Charles both decided that the proximity of the turgid swollen river might be deleterious to his health.

The children were very fond of him and freely made fun of him. Their impertinences amused Charles; but Enid stopped Margaret and Charlie when they attempted mimicry of the ever welcome guest. She could not prevent them from drawing him out and asking him idiotic questions; and she

did not really mind this, because they were so happy all together. Mr. Lake himself did not mind a bit. His amiability was inexhaustible.

He sat there, at the family board, handsome, courteous, the kindest man that ever lived, offering himself as a large family target for every shaft of juvenile wit. Margaret and Charlie asked if he had read books that did not exist—*Upsidedown*, by Somers Ault, *Two Ways of Killing a Dog*, by Pat O'Butter, and so on.

"No, Margaret, if it comes to literature you defeat me—you have me beat at once. Are they good books—books you admire?"

Charlie assailed him with ridiculous catches and sells, springing them at him with a sort of artless eagerness that seemed quite genuine. "Oh, Mr. Lake, did you know that you can't hang a man with a wooden leg?" And Gregory, beaming, employed almost the exact phraseology of those two historic butts, the conductor of a negro orchestra and the ring-master of the circus, when asked riddles by the corner man and the clown. "Let me get it right, young sir. You ask me, Charlie, if I knew that you cannot hang a man with a wooden leg. No, frankly, I did not know. But I had never thought about it. Is it really a fact?"

"Absolutely," said Charlie. "You have to use a rope."

Then when Mr. Lake had seen the point he joined cordially in the youthful laughter. "Oh, very good. You had me there. One up against me."

But he could come back at them. He too was something of a leg-puller on occasion. He would be all square with Charlie at the turn.

Basking in a domestic sunshine that he had not hitherto known, Gregory Lake had come out of himself surprisingly. It was really like the tardy eclosion of a large flower. He opened petal after petal until he reached full bloom. Intellectually he appeared to be far stronger; his general conversation when compared with what it used to be was fluent and easy; he adapted himself with a readiness that is rare at his age to innovations and new ideas. But in fact, although his sleek, well-brushed hair continued to whiten, he looked

very much younger than he had done five years ago. The kindest and perhaps the laziest of men, but no fool, after idling through so many decades, he had at last found his life task—to look after the Derwents.

It was he, old bachelor as he was, who recognised that Margaret was in for a second attack of measles while everybody else thought she had merely a common head cold. And at the seaside, when Charlie out on his motor-cycle did not return, it was Gregory who found him lying at the bottom of a steep hill miles away, carried him straight to the hospital of the county town, and by the good surgical treatment thus promptly obtained probably saved the boy from permanent disfigurement. Charlie had spoken of its being a good sort of hill to test his brakes, and wise faithful Gregory had remembered.

Also, although ignorant of business, he mysteriously succeeded in putting Charles Derwent on the track of serious frauds suffered by the Company at the hands of a foreign agent. The discovery gave back to Charles the energetic work that once was usual. He dashed out to the Mediterranean, up to the Baltic, and home again after making investigations at half a dozen ports in which they had interests. Then he sat down at the London offices and laboured in his old way until he had reorganised their whole system of foreign agencies and so rendered fraud impossible.

This strenuous occupation, far from exhausting him, had a beneficial effect both on his health and spirits. He himself recognised that he had become normal once more. The phase of dreams, regrets, and foolish yearnings, had dropped far behind him, and instinct as well as reason told him that there would be no recurrence. He saw his fiftieth and two more birthdays go by without feeling a pang.

He was helped, but in an entirely different manner, by a queer prolonged illness and slow convalescence of Roddy. There was never any danger; nevertheless both parents felt anxious and were both unremitting in their care of the son that each loved so tenderly. The long hours spent in his boy's company perhaps completed Charles's mental cure. There was something fine, appealing, thought-lifting about Roddy;

and yet still something a little pathetic too. Tall, with his dark hair tumbled about his high forehead, and those marvellous searching eyes, he stood at the window of the room that he had occupied since childhood, and looking out at the old friendly garden seemed to see strange landscapes thousands of miles away. That was Charles's fancy, as he watched him. When Doctor Laurie pronounced him to be fit and well, Charles arranged that instead of going back to Mr. Livingstone, the tutor, he should stay at home for a term. The tutor said that the break in his studies would make little difference. Possibly "lying fallow" might bring Roddy on.

His brother and sister always overbore him in argument. He got excited, stammered. "Take your time," said Enid gently. Often he said queer enthusiastic things about socialism and individual ownership that if said by the other two would have made their father angry. But Charles never uttered an irritable or hasty word to Roddy. And it was noticeable how Gregory Lake plunged to his rescue when Charlie baited him.

"No, no. Fair play, Charlie. You have had your say... I entirely agree with Roddy. If I caught your meaning, Roddy—correct me if I am wrong—you would wish to see the nation's wealth more evenly distributed—so that nobody could be very rich and nobody very poor."

"Yes," said Roddy, "that was it. At least I think so. I can't go on if they keep interrupting me;" and for a moment or two he had his blank empty look.

Charles purposely changed the conversation and spoke of plans for the next summer.

A considerable modification of their summer arrangements had been introduced. During the school holidays, spent always by the sea, Enid of course remained with the family, and Charles was with them on and off—the offness being filled by pleasant little expeditions for golf or fishing in company with Gregory Lake. Then in September, when the children no longer required her, Enid went abroad with her new friends the Tathams.

Mr. Tatham, a stout indolent man of forty, and Mrs. Tatham, an active, sandy-complexioned, pleasure-loving woman of thirty-five, had been altogether insignificant locally

until Enid took them up. Charles did not like them, but he had accepted them in gratitude to Enid, who suddenly developed a keen appreciation of Mrs. Tatham as a travelling companion. Gregory Lake completed the continental party, taking charge of it, acting as courier, and as purse-bearer too, buying tickets, paying bills, and rendering neat little accounts for each of the four "to share and share alike." Yorkshire—that was the mot d'ordre. But gossip in Tudor Green would have it that the Tathams got off scot-free and were paid for by the other two—or by one of the two—Mrs. Derwent. If so, it need not trouble her. For, as all could see, the Derwents were getting richer and richer every day. Charles Derwent, they said, scarcely attempted to conceal his extreme affluence. When you applied to him nowadays for a subscription or a donation, he never spoke fretfully as he used to do of the many other claims he was forced to meet. He just weighed in with a big cheque.

Anyhow, ignoring this and every sort of gossip, Enid took her Tathams away with her for three consecutive and marvellously enjoyable autumn tours. Those perhaps were golden hours in her life. Stirred to a deep emotion, she could expand and respond to the beauty of a larger world. It was "such a nice change from Tudor Green," as Mr. and Mrs. Tatham said. Their hearts also, as one may hope, were lifted in joy to the lofty height of sunlit snow peaks. The mellow sunshine of Italy shone through and through them. They admired, and wondered—at the inverted image of high-perched castles seen in deep water, at the sparkling brightness and well-ordered luxury of the most expensive hotels, at the elegance and gaiety of the prosperous travelling crowd. They could carry these glowing pictures back with them in their hearts, to warm them and fill them with loveliness all through the dull suburban winter.

Charles knew that Enid was perfectly safe with Greg to take care of her, and her absence gave him a freedom that he used by taking his mother away. They went once to Torquay, twice to Bournemouth, and people in the hotels who saw him carrying her shawls and cushions through the hall, or walking beside her bath-chair on the sea front, used to say

that this devotion of a son to a mother was a very beautiful sight. If they said as much to the old lady, and they often did, since it is the invariable practice of visitors in English hotels to touch at once on the most delicate and profoundly intimate affairs of everybody with whom they scrape acquaintance, the old lady would readily sing her little song of fervent praise. No one had ever been so blessed in her offspring. "And he has a son—my dear grandson Roderick—who takes after him. Just the same sweet loyal nature."

Of a truth the devotion of Charles was great. His mother's intense pleasure in these excursions gave him happiness, pain, dread, so closely mingled that there were times when he could not answer in words if she spoke to him and was only able to touch her hand or rearrange the wrap about her shoulders. He had to recover himself, and shut out every thought of the future, before he could talk to her again in the light and gay tone that she loved. He knew that the quiet journey of her long life was drawing near its end. The separation that he used to think of as being worse than death for himself could not be indefinitely delayed. Even now it seemed insupportable. "But for Enid and the children," he thought, "I could not face it. If I were alone, it would finish me."

His every thought of Enid was softened and made bright with gratitude. The statement that his regard for her had been untouched by "the other thing" might well meet with incredulity, and yet it was wholly true. As he declared, he was fonder of her, and in a stronger and more noble way, after that episode than before it. He admired the fineness of her character as much as in the beginning. He respected her herself immensely more. For her forgiveness, when it came, was so splendid, so generously large. From the morning when he heard her voice on the telephone begging him to come home and the evening when, welcoming him back, she said that all was to be as before, she had never once reminded him of his fault.

Yet how many thousand times had he reminded himself! He used to think, "Why do I remember with such cruel vividness? Why was I given a memory too strong for the wear and tear of life?" It seemed to him that every look of

Gwendolen's face, every word she had uttered, every contact of their bodies, were things indelibly printed in his brain; and only to think of her set his brain to work, as infallibly as with a piece of perfectly constructed mechanism, reviving the records, giving off in fatal accuracy all that he wished to forget. Again and again the suddenly evoked sense of her beauty and sweetness overwhelmed him. He felt her thin cool arms round his neck, her warm face against his lips. "My dust would feel it and beat had I lain for a century dead," he used to say to himself, quoting Enid's favourite poet.

Above all, the girl's letters devastated his peace of mind. It is said that letter-writing has become a dead art; our attempts at it are pitiable; it is not taught to children, and the letters of grown-up people are ungrammatical, illiterate, chaotically inconsecutive. But has there not arisen a new and totally different art, first practised by the younger generation at about this period and since perfected—the art, or guileless trick, of making the written missive exactly like the spoken word? This was how Gwendolen wrote letters. To read them was to hear her voice talking.

"Carlos darling"—Carlos had been her pet name for him—"I am being good as you said. I try to forget you were my sweetheart. I try to think of you as my kind dear guardian. Nothing else. Darling Carlos, mother's hateful sometimes. Seems she can't trust me a little bit. Always on the watch for me to do another bolt with somebody else. As if I should. As if there *could* be anybody but you I'd ever want to . . ."

But she wrote at longer intervals of time. He thought of her in the same manner, but not so often, not so painfully. Those brain impressions seemed to be less deep, less clear in the pictures reproduced from them. Nevertheless his thoughts of her continued without any perceptible change until Roddy fell ill. If they did not altogether cease then, they had changed irrevocably.

There came to him one day a letter that he read as calmly as if he had long expected the news it contained and long wished to hear them. She was going to be married. "Mother

wants me to," she said. "He is quite a nice boy. Connected with the film industry and very ambitious . . ."

Once again Charles was ready to subscribe handsomely. He must help the nice ambitious boy, and he only hoped that Gwen would be happy. Poor little girl. So sweet—so un-faillingly sweet. How freely she had made her supreme gift. How cruel had been her subsequent experience. But now she had lived it down. . . . Not quite in the sense of the expression as used by old Mrs. Derwent, they had both lived it down.

II

ENID was disappointed and indignant.

"I do call it rather mean of you when you knew I was absolutely counting on him for the week-end. . . . Besides, what am I to say to the Tathams?"

"Tell the Tathams to go to the devil," said Charles, quite in his old fretful style. "I'm sick to death of your Tathams." Then he was sorry for his ill temper. "Dear old thing, you can't really want Gregory."

"But we do want him. We all three of us were depending on him to arrange everything."

"Take Roddy in his place. Telegraph to Roddy."

"No," she said, "I can't do that."

It was once more the beginning of summer, and she had planned a Friday to Monday visit to the nice quiet hotel at Pangbourne. She had looked forward to it as a great treat. But Charles had shattered her plan by a rival scheme of his own. He was making Gregory Lake go and spend the week-end with him at the dormy-house at Rye.

This was by no means the only time that there occurred a sharp contest for the company of Greg; and in spite of all his wonderfully tactful efforts so to adjust matters that no one should miss what might be required of him, whether the call came from one of the three children or Charles or Enid, he could not always succeed. If forced to choose he gave himself to Charles. He appeared to think that Charles had the paramount claim. The affection between Charles

and himself, ever deepening, made their companionship uniquely precious. If it came to a test, Charles simply could not do without Greg. He was lost without him. Thus it happened that more and more often now Enid was pushed to the wall. She submitted, not at first with a good grace.

Perhaps Gregory explained to her that she had greater resources than Charles possessed. For instance, her dancing.

After criticising it very severely and for a long time, she had taken up the modern dancing—Tango, and all the other new steps. Gregory Lake, obeying her commands and following wherever she cared to lead, had learned it too. He made up a quartet with Mr. and Mrs. Tatham at dinners in London and afternoon teas in Tudor Green when jazz music was a feature of the programme. If the Tathams were otherwise engaged he and Mrs. Charles went in pursuit of the innocent exercise alone.

Enid was shy and self-conscious in the beginning. "Charles," she said, "tell me candidly, do you mind? Do you think it frivolous of me, or undignified? I am anxious to go on if you approve, because I believe it does me good. And of course it has been the salvation of Greg. It will keep his weight down as nothing else could."

Charles thoroughly approved; but when Roddy heard of the dancing he said "O mother!"

That was all he said; but the troubled look in his eyes, the faint flush that came upon his pale face, the nervous movement of his hands as he clasped and unclasped them, seemed to tell her that he was profoundly surprised and that his surprise contained mortification rather than pleasure.

She had no chance then of talking to him confidentially. He was on the point of returning to Mr. Livingstone's after a day spent with them at home. So she wrote to him saying that if the notion of a mother who danced was in any way disturbing to him, if by doing it she lessened herself in his eyes, she would never again take measured paces or rhythmic turns, as long as she lived.

Roddy replied at great length, chivalrously, sweetly, saying in his sprawling and almost illegible hand, with nearly as many misspelt words as loving thoughts, that he would

never forgive himself if she stopped dancing; it would break his heart if he had made her think he wished her to stop; he gloried in the knowledge that his noble beautiful mother was being happy and amused.

Roddy was always the same, unchanging, as true to her, as entirely hers now that he was approaching his seventeenth birthday, as he had been when a child of five.

But the other two were developing rapidly and altering. Margaret especially perplexed and baffled her mother by the completeness of the changes through which she passed.

Margaret and Charlie had always been great allies and passionately fond of each other's company for the pleasure it gave, but with no depth of affection between them. There was a certain hardness about those two. Playing together they were rough. Margaret, ordinarily quiet and self-contained, had a frightful hooting laugh when she let herself go with Charlie. On the rare occasions when she wept, Charlie, un-pitying, mocked her. "Boo-oo-oo," said Charlie, mocking. "Oo-oo-oo. Glug-glug . . . Oh, shut up, or I'll give you something to cry for"—and he did it, twisting her arm or administering the latest form of torture-pinch while she sat sobbing. "Damn and blast you," yelled Margaret, springing up at him. "All right. You may dodge, but I'll give you hell for this when I get the chance."

"You must not be such a hoyden," Enid used to say at that period; "and once for all I will not have this sort of language."

Charlie at fourteen was almost like a man. His voice had broken; he positively growled in a true bass. Very strong, as had been predicted, he was doing well at the public school, being reported good in maths, excellent in stinks, and super-eminent in the school carpenter's shop; but already he had begun to pester his father to take him away and put him in some engineering works or a locomotive place. In the holidays he offered voluntary aid at any neighbouring garage. He was the friend of chauffeurs without formal introduction. In fact all servants and underlings adored him. On any excuse or none he would slip away from the reception-rooms at Tudor Lodge and make himself comfortable and

happy in the servants' quarters. Of an evening after dinner when rather unseemly sounds of laughter and song came from the servants' hall one might know that Charlie was out there.

Yet even in his persistent and undesirable familiarity with the household staff he showed that hard streak which seemed to run through his otherwise amiable composition. Although on wet days he would sit for hours with Wilding in the butler's pantry, he was merciless in condemnation of the old chap's incompetence. He said that Wilding was past his job. Wilding ought to be put out to grass or sent to the lethal chamber. Wilding was stone deaf.

Wilding was not deaf, but he was getting very hard of hearing, and he made ridiculous efforts to conceal his infirmity.

Charlie teased him, now by mumbling, now by addressing him with unheard insults, and Margaret was much amused. "Say it again," she used to urge. "Shout for him."

"Hi, deaffy," said Charlie, "come here, you doddering old ass."

"Did you call me, Master Charlie?" Wilding asked blandly.

"Yes, I called for you—by name," said Charlie; and Margaret hooted ruthlessly.

But all at once Margaret changed. She became sententious, if not priggish. Instead of her drawl she adopted a studied way of speaking. She read difficult and abstruse books about psychology, as well as improper up-to-date works of fiction like *Anne Veronica* or *The Old Wives' Tale*, and released staggering opinions at dinner without stating whether they were her own or those of other people.

She sometimes annoyed her mother.

"I wish you wouldn't talk such nonsense."

"But is it really nonsense?" said Margaret, in her new precise voice and with a smile of quiet superiority.

"I suppose," said Enid irritably, "you got it out of your Mr. Wills and Mr. Benning"—meaning those already very distinguished gentlemen, H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett.

Margaret merely shrugged her shoulders or smiled.

"I think your father has been very foolish in allowing you to read just whatever you please. Half these modern novels ought to be burnt by the hangman. That's all they're fit for. Sheer intentional nastiness;" and she turned to Gregory Lake. "Don't you agree with me?"

"Ah, there, my dear Mrs. Charles, you take me out of my depth . . . No expert, as you know, in literature. But I venture to assume that Charles relied on Margaret's using her judgment—ah, discretion—and perhaps recalled the maxim: 'To the pure all things are pure.'"

"Margaret won't hurt herself with what she reads," said Charles benignly. "Ruskin's advice was 'Turn a girl loose in a library, and she'll——'"

"Yes," interrupted Enid, "you've told me what Ruskin said a dozen times. But the library Ruskin meant was a collection of properly chosen books, not the circulating library. Margaret asks for the things. She puts them on Mudie's list."

"Margaret perhaps will take a hint," said Gregory Lake, "and only select volumes that have been praised in the *Spectator* or *The Times*."

"When you have all finished talking about me," said Margaret, "may I ask Wilding to give me some more apple tart? . . . Thank you . . . I am fond of apple tart, Mr. Lake. That's why I eat it;" and she had her superior smile.

"Don't be impertinent," said Enid sharply.

Margaret could not be described as good-looking, and yet she was not without charm. Elderly men nearly always admired her. She had inherited a long and rather too big nose from her father, while her mouth would be exactly like Enid's if it ever ripened to greater fullness and softness. Her skin was remarkably white and even, never at any time marred by the eruptive blemishes that are usual in adolescent girls. She still wore her tawny hair, of which she now had masses, in a large pig-tail, and it was a grievance that Enid would not allow her to put it up.

Unfortunately friction had become perceptible in this one part of life's machinery at Bolton Lodge. Grievances, irritations, coldnesses had crept into the mutual affairs of the

mother and daughter. Again and again Enid said to Charles "I wish you'd speak to Margaret about it. Tell her it is unkind as well as wrong to ignore my requests;" and she generally added the caution that he was not to let Margaret play them off one against the other. "She's far too inclined to do that."

Then gradually Enid understood that she had lost the girl's love again. As strangely as it had been restored to her it was taken away from her. She appeared to have no natural affection. She hated to be kissed. Finally she broke out of her mother's arms roughly, saying "Mother, I wish you wouldn't."

"*Margaret!*" cried Enid, wounded to the quick.

But Margaret showed no disinclination for kisses when alone with her father. If she wanted anything she would go to him in the library, sit upon the arm of his big chair, and caress him all the time that she was stating her desires. When he granted the petition, as almost invariably happened, she hugged and kissed him effusively. Thus she obtained permission to do up her hair.

"My pig-tail doesn't make mother look any younger, you know. If it did, I'd wear it till I was fifty."

"Your mother had no such idea."

"Hadn't she?"

"Of course not . . . It's a matter of rule. She doesn't consider—I say, Margaret, it is a weight." He was holding the great tail of braided hair and touching it delicately. "Doesn't it make your head ache?"

"No, but it makes me look an ass. Charlie says so."

"I should have thought all this weight hanging down would make your head ache."

"Now I remember, it does," said Margaret, taking a hint. "Awfully. Tell mother I have fearsome headaches from it."

On the score of health Margaret was permitted to do what she wished.

She bound her hair in a sort of coronet, low on her forehead, lower still on the sudden disclosure of her extraordinarily white neck, and immediately entered into another phase. She was mannered, artificial; she drawled once more,

and talked to people languidly with half-closed eyes as if so much bored by them that she might at any moment drop asleep. All her attitudes had a carefully studied gracefulness. She was much under the influence of the Russian ballet, to which she compelled Gregory Lake to take her again and again. She would stand in front of a looking-glass dreamily posturing in the new adorable style, making her long thin hands seem boneless, and her thin arms wave and undulate like weeds in running water.

"Charles, do speak to her," said Enid. "She is simply a bundle of affectations. Everyone will be laughing at her if it goes on."

Yet in the midst of so much folly Margaret now began to show flashes of luminous common sense.

"Daddy," she said one day when alone with her father, "if Roddy wants to be an author, why don't you let him?"

"Well, dear," said Charles, raising a finger to rub his nose, "I'm not preventing him from being an author."

"But you're not helping him. You know, Roddy isn't doing any good at Mr. Livingstone's. Charlie thinks just as I do. It's a wrong atmosphere."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, a clergyman's house! You know what clergymen are. . . . Couldn't you find some younger man who had taken honours at Oxford or Cambridge, and let Roddy work at English with him? He might pull something out of Roddy. For, you know, there *may* be something there."

Charles discussed the suggestion with Greg, who said at once that he believed Margaret had hit the right nail on the head, and Enid cordially agreeing, although not well pleased with her daughter's interference, Mr. Lake was sent off hot foot to make a preliminary tour of the scholastic agencies.

Soon then Roddy was removed to a cramming establishment near Winchester kept by a certain Mr. Kennedy who seemed exactly such a person as Margaret had in mind, except that he was not young but old. Himself an author (of works on political economy and international law), he would put Roddy through a fine course of English literature, and teach him the rules of prosody, for Roddy himself an-

nounced that his bent was poetry. Further, Mr. Kennedy promised to give a conscientious report of his pupil's progress and capabilities after two months.

The conscientious report when it came proved more than disappointing. Charles brought the postal packet into Enid's bedroom while she was drinking her morning tea. He paid these morning visits regularly, and had done so from the time when Margaret ceased to look in upon her mother for chatter and fun before she herself dressed. He had usually glanced through *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*, and he told Enid the principal items of the day's news.

This morning the gloomy expression of his face immediately informed her that the news was not good.

"You had better read Kennedy's letter," he said. "I haven't the heart to wade through it again."

Mr. Kennedy said that he had utterly failed to instil poetry into their son. Roddy seemed deaf to music, incapable of learning the rules of metrical composition, as devoid of ideas as of the power to express them, and rather obstinate in his refusal to admit the excellence of classical models. Authorship for Roddy was palpably an absurd aim. If they would examine the three little pieces that he enclosed they would no doubt come to the same conclusion, and he wished them to tell Roddy how sensible he had been in preventing the despatch of these things to editors of magazines. For that was what Roddy had wished to do. He would have done it, and thereby brought down ridicule on himself and the whole establishment, if Mr. Kennedy had not absolutely forbidden him.

"Now read these," said Charles, as he handed her three sheets of paper.

The poems had been neatly typewritten, so that the unequal lengths of their lines stared at her; and she saw too their freedom from rhyme. One was called *The Mouse and the Night-light*, another *When Morning did not Come*, and the third *Resurrection*. Her face was red and hot, then cold and pale, as she read them.

She was thinking: "The moth and the candle, yes. But the mouse and the night-light? Oh, what does he mean?"

Too wild, too wild. Gibberish! *Vers libres*—yes, I know. That man wrote them—what was his name?—ages ago when Roddy was tiny—our tame poet—who made such a fool of himself holding my hand between the doors and saying I was the one person to inspire him. Piers Markham. He married a woman old enough to be his mother—for her money, of course. But his stuff was Tennyson compared with this . . . No sense, my darling . . . Oh, what *do* you mean? When morning did not come?"

She refolded Roddy's poetry in slow sorrowful hands, and looked at Charles.

"I suppose it is very bad?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Childish?" said Enid, with a quiver of the lip.

Charles nodded his head sombrely.

"Poor old Roddy," said Enid, with infinite tenderness.

"We won't let him know what we really think, will we?"

"No, of course not. But we mustn't encourage him. That's the point of Kennedy's letter."

"I don't like Mr. Kennedy," said Enid forcibly. "I think the way he writes about Roddy is hateful."

Charles put the condemned sheets away in the library; but later he gave them to Margaret at her urgent request to look through. She expressed no opinion about them.

For some reason or other the boys at Charlie's school were given an exeat of four days for Whitsuntide, and during this brief respite from toil Charlie was guilty of a gross breach of decorum.

He had absented himself from home during the whole of the Bank Holiday, coming back so late at night that his parents were already in bed. The lateness was of no particular consequence. Charlie could take care of himself. But then it came out that he had spent the day sight-seeing with Phyllis Rice, the scullery maid.

Charles was horrified. Enid felt almost equally shocked. Hitherto the boy's taste for humble comrades had been treated more or less as a joke. This lapse however seemed to indicate a positive low tendency, if not something rather worse.

Even Gregory Lake was too much overwhelmed to attempt any defence of his young friend. There are things that cannot be done. No—ah! The scullery maid. "Phyllis! I think that is the name you mentioned. Phyllis. Phyllis;" and he went on repeating "Phyllis" meditatively and rather idiotically until Enid snapped at him, asking what the dickens the name mattered. It would make no difference if her name was Kate or Eliza.

"No—just so. That is true."

It was early in the morning, about half-past ten, and they made a solemn affair of Charlie's escapade, sitting in the library, Enid, Charles, and Gregory, looking rather like a Parliamentary Commission appointed to inquire into the Recent Unfortunate Occurrence on Whit-Monday. They took evidence. Wilding appeared before them, not hearing all the questions and seeming to have something on his mind that he wanted to hold from them. A reluctant and unsatisfactory witness. Then Mrs. Lane, the housekeeper, was called, and interrogated as to the female culprit.

Mrs. Lane gave the girl the traditional housekeeper's character—of nice people or she would never have been engaged here; quite respectable, but heedless; apt to err from want of thought, never from want of heart. "Times and often I have said to her 'Phyllis, use your senses. You're not really a fool'"—and so on.

Then the girl herself was fetched.

Freckled, pale, shy, but undaunted, Phyllis scarcely waited to be questioned. She volunteered information.

"I didn't know it was wrong. I'd bin given the day. You had, Mrs. Lane—you know you had. I offered him to pay. I didn't want to sponge on Charlie."

"Master Charlie," said Enid, correcting her.

"*Mister* Charlie," said Charles sternly.

"I don't see why I'm so to blame," Phyllis went on. "I never began it. I can't help it if Charlie likes me."

She had committed the offence again, but they let it pass them. She began to talk fast. She talked faster and faster.

"I'd rather go than cause unpleasantness. If I don't give satisfaction I can't feel happy in myself. I'd ever so much

rather go home to mother. Mother's bin very poorly, and she'd only be too glad to get me back. So if you please, ma'am . . ."

"All right," said Enid. "Don't say any more."

But Phyllis wouldn't stop.

"Oh, take her away," said Charles querulously.

Mrs. Lane obeyed this order, and the Commission was left to its deliberations. Presently Charles laughed.

"It's all rubbish," he said. "There's nothing in it. No need to make mountains out of molehills."

But Enid was not so easily reassured. She said she had disliked the girl's tone. In her judgment Phyllis had spoken exactly as if she considered Charlie her sweetheart—or at any rate a possible sweetheart. She also pointed out that Phyllis in her cap and print dress, as they had just seen her, and Phyllis dressed in her best, for a day's outing, were two very different young women.

Greg, supporting, said he could well believe this. Phyllis had struck him as somewhat attractive in a common style. He would class her as comely. She had a good figure; and he twaddled on till he was once more snapped at by Enid.

"If there was anything up," said Charles sagely, "Margaret would know. Sound Margaret."

Enid went from the library to find her daughter.

Margaret, when found, endeavoured to dissipate her mother's anxiety. Resuming for the occasion her most priggish manner, she said there was no reason to worry. Charlie was too young. He was wrapped up in his love of machinery. One must not be led astray by Charlie's gruff voice and physical strength. Girls meant nothing to Charlie.

"I don't quite understand you," said Enid, frowning, and looking troubled.

"I mean there is no normal response awakened in him yet. The sex appeal does not rouse the instincts which, although there no doubt, are still dormant."

Enid stood aghast. "You must not speak in this manner."

"Why not?"

"It is indecent. I know you merely parrot it out of those beastly novels, but I will not have it."

Margaret shrugged her shoulders.

Enid went back to the library, feeling more worried now about Margaret than about Charlie, and she recounted some of her daughter's objectionable phrases.

"Oh, she doesn't know what she's talking about," said Charles.

"But I am afraid she does," said Enid. "That's what upsets me so terribly."

Then something else came out. Charlie had borrowed three pounds ten shillings from Wilding, to defray the expenses of Phyllis and himself. This it was that had been on Wilding's mind, and he now thought it best to confess. Charles was again horrified. It seemed to him the limit. He opened his sovereign purse and cleared off the debt. Then he hurried away to rebuke Charlie—followed by Enid, who, all her thoughts withdrawn from Margaret, feared that the incensed father might speak too severely.

But Charlie was quite unperturbed by stormy brows and anxious faces. He sat stolidly eating his breakfast when they burst into the dining-room; and he went on eating it.

"What's the meaning of this?" stormed Charles. "Breakfast at such an hour. Half-past eleven. Disgraceful."

Charlie waved a fork as an indication that his mouth was too full to permit of an immediate answer. He masticated slowly, calmly, and then explained that he had not been fugging in bed, but on the contrary had left the house at six a.m. Since then he had been assisting a pal of his at Brown's Garage down the town. "Made me jolly hungry;" and he stretched a large dirty hand for the marmalade. The state of both his hands corroborated the tale. They were ingrained with the black disgusting dirt that is only acquired in places like garages.

Then his father at some length upbraided him with the enormity of the Wilding transaction. Why had he done such a thing?

Charlie said that if he had asked for the money there would have been a fuss, whereas he knew that the moment they found out he had borrowed from Wilding they would refund the amount and there would be an end of it.

"You have paid him back, haven't you?"

His father said yes.

"Well, there you are;" and Charlie laughed chucklingly as he rose replete from the breakfast table.

"Where are you going?" asked Charles.

"To wash my hands."

"But not at the pantry sink," said Enid.

"Oh, all right," said Charlie, in a bored tone.

"Daddy," said Margaret, "come here. I have something to show you." It was just before dinner and she was sitting at a bureau in the drawing-room with an opened magazine. Dressed in pale green, with the lamp-light making her hair shine like gold, she looked graceful, charming, almost pretty. Her eyes seemed enormously large and bright as she turned in the chair, and, although she spoke drawlingly, she gave an impression of curbed excitement and triumphant satisfaction. "I knew that fossilised poop at Winchester was wrong. Look at this. It's *The Fortnightly Review*. The most literary magazine in England! The one that counts."

Charles looked at the page that she offered for his examination. It was poetry in large print, with the title and the author's name still larger—*The Mouse and the Night-light*, by Roderick Derwent.

"Margaret, my dear—How wonderful. But—how on earth—Did Roddy after all?"

"No, I sent it to the Editor," said Margaret. "I wasn't going to let Roddy be sat on like that without having a run for his money. Roddy doesn't know yet, and it's too late to telegraph. Do you think the Kennedy person is on the telephone?"

Charles and Enid spent that evening gloating over *The Mouse and the Night-light*—handing it to and fro—elucidating its subtle meanings—finding fresh beauties in it every minute. Of its outstanding merit there could no longer be any question. *The Fortnightly Review* had settled that.

A few days later *When Morning did not Come* was ac-

cepted by *The Windsor Magazine* on condition that the author permitted certain slight deletions; and a day or two after that *The Pall Mall Gazette* returned *Resurrection*, with a paliating request to see something else from the same pen.

"My dearest, dearest," wrote Enid to her wonderful son, "no words can say the joy it has given me."

And indeed this was true of both parents. The glorious rehabilitation of Roddy was very delightful to them. They walked up and down the terrace outside the house with linked arms and hearts that beat in unison, while they talked about it.

Roddy had proved himself a real poet. He wrote for the best periodicals in England. Who now would ever dare to say that Roddy was not all there?

III

IN the world that stretched so widely beyond the grounds of Bolton Lodge there were many events of importance during the long swift year of 1913 and in the hastening months before August of the year 1914. The vast unexplored river that we call Life ran deep and very smooth; and from a national point of view our governors and rulers, steering the ship of state with an ominous ease, no more saw what was ahead of them than did the earliest voyagers in dug-out canoes when they glided nearer and nearer to the Niagara Falls.

Charles Derwent saw no further, made no better observation of facts, drew no clearer deductions, than Mr. Asquith or anybody else. In his visits to Enid's bedroom of a morning he selected items of news at random and reported them briefly, with little comment from Enid and scarcely any from himself.

Thus he told her that Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson had been knighted ("And if ever man deserved it," said Enid); that the King and Queen were going to Germany for the wedding of the German Emperor's daughter ("A good thing too"); that H. G. Pelissier, chief of "The Follies," was dead ("Oh, no? I am sorry"); that Dr. Walter Hines Page, the new

American Ambassador, had arrived; that Sarah Bernhardt was in London; that the love letters of Robert Browning sold at auction had realised £6,550; that Lord Roberts had celebrated his eighty-first birthday (silence—silence—silence); that Captain Scott and four of his gallant companions had perished on their return journey from the South Pole (“Dreadful,” with a shudder); that Dr. Robert Bridges had been appointed poet laureate (“That will interest Roddy,” brightly and cheerfully).

They passed without delay from the realm of public affairs to matters of seemingly greater import. Their children formed the subject of their endless discussions—Roddy, Margaret, Charlie, first one then another, then all together.

“They are growing up so fast, so fast,” said Enid. “I sometimes feel that before I can look round they will be men and women.”

They talked about them, they gently criticised them, they analysed their characters, they tolerantly explained their slight defects; but they were more and more completely baffled by them.

They did not understand that these three people were *new*—made in their image—a part of themselves—and yet total strangers in many ways. They belonged to the new generation. No such people had walked the earth before them. They did new things because there were new things to do. Their thoughts were their own absolutely, and not a life interest in an ancient trust fund.

Enid talked to other mothers.

“Of course Margaret is really very young still. Yet to hear her talk! And so sure she is in the right always!”

“Oh, they all are.”

The mothers of girls invariably said the same thing—their girls were out of hand, refusing to be controlled, defying authority.

But each of these mothers was like a person who has intended to go a long journey with a child. Then at the railway station she discovers that the child has started without her. The express train has gone. No slower train can possibly

overtake it. She sits on a bench disconsolate. She has been left behind. That's all there is to it.

If only she could fully remember her own youth, she would know that young people are unable to wait for the tardy movements of unsuitable companions. Waiting drives them mad. But she cannot adequately recall the excited rebellious feelings that surged within her breast when she was frustrated in natural desires. She cannot glow again to the once ardent emotions. They were there in her very self, hot, fierce, and strong, burning, blazing; but the accumulated dust of the years has buried them deep. They are like a fireplace in Pompeii—a fireplace, but no fire.

Margaret and Charlie were disobedient in a quiet premeditated manner. They did the deed first and asked permission afterwards. It was only the want of money that stopped them. Every month now money played a bigger part in the young existences. They were always asking for money, and Charles had so much of it that he gave them more than was perhaps advisable.

Enid made him refuse sometimes.

He declined to give Charlie fifteen pounds which the boy required "for a purpose." Since Charlie would not state the purpose, the answer must be in the negative.

Charlie summoned a queer surreptitious kind of man from Bermondsey and sold a lot of his valuable models and boats, throwing in an old bicycle as a make-weight. Thus he raised the fifteen pounds. Then he and Margaret slunk out of the house one morning, in mackintoshes, giggling, close friends as in the past. "Back to dinner," they shouted to the footman.

At dinner they were radiant.

"Where d'you think we've been to? To Birmingham! There and back."

"Why to Birmingham?" asked Gregory politely.

"Well, we thought we'd have a look at Birmingham," said Margaret, with a giggle. "It didn't take us long, either way... We flew."

"Yes," said her father, "it is a good service, the Great Western."

"We didn't go by train. I've told you. We flew. In the air."

The consternation of the three elders struck them silent for a moment or two; then they all talked together.

But Margaret, ignoring protests, went on about the delicious sensations she had experienced. "The thrill! Daddy, flying is *it*. I'd like to fly every day."

"That you will certainly not do," cried Enid. "Never with my consent will you go up again."

"Young devils," said Charles to Gregory afterwards. But he was rather proud of them—especially of Margaret.

In the holidays the dinner-table was like a debating club, and the new changing opinions, uttered so fearlessly, clashed against the old, old opinions that had all been cherished as permanent values, like the best gilt-edged securities not subject to fluctuation, and no more to be repudiated than the national debt.

Democratic ideas were aired. Caste privileges were derided. An equality based on intelligence and sentiment was advocated. If Margaret liked a girl, why should she bother as to what social class the girl belonged? If Charlie found the genial ease of a servants' hall or a garage loft preferable to the cold formalities of gilded saloons, why should he deny himself satisfaction merely because he was a son of the great Derwents? Charlie never argued, and nothing ruffled him. He had a sort of affectionate chaffing way of addressing his father and mother when he saw that they were feeling strongly. "All right. Have it your own way. Stick to the nobs. But live and let live. You're all too grand for me. I am of the people—by instinct, if not by birth."

"Does anybody still believe in birth?" said Margaret. "Breeding, yes, possibly—environment—the pressures to which we are subjected—our reactions to the prevailing stimulus in the human group in which we find ourselves . . ."

Margaret's nonsense upset her mother. The rubbish of the boys bothered their father. Even Roddy rubbed him the wrong way sometimes.

Roddy—bless him—had always been worrying on the question of strikes, concerning which Charles naturally had the firmest conservative views. In the railway strike, when Charles boiled with indignation at the flagrant breach of faith that it exemplified, Roddy pestered him to send large donations to funds for the men's wives and children. Roddy said it did not matter whether the men were right or wrong, you could not punish the innocent. "It's the wives who make the men strike," said Charles. "Anyhow, not the children," said Roddy. The father's love was so great that, although he could not subscribe to what he considered a war chest of his bitter foes, he allowed his quixotic son to send money as from himself, under the initials R. D.

Roddy too had taken the wrong side last June when a suffragist ran out upon the course and stopped the King's horse in the Derby. He said that she had died nobly, giving her life for a cause.

He said now that women ought to have votes, that wealth ought to be taxed more heavily, that patriotism was a danger. These were the things that he thought. He said them diffidently enough.

"To show what rot people talk," said Charles one night at dinner, "a man told me to-day that the Morocco incident rendered war with Germany inevitable, and that it may come much sooner than we can expect."

Then Roddy, without meaning it, completely nettled his father.

He said he thought that the city man was right. Insults rankle. You can't insult a proud and powerful nation with impunity. It seemed to Roddy that we had deliberately asked for war. If not, why be so high-handed, so brutally insulting?

"We were nothing of the sort," said Charles warmly. "We did the only thing possible. Aren't *we* a proud and powerful nation? Germany was at her old game, rattling the sword in the scabbard, and we intimated that we wouldn't have it. And Germany knows which side her bread is buttered. She saw her mistake. She won't do it again—not to *us* anyhow."

Roddy was going to say something more, but Charles stopped him.

"No, do please shut up." Then, quelling his irritation, he smiled and nodded. "Roddy, old chap, you're a poet of course, and I'm only a commonplace matter-of-fact old stager. So you must make allowances if I can't always see eye to eye with you."

It had been a slight clash, no more.

But the trouble between Margaret and her mother became infinitely more serious. Enid had doubts and conjectures about Margaret. She disapproved of so many things; and perhaps she secretly began to dread one particular thing. She could not give way to the girl, or admit to herself for a moment that if it came to a real contest she would be afraid. This thought perhaps made her less sympathetic than she would otherwise have been.

Margaret of course could not yet be trusted with the disposal of a dress allowance and Enid still supplied all her requirements, the two of them going together to choose and buy things; but those joint expeditions to London (for Margaret scorned the shops of Tudor Green), instead of being happy little treats to both, were the occasion of innumerable squabbles. They fell out in regard to colour, style, cut, material; about the transparency of stockings, the height of heels, the length of skirts. One day when Enid had bought her, without any fight, a very nice red evening frock at a smart dressmaker's in Sloane Street, Margaret slipped round to the shop while her mother was busy at Harrods and commanded alterations beyond those that were necessary. She wished the bodice to be made much lower.

The frock came home in due course, and she wore it for the first time on a night when a few friends were invited to dinner. Perhaps aware that there might be opposition, or perhaps only because she was in love with the beautiful red garment, she had departed from her usual custom of being late for dinner and had dressed herself very early. Her mother caught her in the corridor. She came glidingly, mak-

ing slow dance steps and bending her arms as if she belonged to the Russian ballet.

Enid was furious. Her face took on a scarlet glow as she looked at the exposure of Margaret's flat immature bosom and of her back, so white and smooth, and yet so thin that the articulations of her spine were visible.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Don't you *feel* ashamed?"

"Not in the least," said Margaret, pouting and sulky.

Enid ordered her to change to something else, and she refused. But Enid was firm. "Very well," said Margaret, "I won't come down at all." She went back to her room and there remained.

Charles fretted at her absence, of which the true reason was withheld from him, and begged that she would be present on the next occasion of slight festivity a week hence. Margaret however said she would absent herself again unless she were allowed to wear her new red exactly as it stood. Enid gave way.

"You are very obstinate, and very foolish too—but do as you please. You have tired me out. Only don't for a moment think that you're going to get admiration by it. You'll find you disgust everybody."

Again Margaret was in good time. She entered the drawing-room before the arrival of any guest, and half-naked but quite unabashed, faced her family with the insolent red challenge from Sloane Street. Or so it seemed to Enid, who once more flushed and grew warm.

But Charlie fell into demonstrative rapture.

"Ain't she sweet? Gosh. That is topping. But don't be so cocky. You needn't burst with conceit because you're looking nice for once... Turn round, my pretty one;" and he gave her a loud friendly slap on her naked back.

"You vulgar lout," said Margaret.

"Yes, you wanted that lower down. Where you couldn't show the mark," said Charlie, more vulgar still. "Smack, smack smack."

But he meant that his sister needed correction for her

vanity not for her nudity. The boy, Margaret's contemporary, saw nothing wrong about the frock. It seemed to him just right. Enid, wondering, waited for a stern criticism that never came.

Charles had stared, rubbed himself, and grinned. He spoke quietly and affectionately.

"Is that the latest fashion, M.? You do us proud, my dear."

Gregory Lake said nothing and he looked very solemn. But, as Enid guessed, his gravity was not caused by the young lady's underclad condition. He knew of the previous dispute, and thought that Margaret had not been playing the game. For a girl to disobey her mother—and such a mother! Well, it isn't cricket.

The next cause of offence was Margaret's ballroom dancing. She had been well taught and her instructors praised her. But Enid very much objected to her clinging method. For Margaret seemed to make of herself a long flexible adhesive plaster, and, so to speak, she applied it to her partner's body. Henceforth no day-light or lamp-light was visible between them until the dance ended. They were made one, or at least inextricably mixed. As they slid along, the man's leg came right through Margaret's legs. The toe of his pointed shoe kept appearing far behind the back of her high heels.

Enid observed all this in increasing discomfort while Margaret was dancing with General Sir Hugh Fleming at an informal party given by Mrs. Burroughes for two grand-nieces. Margaret danced with the general nearly all the evening and as he was altogether the most distinguished person there he and his partner could not fail to attract attention—as Enid said to Gregory Lake, standing by him in the embrasure of a window. "I simply must make her drop it."

Sir Hugh's wife was an invalid who accepted every invitation she received and then at the last moment sent an excuse on the score of indisposition. She had done so to-night. Sir Hugh himself was the kind of man who does not put you at your ease and with whom you feel you could not possibly take a liberty. Slim and erect, although well over sixty, he

carried with him the prestige that at this time was perhaps only given by proved valour together with the honours and rewards that are earned only in a soldier's career. Like other elderly men he seemed to admire Margaret. During one or two visits to Bolton Lodge he had paid Enid some rather wearisome compliments about her daughter.

Before going to bed she talked to Margaret severely.

"Why?" said Margaret, sullen in a minute. "Hugh didn't complain. Hugh says I dance very well."

"That's another thing. I will not have you calling a man of his age and position by his Christian name."

"Really, mother, that's too absurd," said Margaret sullenly.

"You don't call Mr. Lake, Gregory."

"I know I don't. For one thing he has never asked me . . . And there are other reasons."

"What reasons?" said Enid quickly.

Margaret remained silent.

"You'll never have such another friend as Mr. Lake."

"I shan't look for one," said Margaret enigmatically.

"Very well," said Enid. "Understand me. Henceforth you will address Sir Hugh properly—as Sir Hugh."

"No," said Margaret. "Really I can't hurt his feelings to oblige anybody."

She was very sullen.

Soon after this she began to be rude to Mr. Lake. Having dropped him completely as an escort to plays and exhibitions, she declined or ignored every kindly offer that he made to be useful to her in small things as of old. She omitted the usual morning greeting. When she came into a room where he and Enid were sitting she talked to her mother as if unaware of his presence. In conversation at dinner when remarks fell from him she let them fall. Gregory did not notice her bad manners. Nobody noticed except Enid.

"Margaret," she said angrily, "are you deaf? Mr. Lake spoke to you. Why don't you answer?"

"Oh, really," drawled Margaret, "did you say something, Mr. Lake? Dare I ask you to say it again? My mind had wandered."

Another time Enid rebuked her for not shaking hands with their old friend.

"Is it necessary when people see each other every day—day after day—from January to December? Kindly consider your hand shaken, Mr. Lake. Pleased to meet you, as we say in America."

Gregory smiled contentedly. He did not know how impertinent the girl had been. He was too kind, too good, too loyal—as Enid felt, with warm resentment against her daughter for not valuing him as he should be valued.

Then Margaret took to "making up," as it was called in 1914. She put white on her face and red on her lips. In a word she painted.

She did it very lightly at first; then she painted with a bolder hand. Enid, trying not to believe the repeated testimony of her eyes, waited until doubt became impossible, and then, catching Margaret dressed to go out one afternoon—dressed and coloured—she called her into the library. A short but piteously distressing scene followed. The hour of crisis had come.

"Why not?" said Margaret, shrugging her shoulders. "Nearly everybody does now."

"I don't," said Enid with dignity.

"No, but I wish you did," said Margaret in her hard rude way. "It would be a great improvement. There's not the slightest reason why you should turn red in the face after every meal, or whenever you have a glass of wine. I mean there's no reason to *show* that you do."

Enid uttered a little cry. "Margaret! Oh, how can you be so cruel to me!"

"I am not so cruel to you as you have been to me."

"Margaret! How have I ever been cruel?"

"You have robbed me of ideals."

"I don't know what you mean," cried Enid, pale, tremulous, moving her hands rapidly. "But I know this, that you are a wicked heartless girl to talk—to dare to talk to me, your mother. Wicked, insulting—yes, wicked;" and she went towards the door of the room.

"Mother," Margaret, looking contrite and scared, called to her. "Mother, come back. I'm sorry."

But her mother went out of the room and closed the door behind her.

For a moment it seemed that Margaret was going to run after her. She made two or three steps in the direction of the door, but stopped irresolute. Then she moved slowly to a chair, sat down, and burst into tears.

No one came into the room. Margaret had her cry out undisturbed. If Enid had returned and found her washing away the paint in tears their future dealings with each other might have been very different.

As it was, they became almost like strangers, or two old acquaintances who had now definitely quarrelled and yet, compelled to live in the same house, were maintaining all outward forms of ordinary civility.

Enid made no complaints to Charles, so that he never knew of the great breach; and Margaret, sitting on the arm of his chair and asking to be given a dress allowance, said nothing that could possibly enlighten him.

She merely explained that she wanted a free outlet for individual taste, an untrammelled choice of materials and everything else, in order that she might escape from the characterless uniform of thousands and dress like herself.

"What does your mother think about it?"

"Mother won't object . . . Daddy, please let me start now at once. You don't know what getting her own things means to a girl."

"I must be very stupid if I don't. I imagine it connects itself closely with much else—for instance, her craving for self-expression."

"That's exactly it," said Margaret, delighted; and stooping she kissed his forehead. "You are so dear—so very dear. You can always put yourself in the other person's place. You don't try to squash one with old-fogey copy-book maxims. That's why young people like you."

Once, and not so very long ago, not quite five years, a girl had sent joy thrilling through him by an altogether similar compliment. He thrilled again now, but in so

strangely different a way. His pleasure seemed to obliterate every personal sensation and make him feel only for others. It made him want to guard and protect this girl from danger—this girl and all other girls; to give them all the good of life and save them from its hazards and contaminations, its degrading incidents, its ignoble experience. His thoughts were like prayers.

“Always count me as your friend,” he said gently—“somebody you could trust and rely on, whatever happened. Promise that you’ll never turn against me, Margaret.”

“I promise,” she said, hugging him. “You needn’t be afraid. I know my friends.”

PART V

CHAOS

I

“Of course the children will be very disappointed,” said Enid ruefully.

“I can’t help that,” said Charles.

“You really think we oughtn’t to risk it?”

“It would be madness to cross the channel.”

They had taken a large villa at le Touquet and all of them had been looking forward with the most pleasurable anticipation to these long summer holidays in jolly old France.

But Charles now said that a war between Germany and Austria against France and Russia was a certainty. He did not regard the danger of England’s being drawn in as considerable. The Government could be trusted to keep us out of it. Our rôle obviously should be that of ring-keeper for the belligerents.

There followed a period of growing anxiety, and that again was followed by three days of such suspense and excitement as nobody had ever till then experienced. Charles

returning from the city on each of these days looked feverish but spoke calmly, even philosophically. He said he did not question the wise intentions of Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Morley, and the others, but he doubted their power. Wars are made by peoples not by governments. Then came England's ultimatum.

Late in the evening Charles and Enid had out a car and dashed off to London, if not to hear Big Ben striking the portentous hour, at least to see the crowds. There were crowds everywhere; men cheering, waving their hats. And the singing had begun. One heard *The Marseillaise* and *God Save the King* in mighty chorus again and again. It was impossible for the car to get through the crowd near Buckingham Palace, and people said that the King and Queen were standing on a balcony.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Derwent went home to Tudor Green with the sound of all that singing and cheering as an echo in their ears. Enid held her husband's hand for a little while. She was moved to her very depths with pride, with hope, with noble confidence. She shed a few tears and dashed them from her eyes with her hand, disdaining the use of a handkerchief. She was an Englishwoman—and this tremendous thing had happened. England was at war.

She felt the dead silence of the dining-room at Bolton Lodge as unnatural, almost sinister. Standing by the table she drank soda water thirstily and ate biscuits that produced choking sensations while Charles paced to and fro with hands behind his back. As well as seeming strangely quiet the room had a strange aspect. It was as though during their absence the furniture had been rearranged or the pictures moved—or that something else as queer had been done to bring about an air of unfamiliarity.

Alone in her comfortable bedroom where everything was her very own she had the same thought. This room too seemed mysteriously altered, at least with a different atmosphere in which the appearance of all material objects was seen differently. Truly it was a change from the familiar to the unusual which, as the reflection of inward thoughts, had now fallen upon all things whether near or far. Before she

turned out the lights and everything was hidden she had mastered its significance. We were at war.

Charles came into her room early next morning. He was already fully dressed, and his manner had a seriousness as complete as its tranquillity. He said he thought it right that Enid should know at once how this world conflict might affect him personally.

"I rather think it means that I am ruined." Then he explained the conditions that would prevail and their disastrous effect on shipping. He said that the great lines would of course survive, but comparatively small concerns like his would go down. They would be squeezed to death.

"But I suppose we must not think of ourselves any more. The die is cast."

Enid answered bravely and nobly. No, not a thought now for themselves. She said in effect that nothing mattered except the great cause. So that it went all right, she did not care if they lost their last penny. Denuded, they could live contentedly with the joy of a victorious peace. Yet while she was talking she knew she did not really believe that Charles was going to be ruined, and she wondered if Charles believed it himself. She was altogether sincere in every word that she said as to her willingness to suffer, and yet she felt like a person acting a part—or rather, like a person who has applied for permission to act in the biggest drama that has ever been put upon a stage, but who so far has not been allotted any rôle. Hundreds of thousands of other people were to-day feeling exactly as she did. Moreover the whole thing still had the quality of a dream. The sense of reality was not established until a little later.

Charles said that they should at once cut down outlay. He suggested an immediate reduction of their establishment, the dismissal of half the servants, the shutting up of all rooms not actually in use. Enid promised to attend to all this without delay; but she gave the promise doubtfully and artificially. Naturalness returned to her as she asked a question. Did Charles think that the war was going to be very bad?

"I fear so," he replied solemnly. "Worse than anybody

can imagine. The only thing to sustain one is that it cannot possibly last long. The bankers give it three months—as their limit. But who can say what may happen in three months?”

Ah, no. But it would be over by Christmas. Charles went off to London to watch the nails being driven into the coffin of his prosperity, and Enid after dressing in haste hurried to the hospital.

Day after day excitement shone in people's eyes and vibrated in their voices. At first the well-meaning citizens of Tudor Green did foolish things; but then soon a large and influential committee came into existence for the purpose of controlling effort, managing funds, and giving information. Almost unanimously Charles was elected chairman of this committee. Nobody now remembered his private faults. He who once had been something of a social pariah seemed to be chosen as the natural leader in the hour of public trial.

He rose to the height of the situation.

Bolton Lodge became like a central office. People besieged the house all day long. It was impossible to keep fixed hours for meals. One ate when there was time to eat. Enid and Gregory were entirely occupied at the old hospital, which already had begun to expand, joining hands with military organisations. Charlie spent his days at Brown's garage. Margaret went out every morning and came back in the evening, unquestioned as to where she had been.

Even when Charles was dining he granted interviews. Territorial officers in khaki sat beside his chair and perhaps took a snack with him while they talked of important matters. Mr. Hume the solicitor and Colonel Jackson of the club, who had somehow attached themselves to the remounts service and went about making lists of horses that could be commandeered, came to tell him that his mother's brougham horses were safe—first, as they said, because it would be unfair to deprive the old lady of carriage exercise, and secondly because the animals were beyond mark of mouth and useless for war purposes. Golf-playing friends came to ask for his influences. One wished to help the Army Service Corps, either on the supply side or in its motor transport. Another thought he might get into the Ordnance Department. Others had heard

that business men were required at the seaports, or that a new coast-guard force of untrained volunteers was to be formed, or that there were many vacancies in ambulance work. Still others merely wished to enrol as special constables.

But one and all were alike in wishing to help. That was the cry of everybody. "What can I do to help?"

The month of August ran on towards its end, and in Tudor Green the rapidity of the changes mirrored the march of those terrific events on the other side of the channel. Here too the bugles sounded at dawn and dusk. Columns of troops passed through the High Street. One saw more and more people in khaki. Red Cross Hospitals were opened and absorbed several old houses by the Precincts, on the hill, everywhere. The Crown and Sceptre, no longer an hotel, had been taken over at once. People worked late and early, but nobody got tired. They felt the tension, but as yet not the strain.

Charles gave his energy, his money, and himself to the cause. Bolton Lodge was at the disposal of England. Instead of closing rooms he allowed them to be used as billets for soldiers. A large number of waggons had been parked in the drive, some cart-horses were picketed on the side of the lawns, stacks of hay and straw filled the stable yard, processions of men carrying buckets of water issued from the back premises. Motor-cars with hurrying drivers ran in and out. Visitors blocked doorways. Strange loud voices made the panelled walls of the hall echo and resound. The once quiet place was truly unrecognisable.

And in the midst of all this bustling effort Roddy moved about doing nothing, looking pale, worried, and unhappy.

Several times he tried but failed to get a word with Charles.

"Father, I want to speak to you."

"Dear boy, you see how busy I am," said Charles. "Please don't interrupt me now."

Finally, however, the boy secured a few minutes of his father's attention.

"Daddy, you are so good," he began. "You have always done what I asked when you knew my heart was set on it."

Now I'm going to ask you the greatest favour of my life. Get me out to France."

Charles looked at him in amazement.

"What on earth could you do in France?"

"Why, fight," said Roddy.

It was curious that of all the people in this large group of Bolton Lodge and its friends, many of whom were by no means old or decrepit, and all wishing to do something in the war, Roddy was the only person who had expressed a desire actually to fight in it.

He went on pleading eagerly, saying that if Charles would only use influence he could easily get his son into the army. Commissions were being given very freely. They *wanted* people. Lord Kitchener was continually saying so.

But of course, as Charles replied, it was not to be thought of. Roddy was too young—not strong enough—not in any way fitted for such an ordeal.

"Don't make me go back to Mr. Kennedy," said Roddy in appealing tones.

"But what else can I do?" and his father explained that the home establishment was to be reduced. Life here would be on the smallest scale. Roddy would be in the way here. Of course if the war lasted—say a year hence—then perhaps! Roddy must wait.

"But I don't feel as if I could wait." There was a piteous expression in his face, making it like the face of a child, yet like Enid's too.

Charles had seen Enid just like that before she began to cry. "There, there, old chap;" and, purposely not looking at him, he patted his shoulder.

"I wish you could have helped me, Daddy," said the boy. "I thought you would."

Enid naturally said that it was splendid of him to have had such a wish. She told Gregory about it with the utmost pride.

The battle of the Marne was over and its glorious stalemate an established fact. The Germans were definitely stopped. Charlie had gone back to the public school, to drill in

the cadet corps. Roddy went back to the tutor's. His pale face and searching eyes were gone from house and garden. For the first time Enid did not go with him to see him off. Her time was no longer her own.

All through October and November one could perceive the depletion of adult males which was to continue unceasingly for four interminable years. The youngish footman at Bolton Lodge had long since disappeared. Two gardeners followed him—Charles's chauffeur and Enid's chauffeur had both gone, and in their place were almost elderly men. All the hearty young assistants were leaving the local shops. Everywhere one saw fresh gaps; every day the necessity of harder work and more generous self-sacrifice was imposed on those who remained to fill the gaps.

People had not a moment for themselves. On some days Enid and Charles were so completely occupied that they scarcely found time to speak to each other, and when they spoke it was hurriedly, just saying what they had to say and not pausing for amplifications or reflective comments.

"Margaret has been taken on. Did you know that?"

"Yes," said Charles. "She showed me her nurse's dress. Where is she?"

"Oh, up there, I suppose."

At the very beginning Margaret had pushed herself forward among the medical people, hanging about, officious, incompetent, getting in the way, and getting out of it because curtly ordered to do so; accepting snubs meekly, and returning to be snubbed again. Then soon she was seated in a large bare room with two other girls, writing or copying letters, quiet, assiduous, contented. At a large desk, seated also, was the colonel-doctor—middle-aged, stout, red-faced, breathing sterterously, but with a jolly laugh and an indomitable energy.

"Take this. You—please. I've forgotten your name."

"Margaret Derwent."

"Very well, Miss Derwent—To Captain Verinder's room. Quick, please."

Silent, swift, happy, Margaret hurried up and down.

Then she sat at the table again, scribbling hard, her long nose only a few inches above the paper, her thin fingers inky.

Now she was a nurse, and still working under the same red-faced chieftain, Colonel John Baines.

As well as at Tudor Green Charles had duties to perform in London, and these were becoming more and more important. The shipping world had passed entirely into the control of government. The men who hitherto had pursued personal enterprises were now the managers and advisers of the state. Charles and his colleagues served on new boards and dealt with whole groups of companies whose vessels had been thrown into a general pool. Sometimes he went to London and back twice in the day. Towards the end of November he was excessively hard-driven, really without a minute to spare.

It was just then that he received a telegram from Mr. Kennedy to say that Roddy had left Winchester without permission two days ago. As Bolton Lodge had seen no sign of Roddy both his parents were considerably alarmed by this information. But the morning's post brought them a letter from Roddy himself. His apology and explanation dispelled their immediate fear, only to give them another sort of anxiety. Roddy had enlisted as a trooper in a yeomanry regiment that was quartered at a small southern town. Enid and Charles were very greatly upset.

"You'll get him out of it?"

"Of course I shall get him out," said Charles. Roddy's disobedience made him feel angry, although he recognised something as noble as disturbing in an act that disclosed at once rashness, folly, obstinacy, and almost mad disregard of facts and realities. But he was more indignant with those yeomanry people for accepting a lad who was obviously under the correct age and no less plainly deficient in physique.

"I shall go down there at once," said Charles sternly, "and fetch him away."

Enid wanted to go too, but Charles thought he would get on best and quickest by himself.

"Tell him it is *I* who sent you," said Enid anxiously.

"And appeal to his love—for both of us . . . No, make the appeal as from me."

On a cold afternoon that followed a wet morning Charles and his splashed car arrived at the country town, and within twenty minutes he saw Roddy, tall and lank in khaki breeches, among a string of other men carrying bundles of hay through the gateway of a muddy lane. Then he had an interview with the adjutant of the regiment and another officer, who immediately agreed that if Mr. Derwent's son was under age he would be released on the father's application. But Charles could not take him away at once. Oh, no. They told Charles something that might have occurred to him, but had not. Roddy was on active service. It was the same here as in France. It was the same for all—territorials, old armies, new armies, everybody. A soldier who deserted, or withdrew from his unit without leave, was liable to be shot.

Charles stayed the night there, and they kindly allowed Roddy to dine with him at the hotel. After dinner he made the appeal, in Enid's name, to Roddy's sense of filial duty, his gratitude, and his love. In the morning he went back to London.

They had told him what to do in order to obtain the boy's release, and he set about doing it. But the process seemed maddeningly slow. Weeks passed and nothing happened.

Then one day Margaret talked to him about it.

"Hugh Fleming is at the War Office," she said. "If you like I'll go up with you to see him. He could probably speak the word of power."

Sir Hugh Fleming! The general! Oh, yes. Charles accepted the offer without hesitation.

He and his daughter, then, paid a morning call at the War Office. She had discarded her nurse's uniform, and she looked elegant and attractive in a close-fitting grey frock with black hat, white spotted veil, silk stockings, and buckled shoes. A bunch of violets on one side of her neck completed the costume, which altogether appeared to give satisfaction to the eyes of strangers; for wherever they passed, whether in the waiting-rooms or the big corridors, she was attentively

regarded. It was by no means easy to get access to Sir Hugh, but it would have been far more difficult if she had not been there. She spoke to minor officials very curtly and assumed an air of considerable authority with people who seemed a little more important.

At last they were ushered into the general's presence. He rose from a large unlittered table and shook hands with them. He was wearing a black morning coat, a black and white tie, slate-coloured trousers, and very neat patent leather boots. Charles had expected to see him in uniform with red tabs and gold. The civilian dress caused surprise and yet somehow was impressive. The tidiness of the room, its calm unruffled atmosphere, the courteous manner of its occupant, as of a person in no hurry, willing to spend as much time as anybody asked for, all gave confidence and aroused respect. One had heard so much about the bustle and confusion amongst those in high places.

A tall blond young man, with a very engaging manner, and also wearing civilian clothes, had pushed forward chairs. They all sat down, and Charles stated his business fully and at length—speaking now with great politeness of what he had hitherto described as the inexcusable delay.

"So you see where you come in, Hugh," said Margaret lightly. "We want you to speak the word of power."

"The word shall be spoken, madam," said the general, smiling at her and giving her a little soldierlike bow, a bend of the head with the back remaining stiff.

Then the nice well-bred young man made some notes at Charles's dictation, and the purpose of the visit was achieved. The young man ushered them out into the corridor.

But the general called to Margaret through the open doorway. She went back into the room, closing the door behind her, and she did not come out again for about five minutes, during which the charming kind young man talked to Charles in the corridor.

"What had he to say to you, M.?" asked Charles as they went away.

"He said we were just in time to get his help. He is going out to France to take command of a division."

Charles drove her to the District station at Westminster, whence she could catch a train for Tudor Green.

"Hullo," he said at parting. "You've lost your violets. How did you do that?"

"I must have dropped them," said Margaret. "Yes, I see the pin is gone. It doesn't matter. Bye-bye, Daddy."

In less than a week Charles received an official letter saying that Roddy was free and enclosing a copy of the order that had been sent to the regiment.

Armed with these documents he went to the country town and carried Roddy away to Winchester.

On this occasion he had an interview with the yeomanry colonel, a pleasant sunburnt man of about forty-five, one of those men who are like many other men and with whom you feel at once a complete confidence and ease. He sat on the edge of a table in a room at the back of the corn-chandler's house where he was billeted, and chatted freely while Roddy prepared for departure.

"If I had been in your place," said the colonel, "I think I should have left him here. For one thing, he'd have been perfectly *safe* with us;" and he smiled and blew the ash from his cigarette.

"Safe! How do you mean?"

"Well, I don't believe we shall ever get out to France."

The colonel, speaking now with a slight hint of bitterness, said they had been officially informed that they could not hope to get all their horses for another year at least. Everything was being done for the new armies and nothing whatever for the territorial force. He thought it was rather hard luck.

"He would have been safe with us!" Those words stuck in the father's memory.

Charles parted with his son in Mr. Kennedy's library at Winchester after long affectionate talks. They were good friends. But Roddy had a very disconsolate air, and every now and then he showed that blank unthinking look in his eyes. He only brightened when Charles repeated a promise he had made. As soon as possible Roddy should be sent to

Oxford—to any college that would accept him. At Oxford, after a little while, he might be able to join an officers' training corps.

Before the war there had been so many empty houses in Tudor Green that the municipal authorities, fearful as to rates, had talked of undertaking a strenuous campaign of advertisement in order to attract tenants. Now there was not a vacant house and scarcely a vacant room in the whole place. The invasion of the wounded soldiers had been followed by an invasion of Belgian refugees. In the High Street you heard people talking French and Flemish. In the district across the river, and far along the tram route, shops had been opened with foreign names above the windows. If you went inside you might find that the shopkeepers did not know a word of English.

Things, conditions, habits had all changed, were all different.

Charlie coming home from school for the Christmas holidays found that his favourite haunt, Brown's garage, had passed into the hands of the Army Service Corps. Brown was there, but no longer master in his own premises. It took Charlie several hours before he had made friends and consolidated his new position with the uniformed lorry-drivers. Margaret of course would get no holiday. Roddy was due to arrive two days after his brother's return.

Roddy, however, did not come. He had left Winchester, but Tudor Green waited for him in vain. He had gone to an infantry depot in a midland city and enlisted in the regular army.

Experience had taught Charles what steps to take, and he took them. Again he filled up forms, wrote letters, and had the honour to repeat his applications. It had taken weeks before; now months passed by. He used all his influence, pulled probable and impossible strings, but still without perceptible result. Sir Hugh Fleming was in France. There was no powerful friend at the War Office now to expedite matters.

Moreover Charles was soon aware that things had hardened greatly since last November. He still met with courtesy, but no sympathy was offered. He understood that the authorities felt there had been rather too much of this going into the army and being dragged out again. They were worried by too many faint-hearted mothers who, brave at first and assuring the world that their boys were every inch soldiers, now declared that they were temperamentally unfit for active combat, subject to nervous break-down, inclined to epilepsy, or anything else—anything that might avert the threatened translation from the training area to the battle field.

Charles was asked why he had not tried to obtain a commission for his boy. In all likelihood no difficulty would have been raised on the score of age. He asked in return if he could obtain a commission now. But the answer was no. Roddy a soldier in the ranks was a totally different person from Roddy a gentleman at large. Holding his present status he could only be given commissioned rank on the recommendation of his commanding officer, and such a recommendation could only be secured by Roddy's own efficiency, capability, proved suitability. It was up to Roddy himself to earn promotion.

In May he came home on three days' leave. He did not tell them, and neither Enid nor Charles could guess, the true significance of this unusual grace.

Dressed as a private, in coarse khaki, puttees, and immense thick boots, he looked incongruous at Bolton Lodge, somebody of no importance, indeed pitifully humble, and yet nevertheless he was treated by the old servants with a greater deference than they would have shown if waiting on a prince. Walking with his mother on the Parade, he saluted all officers who passed. If they went by in motor-cars he turned, brought his heels together with a click, and saluted the roadway. There evidences of drill and subordination made his companion's heart ache and almost bleed. Never had she loved him so dearly, or with such poignantly acute solicitude. He talked to her marvellously when they were alone, as they were every evening before he went to bed. She used to sit on the edge of the bed in his old room while

he unrolled his puttees or walked about in his breeches and shirt smoking one of the cheap cigarettes that were now his particular pleasure. Twice she went up in the middle of the night and sat by his bed in the darkness while he slept. He slept as peacefully as when he was a very little child.

Then he was gone again, and Enid felt as if something deep inside her had suffered an irreparable injury. The sources of her energy seemed to have failed. The work tired her. At the end of the day she looked white, exhausted, utterly done. She confessed to an immense fatigue, but of course had no thought of sparing herself. Dr. Laurie gave her a tonic, and she believed it did her good. At any rate she went on working as before.

In fact she and others were undergoing a common experience. The strain had begun to tell upon them. All these people in England were living on their nerves. The monstrous horrible war which they never saw, took no part in, but about which they were without respite thinking, was steadily depleting them of vital force, mercilessly wearing out their bodies and their minds. They hoped too highly, they feared too deeply. Rapid alternations of mood, sanguine expectations, cruel disappointments, the fluctuating curves of a mental life that once moved smoothly along an appointed line, but now had lost balance as well as direction; the undue stimulation of public news, the exaggerated depression caused by gloomy official warnings; the barren results and terrible casualty lists of Neuve Chapelle; the triumphant successes of an enemy contained only on that western front and marching with unimpeded armies all over eastern Europe, taking capitals, absorbing territories, devouring nations, issuing boastful manifestos—all these things together, during the warm bright months when the hawthorn bloomed again and the lilac flung its unchanged perfume to the pleasant airs, carried men and women into what might be termed the second phase. Too many of them asked not "When will the war end?" but "How will it end?" Even the necessity to answer them, to fight their doubts, to sustain their weakness, added to the strain.

At this time people were beginning to act strangely with-

out arousing comment, perhaps too without occasioning surprise.

Colonel John Baines, the medical chief, was going to France and taking with him several doctors and about twenty highly trained nurses. A largish group of people assembled at Tudor Green railway station to see him off. His wife was there, a stout comfortable woman, with two small children. Enid had a little talk with her. Enid and Gregory Lake had come from the old hospital and were accompanied by other members of their main committee. Margaret, not in uniform, but again dressed in her neat grey frock, stood on the fringe of the group watching and waiting for the train.

It came in slowly—a train that would have appeared incredible a year ago, and on an impossible journey, round the north of London, down here and on to Southampton, full of R.A.M.C. people instead of paying passengers, a train belonging to all railway systems or to none, a war train. It stopped, and there was much hand-shaking and bidding of farewells. "Good luck!"

Then just before the colonel got into his carriage he looked round.

"Oh, there you are."

Margaret was with him instantly.

"Good-bye, Jack," she said. "Take care of yourself. Don't run unnecessary risks."

"No, no, trust me. Good-bye, Margaret," and they kissed each other.

"You will ask for me," she said. "Remember your promise."

"Yes, yes, I'll ask for you. I'll go on asking for you."

The train moved slowly out. Margaret ran to the end of the platform and stood there waving a handkerchief. When she came back to the others she was sniffing and using the handkerchief to wipe her eyes. Enid and Gregory put themselves in front of her, as if to screen her from observation.

But Mrs. Baines and the two children were already ascending the station stairs. No one was looking or caring. People did queer things nowadays and nobody wondered.

A few days later Enid received a letter from Roddy. The envelope had on it the words "British Expeditionary Force," a red impression of a censor's stamp, and an officer's signature in a corner. Roddy had gone out to France with a draft. He hoped that they would soon be sent up to the line. He was quite well and perfectly happy.

The routine of the new life continued.

Enid and Charles worked as before, two voluntary servants of the nation, hoping and striving for the public welfare, but now harassed and weighed down with an immense private anxiety. Under these conditions their work was a little less efficient than it had been.

Enid failed to keep one or two appointments. Charles made a few mistakes. He found a great difficulty in learning the names of the men with whom he came into contact day after day. At first he was clever in knowing everybody at once and mentally recording their positions so that he might get at them again whenever they happened to be wanted; but now he blundered and confused himself. Towards the end of long wearisome interviews his mind often wandered.

The thought of Roddy was always between him and his thought of everything else. Sometimes he felt a sudden necessity to speak of him, even to strangers.

"I have a boy in the trenches," he said abruptly. "He oughtn't really to be there. He's too young."

"Is that so? I admire you for letting him go."

"I had no choice," said Charles.

He used to ask himself where was Roddy at this moment. In imagination he could see him marching along a dusty road, staggering perhaps under the cruel burden of his pack and equipment, almost dead-beat, but still keeping step with those others, all of whom were so much stronger than he, marching on—marching on. Or he saw him at night, on guard in a trench, his face brightly lit for a moment by one of those ascending flares from the German position that had been described by some wounded soldiers. People were able

to form a picture of the war now. Those actively engaged in it came home and told one about it. There were graphic articles by the authorised war correspondents. Innumerable photographs appeared in the illustrated newspapers.

Charles going back to Tudor Green sometimes spent five minutes at his club in Pall Mall for the sole purpose of studying these newspaper illustrations. He never looked at the casualty lists that were hanging on boards in the hall, but walked straight into the morning-room, speaking to nobody. He knew that relatives did not have to wait for the publication of the lists in order to receive the final atrocious news. They were being informed with extraordinary promptness and accuracy. Yet the sight of the list as he passed and the aspect of one or two elderly men wearing black ties renewed and gave strength to the overwhelming fear that was with him at all times and in all places.

The fear never left Enid either. Awake or asleep it was always there, a dark cloud lying on her very soul, not to be dissipated by the brightest sunlight, not to be rendered any darker by the blackest night. Her fear could be fought and temporarily subdued only by her swelling pride as she thought of Roddy's courage and endurance. *He was sticking it.* The weeks passed. He had been out there a month, two months, longer; and her first hope that he would fall ill quickly and be removed from danger had entirely disappeared. Moreover she was ashamed of having entertained it. She felt that it had been sacrilegious. It detracted from the grandeur of her son that he should have a cowardly mother. Oh, how grand, how marvellously noble and grand he was—her boy. "Oh, my Roddy!" In all his letters, and there had now been many, there was not a single complaint, a single hint at fatigue. Sometimes, rereading his letters, getting again the full sense of the marvellous things he said to her, she felt an elevation of the spirit that carried her completely out of herself, and seemed to fuse her consciousness in the undeviating will, the transcendent effort of our whole army. Yes, she must be worthy, of Roddy—and the others.

At this time people quoted lines from the Battle Hymn of the Republic. One saw the quotations everywhere. Oc-

asionally the entire poem was printed. Enid knew one verse by heart and whispered it to herself again and again.

“He hath sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call
 retreat;
 He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgement seat;
 Oh, be swift my soul to answer Him; be jubilant, my feet!
 Our God is marching on.” . . .

Roddy was marching on.

The war was a year old, and the number of wounded men at Tudor Green became so great that huts were being built to supplement accommodation which already had been stretched to its utmost limits. Still more wounded poured in. The flood tide of death swept forward, throwing up its living débris wider, further. The black dresses of bereaved women seemed a prescribed costume, there were so many of them. But the war continued.

The tornado of artillery fire swelled louder. It was said that the sound of the guns had been heard at Bexhill and Hastings. The slaughter increased; chaos became more chaotic; the nation's uncounted gold thrown across the seas flowed as if no longer a solid metal, but merely an explosive powder; ruin, waste, destruction were being followed as the sole desire of humanity. For the war continued. Those who wept because of it must still labour for it. Nothing was allowed to stop. Broken hearts went on beating.

At the end of September came the battle of Loos. It was well planned, gallantly attempted, but somehow it did not quite succeed. It cost a large number of brave lives—including Roddy's.

II

HE was dead.

On that morning when the telegram arrived Enid went up into his room, and coming out locked the door and took the key away with her.

The housekeeper, who saw her on the upper staircase, withdrew hurriedly towards a service door in order to avoid the meeting; but Enid called to her.

"Oh, Mrs. Lane! I'll take charge of Mr. Roddy's room in future. Tell the servants. When it wants cleaning I'll clean it myself. No one else must."

"Yes, ma'am. I'll give strict orders."

"You can find me a scrubbing brush and soap and dusters?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am—indeed yes."

Mrs. Lane was scared and miserable. The way Enid spoke, the look in her face, were alike dreadful to Mrs. Lane. It was all so unexpected, so unnatural.

"I've had the blinds pulled down, ma'am."

"Oh, why did you do that? You needn't have. It's quite fine, isn't it? I opened the windows to let in the sunshine. The room will need airing. And flowers will be required—fresh flowers every day, if possible."

Downstairs the servants were talking about her in hushed voices, asking from minute to minute where she was. And where was Mr. Derwent? Still in the library? Had Mr. Lake come?

At the hospital her fellow workers and the higher staff talked about her all the morning.

"Where's Mrs. Derwent. . . . Oh, isn't she here yet? . . . I'm afraid I can't answer till Mrs. Derwent has been consulted."

"Here's a 'phoned order," said one of the matrons, with a pink paper in her hand, "saying we're to have ambulances at Charing Cross for fifty. We haven't got them. Besides, how can we take in fifty?"

"Didn't Mrs. Derwent say that Esher would find room for

another twelve of our convalescents? . . . Anyhow I should ring up the depot about the ambulances. They have probably had the order too. . . . Who's the new man there? Lieutenant Wilmot! . . . Has anyone seen Mrs. Derwent? Ask the office."

"She has lost her son."

"I know. It is very sad. Have the Gordons had any news about their nephew? He is missing. . . ."

"The Derwents have lost their eldest boy."

"Yes, Mrs. Burroughes told me so. I am sorry. Poor Mrs. Derwent! She was so proud of him."

"I know she was. She'll be terribly cut up. . . . But I hope she isn't going to leave us stranded. Not one of the strength returns is signed."

"Ask Mr. Lake. Find Mr. Lake. Send Mr. Lake round to her."

She could not go to the hospital, but in the afternoon she attended to its business with the aid of Gregory Lake. He was at the house three times during the day.

At dusk she and Charles were in Roddy's room, sitting on his bed, both of them weeping. She had her arms round her husband, and although really half-mad with grief she struggled for words that might drive away the most harrowing of his thoughts. With immense generosity and self-repression she had set herself to this task from the moment that he disclosed the thought to her.

"No, no, it isn't true."

They sat there silent, she holding him fast in her arms, shivering a little, but not moving. Every minute the room grew darker.

"I killed him," Charles began again, in the same toneless voice, and speaking very slowly, as if repeating something that he was trying to learn. "But for me he might have been safe. If I hadn't interfered he would have been alive now."

"How can you say so?" Enid clung to him more strongly, held him closer to her. "Never did anyone have a kinder—a

more loving father. And Roddy's love never wavered. In his very last letter—Oh, God!" And she burst into one of her fits of noisy sobbing.

Charles went on in that slow toneless voice, staring at the window, now dark, where Roddy had stood and looked out at imaginary things. "Yes, I brought about his death. I interfered without understanding. I should have left him in the yeomanry. Or I might have got him a commission."

"No, no," sobbed Enid. "Nothing could have altered it. Fate—only fate."

Throughout the day Margaret had remained at home. With red-rimmed eyes and contracted features she wandered about the house, sometimes following her mother at a distance, again and again timidly making efforts to give sympathy and share her sorrow. She was waiting now in the corridor as Enid came along it towards her bedroom. She made another effort and again failed. Enid spoke to her kindly, as to a friend, and yet nevertheless refused the girl's companionship.

"No, dear Margaret, nothing can do me any good. But thank you, dear;" and her voice broke. "Try to comfort your father if you can."

Next day Gregory Lake brought her papers, letters, and forms from the hospital, and she worked through all these at home. In the afternoon she went to the hospital, walking there alone. She thought that a little air, a little exercise, might strengthen her. She wanted to keep strong and well.

Passing through the neglected garden at Bolton Lodge she had a queer thought that it as well as she had put on mourning for Roddy. Her black dress seemed no gloomier, no sadder than the uncut grass of lawns, the weeds on the dingy gravel paths, or even the dahlias, hollyhocks, and other autumn flowers that without being cared for had bloomed once more in the long herbaceous borders. The whole place seemed to her dim and colourless.

But her impression of this altered tone was just the same

when she came out into the open roadway. For her, as for so many many women already, another great change had come upon the aspect of things. She saw it in her turn. The shadow of inward anguish fell from thousands of hearts, darkening the mid-day sunlight, taking away the bright colour even from flowers.

She went on working, but every day she spent some time in Roddy's room—a few minutes, many minutes, more than an hour. She never knew how long. Time did not exist in Roddy's room. It belonged to eternity.

She kept it swept and garnished, as she had told Mrs. Lane that she intended to do. It was like a guest chamber prepared for the guest who would never come. It was like a shrine, splendid in its bare simplicity, gracious and beautiful as the spirit of the saint in whose honour it had been made. It was not owned by her, but by some one who had once lived and was now dead.

She had no future. But in there everything was speaking to her of the past, whispering to her, tearing her heart with memories—his garments that she brushed, refolded, and put away again; his few books that she dusted; an empty box with the name of his favourite cigarettes—"gaspers," as he had called them—that she touched with reverent fingers. In the deep drawer of his dressing-table there were a quantity of the letters that she had written to him at Winchester, still in their envelopes, and all tied into packets with common string. She wept over them, but would not touch them. They had been hers, but they became his—and he had kept them, kept them.

Her tears fell fast and faster. Then at last she came away, locking the door, and removing the key.

Not on the next Sunday, but the one after it, she went to the morning service at that church which, as she had thought sometimes, was bound up with so much that had happened during her life from girlhood onwards.

In the porch a black-dressed woman of about her own age, a total stranger, turning to her, took her hand, showed her a grief-ravaged face, and passed on without uttering a

word. It was the touch of the condemned. They were sisters in adversity—that was all.

There were more black dresses in the church, one at least in every pew. They showed darkly against the khaki coats of soldiers on leave sitting here and there. The church was fuller than it used to be in peace time; everybody who could went to church now. But the war, the atmosphere of war, was here in God's house as in every other house. The flags of some regiment or other hung out in the chancel. The old vicar officiated, with the aid of an elderly curate that Enid had never seen till to-day. One after another the curates who used to play tennis in her garden and make themselves pleasant at her afternoon parties had become army chaplains and gone away. Only the choir boys were still as before in full force.

With their limpidly clear voices they sang warlike psalms and hymns chosen because of the martial swing, the stimulating spirit in them—*Onward, Christian Soldiers, Lord of Glory*. The two old priests prayed for the war. Then one of them preached about the war.

Enid followed the service as attentively as was possible to her.

She did not want to think, but her thoughts never stopped. Once she was thinking of that night such a little while ago—only five years—when she was here, miserable and desperate because of a trifle—because of nothing at all. What was the importance to her now of that episode of the girl with whom he ran away? What was it now to Charles himself? What had it ever mattered, with its brief passionate joy for him, its wrath and shame, the burning jealousy, the lacerated pride for her? Broken vows, the stolen love of husbands and wives, their physical fidelities or infidelities, their petty consolations, their vindications and revenges or reprisals, the abandonment of any man's faith, the surrender of any woman's chastity—how could she have ever fancied that these trifles had real weight in the terrible scale of essential things? Life and death matter. Nothing else. It seemed to her that till the hour of her bereavement she had never guessed, much less understood, what real pain could be. Every day, every month,

every year through which she had passed were added together as the prelude or preparation for what she was now suffering.

She thought with pity and fear of Charles's grief—the agony of grief that gave no respite, that showed not the least abatement. Poor Charles, his sorrow was rendered terrible by remorse. Self-reproaches, baseless perhaps but unconquerable, kept him stretched on the rack of an unceasing torment.

Remorse! But if she avowed the truth, remorse was torturing her as well as him. Each time that she had courage enough to look deep into the past, searching for causes and tracing consequences, it mingled with every strong or vivid recollection. If either of them had failed in that protecting duty which parents owe their children, it was she not Charles. It was she, not Charles, who really knew Roddy; and knowing him she should have resolutely planned for him the sheltered life for which only he was fitted, the guarded, sometimes hidden life which danger could not reach, and in which he might have been happy, as a child possessing the noble feelings of a man. If she had loved him wisely she could have saved him.

She had recognised the arrest in his development, but had refused to admit it; she had seen as none had seen the weakness of his intellect when compared with the normally firm minds of her other children; she had known of his physical disabilities; she had been terrified by those secret things that he said to her in his fits of exaltation. But her love and pride overmastered her prudence. Or she had been too cowardly to face the truth. She had cherished the fitful signs of brain power; she had told herself that so noble a spirit must be allied to vigorous intellectual faculties, dormant still but presently about to expand. Then what she hoped for seemed to be happening. Roddy was unlike other people only because he had a sweeter, a grander nature. He began to say brilliant things, and she cherished them, quoted them. Then came the wonder and delight of his successful poems. Roddy was a poet, a genius. He was different, a little strange, sometimes incomprehensible, because the plane of his thought lay so much higher than the ordinary commonplace level of a stupid world. She gloried in the poetry that she could neither

understand nor really admire; yet even in her happiness there came again and again something of dread. To be a poet does not mean that one is altogether sane.

She had never faced the truth, and she could not face it now. She tried to stop thinking about it. Then suddenly, inexorably, the past gave up one of its recorded pictures, precise, clear, as if a recollection of yesterday.

But the thing itself was old, belonging to a night years ago, long before he went to Winchester. She had kept it secret, never telling anybody, although all the time she knew she should have spoken—to Charles, to Dr. Laurie—to somebody who could fathom its significance, and give advice.

In the middle of the night she woke with a start, feeling that she had been disturbed and roused from sleep. She fancied that the door was open and that somebody had entered the room. Hastily she turned on the electric light.

The light showed her Roddy standing in the doorway, looking at her but not seeming to see her, his whole face completely blank.

She sprang out of bed, went to him, talked to him, and for a little while he took no notice of her, did not seem aware of her presence. Then it was as though she had reached him, or that he had returned to her from a remote distance.

"What is it? Did you want me, Roddy?"

Yes, he said. He could not sleep. He was afraid.

"Afraid! That's not like my brave foolhardy Roderick. What are you afraid of?"

"I don't know;" and his eyes were going dull. That horrible vacancy tried to creep over his face. Soon he began to shiver.

"I can't be alone ever," he said, shivering. "I have been too much alone. I want somebody to be with me always. Mother, I know now. It's myself I'm afraid of."

He terrified her, he made her cold with terror.

She took him up to his room and sat by his bedside until he fell asleep. She sat there till dawn.

But this too she had kept to herself. She meant to disclose it, but postponed the disclosure. Then after a time she felt that to speak of it would be like betraying Roddy. He

told her he was all right; he scarcely seemed to remember what he had said to her. But she remembered, she had not even yet been able to forget, those moments when his eyes seemed sightless and he did not know his mother.

And now—now, God—Merciful God—Redeemer of mankind—in a moment, out there, amidst the carnage and the smoke, the light went out of his eyes, the blank look came into his face for ever.

It was the priest who had made her echo these sacred words in the silent utterance of her thought. The priest had said the words. Presently he gave the blessing.

“The Peace of God be amongst you and remain with you always.”

Sunlight shone through the painted window above the altar, making rainbow flames with the red and blue and yellow bits of glass, but Enid could not see the brightness of the colour. The cross and the figure, with the silver flashing at its base, were dark and cold. The figure itself was dreadful, sinister. It looked like a stabbed soldier who had been stripped naked by the pitiless murdering foe.

She remained kneeling, as the other women in black were doing. They were there, on their knees, with bowed heads, when all the congregation had gone out. Before she lowered her head she looked at the crucifix and then shut her eyes. “The Saviour of mankind. . . The God-man who suffered, and was buried, and rose again.” . . . She did not pray. She talked to herself.

. . . “Oh, I must believe. It is the only thing to help me. For my darling’s sake. I *will* believe—I do believe. My perfect Christlike boy, you too have died for mankind. Not in vain—oh, not in vain. You gave your beautiful noble life for us, but you are not dead. You will never die.”

III

NEXT morning she was at the hospital. She resumed her work and went on with it steadily.

But Charles was unable to work any more. He resigned his post as chairman of the local organisation. He still went

to London, but not for work. Sometimes he sat all day at his club in Pall Mall, thinking, thinking.

He had not hated the enemy till they killed Roddy. Now a passionate longing for vengeance consumed him. He thought of their past history—their brutal disregard of all that makes for nobleness in human beings. They had always been what they were to-day—gross brutes like Bismarck, lean hounds like Moltke, and their vulgar heavy-drinking, heavy-eating kings. Pigs! Wild boars! The officer class—strutting louts in spiked helmets, bullying their square-headed dull-eyed soldiers, hitting them with the flat of the sword, smashing their fists into defenceless faces of raw peasants, each one doing his part in the animalising of the nation, each sharing the guilt of making the cursed war-machine that should sooner or later drench the world in blood and tears!

He wanted a colossal punishment to overtake them. He had wild thoughts of a general who would pursue a whole army into dense woods and burn them to death, or hold them in barren valleys beneath rocky hills and starve them, or drive them into the sea and drown them. He imagined the general's despatch—"In view of the necessity of showing that *frightfulness* is a weapon that we too can employ, I considered myself justified in refusing a surrender and pushing the operations to a remorseless end."

During these bitter reveries, these dreams that embodied his hate, he often felt an intense longing for personal revenge. A hundred times since the blow fell upon him he had wished himself dead, and he thought often of how freely he would give his life if only he could be placed face to face with Roddy's murderers. Oh, to kill some of them himself with his own hand—to shoot, stab, and kill. Then let them kill him. At least he would have relinquished life for his dead boy and expiated his own criminal blunder.

Gradually this thought of expiation filled his mind and excluded all else. Expiation. He wanted to suffer for his crime. He must follow the road that Roddy had taken. He must go through every stage of labour, fatigue, pain in that journey during which Roddy's footsteps may have stumbled but his heart never wavered or failed. If he were killed, so

much the better. He would be killed. He did not doubt this. He wanted it.

His desire grew overpowering. He felt an imperious necessity to get out there, to the fighting line. Perhaps he was not altogether sane. Perhaps very few people were, by the end of 1915.

A wounded officer told him that the only chance at his age of ever reaching France was to join the Army Service Corps. Once in France things would be altogether different. Out there useful people were quickly noticed. If he did well he might be able to push his way into any service he wished for.

The Army Service Corps had been very unjustly dealt with by critics who spoke of it as a shelter or bolt-hole for young and active men who ought to have been in the infantry, whereas a sort of voluntary combing-out was in progress within the corps itself. Young men were leaving it and older men were taking their places every day. Mr. Charles Derwent, a patriotic gentleman of uncertain age but a good rider and well accustomed to the care of horses, was quite acceptable among other stop-gaps. With little difficulty he obtained a commission as lieutenant.

Four months later he was still in England; but in the next month he and his new friends, with horses and waggons, were under orders for France.

He came home to settle all business and to say good-bye to his wife and his mother.

Old Mrs. Derwent took him for a drive round the Chase, and afterwards they had tea together at Acacia Road. The quiet room was just as it had always been, except that she had put an enlarged photograph of Roddy in uniform on the table by her chair where she could always see it.

"Father and son," she said, touching Charles's leather belt and then running her hand along his khaki sleeve. "Both of them soldiers. Ah, well, I never thought I should live to see these days."

She was shaken, yet resigned, meekly accepting everything.

But all at once she asked him if he was clear in his conscience. Was he quite sure that it was right for him to go?"

"Mother, I don't know," he said humbly. "I feel that I must go."

"Because it is your duty, Charles, or for other reasons?"

He did not answer this second question, and she asked him a third.

"Wouldn't you be of greater service—wouldn't you be fulfilling your duty better—by staying here?"

"I don't know," he said again. "No—I am of no use here. Mother dear, I'm done for;" and he spoke of Roddy.

"Bless you, Charles," she said at parting. "God guard you. I shall pray for your safe return. . . . Yes, I shall pray. That's all that is left to me—to pray."

"You'll take care of yourself—and, and see Dr. McGrigor if you are ever in the least ill."

"Oh, yes, I'll be careful. Peckham makes me. You'll say good-bye to Peckham, won't you?"

Then in two days he was gone.

As the year 1916 grew older all the talk in England ran upon the great offensive. If the French could hold out at Verdun until the summer the British would be ready not only to relieve all pressure, but to deliver such a smashing blow as might bring the enemy to his knees wailing for peace. Preparations for the coming attack were on such a gigantic scale that any attempt to conceal them would have been futile.

At this time Charlie Derwent with a dozen other hefty boys from his school had been lent to a munitions factory in the neighbouring town. Enid reported this to his father, saying she was sure he would approve of her having given permission. Charles of course must approve of it, as of everything else that she did, whether in business or private affairs. She was his attorney, all powerful in everything that concerned him. As an ordinary citizen he had ceased to exist. He was a dust-coloured ant in that vast creeping ant-heap known as the British Expeditionary Force—or B.E.F.

Indeed those initials were known by now even to little children who had not learned to read and write. Their fathers and mothers, people in every walk of life, politicians, clergymen, journalists, and everybody else repeated them so often. It had become the one task of England, straining its utmost resources, to provide B.E.F. with all that it could possibly want. What B.E.F.—combative, departmental, or organic—might care to ask for must somehow be supplied.

For instance, the medical services in France were making heavy demands; but everything was granted them. They asked for beds by the thousand, for lint and bandages in hundreds of tons, for whole railway trains, fitted with berths and vestibules, three and four at a time; and all these things were sent out to them. One day they asked for a nurse called Margaret Derwent. She was immediately sent to them.

That doctor-colonel had kept his promise. Fortunate young woman! Her Tudor Green associates clustered round her as she packed her slender traps. "My congrats. . . . And mine too! . . . Don't forget us. . . ." Within a week she was on duty at a casualty clearing station near Silvestre-le-Grand; working hard by day, and sleeping as well as she could at night—sleeping under the Red Cross, but not sleeping safely, because the place was mercilessly bombed from the air. Her first patient was killed in his bed; and the injured man on each side of him was further mangled as he lay.

"Margaret is in France," said Enid in a letter to Charles, "but I don't know where. I wonder if you will meet her."

Like thousands of other wives, Enid was writing to her husband frequently.

"My own dear Charles," she had said, "since you tell me my letters are a comfort to you I shall write to you every day. I loved your description of the post corporal and the mule cart bringing you the mail. Don't expect news or long letters. But my daily scrawl shall keep you in touch with your home and those who love you.

"Everybody here thinks you splendid to have gone."

She used to put the day of the week only at the top of her letters. The posts were rapid and unfailing.

"Thursday. . . It was impossible to get all the splints and crutches we require. So we have started a big carpenter's shop, and Gregory is working in it with Mr. Egan and Mr. Knight and another of your golf-playing friends. Strictly between ourselves he had been of less use lately. He could not keep pace with us. The dear fellow got fussed and rattled, and then muddled things. Everybody noticed. He still does a good deal for me, and is most useful in copying notes. I, of course, understand him and don't hurry him. . . ."

"Monday. Miss Lacey has married Mr. Herapeth, an elderly clergyman. He came here to replace Mr. Robins. Another marriage that may interest you is Jane Anderson and Doctor Cunningham. She has been driving his car for the last few months. The young girls in all classes of society seem to be marrying soldiers on leave. It is very imprudent, but one cannot blame them. . . ."

"Saturday. Sooner or later America is coming into the war. There is a piece of real news for you. Now I will tell you from whom I have it. My sister Adelaide!"

And she briefly related the substance of her sisters' latest communication. They were firmly settled in California, where they had lived for a long time, and they had no intention of ever leaving it. The climate was delightful, and it admirably suited Kate, whose health had somewhat broken down. Adelaide, once the invalid, was extremely strong and well. She had little leisure, because most of her time was occupied in looking after Kate.

"Tuesday. You really are magnificent.

I love you for being modest about it, but of course it means that you have done great things. If you had not won golden opinions and been highly valued, you would not have been transferred to the Artillery.

So now my man is a gunner and wears the badge

with the wheels. My dear, I am so proud of you. I know how glad you will be to leave 'the livery stable.' But really you ought not to speak of the A.S.C. like that. They have served your turn. . . ."

Once she wrote him an enigmatical letter. It was about her friends the Tathams. She reminded him of how she had dropped them or let them slide; but he did not remember that any coldness had arisen. He had thought that she and they were still allies.

"The real reason," she said, "was that Angela Tatham had become troublesome. Richard Tatham was never any good, too lazy for words. Now he has somehow disgraced himself in the army. From time to time I have given her money. But I told her it could not go on indefinitely. Of late she has been more importunate than ever. One is sorry for anybody who is in trouble, but with her it has been like blackmail, and one has so many other claims. If she should ever write to you, please disregard her letter. Send it straight to me. She has become very reckless and does not mind what she says."

Then a day came when she sent him grievous tidings.

"Sunday. My dearest Charles, this letter is going to cause you great sadness. I have tried to prepare you for your loss. Dear mother passed away at five o'clock this morning. I was with her. Dr. Laurie says he never saw anything more peaceful. As I told you, Dr. McGrigor before he left Tudor Green said he was sure she could not last through another winter. I am writing to him. He is at Salonika. I grieve with you, my dearest, and for myself, too. Oh, she was good to me—so very good—always."

And throughout this time Enid was receiving letters not only from Charles, but from other people, most of them sad letters, and one or two exceedingly troublesome. She had been painfully disturbed by a letter from Lady Fleming, wife of General Sir Hugh Fleming.

It was in the third person. Lady Fleming presented her compliments and wished to know if Mrs. Derwent was aware of or in any way countenanced the disgraceful conduct of her daughter, Miss Margaret Derwent. She said that the General, instead of coming home, spent his last leave alone in Paris with Miss Derwent. It was a scandal and everybody knew about it. She further said that to her mind the outrageousness of an unmarried girl deliberately coming between a married man and his wife in this manner was utterly disgusting—more especially if done in wartime. Then, contradicting herself, she announced that she would make it her business to let everybody know of Miss Derwent's scandalous behaviour.

Enid went to London to consult Mr. Ansell, the family solicitor, and they sent Lady Fleming an answer that he described as "a real stinger." After reminding her ladyship of the law in regard to libel and slander, they threatened her with dire consequences if she ever dared to repeat her odious allegations or insinuations, and in order to be ready with writs and such proper engines of punishment they expressed a desire to be immediately referred to Lady F's lawyers.

Enid did not say a word to Charles about all this. But she wrote to Margaret, saying that she thought she ought to report what Lady Fleming had stated although she sincerely hoped it was not true, and begging Margaret in any event to be more prudent and circumspect.

After a little delay Margaret replied.

Her letter, written, as Enid saw, with a rapid but firm hand, had the words "Dear Mother" for its beginning. Margaret said that the statement was substantially true. She had been in Paris with the general—but not alone with him. One of his A.D.C.'s and Lady Cynthia Pollard had accompanied them.

"But if it had been alone I should have gone all the same. I went because he is fond of me and it helps him to have me there sometimes. He is not in love with me. I am not in love with him. Before the war it was dif-

ferent, and perhaps he liked me in another way or was beginning to. But that is over and done with. It ended with us as it did with other people. This is not a time for love-making. People have other things to think of—decent people.”

Enid said to herself “That is true.” She stopped reading. “Yes,” she reflected, “I recognise that as a general fact. . . . Poor little Margaret. I have wronged her in my thoughts. Besides, she is so different from me. Her nature is so cold. She has not the feelings of my generation. I must never judge her by putting myself in her place.”

Then Enid read the end of the letter.

*“I am very anxious about Hugh. He ought to have gone sick a month ago, but he won’t. He is booked for command of a corps. Lady Fleming is an old fool. Don’t let her bother you. Send her to the devil.
In haste, with love, Margaret.”*

IV

TOWARDS dusk on a winter’s evening a gunner officer was riding homeward through a village not far from the line. Feeling rather tired after a longish round, he was entertaining pleasant thoughts of food, rest, and ultimate sleep. But at the bottom of the village a motor-cyclist stopped him and gave him a written paper.

It was an order to go to the headquarters of an infantry brigade in the line and discuss questions concerning an observation post and some recent requests for the fire of a certain battery.

That was the way in France. As soon as you had done one thing you were given another thing to do. When you believed that all was finished, all began again. The last moment at night when you had pulled off one boot and were about to pull off the other boot, you received an unexpected

order that compelled you to get both boots on together. This particular officer, being a person of general utility rather than an expert, and perhaps considered as the servant of all jobs, received even more of such orders than was usual.

He turned his horse's head and rode up the slope down which he had just come. He was tall and thin, a hard-visaged resolute-looking person, with a grey moustache, a long nose, and an occasional grin. He grinned now, emerging from the village and coming out into the incredibly ugly scene of ruin and desolation that was presented to view by the open country. "Hold up, old chap," he said, patting the horse's neck; and then he jogged along the uneven roadway at a steady trot. He was Charles Derwent of Tudor Green.

The road ran parallel to the line, and he had to go six or seven miles to reach his destination. Broken walls, shattered trees, weeds that had grown breast high, shell holes full of muddy water, chalk banks, roofless cottages, church towers in fragments—all that composed the hideousness of the now familiar landscape passed as a panorama that is no longer worth observing. But he looked with strong interest at all living human things. And these were all soldiers.

Sappers came by, gunners from a battery, signallers with rods and wires. Then, at a point where the road turned and crossed a devastated railway track, he met infantry. They were two companies of a relieved battalion that had issued from a communication trench. He heard the rattle of their arms and equipment and then the words of command before he saw them themselves, and he pulled up his horse and drew aside to let them pass.

In the fading light they looked grey and ghostly. Mud-stained, haggard of face, weary of limb, they marched very slowly, yet keeping their ranks correctly, the little stream of steel hats oscillating to the rhythm of an even step. They were marching to the shelter of barns, the warmth of blankets, the possibility of extended bodies and undisturbed sleep, after completing their ten days or two weeks of the continuous danger and unspeakable discomfort of trench duty.

Charles watched them with intent eyes. That was what Roddy had done. Roddy had looked like that—like all the

others. If his ghost had passed by now in those ranks it would not have been recognisable. Charles waited till the last of them had gone, and then rode on thinking of his son.

Soon night fell.

The red lamp, a spot of crimson seen from afar in the darkness, would have led him to the brigade office even if he had not known where it lay. But in fact he was sufficiently acquainted with the whole of the sector. He could find his way about as well by night as by day.

This village, close to the line, had become merely a heap of ruins. In what had once been its pleasant tree-shaded square surrounded by the church, the school, the mayor's house, and the high wall of a villa garden, there were many busy people. One heard the sound of horses shaking their bits and the creak of axles. Limbered waggons of the infantry stood waiting. A flash now and then from electric torches showed men at work loading them with bombs and trench stores. Two motor ambulances were also waiting for their customary load. Charles saw stretcher-bearers bringing some wounded men as he dismounted and looked round for anybody who would take care of his horse. A young corporal in charge of waggons offered to do this for him.

To one not accustomed to the place and time it all might have seemed strange, malign, even awe-inspiring—these silent labours under the cover of darkness, the cautious flickers of light, the intermittent rifle fire and the occasional bang of guns, with death so close if not actually on the spot.

But Charles, the habituated, was unimpressed. He went down into a lamp-lit cellar and there transacted his business with the brigade. Coming up again he found the staff-captain talking to the guardian of his horse.

"Why did they send you," said the staff-captain, "if you weren't sure of the track?"

The young corporal explained that the regimental transport officer had gone sick, the transport sergeant was with the rations party, and he himself had brought these waggons by the roads, not understanding that he would have to take them on in a short cut over the open ground. He seemed

without any confidence in his ability to do this, a little nervous, a little troubled in mind. He was very young.

"But the battalion want the stuff," said the staff-captain. "They're in a hurry. If you go round by the road it'll take hours. . . . Oh, you can't miss the track. Go straight past the calvary, then bear away to——"

Charles interposed by volunteering his services. He knew the track. He would be glad to go across with the corporal and show him the way.

"Thank you, sir," said the corporal, and he moved towards his waggons.

The staff-captain, however, told Charles that there was no occasion to put himself out in this manner. Certainly not. That chap would manage all right.

"Besides," he added, "it's none too healthy up there. They were shelling it hard this afternoon."

But Charles said he really wanted to go. He would visit that observation post. Now that he was so near, it would be a pity not to take the opportunity.

"Well, it's very decent of you. . . . Good night."

The staff-captain returning to the cellar spoke to the brigade-major.

"That's a good plucked 'un—that old chap."

"Oh—Derwent? Yes," said the brigade-major, looking up from his papers, "I've a great respect for Derwent. . . . So has the G.O.C."

Meanwhile Charles and the corporal had started on their adventurous little journey. They concluded it without trouble. Once they came under a common nocturnal annoyance of these open spaces—the drifting bullets from hostile machine-guns.

"Get a move on," said Charles; and they trotted, cantered, with the waggons hopping and lurching behind the horses.

Arrived at the dug-outs of battalion headquarters, he asked the corporal if a spare feed could possibly be found for his horse.

"Yes, indeed, sir," said the corporal cheerfully and gratefully.

Charles went down into the headquarters mess, found the adjutant, talked to the colonel, and asked for a guide to take him to the observation post—or “o pip,” as they called it.

Then soon he was in the trenches, following his guide round innumerable traverses, splashing along submerged boards here and there, with the muddy water above his spurs sometimes. At last he was chatting with the tenant of the “o pip,” a very neat little place the security of which depended entirely on its unobtrusiveness. It was, of course, amply provided with telephone lines, and from it Charles made a report to his own headquarters. In response he was given something else to do. It would be just as well if he now paid a visit to the battery in question and talked to them too.

Out of the trenches again, he mounted his replenished horse and rode away to the battery, feeling a bit cold about the legs, extremely hungry, and slightly more tired than he had been six hours before.

After the battery visit, he rode back to bed. The night remained dark but clear, with stars shining plainly. Jogging along he looked at them, picking out, on his right hand, that most friendly and useful of all constellations, the Plough or Great Bear.

The kindly Plough and its pointers gave one the north. With the Plough to your right, you knew that you were leaving the enemy behind you. Keeping the Plough on your left, you knew that you were approaching the enemy. If the Plough was on your left when you erroneously thought you were going home, an accident could happen. You might go right through a gap in our trenches and on into the German position. It would be stupid of you—but such accidents had occurred.

Already he had much of interest to look back upon.

He had passed through the glorious sunlit horror of the Somme battle; he had survived the midnight devastation of the successful Ancre, with death invisible, rising out of darkness in fountains of slime, striking and burying in the same tremendous gesture; he had talked and laughed with friends,

and an hour, half an hour, five minutes later, had looked at their dead masks. Yes, already he could count himself as one injured to the war. Yet, although he moved among the fighters, taking many of their risks, it seemed to him that he was as far away as he had ever been from the attainment of the object that had brought him to France. He himself had struck not a single blow. Except as prisoners he had never seen a German face to face.

He was strong, healthy, active, doing his duty, but not fighting as Roddy had fought. That idea of expiation, of following Roddy's path to the end as a pilgrimage of atonement, still held his mind completely. To this extent he was still not really sane. He could be happy in his work, feeling its exhilaration and excitement, its picturesqueness, its unchanging interest; but whenever he had time to think he was most miserably unhappy. In his sleep, when not too tired to dream, he dreamed of Roddy. He dreamed that Roddy came to him, pale and reproachful, no longer alive but dead; and speaking to him as the dead speak, not with words that one can hear but with their aspect alone, Roddy asked what his father had done for him. Why was his father delaying? Why did not he fulfil his promises?

But now the dreamless nights and the days during which he did not think at all became more and more numerous. Physical health, the constant sense of responsibility, as much fatigue as he could support without collapse—these were the things that obliterated the power to think. In truth his was the experience that each and all underwent in the armies of France. War on this front took from one everything that one had to give. It permitted nothing to be withheld. It asked for its needs not only one's body and one's mind, but one's very soul. It gave no respite, it granted no real leave, it admitted of only one excuse for supineness or inattention—and that was death.

Charles, surrendering himself to the war, passed into the phase of automatism that was by no means unusual out there. He did his duty efficiently but unexcitedly. Each day sufficed. It was born and it died. Then another day took its place, exactly as all these soldiers were doing when their

comrades fell. He lived without looking forward or backward.

The next phase was when there came not only an inability to think, but an inability to feel. He reached it, together with thousands of others, in due course. Nothing shocked him, nothing disturbed him. He ignored all that did not concern the war and the war's affairs.

He found an extreme difficulty in answering Enid's letters. Other letters he left unanswered. The office news, the knowledge that instead of being ruined he was growing rich, gave him no pleasure. All that sort of thing he met with simple indifference. The war possessed him. Nevertheless it sometimes had a strange unreality. It was like a dream. But he used to tell himself that all before the war was the dream and this the reality.

Then he received the news of his mother's death. It had come—that which he once used to dread more than any conceivable misfortune—and he scarcely felt it at all. In the absence of true emotion he tried to think of it in the stereotyped terms of sorrow. But he could not even do this. He said it was the war, of course, that had killed her. The war killed everybody—as sooner or later it would kill himself.

Before the inclement spring of 1917 had succeeded a long cruelly cold winter he was inwardly as well as outwardly much the same as everyone else. The haunting face of Roddy had disappeared, and it did not return to him. He was here for no purpose except the obvious one.

He felt robust, contented, jolly; able to extract a little pleasure from the merest trifles, to make jokes with his friends and comrades, to enjoy those amusing periods known as rest when the divisional artillery came out of the line and strenuously pulled itself together in pleasant and partially inhabited villages. Nevertheless he was a tired man. Although he did not know it, he was a very tired man who desperately needed a relief from the unceasing effort of his life.

One day towards the end of April he enjoyed a few idyllic hours far from the sound of the guns.

His daughter Margaret had summoned him to meet her at a village near Amiens. She sent a car to fetch him. Another car was standing in the village street, and a very young staff-officer told him where he would find the ladies.

"Ladies!" echoed Charles. "Are there more than one of them?"

"Yes, three," said the young man. "Now I must look after the food. There's a lot of unpacking to be done."

Charles went through the open doors of a cottage and in the small orchard behind it he saw the three girls. They were standing beneath the blossomed fruit trees, with tall daffodils about their feet. They seemed graceful, sweet, adorable, to eyes that had not looked at such pretty creatures for an eternity of hideousness. Two were in civilian garments. The other wore her nurse's dress.

"Margaret, you angel. How are you?"

She had come to him and he was kissing her. She led him back to her friends, and introduced him.

"This is my old, old daddy," said Margaret. "I'm rather proud of his age. He is fifty-four—though he doesn't look it."

The other girls declared that they could not believe this.

"But how *splendid* of you," said one of them. "Oh, I do think it's sporting of you."

These compliments gave Charles a gentle warmth of gratification. At that moment he was proud of his age. He wished that he could have said he was a little older.

A table was brought out from the cottage, and they had their luncheon in the open air. It was a gay and happy meal.

One of Margaret's beautiful friends was a Lady Cynthia, the other was called Molly. Charles did not learn their surnames. He gathered that they belonged to the realm of high fashion in England, and he chaffingly asked what they thought they were doing in France. Sight-seeing, of course! But how on earth had they managed to get out here? Who had done the trick for them?

They told him that it was his daughter who had been principally instrumental in procuring them so delightful an excursion.

"Margaret seems to do what she likes," said Lady Cynthia, laughing.

"Easy to do that," said Miss Molly, "if you keep a lieutenant-general in your pocket."

"What's this, Margaret?" said her father. "Explain the mystery."

Margaret laughed, too, and said it was all nonsense. "Don't be idiotic, Molly. Keep a curb on that babbling tongue. Yes, be careful what you say—especially before the boy."

"Oh, it's no news to me," said the young staff-officer, laughing in his turn.

The happy hours passed too swiftly. A second kiss, some whispered words of love, and Charles and his daughter were separated again. The car that she had provided took him back to the line.

Three or perhaps four weeks after this an order from higher authority came downward to him through the proper channels. Like all other orders it had to be obeyed, no matter what one might think about it. He was to report himself to the XXXth Army Corps as Aide-de-camp to Lieutenant-General Sir Hugh Fleming.

"I am so glad you were able to come to me," said Sir Hugh, welcoming him very genially. "I wrote to Margaret the moment the vacancy occurred."

"Then it was that daughter of mine, sir, who asked you to——"

Sir Hugh interrupted him, but with the same smiling geniality. "Your daughter thinks you have fairly done your bit and that it would be quixotic to undertake any more. I quite agree with her. . . . But I must introduce you. Captain Derwent—General Lock."

This was just before dinner, in a large well-furnished room of a château. Other generals of the staff appeared, and they sat down and dined quietly, comfortably, and, as it seemed to Charles, sumptuously. Except for himself and the other A.D.C., they were all generals. But they were as friendly and chatty as if they had been subalterns.

Even on that first night Charles abandoned himself to the lures of ease and splendour. An invincible craving for the repose now so wonderfully offered seemed in fact to deprive him of all choice in the matter. But beyond this he was at once enraptured with the absorbing interests, the wide views, the first-hand information of life at a corps headquarters. His work was the gentlest child's play compared with what he had been doing.

Within a week he had become entirely devoted to General Fleming. The difference of this general in war from the general Charles had known in peace-time surpassed all measurement. That stiffness, the solemnity, the rather forbidding air, had disappeared. Efficient, able, as unfailing in judgment as prompt in decision, he was kind and considerate beyond belief. His new A.D.C. admired him, liked him, really loved him.

So the bright warm restful summer glided away, and Charles still slept in delicious beds, rode nicely groomed well-bred horses, wore red tabs on his tunic, and carried the red and white band of corps round his arm.

But the novelty of his situation had gone; the want of hard work allowed him to think again. He became unhappy.

Then one evening at mess somebody said, "To-morrow will be the anniversary of the battle of Loos;" and the others talked about it while Charles sat thinking. He thought of Roddy.

In October General Fleming was finally compelled to go on the sick list. He had made a long fight against ill-health. They sent him down to Etaples, and on the day after his departure Charles made an application to be transferred to the infantry.

Perhaps because he was importunate, perhaps because of the doubt whether his general would recover, perhaps merely because the shortage of infantry officers had reached an extreme condition, his prayer was granted. A little time elapsed and then the order came. He was posted as supernumerary to a battalion at present in rest but about to go into the line.

For the rest of the autumn he was learning his fresh trade. Soon after Christmas he and his battalion passed into

another army. They had the honour now to be serving under General Sir Hubert Gough—than whom no great general ever deserved better of his country or was more ungenerously treated by it.

On the evening of March 20th Derwent and a contingent of his battalion found themselves very comfortably established in a place that had been christened The Trianon Redoubt. It was a strong post showing good results for the immense labour that had been expended on its preparation. The dug-outs were deep, capacious, and solidly built, and not too close together. Slits of disconnected trenches were well sited, with a good field of fire both for rifles and machine-guns, of which latter weapons they had four. The whole position was unusually well wired. A man called Craddock was in command, and the only other officer except Derwent was quite a young boy—by name Ainsleigh. They had ammunition, food, and water, for forty-eight hours, and all knew that the long-threatened attack was imminent.

The night was unusually quiet. Charles Derwent, doing a round of their outposts, noticed the tranquillity and silence. Not a sound of life reached him as he passed from one occupied crater to another. Except when actually speaking to the men he might have been in the middle of a vast uninhabited country. Yet, of course, there were many thousands of people, friends and foes, at no great distance from him.

His was the only battalion of the brigade in this advanced situation—"the forward zone," as it was termed. About a mile behind, two other battalions occupied their allotted positions in what was termed "the battle zone." A little way behind them lay the brigade headquarters. The deeply buried telephone wire ran to this from the Trianon Redoubt; it was also connected laterally with battalion headquarters five hundred yards away on its right.

When Charles returned from his round, Craddock was talking on the wire to the battalion commander.

"You had better turn in and get some sleep," said Craddock. "I am going round myself at half-past two."

They slept then, Derwent and the rest, snugly and peacefully, as the night, still silent, slowly passed away towards dawn.

They were awakened by a crashing, deafening bombardment. The shell-bursts came in bouquets—so many and so swift that one's ears could not disentangle them. It was a hurricane, a tornado, of noise and fury. It continued minute after minute. No one could doubt what it meant. The picnic had begun. This was the process which we ourselves euphemistically described as "softening"—softening a position by artillery fire before an attack. It was a softening on a titanic scale. Shells apparently of all sorts were being pumped by the thousand into every section of our front line. They continued to arrive as plenteously hour after hour.

But as if to avoid monotony, after a time, gas shells began to fall. They went on falling. But the dug-outs, well protected against this annoyance, did not suffer. Craddock and his lot remained under cover with gas blankets down. But he, or Derwent, or Ainsleigh, went up occasionally to listen. Obviously they need not expect any human visitors until this sort of thing was over.

"It's nearly light," said Ainsleigh, coming down the steps. "But there seems to be a mist rising."

Some time after seven o'clock the gas shells ceased to present themselves. Everybody had breakfast. But just as they were finishing their meal, there came an earthquake bang so tremendous that it violently shook the dug-out. This terrific rending smash was followed by another and another. In the brief hush after each roaring explosion there was a clatter, light and heavy, of earth, stones, and varied débris, falling from the air. The Trianon Redoubt was being pounded with high explosives, for the purpose of tearing to pieces its wires, and shelters, and all its conveniences, after the previous lengthy and comparatively gentle treatment.

Charles and Craddock went up together to look about them. The mist reported by Ainsleigh had developed into dense fog. One could not see twenty yards in front of one. A vague swirling whiteness floated past one's eyes—baffling,

confusing. One saw nothing—even when a vast fountain of earth flew upward, close at hand, as it seemed. One merely heard, and then the earth fell upon one. It was fantastic and terrible. Through the curtain of fog, from far away, as if from nowhere, diabolical havoc was being launched at one.

The redoubt suffered now. Two of their dug-outs were completely destroyed. Men buried alive struggled to the surface, and fell gasping. Thirty or more n.c.o's. and men were put out of action—killed or badly injured.

The big guns desisted, as if they had performed their duty, and there came a period of unnatural quiet. The fog was as dense as ever. One saw nothing, one knew nothing, Craddock telephoning to battalion headquarters received no answer. Deep as it lay, the telephone wire had been reached and broken by that big stuff. He telephoned to brigade headquarters for news, but none was available. And all this time, when above ground, moving about as a swimmer in water, one had unpleasant fancies that the forward zone might already have been penetrated. For all one knew to the contrary, masses of the enemy might be close by but hidden behind the fog-curtains.

Then Craddock, listening, heard the sounds of barrage fire away on the left. That incessant drumming was unmistakable. One must suppose that as close behind it as they dared the enemy's infantry were advancing.

The garrison of the redoubt took up its fighting posture. The men were in the slits; the machine-guns in their nicely devised emplacements were ready. They waited. Nothing happened. They went on waiting.

Then, about mid-day, the fog began to shred and lift.

It cleared rapidly. Every moment things came into view—the redoubt itself, a wood, the open space in front. The belts of protective wire were less damaged than one could have ventured to hope. The nearest barrier was apparently intact.

There was no sign of the foe. But no one came back from the advanced posts. There was a crackle of rifle fire now and

then; and once or twice there came a hissing and pinging of bullets, but whether these were from in front or an unconscious enfilading by friends one could not guess. These little disturbing spurts seemed like an expression of nervous irritability, the cries or exclamations of people worn out by suspense.

Suddenly it grew much brighter. Overhead there was a patch of sunlit sky; and in this glitter Craddock went forward to examine the wire and look round. Glasses in hand he stood by the wire, just as one heard a louder splutter of rifles, and then he subsided quietly across the wire, his arms through it, his head over it, hanging down. Craddock's was the first dead body on the wire.

"Shall I fetch him in?" said Ainsleigh. "You're in command now, sir."

"No, leave him," said Charles sharply. "Look out. Pass the order. At a hundred yards—rapid fire."

He saw the Germans now, a long line of them, not defenceless prisoners as he had seen them hitherto, but armed enemies tramping slowly towards him. In the moment that the redoubt opened on them they disappeared. They had laid down themselves to shoot. Then they were up again, advancing at a jog-trot, grey and dark, their ugly-shaped steel helmets bobbing up and down.

They had reached the wire and were coming through it, spreading as they came, with little knots of them struggling in the gaps. A little nearer, and they were given all that the Trianon Redoubt could give. Then they were gone, a few scouring away to the right and the rest invisible. Probably these had dropped into shell holes for safety. Their dead lay scattered here and there, with the wounded crawling, groaning, tumbling, while six dead men kept Craddock company on the nearest wire.

Then before one could breathe they came again, other Germans. This was the second wave. It seemed, as it swept on, faster and more determined than the first; but it broke as completely at the wire, festooning the wire with its dead. Another and feebler wave followed, seeming to break of

itself, and pouring away to the left. One saw them going at a shambling run, and they were shot at as they ran.

Then, with long pauses perhaps of hours, similar attacks were repeated, some strong, some weak, but each becoming more dangerous than the last because of the losses in Trianon's garrison and the destruction of two out of their four machine-guns.

At three o'clock the redoubt still stood firm. It had handsomely obeyed the brigade order to hold out.

Charles Derwent did not understand the situation. He did not endeavour to understand it. There was an infernal racket on the left, and the noise seemed to indicate that the enemy's field guns had been brought forward and were busy. On the right, several times, large numbers of Germans had been seen, and these must certainly have entered the forward zone very deeply. At intervals young Ainsleigh talked to the brigade, reporting and being given information. The brigade rather thought that the other companies as well as battalion headquarters had been overwhelmed. Not a word by runner had come from them, and their telephone had long been mute. Brigade said it was pleased with Trianon and asked to be furnished with frequent reports.

"That's a splendid boy, that Ainsleigh," Charles said to himself. "Roddy's age—no older than Roddy would have been now." And next moment he seemed to be speaking to Roddy himself. "We're not going to give in. No, my dear boy, we'll let 'em have it while there's a shot in the locker. We have made them pay toll, and, damn them, they shall pay it again. . . . Watch the wire, Roddy."

He had said it—his boy's name—out loud. But Ainsleigh did not hear him. He was not light-headed. Yet his mind, stimulated to excess, worked strangely and with abnormal quickness. He had absolutely no fear—either for himself or the others. During the fierce excitement of each attack he felt no anxiety, but power, intuition, joy. He knew they were not going to be beaten—not they.

And between whiles, when they were merely waiting, he was conscious of sharpened senses, tenser muscles, a stronger heartbeat. He had a clearer vision. The landscape was efful-

gently bright. Distant things seemed near. He could have counted all the branches on the trees in that little wood over there, more than a mile away. He felt or thought, "I am *living*—for the first time. This is life. It is only when life and death join hands and dance in the sunlight as they are doing now that one really knows the mysterious force that lies within us, its limitless expansive strength. Life!"

It was astounding how brilliantly the sun shone. What a difference from the fog that had persistently shrouded the landscape two or three days ago. Then he thought, "But that was this morning!" Could it be possible that all these protracted events belonged to to-day? Joshua! The prophet who held up his hand and stopped the sun! The day would never end. He looked at his watch.

Yet he was surprised when the light began to wane. Surely not the evening already? They had been left unmolested for a long time, and in this respite they had done all that they could for their wounded. It was very little.

Young Ainsleigh touched his arm.

"I can't get any answer from the brigade," said Ainsleigh. "I have tried twice. But there's no answer."

Suddenly the twilight was full of shouting voices. The Germans were in the redoubt. How many? At that first moment they seemed a million. They sprang about among the remnant of the garrison, above the slits, over the tops of the dug-outs, bellowing, firing, stabbing downward with their bayonets. Whence had they come? Not from the front. From the left flank? What matter? They were in.

It was elemental then—hand to hand, face to face, a life for a life. Death for you, death for me, death for all of us—but no surrender. Large dusky figures prodding in smoke and fire—our men, scrambling out of the trenches and pits, their men falling in—Charles and Ainsleigh side by side, then widely separated as they got the men together and began to drive towards the left-hand wire. . . . The place was a shambles. Charles was being given his wish at last, but had neither conscious thought of the present moment nor con-

scious memory of past years. He was fighting for the Trianon Redoubt. He was trying to recover it, to hold it to the end for the brigade, the division, the corps, for the Fifth Army and General Gough, for England. He had killed, he was killing. Now again. A helmetless brute lunged at him and he fired his revolver for the last time, making another kill. But the revolver fell from his relaxed hand. He had been stabbed in the arm.

As suddenly as it began it was all over. The place had become strangely quiet, but they still held their redoubt. They had driven the Germans out.

"There can't have been so many of them," said Charles.

"A goodish few," said somebody else.

"Thank you so much," and he looked at the blood on his hand—not red but black in the gathering darkness—but blood because it poured over his fingers and trickled everywhere. A man had cut the sleeve of his coat with a knife and was binding something round his arm. "Thanks awfully. . . . I must see. Yes, I must see."

He moved to and fro among the dead. His own men and the Germans. It seemed that everybody was dead. The boy, Ainsleigh, seemed to be moving where he lay; but that was an illusion. It was merely the attitude of writhing anguish preserved even after death. Charles went on. He had to count those who were still living and active. They numbered eighteen—eighteen able to stand up and go on fighting, although five or six had wounds. Counting himself in, they made up nineteen. Nineteen out of a hundred and thirty. That was their number this morning before the bombardment—one hundred and thirty.

The place was not attacked again. The silence and darkness remained undisturbed; and Charles understood his situation now. He was cut off. The last attack had been in the nature of a clearing up as the enemy pushed onward. The Germans had gone on at each side of him, probably thinking that all opposition was overcome and all the ground theirs; or else, as they advanced in the wide clockwork stride, not caring what they left behind them. The vast machine must not be put out of gear for trifles.

But before this full comprehension of affairs and while still rather dazed, he had spoken with brigade headquarters. He went to the telephone automatically in order to make his report and did not even remember that the dead boy had told him the communication was failing. It worked now. Batsford, the brigade major, instantaneously answered him, and the sound of the familiar voice seeming close beside him made him jump.

"That you, Derwent? I've been trying to get you. How goes it?"

Charles told his tale.

"Good. Very good. Now look here. You're to fall back. We're going now. Work your way through as best you can. . . . Wait a moment. . . . I say. The general says you've done magnificently. Yes, magnificently. Good luck!"

Good luck! It was needed. They waited until the darkness had completely fallen, and then made the attempt to join their friends. The Germans lay between. Hour after hour, mile after mile, this tired officer and his exhausted straggle of men toiled across the lost ground, dodging detection, hiding themselves, going on again. Ammunition dumps blazed and spluttered. Huts, stores, waggons had been set on fire. Often the guiding Plough and all the other stars were obliterated by the light of the flames, and then in the far-reaching glow they saw the Germans again—Germans digging trenches, Germans moving with transport and guns over the open, Germans marching on a road.

When the night was nearly done they were still uncaptured, still moving slowly on. They came to a sunken road and they followed its course, keeping on top of the bank. Then Charles made them halt and wait. He thought he heard voices. On all fours he crept forward till the voices were almost beneath him and he heard them plainly—English voices. But perhaps prisoners? No, prisoners don't talk like that. He clambered down the bank and found the talkers. They belonged to men of various units in his own division. He and his little band were safe.

He brought them down into the road and counted them.

Ten. No more. Or eleven, adding himself. The others had been too tired.

He was sent down as wounded, but somehow managed to escape evacuation to England, and he got back to his division in time for the victorious advance.

PART VI

CHARLES AND ENID

I

ON an afternoon in May 1919, Enid and Charles strolled along the terrace of their house and talked about the future. The endless war had come to an end. Peace or a state of peace was already half a year old. Charles had just come home, demobilised at last, but still in uniform. He looked sunburnt, tall and big, replete with health, satisfaction, and the quiet joy of victory. He had now eaten a heavy meal for his luncheon.

Enid was a much thinner woman than she used to be. Her pretty hair was fast going grey. The round neck that Netherby painted had lost its fullness. The smooth firm cheeks showed lines at the corners of the mouth. In the lessened face her soft kind eyes seemed larger. She carried herself as well as ever, and was undoubtedly still handsome; but it was in another way, with subdued tones and a charm that appealed to the intellect rather than the senses. People who had not known her in the past thought her very gracious and dignified, yet understood without being told that she had experienced much sorrow.

She asked Charles to take her away from Tudor Green for good and all; for it seemed to her that their only chance of happiness was to break old associations and begin life again in new surroundings.

He agreed to this at once, and she was grateful to him for

his ready acquiescence. Indeed he had not hesitated a moment. It appeared to him as the right thing to do for her; but even then, looking through an open window and seeing one of the pleasant familiar rooms, he felt a qualm.

Of course their situations were so different. She was the one who had stayed at home. He was the one who had been away. To her it was the place in which she had suffered four years of anxiety, strain, and grief. To him, in all that infernal noise and recurrent horror, it had been the place of shelter and peace—the refuge of his thoughts.

Margaret joined them on the terrace. She was pale, languid, cold even to Charles—even in the first hour of their reunion.

She had come home two months ago, immediately after the death of General Fleming. He died in a villa at le Touquet, where she had been nursing him for a long time. She told her mother that his death had “knocked her out” and she did not want to speak of it. Sympathy was impossible between them, and soon they became again like strangers. As if not caring to avoid the renewed estrangement, Margaret said unkind and wounding things. She was hard—far harder than she had ever been.

Yet she could not have lost all ordinarily gentle feelings; for upstairs in her room she had some large photographs of her general, and a pretty enamelled box on the dressing-table contained some sentimentally cherished relics—the pink and white brassard that he had worn when commanding the corps, a small map-case, a pair of white doeskin gloves.

She presently showed the photographs to her father, who looked at them reverently.

“A good friend, M. A fine soldier!”

“One of the best,” said Margaret, hard and dry.

She and her father still spoke as they used to do in France, plainly and concisely.

Since the war had not ruined Charles but made him considerably more opulent, he decided that when they moved from Bolton Lodge it should be to something better. He had been told of a quite beautiful place situated near Esher with a fine park and famous gardens. He must keep it in

mind. The Esher house might be just the thing for them.

But meanwhile he was eager to get things going, to organise and arrange, so that a normal existence should be possible here—in their old home. Every day brought energy and happiness. It was a bliss that saturated mind and body to be free, to do what he pleased, to walk about with Gregory Lake talking of victory. As he explained to Greg, he had done with the city. Why go on with it? Nothing would induce him ever again to sit in a stuffy office. Besides, those fellows had got on very well without him for over three years. They should see him occasionally, as an ornamental figure at board meetings, but no more hard labour for the released soldier Charles Derwent. Like many thousands of other men, also walking about and doing nothing, he revelled in his idleness.

He played golf one day, and for the first time Gregory beat him without receiving odds. Charles sliced and fluffed and missed the globe. It was absurd. It made them laugh.

The delight of Greg in getting back his pal was touching. He patted Charles's back and shoulders; he followed him about with doglike devotion. Charles returned pat for pat. He danced round Greg. He dug Gregory in the ribs. A sense of physical well-being exhilarated him; an exuberance as of extreme youth bubbling inside him demanded expression in quick movements of the feet, noisy words, broad gestures. He felt amazingly, preposterously young.

Yet, oddly enough, the first person outside the home circle that he met in Tudor Green, a man called Rushworth, had said that he looked older.

"Oh, yes," said Rushworth, "the war has aged you, you know."

Charles was surprised, a little taken aback. He told Rushworth that this was not what he felt—"rather the reserve."

"Oh, it's very perceptible, of course," said Rushworth, with well-intentioned persistence. "How could it be otherwise? No one could go through all you have without showing the effects of it."

"Have it your own way," said Derwent cheerily.

He did not in the least care what he looked like. His age

would never again trouble him. He had held his own with the youngsters out there. Anticipating the phrase of a brilliant French writer, he thought proudly that not only were the people in the fighting armies all one family, they were none of them older than any other member of the family. They all had the same birthday. They had been born, or had come to life, in August 1914.

Enid complying with all his wishes although they were often strangely different from her own, he speedily set the house in train. Wilding, deaf, shaky, admittedly ripe for retirement, was given a pension and disappeared, his duties being taken over by Edward Haynes, ex-quartermaster-sergeant, who, with combined experience of domestic service and army rationing, at once began to prove himself an ideally good butler. Charles suggested that the war-time females might be discharged with honours and rewards and two footmen be given the vacancies. He preferred to have men about him, and it seemed patriotic to employ them. He was enormously pleased with the acquisition of a round table that had adjustable sections which allowed it to assume any size that could be desired. The round table made him feel that he was at a headquarters mess, and he liked the feeling.

As they sat at dinner Enid and Gregory Lake listening in silence sometimes felt a little out of it, for Charles and Margaret talked freely of localities in the war zone the very names of which were strange to the other two. Then sooner or later Haynes was drawn into the conversation.

"What was that little place between Amiens and Albert—to the left of the road? You know, M—— the place where you came with Lady Cynthia!"

"Bresle," said Margaret.

"Well, just beyond that I saw a very strange sight. Some mules of the 34th Division—Haynes! Who commanded the 34th Division in the autumn of 1916?"

"I couldn't say, sir. . . . I was never with that division, sir."

"I don't know what has happened to my memory," said Charles. "I always thought it was a remarkably good one. But now I shall forget my own name next. General . . .?"

Began with a D! Tscha! Tscha," and he snapped his fingers. "Well, as I was saying, all the battery mules had stampeded and . . ."

The goodness of Charles's memory had been an illusion with him. It was quite the average sort of memory, with the usual faults and failures in its retentive power. If it was remarkable in any particular characteristic, this lay in the complete concealment and deep burial of matters concerning which its owner did not desire to be reminded. Now it had undergone the same ordeal that everybody else's memory had passed through. The war, as a new tremendous force, tended to wipe out the past and compel people to forget.

Things *before* the war seemed not worth remembering. One looked back at them and did not care. But, stranger still, if one looked at oneself, one could scarcely recognise the person who had lived and thought and felt before August 1914.

This was very much the case with Enid. Her memory had always been based on feelings rather than facts. She recalled states of mind first, and then came the things or circumstances or events that had occasioned them. Her memory, if a lapse of years lay between the present thought and the past occurrence, gave up its pictures spasmodically, and not obediently in response to her will. It did this again and again before the pictures began to fade or grow dim. The actual circumstance might not be really lost then, but a clear picture of it became an impossibility to her when she ceased to feel the emotional atmosphere that had once surrounded it.

After that stage the recall was but a pallid haunting that could no longer give her pleasure or pain. Thus at this period she was haunted by pre-war ghosts. One especially recurred to her as of something in the story of another woman that she had read about or been told of, or dreamed of. But it was definitely unchanging, this memory, and with a surprising amount of detail, although all of it cold, impersonal, untroublesome. She calmly wondered. For this other woman, of whom she thought so queerly, had been a sober steadfast kind of creature, but nevertheless she had lost control of herself and let everything go from her in a totally unex-

pected access of tardily awakened passion. Alone with a man in a room she had been carried away by her feelings, and had allowed him to change the whole current of her life. And the astounding nature of all this was that such a thing should have happened to a woman of that age and character—and more especially when she had been shaken and saddened of late by a series of most distressing events.

Charlie came home and condescendingly agreed to live with them at least for as long as it might be convenient to him. He was now permanently employed in Sir Greville Thomson's works at Lambeth, where re-conversion was being pushed ahead. All idea of a university for Charlie had been abandoned. He was now a very solid young man, with thick eyebrows, a small black moustache, stained and scraped hands that looked dreadful when he put them on the table. He had the same tolerant smile for his parents. He paid little attention to Margaret, who was cold and haughty to him.

"Where's Charlie?" said his father after dinner, just as one of the doomed parlourmaids brought a tray of innocuous evening drinks into the drawing-room; and at the same moment a sound of loud voices and hilarious laughter came like a gust of wind across the hall. No need to ask where Charlie was. It was the old story. He had gone out to Edward Haynes, Mrs. Lane, and the others, finding them more congenial company than the swells.

"Water is not the only thing that finds its own level," said Margaret haughtily.

Little by little Margaret was recovering vitality. She did not look so pale, she was less languid. Then soon she began to dance, and she seemed now always to be dancing. She would dance more than half the night in London, and, returning at dawn, sleep for half of the day. She had many friends in London, and she went about a great deal with Lady Cynthia Pollard and Miss Arundel. She invited them to Bolton Lodge sometimes. Various young men came to see her, too, including one called Vincent Cayley whom Charles instinctively disliked.

Margaret had now attained a supremely self-possessed

manner. Without any outward signs of conceit, she seemed to have the fullest confidence in her attractiveness as a possession that she could exercise or not as she pleased, a spell of now well-proved efficacy that could be thrown at will not only over elderly and no longer fastidious men, but the nicest and most difficult youths. She was not really pretty, and she had entirely ceased to avail herself of the now common aids to beauty. She neither painted nor powdered; she had sacrificed her fine tawny mane by being severely bobbed; she dressed herself in quiet colours and often quite plainly. Nevertheless she feared no living rival. Otherwise she could not have chosen for her close companions Lady Cynthia, a glorious brightly tinted creature with a flashing smile, and Grace Arundel, who was one of those splendid dark girls that make one think of nymphs bathing by moonlight, exotic princesses led into captivity under Roman emperors, or lovely necromancing slaves with a perfume of roses and sandal wood in a tale of the *Arabian Nights*. They were both widely famed for their good looks; but Margaret, with the lift of her eyebrows, the slightest outline of a gesture, a mere semblance of awakened attention, could take a boy away from either of them at any moment.

Her father, though not altogether happy about her for a personal reason, admired her vastly and was more and more amused by her almost contemptuous treatment of her male visitors, all of whom appeared to be paying court to her. He spoke of this with a chuckle to Enid.

"I don't agree with you," said Enid, whose observation in such matters was naturally more acute than his. "I think she is getting fond of that young Cayley."

"Surely not," said Charles. "He's the one I don't like. He seems to me rather a worm."

"So he may be. But Margaret talks of him, and I warn you she'll snap your head off if you say anything against him. He took honours at Balliol, and the Foreign Office think no end of him—according to her."

"Highbrow?" said Charles, using a word that he had only just learned and making a grimace to express his distaste.

"Yes. Brilliant. Margaret says he's brilliant. That's the

excuse for anything nowadays. Young men weren't brilliant when I was a girl, but they didn't sit lolling in a chair while their hostess came into the room and stood waiting to be addressed—as Mr. Cayley did to me last week."

"The cub. He wants kicking."

"Yes, that's exactly what Gregory said about him."

At the request of Margaret and very much to the satisfaction of Charles, there were dinner-parties now at Bolton Lodge; easy and informal gatherings of eight or nine about the round table—little feasts with young people among the guests; the men all in black ties and jackets, but the girls attired like the lilies of the field, with bare arms and low-cut frocks. The whole thing was immeasurably different from those grand ceremonious assemblies of local potentates over which Enid had presided in the far-off shadowy past. She accommodated herself to the new conditions; but her portrait hanging alone on the end wall of the room, that serene and magnificent lady in the red robe, seemed to look down at the seated company with wonder and doubt. That vanished lady used to place name cards on her table, the long one, and she had been very particular in allotting her guests their proper situations. Nowadays the guests did not even take arms as they approached; they came trooping into the room; they sat haphazard, or as they pleased. Instead of waiting for a cigarette with the coffee they smoked before dinner—and between the courses.

"Dinner," said Charles loudly and gaily. "Come on, everybody. . . . Greg, shove them along. . . . Now, here we are. Gladys! I must have Gladys next to me. Where's Charlie? Leave a place for Charlie on the other side of Gladys. Then she can make love to him when she's tired of making love to me."

"You flatter yourself," said pretty Gladys. "I've never made love to you."

"Oh, I thought you had," said Charles, laughing contentedly. "I thought you did to everybody—for practice, just to keep your hand in."

"Gregory!" said Enid, and she pointed to the vacant chair on her left. He had been standing at a little distance, looking rather like a person who had lost his way or gone by

mistake to the wrong house. He sat down by Enid, whispered to her, beamed upon the others, and looked happy and in his right place.

Charlie was nearly always late. Sometimes he did not trouble to change his clothes for the party. But nobody minded that.

"Gladys," said Margaret, "this is my uncouth brother. I don't think you have met him before. He works with his hands. He is the Caliban of our little circle. Charlie, put your hands on the table for Gladys to see."

Charlie, imperturbable, quietly smiling, did as he was bid, and looked at the adorably pretty girl beside him with rather less interest and admiration than if she had been an engine-cleaner or a coal-shoot man.

"Don't you like my hands?" he said to her. "I value them myself. They're worth four pounds a week in any civilised country of the world."

"Well done, Charlie," said Mr. Gregory Lake, beaming at him. "I'd be proud to say as much of mine."

Gregory, like most people who remained in England during the war, had lost weight. He looked thinner, but not older, although his hair was now completely white, of a smooth silver whiteness that made his face seem to be pink and glistening. Amiability and affection shone from him as from a lamp that always has a full reservoir and a well-trimmed wick. When Enid ceased speaking to him he was apt to fall into a state of smiling abstraction. It was as if the rapid talk of the others flowed past him and left him stranded. He could not follow it. But of late he had developed a most disconcerting trick of occasionally thinking aloud. After listening to and striving fully to understand what somebody was saying—Mrs. Burroughes, the hospital secretary, or anybody else—he would meditate, and then utter a perfectly devastating observation, as, for instance, "I consider that piffle and tosh," or "Yes, you did it, because you didn't know any better." It was evident that he had no consciousness of having spoken, and Enid had taken him in hand, very kindly but very firmly cautioning him about his dangerous oblivion.

He had one of these lapses, although fortunately without any troublesome consequences, on the night when Vincent Cayley came to dinner and finally disgusted Charles.

Charles tried to be very polite to Cayley because he saw with twinges of regret and a wistful disappointment that Margaret, exactly as Enid suspected, showed a very marked interest in him; but long before the dinner ended he was actively hating him. Mr. Cayley justified that word highbrow in a literal manner by having a lofty forehead, from which his over-long hair was plastered straight back without any parting. When he smoked, the cigarette drooped downward instead of sticking out in a proper manly style. He had what Charles supposed to be "the Oxford manner," a blend of pompousness and effeminacy. Instead of joining the army he had obtained employment in some new department under the Foreign Office, which still retained his services. Encouraged by Margaret he told them of his work in foreign propaganda and of two secret missions, one to Mexico and one to the Argentine, describing it all amusingly enough, and making cynical little jokes about his avoidance of bullets, shells, and the other disagreeables met with by the actual combatants. Altogether he seemed to be the last person on earth Margaret should have cared for; and yet there she was, animated and solicitous, sitting unnecessarily close beside him, encouraging him, praising him for his wit, hanging on his every word. Of course, as Charles thought, the damned fellow was clever. He talked, talked, talked. Heavens, how he talked.

He finished Charles with an harangue on the suburbs.

He had made some disparaging remark about suburban society, and this had been taken up with a flash of indignation by Enid. But Margaret asked her not to interrupt and implored Mr. Cayley to go on talking.

"Oh, by all means," said Charles, curbing himself in the sharp bridle of a polite host. "I should be interested to hear what you have to say against the suburbs. Tudor Green, for instance?"

"Tudor Green has never been counted as a suburb," said Enid sharply.

"Don't," said Margaret. "Please don't. . . . Go on, Vincent."

Vincent Cayley went on, after removing the slanted cigarette from his mouth and slowly waving it. "The worst thing, Mrs. Derwent, that one can say against Tudor Green is that it shares the essential character of every other suburb. The suburbs are half and half—not one thing or the other,—not London really, not the country—although often very like both. To live continually in the suburbs is to miss seeing nature at its boldest and man at his grandest. Your parks and open spaces are beautiful, but not sufficiently wild. Your ladies in their Sunday costumes—I suppose you have a church parade—are not really so smartly dressed as the week-day congregation of the Piccadilly and Bond Street pavements. But gradually you come to believe they are. You accept the second-rate for the best."

"Indeed we don't," said Enid warmly. "I can't agree for a moment."

"Oh, *don't*," said Margaret.

Mr. Cayley took a puff at his cigarette, waved it, and went on again. "People go to live in the suburbs because they are handy, cheap, and convenient. Convenience is the very keynote of the suburbs. And it may be doubted—yes, it is distinctly a question if this compromise about your place of residence, the half and half quality, does not affect your whole character, so that your range of mind narrows, your ambition contracts; you grow tame in harmony with your surroundings; you split the difference in politics, religion, and ethics; you seek the happy medium in irreconcilable things, and shirk the great splendid antagonisms that make up the fierce joy of human existence." Then he paused, waved the cigarette, and smiled. "I don't think one can say anything else against the suburbs; and, after all, it doesn't amount to much, does it?"

Margaret gave a peal of happy laughter. "Brilliant," she said. "Absolutely brilliant."

Others laughed. The young people chattered. And in the midst of it Gregory Lake spoke quietly and distinctly.

"I never listened to such piffle in all my life."

Enid, panic-stricken, turned to him and gripped his arm. By a merciful grace of Providence no one except herself had

heard what he said. Margaret would have been furious if she had heard it. Margaret would have said something atrociously rude. There would have been a scene.

In one of the other rooms after dinner Enid reproved the offender and again cautioned him. It was time to break himself of a silly and dangerous trick. He must keep awake and remember where he was. He must not think aloud.

They did not see Mr. Cayley again for some weeks; but it was perhaps his brilliant discourse on the suburbs that made Enid suddenly ask Charles what he had done about the projected move.

He confessed that he had done very little, and he asked deprecatingly if she was still set on the idea of leaving.

She said that she was. She repeated the phrase about its being their only chance of making a fresh start. But her appeal was more strongly worded than on the previous occasion. She begged him to sell Bolton Lodge. It had become a house of death—a haunted house—a place of sad memories and unfriendly ghosts. Also, as she said, she had grown to hate the whole district and everybody in it. She felt that it was bad for health too. She would never feel really well there.

Once more Charles showed himself to be entirely acquiescent. He was enthusiastic. They had a happy talk, with all sorts of visions of the future rising before them.

Immediately he informed some agents that Bolton Lodge was for sale and invited information as to houses in the market. Then he and Enid went over to Esher and saw the place he had already heard of. It was bigger and grander than Enid had anticipated. She instantly recoiled from it. "Oh, not such a large establishment as it would require. Charles, I am too tired."

"We could live in London, if you wished," said Charles.

"Yes," she said, "London."

After this he used to talk at dinner about the houses that had been offered to him—one at the corner of Prince's Gate—one in Rutland Gate, standing detached—a Queen Anne house with a square hall in Hill Street, Berkeley Square.

But every day he knew better what a terrible wrench his

departure from Bolton Lodge was going to be. As he sauntered about, ruminating, with wrinkled brows and hands thrust deep in his pockets, he felt as if he were a part of the house or the house a part of him. He felt tied to it with hitherto unnoticed ligaments, and he doubted if he had the power to sever them. Again, the thought of the pleasant old rooms, the staircase, the corridors, the comfortable dependencies, the useful outbuildings, all being in the possession of total strangers—unappreciative people, profiteers perhaps, rich vulgarians who would alter it, knock it about—caused him an increasing distress. He wanted to shout loudly that it was *his* house and nobody else should ever have it.

Then on a bright warm day when Enid was walking through the almost restored garden her feelings were in many respects similar to those of Charles. She shrank from the thought of so great an upheaval. She was a tired woman. Moreover, how could she leave her soldiers?

She never spoke of the move again, and Charles willingly allowed it to drop out of his conversation. Then it was as though the idea had faded away in both their minds.

Charles was busy with political affairs, and (a compliment that gratified him) had been given the very responsible position of chairman of the Conservative Association. He presided at meetings, and with neat soldier-like speeches introduced cabinet ministers to enthusiastic audiences. He regularly sat on the magistrates' bench, and enforced extreme leniency in dealing with the offences of ex-service men. At golf his game had come back to him, and he presently tasted a very delicious pleasure in discovering that he drove a rather longer ball now than before the war. He played with Gregory, if not every day, at least very frequently, giving him a half and nearly always beating him.

Rapidly for Charles and gradually for Enid something not greatly unlike the old peaceful life had been resumed. The flowers in the garden bloomed gaily, and Enid could see the brightness of their colours. In the house there was scarcely anything to remind one of the war except that empty room upstairs, into which she still often went and sat desolately mourning. The room when she unlocked the door

showed itself quite unchanged. But Mrs. Lane had a key of it now, and the housemaids cleaned it.

II

CHARLES being now well over the border-line of opulence thought it proper to execute a new will, with very handsome bequests to friends, servants, charities, and philanthropic societies. As well as thus providing for the remote future, he made an immediate settlement of £1000 a year each on Margaret and Charlie. This arrangement appeared to him as a not illegitimate way of evading a certain amount of income tax and super tax. The young people, as he told them both, were to pay a contribution to Enid for household expenses.

Charlie spoke gratefully but phlegmatically.

"It's awfully decent of you, gov'nor," he said. "But the mater can have the lot. I'll hand it over to her every quarter day."

"Oh, no."

"What should I do with all that money? I don't spend thirty bob a week."

"Let it accumulate," said Charles.

Margaret received the endowment coldly, taking it as a matter of course and scarcely offering any thanks at all.

"You'll like the feeling of being independent," said her father tentatively.

"Well, you know, I have always felt rather like that."

Her hardness made his heart ache.

Margaret was the trouble in their lives. It was Margaret who prevented the sun from shining quite as clearly as it ought to have done, it was she who created a sense of emptiness and loneliness in a home that should always have been cheerful. But for unhappy thoughts about Margaret, he could have continued to be so well contented.

He had lost the girl who used to sit on the arm of his chair and accept favours in such a pretty charming way. Gone too was that other girl, the girl of the war, so quiet and steadfast, who dragged him backward from the front and appointed him an A.D.C. in order to preserve him from peril.

Margaret cared for only one person now—not her father, mother, brother, but a new-comer, a stranger. She was in love with that worm, that supercilious talking-machine, that double-distilled poop, Mr. Vincent Cayley, who deserved kicking from Tudor Green to Timbuctoo. These were words that supplied themselves for Charles's disgusted thought as Margaret's infatuation became obvious. There was no doubt after the young man's return from Paris, where, as Margaret said, he had been engaged on business of national importance.

He came often to Bolton Lodge; but much more often Margaret was going about with him in London. When they were not together he talked to her on the telephone.

It seemed as if every time the telephone bell rang the servants came from room to room looking for her.

"What's that?" said Charles or Enid. "Is it a call for me?"

"No, sir," or "No, ma'am," said the servant. "It's Mr. Cayley for Miss Margaret."

He wrote her letters, too, many of them, which she picked up eagerly from the hall table. Charles hated the handwriting—so small and finnicked and over-refined. The writer totally ignored the parents in this courtship of the daughter; and she herself said nothing until Charles spoke to her about it.

"M. dear, if you seriously contemplate anything beyond an ordinary acquaintance with Mr. Cayley, you are making a great mistake."

"I don't think so."

"Listen, dear—and let us talk quietly. You may think I'm prejudiced."

"I do. Absurdly so."

"Well, leaving me out of it. . . . The best test of a man is what other men think of him. Men don't think much of Cayley."

"How do you know?"

"I have made inquiries. He hadn't a good reputation, and——"

Margaret was angry at once. "You had no right to make inquiries about him. It was mean and underhand."

"My dear, think what you're saying. You are meditating the greatest adventure of a girl's life. You are my daughter. Be reasonable."

But Margaret was not reasonable.

Once more she had changed. She showed great anger, and yet was as hard as nails. Then the old sullen look came into her face.

Enid asked him the result of the interview, and said it was as she expected.

"I don't profess to understand Margaret. I always said I couldn't. But I know this, Charles. She is now really in love for the first time—and she is desperately in love."

Charles and Margaret had another talk a little while later, and Margaret told him that this must be their last discussion, for she fully intended to marry Mr. Cayley.

"Without my consent?"

"Yes, if you refuse it."

They were both obstinate. Obstinance and precipitancy had ever been Charles's twin fault. They stood looking at each other.

"I warn you that you'll repent it if you disobey me."

"Then don't force me to disobedience."

Charles, mastering the wrath induced by her completely defiant tone, said that at any rate she was to wait, and look carefully before she leaped. She must take time. At least he had the right to demand this of her. "As a friend"—and his affection overcame his anger—"yes, simply as a friend, Margaret, I ask you to give me your word that you won't act hastily, or without my knowledge."

She seemed to agree and to give some such pledge.

"Your mother concurs in my opinion, you know," said Charles. "She has shared my views from the start."

But this speech made the girl angry again, and almost immediately after it there was a dreadful exchange of recriminations between her and her mother alone together in the parlour. At the end of it Enid said, "I disown you. You are not my daughter. I'll never speak to you again."

And in fact she did not address a single word to her during the six weeks that Margaret remained at Bolton Lodge.

Then Margaret announced that she was going to visit friends and would be away for a fortnight. She asked for the big car to take her to Victoria next morning. Piles of luggage were brought down to the motor-car. Charles saw it through the library windows, and would not go out to say good-bye to her. He thought, he hoped, that she would come into the library. . . . But she did not. He saw the car drive off.

It drove not straight to London, but first to a house near the Playing Fields, where Vincent Cayley was waiting for her, and where Mr. Smith, the registrar of marriages, united them in wedlock. Then they went to London—*en route* for Paris, as Margaret said in a note that was brought to Charles by special messenger.

"To avoid any more fuss and as neither of us is religious, Vincent and I have been married civilly. We are going to Paris. I will write fully from there. M."

She did not even send her love.

After a few days, the letter came—a cruel letter, as it seemed to Charles. She offered no excuses. She made no allusion to conduct that entailed something like a breach of faith. She reminded Charles that she was independent. She had a thousand pounds a year which nobody could take away.

"Vincent and I ask nothing from you. We want nothing. If later on you will receive us properly we shall be quite glad to come. But I warn you that if there is any patronising of Vincent or any attempt to make him feel that he is not cordially welcome, it will be the last visit I shall ever pay to Bolton Lodge."

He handed the letter to Enid.

"How will you answer it?" she asked.

"I shan't answer it," said Charles. He folded it neatly, endorsed it as "From Margaret 1920," and put it in a drawer of his table.

He felt like King Lear. His daughter had almost openly said that she owed him no duty. His love, his loyalty to her, all had been without avail. He counted for nothing.

He winced beneath the peculiar unkindness, the lack of generosity, in that touch of hers about the assured income. He was stung too by her echo of his own words—"I warn you." A father may surely give warnings; but children speaking to the fathers who have greatly loved them should not say "I warn you." She had turned against him. Yet once she had promised never to do this, and had told him that he need not be afraid of such a thing happening.

He said that he could never forgive her. Enid said so too. But Enid was the more bitter in her resentment.

Nevertheless life went on. Soon their son Charlie left them. His employer, Sir Greville Thomson, had recently been made a peer as a reward for his services to the government during the war. He had become a very big man, much talked of by the newspapers, with a large house in Grosvenor Square, a vast country mansion in Hampshire, and works all over the kingdom. But big as he was, he seemed to think well of Charlie. He put him at his works near Portsmouth—not far from the country place, to which splendid haven of rest Charlie was invited sometimes for the week-end, and at which he met his lordship's two fashionable daughters together with many of their grand friends.

Charles, Enid, and Gregory were now alone. They settled down once more. Enid occupied herself with the welfare of the permanently disabled soldiers, for whom a new hospital was to be built on the site of the Crown and Sceptre. This was henceforth her task—an almost sacred task in memory of Roddy.

She no longer depended on Gregory Lake for help. He spent nearly all his time with Charles. Indeed they were, if possible, more inseparable than ever; and Enid seemed happy in watching them. She treated them rather as if they were children, having a motherly manner now to both of them. Laughingly she called them her boys. "Don't get into mischief," she would say, as she saw them sallying forth

together. "I can't really trust either of you boys;" and she laughed.

"Oh, yes, you can, Mrs. Charles," said Gregory. "We'll be good boys."

III

Our language is necessarily expanding; it is always receiving additions. Think of technical terms alone. And the coinage of words for inventions, scientific discoveries, fresh classifications is also very large. In ordinary speech there are words that almost appear to supply themselves without extraneous aid and to fill the requirements of the hour completely. Other words newly introduced seem and continue to seem quite inadequate for the new occasion. As an instance of the successful words one may cite "crashing" as a description for the disastrous fall of aeroplanes. "We regret to report that the air-liner that left Brussels for Berlin this afternoon crashed near the Belgian frontier . . ." Crashed! It is a simple yet tremendous word seeming to convey the whole idea of an irreparable catastrophe, no matter how brought about—whether from a big or little cause, such as the failure of an engine, the breaking of wires or struts, a slight explosion. The huge mechanical bird is flying smoothly and comfortably in a windless cloudless sky when something happens, small in itself but overwhelming in its consequences. The machine crashes.

There were no clouds in the sky at Bolton Lodge; all was peace, confidence, apparent stability; when suddenly the whole of life crashed.

Charles, Enid, and Gregory had just finished dinner on a Sunday in June. The Sunday evening meal had been called supper long after it had become a comfortable affair with several hot dishes to choose from. But in the last year or so all pretence had been abandoned. It was dinner, as on week-days. Nevertheless a very proper consideration for the household staff was shown in its arrangement. A kitchen-maid cooked it or "hotted it up," and as soon as it had been disposed of any servants retained on duty for it were allowed to go out for the rest of the evening. They put ready all

things that could possibly be wanted by the master and mistress. Then they went.

This stage of the programme had now been reached. Enid stood at the sideboard pouring out the coffee. Gregory had wished to assist her, but she had told him to sit still.

"I *like* waiting on you both—and you can't say that I don't know your tastes."

She brought them their coffee cups and gave to each a glass of his favourite liqueur. She put the cigarettes near one and the cigar boxes by the other. She made much of them, she fussed over them in a charming motherly way, and then she returned to her seat at the table and talked to them, listened to them, smiled at them, making them both happy by the interest she displayed in everything that interested them.

It was all restful, full of gentle peace, with no electric light to tire the eye but candles on the table that shed a soothing radiance from beneath their fringed shades. Outside the windows the garden was losing its colour, putting on its evening cloak of grey and silver—to be changed presently for a sable wrap. Beyond the round table and the candle-light all the big room was in shadow. Enid's picture on the end wall looked pallid and ghost-like.

Charles spoke of the afternoon's golf, and then adverted to the extraordinary kindness of Greg in getting him Lantier's French grammar. It was a little book that Charles had craved for but failed to obtain in London. So Gregory had telegraphed to Paris for it. Arriving last night, it had been brought here by Gregory this morning as a surprise.

"Isn't it just like him," said Charles, "to go to all that trouble just to gratify a mere whim of mine?"

"Yes, he is a great dear," said Enid; and then she had one of her frank and jolly laughs sounding as fresh and young as it might have done years and years ago. "He is as good as gold when he keeps awake; but he mustn't be stupid and fall asleep in company."

"Oh, Mrs. Charles," said Gregory, delighted at being chaffed. "My dear Mrs. Charles, how can you be so hard on

me? What crime have I committed? Oh, dear;" and he laughed too.

She stayed with them for a little while longer and then said she would leave her boys and retire for the night. She was a tiny bit tired.

"Now remember, Charles—and you too, Gregory—that if you want anything, you are not to go ringing bells for it but find it yourself." She was standing in the open doorway, a kindly grey-haired figure, and she kissed her hand to them. "Good night. Good night."

Then she shut the door and they were alone.

They sat talking, secure, content, heart open to heart, and after a time Charles spoke again with gratitude of the gift of the grammar. Indeed it was one of those characteristic little acts of kindness that his friend was always performing; and thinking of them, so many, so long maintained, Charles said what an amazingly good husband, what a perfect father of a family, Greg would have made if instead of remaining a bachelor he had consented to marry some nice suitable wife.

"They were all after you at one time, old boy," said Charles, smiling.

"Oh, no." Gregory's modesty repudiated the suggestion.

"A happy marriage is the most marvellous thing in life," said Charles; and then he sighed, because he had thought of Margaret and Cayley. He went on presently, sketching lightly yet with real feeling the joys of home, the companionship of husband and wife, the mutual support, the solace. "Yes," he said, "you ought to have married, Greg. You have missed a great deal."

As he said this Gregory turned slightly in his chair and glanced at the portrait on the wall.

"Don't you ever regret the loss of what I speak of?" asked Charles.

"Never, my dear old boy," said Gregory. "No doubt I should have but for Enid. . . Ah—if darling Enid hadn't given me all I wanted."

There was a silent pause. Then Charles spoke slowly.

"I don't think I caught that. What was it that you said exactly?"

Gregory did not answer. The awful thing he had said seemed to be echoing loudly in his ears, and yet he did not quite remember its actual substance. He only knew for certain that he had had one of his appalling lapses, and in his dire confusion of spirit it seemed to him that there was something irrevocable, wholly devastating, in the results of this one. Yet he could quite easily have put things right again with a few words. Charles's suspicions were scarcely aroused. He was merely surprised, startled, and a little displeased by the strange new familiarity in the other's tone, as well as by the unexpected word of endearment. It was the first time that Gregory had ever spoken of Mrs. Charles by her Christian name; but the use of it was not unnatural or unpardonable. Indeed, taking into consideration the closeness of their friendship, it was perhaps odd that he did not always call her Enid. The term "darling," although it had not at this period become the meaningless counter of speech that it is at present, was even then habitually employed to express ordinary regard. He could have explained the gist of his astounding statement by saying that Enid had long since advised him not to marry because he was a born old bachelor—or that she had made him so comfortable as an incessant guest at Bolton Lodge that he never felt lonely. Really anything would have sufficed—if done quickly. But he sat there gaping, silent.

Then the possible import of his words burst into the reception chambers of Charles's mind. What else could they imply? What other interpretation could be given to them?

"You swine," said Charles with a shudder; and he slowly lifted one of the candlesticks until the light fell upon Gregory's face, pink in the gentle glow, with eyes blinking, and the mouth opening and shutting.

He set down the candlestick and spoke again.

"You utter swine."

Gregory put a hand to his silver hair, reopened his mouth, but said nothing.

And in the silence that ensued, a silence during which

Gregory made no protest against being called a swine, Charles tried to think clearly about the abominable situation that, as he supposed, had now been tardily revealed to him. But at first the disclosure was too big. At first he could merely feel a cold sick horror. He was stunned, numbed. He was like a man looking about him after an earthquake, not yet fully understanding that the house in which he has lived secure has just fallen about his ears; and exactly as people in such circumstances state the fact to themselves, saying "It is an earthquake," Charles used actual words and told himself "My friend and my wife have betrayed me. This man is my wife's lover." He felt shame and horror for them, not for himself. It was as if he had seen them do something terrible in its meanness and baseness—such as cheating at cards or stealing money. Yes, it was just like that—as if Enid had been convicted of systematic shop-lifting—as if she had been followed, watched, and finally bowled out, with the stolen articles in her handbag or hidden under her fur cloak. This man, his best, his dearest friend, his only real friend, was a traitor, a blackguard. This woman whom he had loved and honoured was bad, not a wife at all, another man's mistress. Oh, how shameful, how unspeakably disgusting of them both.

Then thoughts of himself began, and with them came burning wrath. He thought of how year after year he had been deceived, fooled, degraded, covered with intolerable shame. He had been made to walk the earth holding his head high, giving himself the smug self-satisfied air of a happy husband, and all the time he was in truth an object of scorn, a source of mocking laughter for everybody who saw him. He thought of the things that must have been said about him in every street of this chattering tale-bearing place by friends, neighbours, and by people totally unknown to him. He had been like a person who unconsciously carries an insulting placard on his back. Directly he passes and shows his back, he is pointed at, jeered at. This for years, years, years, had been the fate of Charles Derwent—to be the walking mirth-provoker of Tudor Green.

He turned to Gregory in fiery rage.

"Curse you. What's your defence? What have you got to say for yourself?"

Gregory spoke then, at last, but feebly, almost idiotically, in no manner that could allay the other's wrath; and Charles immediately called him a swine again.

"No, Charles, I beg," said Gregory. "I cannot permit this language. But let me say, I wish to withdraw my remark about marriage. It was indiscreet—and unintentional."

This lame apology could but add fuel to Charles's fire. He shouted.

"My dear fellow," said Greg, "do not allow yourself to be, ah——" and he paused, looking at Charles deprecatingly. "Permit me to explain."

"That's what I've asked you to do," shouted Charles. "And you can't—you can't."

"Oh, but yes," said Greg. "Really there is no occasion—none whatever—for hot temper. If you will hear me. You know my admiration—how I have always admired Mrs. Charles. And regard too. Regard that I have not concealed—no, never in the least concealed. She was on a pedestal. But so were you, my dear fellow. You two! Above everybody. I have not sufficient words to express it—what I have always felt for you—you yourself—Charles."

"Oh, damn you, leave me out of it," cried Charles wildly. "It's Enid—Enid. It's my wife, you infernal scoundrel."

Gregory spoke now more effectively, but still not in a way that could banish wrath or dissipate suspicion, because while submitting his strongest statements and assurances he seemed to make some damaging reservation or to imply a fundamental difference between the past and the present time. He confessed that ages ago, long before her marriage, he had nourished a very great tenderness for the dear kind lady who had recently gone upstairs to bed and whose beautiful picture hung over there, to remind them both of all they owed her. But he fervently assured Charles that there was nothing wicked, or in the smallest degree objectionable, in his thoughts of her now. He said that his feelings for Mrs. Charles were now those of a brother. In his heart of hearts it was as though Charles had a sister, named Enid. "Simply

as if she was my sister too. Regard—yes, and respect.” He repeated this with immense fervour. “Charles, old chap, I give you my word of honour.”

“Your word of honour! That’s a valuable pledge, isn’t it? You don’t know what honour means. You, who dared to teach us good manners, telling us what we ought to do and what we oughtn’t—Oh, my God.”

For more than a minute no more was said by either. Charles sat without movement, except that his features seemed to twitch, to distort themselves, while he stared across the table not at Gregory but at a dark corner of the big room. To Gregory this fresh silence was most painful; but far worse, far more distressing, was the aspect of his long-cherished friend. This dreadful unexpected quarrel seemed like the end of the world to him. It was he who broke the silence.

“Charles,” he said meekly, “I have begged you not to be angry with me. But if you must— Well, of course—I mean to say: My dear fellow, what are you going to do about it?”

Charles breathed hard, but gave no answer.

“It seems to me,” Greg continued sadly and deprecatingly, “that—as I think I pressed the point already—there is no cause whatever. But I want you to understand that if so, well, here I am, don’t you know. Go for me. For *me*, Charles. Not for *her*. . . . You won’t be hard on her, will you?”

But this was too much.

“What the devil’s that got to do with you?” Charles had sprung up from his chair. He went to the door, opened it, and came back to the round table. “Get out, you infernal blackguard, and never dare show your face here again.”

“I will not resent anything you say to me,” said Gregory, confronting him largely and solidly. “If you insist on imputing blame, it is I who must be blamed. But really I will not stand any bullying of Enid.”

“Get out,” roared Charles, “before I pitch you out.”

“I don’t budge—really I cannot budge an inch,” said Greg-

ory, and he too spoke with a loudly raised voice. "No—not until I have your promise that you won't attempt to visit it on Enid's head."

Then the thing became elemental. Charles in his fury and Gregory struggling to make himself heard shouted, bellowed at each other. The upper servants had not yet returned, or one of them would certainly have come hurrying to the dining-room. Such underlings as may have been on guard in remote regions, if the unusual sounds reached them, could not of course venture their presence in this part of the house. Probably they did not hear it.

But Enid heard it. Suddenly she came down, frightened, motherly. Her boys were quarrelling. She was half undressed when startled by the unbelievable noise and compelled to dash out to the landing and listen. Instantly she had flung herself into a dressing-wrapper, and now with slippers on her feet she came running through the open doorway and interposed herself between them.

"Charles, what is it? Gregory. For heaven's sake. You have frightened me."

It was terrible then for minute after minute. She kept telling Gregory to go away. "Yes, go. . . . Leave us alone. . . . I tell you, go." And at last, all pallid, shaking, with tears streaming down her face, she made him obey her.

He had to go. There was nothing else for him to do. He shut the door behind him, moved slowly across the hall, and stood there listening. Then he sadly assembled his hat, gloves, stick, and went forth into the soft warm darkness of the gravel drive.

Alone with her in the closed dining-room Charles was saying the most terrible things. He stormed and raved at her; he charged her with an infamy more monstrous than the world had ever known. But she answered him firmly and courageously, denying everything, throwing aside his repeated accusations with passionate force. She followed him as he raged here and there about the room, speaking to him in every pause that he himself made. It was not true. No, no, no, it was not true.

He thought that she was lying, he seemed to know without

any possibility of doubt that she was lying, and yet nevertheless—so strangely does the mind work in phases of apparently uncontrolled emotion—he felt a queer admiration for her strength and persistence. She at least did not do things by halves. He thought, or felt without supplying words or any definite form for the thought, “These are the answers I wanted. These are the answers I wished for.” Indeed she was saying all the time what he would like to believe, what he longed to believe, what he would readily have given the bulk of his fortune to believe. But he could not believe.

“It’s no use,” he said, refusing to let her touch his arm as she was about to do so. “Your denials are all too late. Gregory didn’t deny.”

“Of course he denied.”

“I tell you he didn’t, he didn’t;” and Charles blazed out again. “He hummed and hawed—he beat about the bush. He didn’t once—not once—explicitly deny. Now how d’you explain that? Why?”

“Because he’s a great donkey, and always has been,” Enid said with amazing strength. “Besides, he’s failing. His intellect is breaking down. You must have seen it yourself. Probably he scarcely understood what you were talking about.”

“Oh, yes, he did. He understood well enough—only too well. He asked me not to be rough on you. Wasn’t that by inference a full admission?”

“No, it wasn’t—it wasn’t. And I can’t help what he said. I don’t care what he said. I can speak for myself. Charles, be fair. Don’t be unkind.”

She was crying again, piteous to see; but she dried her eyes and continued to declare her complete innocence, while he on his side went on denouncing her. It was truly pitiful. They were so much too old for such a scene. It should have happened years ago or never. She had turned on the electric light, and thus each could clearly see the other’s face with its familiar and its changed expressions. At one time she stood just beneath her portrait, and, if they had thought of it, the strangeness in this juxtaposition of reality and a painted image should have finished everything. Enid, grey-haired,

with her lined face and diminished body, stood there as if cruelly called upon to defend the honour and reputation of that other woman who had gone from the earth for ever; that other splendid woman, robed in red, with smooth white shoulders, who a long time ago had lived and smiled tranquilly and followed people with her large soft eyes and perhaps—or perhaps not—once loved imprudently.

She had met every accusation with a resolute negative. It wasn't true. But she was frightened, shaken to pieces, by his violence.

Next morning she felt completely worn out, and as much from necessity as choice remained in bed. Charles came into her room once and would have renewed the harrowing debate if she hadn't implored him to show at least some mercy by postponing it. In her present condition she had not strength to begin all over again.

At some time in the afternoon Gregory Lake called at the house and was not admitted. Haynes informed him that Mrs. Derwent was not very well, and Mr. Derwent, although at home, could not receive any visitors. Gregory understood that instructions had been given. He scarcely expected permission to cross that well-trodden threshold, but was unable to refrain from asking for it. All through the morning he had anxiously waited for a note from Enid. He felt sure that she would write to him. Then when no letter came, it was as if his feet carried him to Bolton Lodge of their own accord.

He went away again, sorrowfully and heavily. Sitting at a window of his flat, he looked out disconsolately at the stone bridge, the ebbing river, the boats, the poplar-trees, and the half-hidden houses. He had loved this view and its lifelong familiarity, but now the charm of it had been taken from him. At dinner-time he became aware not of any normal appetite or hunger, but a nostalgic longing to telephone to Bolton Lodge and ask, as he had asked so many many times, if he might go round there and join them at their evening meal. Alas, such a use of the telephone was fatally forfeited. They were at home, but not at home to him. He could not go and dine at the local club, because he would

be questioned there. Men would inquire if they were likely to see him and Charles on the golf course to-morrow; perhaps suggesting a four-ball match if Charles cared for it. They would send messages to Charles, saying that he would be sure to see Charles before they did.

His servant provided him with a little food, obtained at a neighbouring restaurant, and he ate alone in sadness.

He wanted to write a long letter to Charles, but he dared not risk the adventure. He could not trust himself with pen and paper. He felt vaguely that it was essential he should see and talk with his dear Mrs. Charles before hazarding any further apologies. But how could he see her? He would not be allowed to see her—not to-morrow, not ever again perhaps. She made no sign, she sent him no word. Had she too turned against him?

Another day crept slowly by, and still another day after that.

And now, apart from all anxieties and perturbations with regard to those two dear people, he began to suffer most bitterly in his prolonged remorseless banishment from their house. Bolton Lodge itself seemed to be calling him, seemed to be drawing him invincibly back to it. He walked past it, watched it ruefully, yearned for entrance. He had nowhere else to go, nothing else to live for. If he went to London and sat in the large respectable club to which he had belonged for years, the unfamiliar faces of its numerous members made him uncomfortable; he felt alone in the midst of an inimical crowd. If he walked about the cherished open spaces of the suburb the sameness and knownness of the landscape evoked lacerating memories of all that he had forfeited. He was invaded by mental visions of Charles's library. In imagination he saw the books with their prettily toned bindings, the dark old Italian pictures, the solidly carved writing-table with Charles's huge inkstand, his trays of pens, his handsome blotting-pads, and neat little row of volumes of handy reference. In imagination he sank luxuriously into one of the deep leather-covered chairs, and could smell the perfume of flowers in bowls on side-tables as it mingled with the fainter odour of morocco and vellum. In imagination

he touched again with lovingly gentle fingers the golf competition cards, the photograph frames, the box of old coins, the glass-topped case that contained the charming eighteenth-century miniatures, the innumerable pleasant odds and ends which belonged to Charles, but in which he had gradually lodged his own keen interest. He possessed nothing of the sort at the flat. He had kept his heart at Bolton Lodge, together with the intimacy, the ties, the delicate attachments that make up the life of the heart. Bolton Lodge was *home* to him, and now he was exiled from it.

On the third day he saw Dr. Laurie's motor-car drive in at the gates, and he hung about until, after forty minutes, it reappeared. He stopped it in the roadway outside the gates and timidly asked for news of Mrs. Charles. He trusted that she was not really ill.

Dr. Laurie replied unhesitatingly, giving all the information with which he would have supplied Charles himself had Charles asked for it. No, Mrs. Derwent was merely a little run down, tired, and needing rest. He was keeping her in bed as the best place for her. There was not the least occasion for alarm.

"She has a splendid constitution, hasn't she?" said Mr. Lake.

"Yes, excellent."

"So I have always thought—ah, yes. Remarkably good health."

"By the way," said Laurie, about to restart his car. "Will you tell Derwent what I've said. I didn't see him just now."

Gregory opened and shut his mouth, but did not speak as the car drove off.

He had not feared that Enid was seriously ill. Her trouble was of the mind, not of the body. It was the worry of this quarrel that had overwhelmed the dear kind soul. He longed to be with her, if only for a few minutes.

His unselfish thoughts about them, his remorse and regret on their account, were almost unceasing; but stronger than these were the thoughts of the disastrous consequences that threatened himself. He was too guileless, too simple in his whole mental equipment, to struggle against the consideration of personal disadvantage or to condemn it as unworthy.

With him any analysis of thought was impossible. He accepted in the realm of thought whatever came to him, rarely if ever knowing whence it came or why it came.

He knew, then, that his commiseration for Charles was greater than anything that he felt when grieving about Enid. He wanted both of them, but Charles was the one he wanted most. It was the separation from Charles that if rigorously continued would kill him. He yearned for Enid, but he pined for Charles. He adored Enid, but he could not live without Charles. The attributes of Charles, mental and physical, were immeasurably dear to him—Charles's humour, his long nose, the variety of his moods, the rapidity of transitions in his discourse, his genial glances, his abrupt gestures, his friendly nudges and pushes with hand or elbow, these all added together endowed Charles with a charm infinite and inexhaustible, a charm to which Gregory had yielded ages and ages ago, to which he had been during endless years a willing thrall, and which now was necessary to health and well-being. If withdrawn, if permanently hidden, Gregory would wither and fade out of existence. Or so he thought. Suppose that Enid had died. It would have been too awful, it would have almost broken his heart; but he would have been able still to feel mildly happy because of Charles. He would have made it the business of his remaining years to console Charles. He would have said to Charles, "Dear old boy, be brave, and remember that you still have *me*. I will never desert you" . . . And now Charles, his dearest Charles, was angry with him, ready at any minute to glare at him and call him nasty names. Old as he was, he felt the swelling heart-bursting anguish of a small child who has suddenly been bereft of a loved and accustomed playmate.

On the fourth day, at the luncheon hour or a little earlier, he received a letter that had been delivered at his flat by hand. It was from Charles. Gregory's heart bounded as he recognised the neat business-like handwriting.

"My wife is not well and she wishes to see you. You had better come at 3 p.m., or, if this is not convenient, at 5.30. C.D."

That was all. The messenger had gone away without waiting for an answer. No answer was necessary. Of course they knew that he would obey the summons.

A footman admitted him and took his hat. Then, as Haynes stepped forward and ushered him through the hall to the staircase, he seemed to be aware that Charles although invisible was very near to him—either in Enid's sitting-room or in the room they called the parlour, and not in the slightly more distant library. Waiting on the stairs stood Enid's own maid. She led him to the upper floor, opened a door, and drew aside.

Blinking his eyes he entered the room that he had never seen till this moment. He saw it now as large and high, with three narrow windows in a sort of bay outside of which there was the balcony that he had looked up at a thousand times from the terrace. He saw mirrors, pretty things of gold, glass, tortoise-shell on a long dressing-table, a sofa covered with bright chintz, a pair of beribboned slippers—and Enid, wrapped in black and silver, half sitting up, half reclining against pillows and cushions, looking small in the vastness of a wide low bed. He shut the door, and walking towards the bed with the air of somebody in church he heard her speak to him.

"What a fool," she said sadly, "what an idiotic fool you've been. . . . Oh, Greg, Greg, how *could* you bring this sorrow upon us all?"

IV

NEXT day, when afternoon was drawing towards evening and the golden sunlight made the whole town beautiful, two most unhappy men were walking about Tudor Green.

The first of them was Charles Derwent. Soon he left the well-frequented streets behind him and passed into the verdant solitudes of the Chase.

His misery was so intense and yet so voluminous, so all-embracing in its character, that if he had tried to do so he could not have recalled his feelings during the many other hours of sorrow that he had lived through before the present

time. This sensation of an irreparable loss was different altogether from his regret for a vanished youth and the dread of advancing age. The grief was different essentially from his agony after Roddy's death. It was different from the lesser but very severe torture of heart and nerves when he tore himself free from that too sweet happiness with the girl. Everything till now had been restricted, concentrated. But this reached to the foundations of his life. It was a loss with a thousand other losses contained in it. With Enid taken from him as his controlling influence, his guide, his comforting supporter in all his doubts and difficulties, then necessarily everything that hitherto had seemed solid and impregnable was gone from him too.

Once she had told him that he had failed her and that it was like the rock beneath her feet ceasing to give support. But *her* failure was a destruction of his universe. It was like the sun not rising at the appointed time, or the earth spinning round the wrong way in a perpetual night. It was the creation of a void that beginning in Charles Derwent spread to the confines of known space and beyond the dawn of recorded time. Her love had been air, light, nourishment to him. Without her he lay cold and dead. Indeed, with her proved to be false, the sense of reality came to an end and it was as if he had never been alive at all; he had only fancied that his life was life.

It was too awful. Sometimes he tried to think that it was impossible. Surely it could only be a hideous and baseless thought of his own mind?

But then other thoughts ravaged him. He thought of the obviousness of her crime as well as of its cruelty. Again and again he had read such stories in fictions that avowedly held a mirror to common and usual facts. It was like a French novel—not rapid with a startling dénouement as in a play, but a long quiet wickedness spun out through hundreds of pages. Looking at the past now it was all lit up along a fixed line of thought, and in this strong light of an abnormally stimulated memory the unexamined archives of his mind displayed themselves clearly and brightly. Doors opened. Old facts poured out upon him. Everything matched; everything

fell into its place, like the large pieces of an extremely simple jig-saw puzzle—a puzzle made for children, a puzzle only in name. Those foreign tours! The week-ends up the river. The way they had danced. . . . They were always together, and yet they went away whenever they could in order to be more completely together. . . . Those foreign tours, autumn after autumn, with those beastly people! He could not recall the name. Then it came. The Tathams. They knew, of course. They lent themselves to the disgraceful intrigue—the man who went wrong in the war and the cackling sandy-haired woman. She was a go-between, a person employed to cloak the abominable arrangements and make them appear natural. . . . And two big plainly fitting pieces of the puzzle came together with a jerk. He remembered how that Tatham woman had afterwards extorted money from Enid—black-mailing her. Enid had told him all about it in a letter and he had not understood.

He groaned. It was fatally easy to understand, with the new light shining on it. Enid had felt herself so safe in the permanency of his obtuseness that she had ventured to inform him of her predicament. Or perhaps she had been allowed no choice. The wretched woman, when her demands became greater than Enid could meet, had threatened to betray the secret. Then Enid had been forced to write to him in preparation—to ward off the danger by an act of seeming frankness, to fool him once more, to throw another handful of dust in his eyes. “Oh, Enid, Enid.” . . .

Yet she had really loved him. Not quite as he had wanted in the beginning, but later—year after year. Deeper than thought, with a greater certainty than reasoning can bring, he knew that he had possessed her love—all of it—at one time—and for a long time. He *knew*. Men cannot deceive themselves as to this—not ordinarily intelligent men,—and there are limits to a woman’s power of deception. There are things that women cannot act. Moreover, close thought helped him here, confirming instinct. He worked back to her bitter grief when she discovered his aberration with the girl. That wasn’t acting. It was all of it real, terribly real. But if she hadn’t loved him, if he had not been, as she vowed,

all the world to her, she would not have felt like that. She would not have minded. She would not have said that she could not forgive him. If she herself was false it would have been so easy to forgive.

Then he remembered her forgiveness, its suddenness and completeness. She pardoned him and never spoke of the thing again. She seemed to think no more about it. . . . And he had a flash of thought, vivid as lightning, swift and convincing as an intuition of a truth that henceforth cannot be questioned or refuted. It was *then* that she withdrew her love. It was then. . . . He grew hot and breathed fast. The thought suffocated him. That must have been the beginning. Perhaps before then there had been dalliance, an infidelity in thought, but then had come the actual betrayal, the consummation of his shame.

But this was years ago—ages ago; and he tried to remember the date. It was long before the war—when the children were young. The children!

And again, quite suddenly, he felt the inrush of still further light. He thought of Margaret. Margaret knew. Margaret had guessed. That was the clue to her treatment of her mother. This thought was too dreadful. He drove it from him.

He had wandered far into the Chase, and now he sat down, on a fallen tree between the avenue and the two ponds, meditating, brooding, alone with his shame and sorrow—a grey-haired, elderly man, but still youthful in the slimness and taut muscular poise of his body, very neatly and becomingly dressed, looking prosperous, just the sort of fortunate person who has always been well-off and never known ordinary troubles. He sat like this for more than an hour, unnoticed and unnoticing. Young men, returned from the day's business, with girls who had lounged through the day waiting for them, passed by down the slope towards the water. A couple of herons flying high on lazy wings swung down to the tree-tops in the wood behind his back and vanished. These birds were like the people of the suburbs. They went away in the morning; they came back in the evening. The surface of the ponds flashed and began to deepen in colour;

the light became more mellow; the long horizontal rays from a sun that soon would set were stopped by the foliage of the wood and gave it on Charles's side a wall of shadow.

An impersonal sadness, a wistful sympathy with all who suffer, that he had so often felt on summer evenings, crept through his harder thoughts, softening them. He thought of Enid, now at home, unhappy. It was all her own fault. But there came before his mental eyes, and painfully, the expression of her face as he upbraided her. He could hear the little cries that she had given when he called her opprobrious names—for he had said the most terrible things to her. He could not have avoided them had he tried. The words said themselves. "You lie. . . . All lies. . . . You have lied to me for twenty years." . . . He could hear the words. He had smashed into all her protestations of innocence with his abuse.

But there should not be any more of that. He would leave her. What else could he do? She might have Bolton Lodge and everything in it. She could go on living there with all outward show of dignity. He would save her from disgrace of any kind. But he himself would go—travel—round and round the world.

He sighed heavily. He knew that he did not want to go. The craving for adventure was gone. The war had finished those fancies. All that he really wanted was peace, comfort, freedom from interruption in his work and play. For he meant to work—to improve himself. He would master French and Italian—and then Spanish. He would make up for lost time by solid reading. . . . The English classics. . . . Science. . . . And up-to-date psychology. . . .

Oh, the sadness of life! Its ugliness . . . its diabolical cruelties! He sighed again.

But all this time there were lower streams of thought beneath the eddies, the flowings, the ebbings, of the surface river, and all these deeper currents were setting one way. He wanted to refuse the inference of remembered facts, to disbelieve everything that proclaimed itself as plain evidence. He wanted to believe that he was torturing himself without a valid reason. And now it was as if deep voices inside him

argued strenuously, reiterating his earliest thought, whispering it more and more loudly. The thing couldn't be true. It was too big—too monstrous. It was impossible. As if without his own consent he was forced to reflect upon Enid's perfect propriety of conduct in every relation of life. She never hesitated, never blundered. She had an undeviating sense of right and wrong that carried her at once to her decisions. With her, black was black and white white. In her judgments, in her whole attitude towards sin, taste, behaviour, there were no neutral tints. Was it conceivable then that she could steep herself in long-continued darkest iniquity and still go on laying down the law for other people, saying as she used to do, with such emphasis, "Mrs. Jones is not a nice woman," or, "I hope I am not unkind, but I cannot take a light view of Miss Brown's peccadilloes?" . . . And Gregory, too! The soul of chivalry, loyalty, single-mindedness. How could it be possible?

He rose from the tree-trunk, stretched himself, and walked homeward. Then, nearly at the end of his walk, quite near to Bolton Lodge, he met the other unhappy man—Gregory Lake.

Gregory was on the far side of the road, big, erect, carrying himself well but moving very slowly, as if fatigued; and Charles had the thought of a steadfast old soldier marching under a heavy equipment. Gregory walked just like that, as if overburdened but meekly submitting. Was it a fact, what Enid said, that he was beginning to fail physically and mentally?

He made a feeble timid gesture with his hand; but Charles stalked past as though not seeing him or not recognising him. He had been cut dead. Then however Charles stopped and called to him.

At once he hurried across the road and walked by Charles's side, humbly keeping step with him and glancing at him with diffident eyes that blinked unceasingly.

"I want to speak to you," said Charles curtly.

"So glad," said Gregory; and he added some incomplete sentences to the effect that he was grateful for the permission

to see Mrs. Charles the other day and he trusted that this grace implied a more lenient spirit on Charles's part.

"Nothing of the sort," said Charles. "But I want a few words with you. Where can we go? . . . Yes, come in here."

They had turned a corner and were now close to the lower wall of the Bolton Lodge grounds. Charles unlocked a door, and next moment they were in the kitchen garden. They strolled down one of the grass paths between flowers and fruit trees, and seated themselves on a stone bench. It was very quiet here, with the sunlight all gone but the air still warm.

Charles cleared his throat and spoke with abruptness.

"This is serious, you know."

"Yes, my dear fellow, most serious."

"In the duelling days you and I would have fought, and I'm inclined to think it would have been the best way out of it—for one to kill the other."

"Shoot me if you like," said Gregory. "Get your revolver. I'll not shrink. Rather not."

"Oh, don't be an ass;" and Charles got up and stood at the distance of a few feet from the bench. Something in the absurd offer of Gregory had touched his heart and still further softened all his feelings. Indeed, he had nearly acted automatically and given Gregory a push of the elbow, just as he would have done in the old friendly time. It was a realisation that he had almost made this inappropriate movement of the arm, and not anger, that caused him to jump up.

"Look here," he said gently, "as man to man, let me have the truth;" and saying these words he himself knew he was in such a mood now that a single downright explicit denial from Gregory would satisfy him.

But once again Gregory failed to give it. He began all right, and then unfortunately he fell into a muddle of ill-considered phrases.

"The truth," he said. "Ah, yes. Why not? I thought I had endeavoured—you know, when you first charged me. I admitted freely—I did, didn't I?—the truth of my respectful admiration—and, ah, my strong—my very strong regard."

Charles watched him, and listened with growing irritation.

"Go on," he said; "out with it. You were in love with her."

"Friends with her," said Gregory. "Warm friendship. A platonic friendship, if I may so describe it;" and he spoke now quite briskly. "Yes, that is the correct term. Platonic. Friendliest regard—but, ah, platonic."

"You're reciting a lesson," said Charles fretfully. "You are just saying what Enid told you to say."

"No, did she?" And Gregory looked up at him, blinked his eyes, and made a gesture with both hands. "I'm not aware. It may be. Naturally she and I talked about the whole question—when you so kindly granted me an interview with her."

"Well, go on."

Then Gregory floundered in an idiotic manner. He seemed not so much to be asserting his guiltlessness as to be explaining that he had long since ceased to be guilty. Or thus it struck Charles, getting angrier every moment. Gregory maundered about the war, that protracted time of grief and anxiety, and he also reminded Charles of the loftiness of thought that filled the minds of even the most commonplace people. "Duffers like myself, old boy... I surmised that Mrs. Charles, feeling the uplift, as you know she did more than any woman I ever knew, or so it appeared to me at the time—" and he made his gesture and smiled deprecatingly. "For my part I acquiesced. It appeared to me—there are things that can be done and things that cannot be done. At that time I think we all felt we must give up something—stop playing golf, or bridge—something to show that one really did feel that one was not so selfish as to put one's own inclinations before the needs of the Empire."...

But by this point Charles was beside himself. That touch about giving up golf rendered him frantic. He shouted.

"Shut up. That's enough. I don't want any more... Let yourself out the way you came in;" and turning his back he moved off.

"Ah, yes—just so," said Gregory as he slowly rose to his feet. "But one moment. I have not the key."

"You don't require the key," said Charles over his shoulder. "It's a latch lock—on the inside;" and he walked away through the espaliers towards the other part of the garden and the house.

The thing had been definitely pushed into the past. It was a traffic that was rife a long time ago, but that was altogether over and done with. Charles once more believed that they had cruelly wronged him, and yet he could not think of it quite as he had thought till now. Between it and him time had made a wide bare space, similar to the Norman's land lying between the enemy's line and ours at least in one respect, that you could not cross it without extreme difficulty. The space looked like open ground, but it was entangled with wires, pitfalls, and little broken ridges. When Charles adventured himself upon it he felt weak, tired, quite incapable of overcoming the hidden obstacles.

Again, and perhaps as an experience that was final, never to be repeated even in a lesser degree, he had a plain recognition of the essential nature of time. Time the all-powerful! We cannot defy it, we cannot even ignore it. If we disregard time itself, its work is none the less evident, a continual unflinching process seeming of such slight immediate effect and yet tremendous beyond the imagination of man in its ultimate results. The past does not die a natural death, it is time that kills it. We look backward through a telescopic glass seeking to keep the past near us, and very slowly time turns the glass in our hands till we are looking through the wrong end, to find that great events have become small. Smaller, still smaller—and then they vanish, because time has slowly drawn the cap over the lens, and the glass can show us nothing at all. Time softens and blurs everything—action, thought, feeling—before it obliterates. Time robs us of the power of thinking of the past clearly. We know that our primeval ancestors ran about naked like wild beasts and were devoured by other wild beasts bigger

and fiercer than themselves; but we cannot think of their death as we do of the workman who was knocked down by a motor-car last September. We cannot think of Nero's villainously cruel deeds as we do of the Black Hole of Calcutta and Surajah Dowlah. We cannot think of Queen Anne as we do of Queen Victoria. Truly we cannot think of yesterday as we do of to-day—because already time has begun to render it unreal to us.

He struggled against ideas of this kind. He endeavoured to maintain himself at his initial state of heat. In such matters no statute of limitations can be rightly applied. If you discover that somebody has committed a murder you don't treat it lightly because it happened years ago.

In much the same manner he refused to entertain the thought that there was something pitifully ridiculous in their relative positions—three elderly people hammer and tongs at one another, squabbling, wrangling about a state of affairs that, if not confined to youth, is incongruous even to middle age. But they were old—all three of them. Two were grey-haired, one was white. Suppose that anybody except themselves knew of the quarrel and its cause. He would laugh—if it was a man. She would giggle, if a woman. Charles writhed in discomfort as he thought of this; but nevertheless he endeavoured not to be influenced by so poor a consideration. Tears and laughter are always close together. In the greatest tragedies there is some comic by-play. The drama of *Hamlet* is not less dreadful because the grave-diggers make grotesque comments on death.

The days continued to drag themselves past, and every day the difficulties of the situation were increasing. Enid came downstairs for a day or two, and then retired to her bed. It was still (if not quite in the sense implied by Dr. Laurie) the safest place for her. People were informed that Mrs. Derwent was laid up with a mild indisposition.

But Dr. Laurie, again in attendance, looked at Charles queerly. The servants appeared to be troubled in mind. Friends asked questions of Charles that he could not answer. From interrogation to suspicion would now be an easy step for any fool to make. Above all, the absence of Mr. Lake

was so crushingly inexplicable. Bolton Lodge was not, could not be the same place without him.

This shattered and disturbed life necessarily became intolerable. It must be ended *somehow*. But in what way? An immense fatigue fell upon Charles and possessed him, body and mind. There were moments when sheer weariness, the exhaustion of too long continued emotional stress, made him murmur aloud, "I can't go on with this. . . . It is wearing me out." Then one evening he was conscious of a thought that made him shiver. He had distinctly said to himself, "What the devil does it matter?"

Was it possible that for a moment of time such a thought, coming as if from outside himself, had found a lodgment in his harassed weary mind? He would be the most contemptible of human beings if it were really his own thought. But it wasn't. It was only the voice of his worn-out nerves and tired brain demanding a respite.

"Oh, is that you, Charles? Yes, come in."

He had opened the bedroom door, and he waited for permission to enter. It was late in the afternoon. The sunblinds were drawn down outside the windows, and with no strong light anywhere the whole room looked grey and sad. He went across to the dressing-table and mechanically picked up a scent bottle and turned its stopper round and round while he talked to her.

"How are you feeling?"

"Wretched," she said forlornly. She was lying flat in the bed with only her head visible, and she did not raise it.

"Gregory wants to see you. I told him to wait in the garden."

"Do you wish me to see him?"

"What do I care? See him or not as you please. It can make no difference to me."

"Oh, dear;" and the exclamation sounded like a moan. It was sorrowful, piteous.

He stood looking at her. The sight of her lying there made him sorry for her and angry with her. He had been calm coming up the stairs. Now he became excited. He put

down the scent bottle with a bump, and once again assailed her with his violent reproaches.

"Charles, stop," she wailed. "You are making me ill. Stop tormenting me."

But he would not stop, he could not stop. He had lost control of himself. Wrath again held him.

"What's the use of pretending? What's the sense in lying—when I tell you I see it all. It's as plain as the nose on my face—and that's plain enough and large enough, isn't it? Perhaps if you said what you think, you'd say it was my fault. I brought it on myself;" and he laughed harshly and bitterly. "But I owned my fault—I never lied to you. I went on my knees to you—about Gwen—Gwendolen. I confessed—I never tried to exonerate or to— But you wanted your revenge. You did it in revenge. It was to be tit for tat."

"No, no. I didn't. It wasn't."

"Yes, it was then that you did it—just when I thought you had forgiven me."

"No. I tell you no. Charles, for mercy's sake stop. I can't bear it;" and she spoke rapidly. "Oh, I don't deny that we became greater friends then. He helped me. He helped you too. It was so natural—and you fully approved always. You wished me to be the same to him as you were. So how can you go back on me—and be so cruel?" And she said much more about Gregory's friendship with both of them.

Charles sat down wearily and spoke in a tone of sullen scorn.

"You go on talking, of course. You are trying the old game of talk. You want to talk it all into nothing."

"It is nothing," said Enid, with force.

She went on talking. She talked, talked, volubly, eagerly— and convincingly. He knew that she was beginning to convince him and he struggled not to be convinced—not to be convinced against reason or common sense. But he realised that he was no longer thinking consecutively. She stirred his gentler emotions. Her aspect affected him; the tones of her voice upset his power of judgment; the varied evidences

of a distress that she had said was insupportable nearly unmanned him.

Presently he came from his chair to the side of the bed and stood looking down at her.

"Do you swear there was never anything in it?"

"Of course I swear. Any oath you like."

"Look me in the face."

"Yes, yes." She had scrambled up in the bed to a sitting posture, and she tried to put her arms round his neck.

"You swear he wasn't your lover?"

"Never."

"That no familiarities ever passed between you?"

"No, no."

"Listen. You're religious—you believe in God. Will you swear before God—as God sees you—that you were never guilty with him?"

"Yes, yes——" and she spoke wildly—"but I don't know about God. . . . Leave God out of it. . . . It isn't right to invoke God, except to things of life and death."

"This is worse than life and death—to me anyhow."

"Then for God's sake stop it. There. I have said what you asked;" and she was almost hysterical. "Now stop being cruel and unkind. I can't bear it. If it goes on it will kill me. If your mother was alive she'd tell you not to. She was always kind to me."

"My mother, yes. My mother loved you."

"Yes, and I loved her. But it's you I've loved. Oh, Charles, think. Think what I've been to you—what you and I have gone through together. How can you doubt my love? When has it failed you?" She had him in her arms now. She was pressing her face against his. "Don't you feel my love, just the same as ever—quite unchanged?"

She had at least convinced him of her love. He could not doubt it, and it seemed that he could not go on doubting her herself. Holding her close with her dear head against his shoulder he felt a melting, a flowing away, of every thought, every sensation that had been hostile to her. The tremendous strength of an interrupted habit, like a river that bursts through the foolish dam that men have tried to erect in its

course, swept on again, carrying him with it whether he wished or not. She was Enid, his faithful devoted wife—his poor girl who had come to him in her fine healthy youth, bringing him joy, giving him peace, surrendering to the yoke that was pleasure for him and pain for her, giving and paying, letting the debt of his bliss accumulate until she paid for it in the pangs of a grinding anguish so frightful that he and other men cannot even measure its terror to the women who meekly suffer it. She was this sacred unique creature, the wife who had borne him children. She was the mother of his dead boy. She was Roddy's—Roddy's mother. The father and mother of Roddy must love each other, must never part in anger; for death as well as life had united them.

She was crying. Those eyes that had wept for Roddy were weeping because of him. He kissed her and caressed her; he yearned over her. "Enid, Enid, Enid. . . Darling girl;" and he held her closer still. He was weak, limp, broken with emotion.

"Dear old thing," she murmured. "Is it all right again? Oh, say that it's all right."

"Yes," he said. "Quite all right. Absolutely—darling."

Gregory Lake was in the garden. Charles had forgotten him. But no doubt he was still waiting down there.

"Let him wait," said Enid firmly when her husband mentioned him.

Presently however she said that perhaps Charles had better go and set his mind at rest.

Moreover, she wanted to make her hair tidy, and she said she thought she would probably get up for dinner. "Yes, I would like to. But you and I alone, darling. Nobody else."

Gregory was leaning against the balustrade at the end of the terrace, a solitary figure, big, tall, apparently robust, yet somehow suggesting misery and desolation. Charles melted again at sight of him. Was it true, what Enid had said, that he was beginning to fail, that his intellect was weakening?

They shook hands. Charles said very little. Poor old Greg could not speak at all; he was overwhelmed. When his

hand was free after that warm clasp of renewed friendship he patted Charles, he almost fawned upon him in his affection. He really was doglike—just like a good big disgraced dog who at last has been taken back into favour.

V

THE triangular reconciliation was absolute and complete. The three of them were more closely united in trustful confidence than they had ever been. Indeed they were like people who had weathered a terrific cyclone together, and, since no one else has passed through this particular experience, they are necessarily nearer to one another than they can be to the rest of the world.

Upon Charles and Enid the immediate after-effects were such as one could not have expected. The storm of emotion had to a certain extent rejuvenated them both. Enid felt as if she had done a course of mud baths, and Charles as if he had been to Aix. And yet, curiously enough, although they felt the better for the drastic treatment—freshened and lightened—nevertheless they seemed also to be tender and rather shaky.

These sensations did not endure. Once again there was a mental settling down into the old well-used grooves, another readjustment to surroundings and routine. Life then went on easily and pleasantly—more pleasantly than before.

But Charles was gnawed with regrets concerning Margaret. He kept them to himself. Tempted often to speak of them to Gregory, he always refrained. He knew that Enid would not sympathise with him.

Margaret had never written again. He was utterly cast off by her. But no retributive punishment had fallen upon her. She was doing very well without him. She was comparatively poor, and he might have made her comparatively rich. But she did not repine. She had her hateful husband—and that was all she wanted.

With considerable mortification Charles realised that the brute himself was carrying on his career successfully. He wrote pompous articles about international affairs in monthly

reviews and Sunday periodicals. He had friends as well as enemies. At the London club he was spoken of in kindly terms by men that Charles knew and respected. One of these told Charles that the young man would go far.

Then the public press echoed this opinion. An article, one of a series about people who count, gave an almost sickening eulogy of Mr. Vincent Cayley and his brilliant prospects. Charles read every word of it, and frowning at the printed page and hating its writer he said to himself, "What tripe these penny-a-liners pour out!" But he was forced to accept as more solid evidence the appearance of Mr. Cayley's name in the lists of guests at the dinner-parties of foreign ambassadors and the official receptions of British cabinet ministers. Charles ruefully supposed that one is not asked to that sort of thing if one carries absolutely no weight and is of less than no account. Still further he had to admit that the newspaper attentions received by Margaret were earned as the wife of Vincent Cayley and not merely as the daughter of Charles Derwent. She was described as pretty Mrs. Cayley. Several times her photograph was published. Charles gathered that she was a prominent figure in a smart young set, and he waded through *The Tatler*, *Sketch*, *The Bystander* every week on the chance that she might be portrayed again. He even studied the woman's page in daily newspapers to see if there was anything about her clothes.

Then he read a very formal paragraph in Court and Society news that had probably been paid for—"Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Cayley have bought the lease of 27, Sanctuary Road, Westminster, which will henceforth be their permanent address." Yes, no doubt they had put that in themselves, as the easiest way of informing their large circle of acquaintance.

Secretly—that is, without telling any one before or after—Charles went to have a look at that house. It was absurdly small, in a horrid little street that had been almost a slum until speculation and fashion joining hands had converted the meagre dwellings of working people into these band-boxes for the smart and the young. Charles looking at it furtively at dusk of a winter afternoon felt sad and lonely. If he and

she had not quarrelled, if they had continued to be to each other what they had once been, he could have afforded to give her such a much better and more attractive house. Also, if that young ass was really going to do big things, Charles could have made it all so much easier by solid financial aid. A man with money behind him gets there so much quicker.

Charles had left his car at a safe distance, approaching on foot and warily, in dread lest by some unlucky accident he might encounter Margaret. He thought now with a sudden qualm that she might look out of a window and see him. It was still light enough—and she would probably be inside the house at this hour. Following the timorous thought he had another, a fantastic and impossible one. He thought, "Suppose I rang the bell, and, pretending there was nothing wrong between us, went in and asked her to give me a cup of tea."

He turned on his heel and walked briskly away.

Not long after this unmentioned reconnaissance the fashion columns of a Sunday paper informed him and its other suburban readers that next season Mrs. Vincent Cayley would not be so prominent socially as hitherto, because she was in somewhat delicate health.

Another person indisposed in the springtide of the year was Gregory Lake. He had developed trouble with a vein in the leg, and Dr. McGrigor ordered him to give up golf at least temporarily and perhaps for ever. He lay in bed for two or three weeks, and Charles and Enid were very anxious about him. Some hint, embodying the maxim as to the correlation between a man's age and his arteries, that McGrigor had let fall scared them both. They talked about their friend a great deal.

"Do you know how old he is exactly?" Charles asked her.

Enid said no. It was very queer, but she had not an idea. He never cared to speak of his age. He had even concealed the date of his birthdays. "Of course," she added, "he is very much older than you."

"Well, I don't know," said Charles.

"He looks twenty years older."

"Does he really?" said Charles.

As soon as the dear fellow was able to go out they took him for long drives. Then when he said he felt quite well again they made treats for him. He came to dinner on most nights in the week; but one evening in April Charles, looking out of the dressing-room window before going down to dinner, saw him come along the drive and had a little shock of distress. Gregory moved so slowly, stooping a little, instead of carrying himself erectly and gallantly as had been his habit. The light overcoat slung over his shoulder seemed too heavy for him, and unexpectedly he stopped and stood still as if to rest for a few moments. Charles realised then what an effort was entailed even by the short walk from the flat to the house.

After this they made a new arrangement. The car was sent to fetch him twice a week. He dined with them on Wednesdays and Sundays, and they rigorously kept these nights free for him, refusing all other invitations and engagements however tempting or interesting.

But inevitably Greg now passed to a certain extent out of the home picture. The loss of locomotive power is an ever-growing barrier between oneself and those who are still moving about the world freely. The friend you have to go and find is never seen as often as the friend who can come to see you. Charles and Enid were now more together in their odd hours. Charles played golf with the professional and the professional's son, a boy of sixteen who drove a prodigious ball. He could not disguise from himself that they pulled him out more than dear old Greg had done. He was playing on a twelve handicap after winning the monthly medal.

Although their family circle had contracted to so small a compass Enid's days were full. The disabled soldiers at the hospital continued to provide her with steady employment. There was nothing that she would not do for them; and beyond them, earlier friends still claimed her time and occupied her thought. She helped the sons and daughters of fathers and mothers once helped by her and now dead.

"Now," she would say to her chauffeur, after delivering beneficial parcels in that still sordid purlieu, River Lane;

"now I want to go to Miss Peckham's. . . . You know, Wilderness Road—beyond the gas-works."

She paid frequent calls upon Peckham, the old servant of Charles's mother.

"Now," she said, coming out and waving her hand in adieu to old Peckham on the threshold, "now let me see. Yes, I want to go to Mr. Wilding's."

"Yes, ma'am. Rose Terrace. I know."

Wilding, the pensioned butler, lived with his wife in one of the best cottages that Tudor Green could provide. Charles looked him up occasionally, but Enid was frequent and regular in her attentions. She always made it a long visit, and it used to tire her a little because Wilding's deafness obliged her to speak loudly all the time. His pleasure in talking over past days and by innumerable questions securing the latest news of the family he had served for the better part of his life was so manifest that she could not spare herself.

She sat there, kind, gracious, patient. Sometimes they gave her tea, and took out other tea to the chauffeur. Sometimes when listening and not answering questions she was lost in amazement, because Wilding seemed to be so strangely off the line of actual facts. Indeed, Wilding's talk came as a revelation of how little servants really know about their employers. They seem to learn everything, to watch each passing event, and all the while they are misunderstanding, getting wrong clues, drawing false conclusions.

"Miss Margaret!" said Wilding. "Ah, she was the warm-hearted one. All the maids loved her. They'd quarrel among themselves for which should wait on her. Yes, she had all their hearts, Miss Margaret had."

Enid was amazed.

"Master Charlie!" And the old chap smiled. "He'd say 'How be um all?' He'd preach us a sham sermon. Oh, how we laughed."

"Yes, I know you did," said Enid. "We could hear you in the dining-room."

"No, ma'am?" said Wilding, retrospectively shocked by

the grievous solecism he had committed. "Well, I *am* sorry. I do apologise. We never thought——"

"It didn't matter in the least."

"You're very kind, ma'am . . . And Mr. Roddy! Ah," and he sighed. "There was a spirit, ma'am. Oh, we all knew he was the flower of the flock."

Enid turned her head, and looked at some ferns in china pots with which Mrs. Wilding had decorated the window ledge. She did not speak.

"And Mr. Lake, ma'am? I hope Mr. Lake keeps his health. *What* a nice gentleman!"

"Yes, isn't he? But I'm sorry to say he has been far from well;" and she gave an account of Gregory's illness.

Then presently she told of Charlie and his successful labours under that great chieftain, Lord Havant. Mr. Charlie had a very swift motor-car and he ran up in it to Bolton Lodge now and then. He also stayed a night there occasionally—when he could be spared. Mr. Charlie was a comfort to them. He had not altered a bit. She said all this not as if speaking to a servant of the family, but as if to a member of the family itself; and to amuse the old man she related the grandeurs of Lord Havant and his belongings. That house in Hampshire was enormous. You could lose yourself going about its passages. The house-party at a week-end numbered as many as thirty-five. When a ball was given for the officers of the fleet there were five hundred people present. Lord Havant was a widower, but he liked entertaining because of his two daughters—one of whom was on the point of marrying Lord Stourbridge, eldest son of a marquess.

Wilding loved such talk. He smiled benignly and wished to know how Mr. Charlie "cottoned" to these festivities.

Enid laughed. "It doesn't sound like Mr. Charlie, does it, Wilding? He can't dance, and he won't play cards—but they make him go to their parties all the same. Lord Havant thinks a lot of him. I have made him wear white waistcoats and dress properly."

"Have you indeed, ma'am? . . . Well, thank you very much for coming. It's been a great pleasure."

"I'll come again soon," said Enid.

It was a little time before dinner, and the full light of an eight o'clock that was really no more than seven o'clock flooded the windows of the library. Enid, who had changed her clothes earlier than usual, sat working at a piece of embroidery. When Charles came into the room she raised her head and smiled.

But Charles seemed to be moody and abstracted. He moved to and fro, with hands plunged deep in his trouser pockets. Then he frowned, coughed, fidgeted.

"Look here," he said abruptly. "I have been with Margaret this afternoon."

"Oh, you have, have you?"

"Yes. I hope you don't blame me. It wasn't treacherous to you. I felt I *had* to go."

"Oh, I understand." She had put down her work and she was trembling. "Margaret was always your friend, not mine. Stick to your friends. Don't consider my feelings."

"It isn't that at all. I simply *had* to go."

"Well, I have to stay away."

"Are you sure? Look here. She's expecting—she's six months gone, and things don't seem going well. I saw her doctor. He's a fool. I'm going to get a woman's man to see her. She's *afraid*. I did all I could, and she seemed much jollier before I left. But I know she wished it had been you instead of me."

"Did she say so?"

"Yes—half a dozen times."

Enid had begun to cry. She dabbed her eyes and gasped. "I can't go. I won't go. She has made me suffer too much. I'll never, never forgive her—not until she comes here and kneels in front of me and asks my pardon."

"She can't do that—I mean, coming here and kneeling—in her condition."

Next morning at eleven o'clock Enid was sitting in the front room of a small house that, built in the reign of Queen Anne and occupied by persons of quality, then knocked about and neglected in the hands of common folk during two centuries, had now under George the Fifth been restored,

renovated, almost reconstructed to make it habitable for very select society. The decoration of the room was modern but not futurist. Its panelled walls were painted in bright green; its ceiling was green too, but of a darker tint; its floor, bare except for mats, highly polished and extremely slippery, was black. The principal pieces of furniture were two low divans, on which lay in tumbled profusion cushions of many colours and rich fabrics, some indeed barbarically gorgeous. Mirrors, crystal, glass filled all odd corners.

Enid, agitated on arrival and enervated by subsequent waiting, went to a window and looking down at the top of her stationary motor-car felt tempted to hurry out of the house and put the car in motion on the road back to Tudor Green. Just then the maid reappeared and took her upstairs.

"Oh, mother," said Margaret, stretching out a thin hand and slender fore-arm from the loose sleeve of her ornate dressing-gown, "I am so glad you've come. I am so very glad."

Enid gently shook the hand, murmured a greeting, and sat down by the bed.

"Mother! Aren't you going to kiss me?"

"Do you want me to?"

"Mother!"

Enid rose, stooped over the bed, and touched Margaret's forehead with her lips. But the girl flung both her arms round Enid's neck, kissed her again and again, cheeks, eyes, mouth, and then falling back on the pillows burst into tears.

"Margaret dear. Don't cry. Don't, my dear. There's nothing to cry about."

"There is," wailed Margaret. "You don't know. I'm afraid. I'm so terribly afraid. I shall die—I know I shall die. And I thought I was going to die without seeing you—without your forgiving me."

She sobbed now, loudly, shatteringly, her whole weak frame seeming to be torn and twisted by internal forces. She made the noise that she had made when she was quite a little girl—when she had hurt herself running away from Charlie, or when deprived of the amusement she craved for. Enid made just the same overwhelming noise in her fits of sharp

woe. No one who had ever heard these two giving way to their grief could doubt that they were mother and daughter.

"I've been so horrid to you," Margaret gasped. "So *wicked* to you. Yes, you said it—and it was true. But I didn't understand. Somehow I couldn't. Now I understand everything. Oh, mummy, mummy;" and she was exactly like a clamouring, howling child. "Oh, don't let me die without forgiving me."

"You're not going to die," said Enid; "and there's nothing to forgive . . . There. Never think of it again. I promise I won't either;" and her own tears mingled with Margaret's. But she did not sob. She was steady and calm quite soon, the grown-up person soothing and comforting her small frightened child. "Margaret. My poor little Margaret. Believe me it is going to be all right."

And it was. Enid took charge. When the anticipated date drew near she went to Margaret's house and remained there until a nice little girl was several days old and the invalid had been authoritatively pronounced as doing very well. The infant's father, detained by business of state in Vienna, had escaped all anxiety, and Enid for her part had felt glad he was out of the way.

"What are you going to call her?" she asked.

"Enid, of course," said Margaret.

"Do you really want to?"

"Of course I do."

The grandmother folded her regained daughter in her arms.

In order to spare Margaret inconvenience, the young Enid was brought to Tudor Green and christened with considerable pomp at the church of S. Barnabas. A large luncheon-party at Bolton Lodge preceded the ceremony, and old friends who had known Margaret herself as a baby toasted the health of this representative of another new generation. The fact that their son-in-law was still in Vienna and therefore unable to attend the gathering greatly enhanced the pleasure of Mr. Derwent.

Cayley in due course sent a polite note to Enid, offering

thanks for the kindness they had shown and the trouble they had taken. Charles read the note and made a face, as if he had been forced to swallow a dose of medicine with the knowledge that there were many more draughts of the same mixture in store for him.

VI

EARLY in the afternoon of a Sunday at the very end of September their son Charlie sent a telephone message from Hampshire to say that he would run up and have tea with them.

About half-past four, hearing the sound of his klaxon horn and the quieter screech of his wheels on the gravel, they hurried out into the porch to welcome him. It was a racing car, a grey thing with a ridiculously long bonnet, looking more like a motor boat than an ordinary road conveyance; and from what seemed to be its cockpit Charlie emerged, large, bear-like, in goggles and leather coat. But Charlie was not alone. He had a companion—female, as far as one could judge.

The surmise proved correct. She was Lord Havant's unmarried daughter. Having introduced her, Charlie helped her to extricate herself from the hole in the car and led her by the arm into the hall. There he carefully unpacked her, as though she had been a parcel with something rather nice but very fragile inside it. Deprived of dust-veil, spectacles, outer leather coat, inner fur coat, she stood disclosed to view as an attractive and beautifully dressed young woman.

"I hope we're not late," she said, as if they had been expecting her, and then she smiled at them prettily but shyly.

Enid was shy too. Her manner became brisk, bustling, and yet a little stiff or unnatural. This totally unanticipated Miss Thompson was upsetting. Why had Charles brought her? It was oafishly stupid of him.

"No, not in the least late," she said briskly. "Come. You must be dying for tea."

Presently they were all established round the tea-table.

But Enid did not at once recover composure. This young person, she thought, was not their sort. She belonged to stuck-up, purse-proud, vainglorious people. She was the Honourable Vera Thompson, a society beauty, whose portrait appeared twenty or thirty times in the newspapers for one insertion of Margaret's picture. She might speak politely and pretend to be amiable, but she was probably a mass of self-conceit, secretly thinking her entertainers suburban, old-fashioned, perhaps even middle-class. This thought aroused hostility in Enid's breast and made her tone stiffer.

"Would you care to see the garden after tea?" she said, almost curtly.

"Yes, I should adore it," said Miss Thompson gently and diffidently.

Their son made nothing of her, rarely addressing her and then in a brief style—calling her V.

"Sugar, V?"

He was quite at his ease—just the same as ever, soon talking to Charles and Enid of intimate matters without regard to the presence of a visitor. He had his old tolerant smile for both parents when he spoke of Margaret.

"So the hatchet is buried?"

"Yes," said Charles, rubbing his nose. "Buried deep."

"Have you smoked the pipe of peace with Vincent too?"

"Yes, several."

"But you don't really hit it off with him, do you?"

"The devil is never as black as he is painted," said Charles good-humouredly.

"Won't you have another of these?" said Enid, offering a plate of cakes.

"No, thank you," said Miss Thompson.

"Some more tea?"

"No, thank you."

They all went out into the garden, Enid and the incongruous visitor leading, Charlie and his father following.

Gradually one's opinion of the girl improved. "She is rather sweet," thought Enid. "A nice nature, I dare say—if she hadn't been spoilt by flattery and money and all the rest

of it . . . There's no mistake about her being pretty. It isn't just the newspapers."

Her face, when near, seemed like the most rare porcelain, the white flesh faintly tinted, with beautiful liquid eyes, long eyelashes, and the thinnest possible black eyebrows—exactly as if painted on the china. Enid decided that the thinness of the eyebrows was natural and not made by pulling out superfluous hairs. Also she was rather like a hothouse flower—so delicate in texture and colour, long and slim, but the flexible stalk quite strong—a healthy flower. Enid thought this as Miss Thompson stooped over blossoms in the greenhouses.

She admired the garden. She spoke of it sweetly but with knowledge. On the way back to the house Enid unconsciously called her "dear."

Then it was time to take Miss Thompson home. Enid heard Charlie telling his father that he did not want to break her neck. The car could do ninety easily, but on a Sunday, with all the scorchers about, it wasn't safe to go really fast.

The men were in front now, and as they crossed the terrace, with Miss Vera and her hostess a little way behind them, something very startling occurred. The girl stopped, looked at Enid, and spoke shily and eagerly.

"Mrs. Derwent, I hope you'll like me. I want you to so much."

"I do like you," said Enid, breathless with surprise.

The amazing truth had burst upon her, but she needed an immediate confirmation of it; so while Charles assisted Miss Vera to put on her wraps she drew aside her large and outwardly unattractive son and asked him if she had guessed right.

"Yes," said Charlie, suddenly looking sheepish. "That's about it. V and I have got keen on each other."

"D'you mean you're engaged?" Enid whispered excitedly.

"Well, I wouldn't say that," said Charlie, more sheepish still. "No hurry, you know . . . Come along, V."

They bestowed themselves in the car and swept away.

Charles would not believe at first, but when Enid con-

vinced him he laughed heartily. He said that Charlie had brought off the historic trick—making sure of your job by marrying into the family.

“But will Lord Havant allow it? Charles, I doubt if he will.” She had been thinking rapidly. A man of that type—with the other girl married to a lord—and *this* girl pretty enough to catch a prince! “No,” she said, “the high and mighty Lord Havant won’t willingly accept plain Mr. Derwent.”

“Well, he’s certainly plain,” said Charles facetiously. “But if the girl can put up with his plainness I don’t see why her father should mind.”

Enid explained.

Charles was dignified and stern then. He said that he would be very straight and to the point if Lord Havant gave himself any airs. He would tell his lordship that they felt neither elated nor flattered by the alliance.

“No, don’t do that,” said Enid. “If you upset him you may spoil Charlie’s chances.”

They talked of it all the evening, and Enid was still talking of it when she rose from her chair in the library to go to bed.

She said it was so marvellous that she could not get over her wonder. Who could have foretold that a beautiful much admired girl of that class, with all the male world to choose from, should have deigned to select their black-browed, thick-shouldered, coarse-handed Charlie? She extolled the girl now as more than lovely, intelligent, refined, sweet beyond any descriptive words—perfection. Never, never—so she said—had she met a young creature whose charm had won her so rapidly. No sooner had the dear thing entered the house than Enid had felt herself fascinated by her. And yet Charlie without any apparent effort had made himself loved by her. Miraculous!

“Yes,” said Charles meditatively, “it is odd, I must confess. So refined and cultivated, isn’t she? If it had been his brother, one could have understood. Yes, if it had been Roddy—”

Enid sat down again, and putting a hand before her eyes remained silent for a little while. The sound of that name always took away her voice.

But after this arrest of speech she jumped up and spoke agitatedly.

"Charles, what's to-day?"

"Sunday."

"I mean the date—the date?"

"The twenty-eighth of September," said Charles, glancing automatically at the large calendar on his desk. "Yes, the twenty-eighth!"

Enid uttered a little cry of horror.

The anniversary of the battle of Loos had passed by them unnoticed. They had omitted to send their boy's In Memoriam advertisement to *The Times*. Every year till now it had appeared—the same phrasing time after time, with two lines of his own poetry, and their own words at the end: "Always mourned, never forgotten." It was the first time they had failed.

"It doesn't matter," said Charles, looking very sad and speaking as if compelled to say something, rather than because he had anything that he wished to say. "It makes no difference. Our thoughts and feelings are just the same."

They went upstairs silently and sadly.

The rich and powerful Lord Havant caused no trouble. Within a week Charles received a brief note from him, saying "Your boy wants to marry my girl. Had not we better meet?"

Charles asked him to luncheon at his club, and took to him at sight. He was everything that one had not expected. At luncheon Charles talked about iron and steel because Lord Havant was interested in them, while Lord Havant asked questions about shipping because he knew that this was his host's subject. Afterwards in the smoking-room they discussed the business in hand.

"I suppose you don't object," said Lord Havant. "I don't. Besides—" and he laughed—"nowadays young people settle these things for themselves."

"You never said a truer word," said Charles, smiling sympathetically.

They concluded the matter there and then.

There had been no trouble. Lord Havant had not hinted at any inequality in the match. Nevertheless that expression "Plain Mr. Derwent" recurred to Charles. He understood exactly what Enid meant. Henceforth the boy Charlie would be among the "nuts" or "swells" that he used so sedulously to avoid. They all had handles to their names or were going to have them, whereas he to the very end of the chapter would be a mere unornamented person, as he was now. Silly as such considerations are, one must take them into account.

Charles toyed with an idea that had on several occasions been in his mind lately.

After the war, at the end of the year 1919, when he was elected chairman of the political association, he had been offered a knighthood, a K.B.E., and he had flatly refused the honour. At that time the loftier kind of emotions bred of the war itself were still active in him, and thinking of people who had served across the channel and been given neither distinction nor reward, and knowing also that this thing would be given to him for party services and not for anything he had done with the army, he felt that the honour was not an honour at all. He declined it much as a stomach rejects undesired and indigestible food. It simply would not be taken. But he never told anybody of this—not Enid—not even Greg. Now however he spoke of it lightly to Enid.

"You don't blame me, do you? You didn't want to be Lady Derwent?"

"No, of course I didn't," said Enid. But possibly, although her tone was firm, the words lacked the convincingness they might have been expected to convey. "Of course not," she said again; and there was perceptible doubtfulness in the sound of the repetition. "It was for you to judge. And I'm sure you judged rightly. But I can't agree that it wasn't a compliment."

Perhaps after this conversation Charles allowed his friends to make a discreet move in the right quarter—or perhaps he made it himself.

Anyhow, on January the first, he had occasion for much facetiousness with the morning newspapers. Two of them were spread on his wife's bed, beside the tea-tray, when he paid her his usual early visit.

"Any news in the papers, old girl?"

"None," said Enid. "But I've only glanced at *The Daily Mail*."

"I should look through it," said Charles; and she picked it up again.

"They sold two million copies last month—no, on one day of the month... Oh, Charles! Your portrait. Why on earth?... Oh—what's this? New baronets! Charles!"

Thus when Charlie led his lovely lady to the altar at St. Margaret's, Westminster, he advanced thither as the heir to a baronetcy. It was a grand wedding. At the crowded reception in Grosvenor Square one saw as well as the pretty people and the fashionable people, augustly solid people representing the worlds of politics, finance, industry, engineering, shipping, and so forth. Sir Charles and Lady Derwent enjoyed it all thoroughly.

Sometimes life seemed to be like a kaleidoscope continuously shaken by an unknown hand.

They travelled, by land and sea—very luxuriously, because Sir Charles was a rich and important personage for whom railway berths are reserved and state cabins allotted with alacrity. They tried to take Gregory Lake with them, and would have modified their arrangements to suit his convenience. They begged him to come, if only for a short journey. But he could not. Indeed it was out of the question. So they took their trips alone, visiting Egypt, Palestine, Constantinople, Venice, the Adriatic shores, and other strange regions. They derived great pleasure from these adventurous excursions; but they always returned to Tudor Green, to Bolton Lodge, with satisfaction. The old place welcomed them. It was home. It seemed to tell them so.

"I was born in this house," Charles used to say to visitors, "and I want to die in it... I don't mean that I want

to die yet awhile. Not a bit;" and he grinned and touched his nose with a bony finger.

Still feeling young, he thought of his actual age without the slightest discomfort. It was long since he had been worried with any consideration of the shortness of the time available to him. In fact he talked and behaved now as if it were limitless or himself immortal.

Half of his aims were directed to a remote future. He was studying foreign languages in order to talk them like a native before he finished with them. At Bolton Lodge he made structural alterations the advantages of which would be recognised twenty or thirty years hence. And, most remarkably, when creating a hedge to screen a long path in the garden he insisted on planting yews instead of thuja.

The head gardener strongly advised thuja as quick-growing, whereas yews are the slowest things on earth and tire you out before they make any effect at all. Moreover, the profuse and rapid thuja looks exactly like yew when clipped and trimmed.

"That may be," said Charles; "but I prefer the real article. We'll have yews."

This was his confirmed attitude of mind; yet truly time, that had always gone so fast with him, was going faster and faster. He was fully conscious of changes, of immense changes, when they had matured; but the sliding staircase up which all people and all things were progressing seemed to be invisible to him.

He felt delighted when Vera tardily presented Charlie with a baby boy, but he did not realise how long they had been married. Margaret was the mother of three children instead of one. The little Enid seemed to leap from her cradle yesterday and to be running about by herself to-day. She was two years old—three years—getting on for four. Charles observed that she had changed enormously.

Everything was changing, moving, expanding, or disappearing. Mr. Bonar Law died. Mr. Baldwin succeeded him. The Conservative Government fell. The dreaded advent of a Labour Government was an accomplished fact; and Charles's side, apparently turned out for ever, came back

again on a wave of swollen power. Lord Curzon died. The coal strike began and ended. The Duke and Duchess of York returned, after going round the world, almost before one understood that they were well away on their long journey.

Movements, alterations, changes! Only one thing seemed stable—the income tax. Charles grouched about it, wrote to *The Times* about it, even made speeches about it, went as far as possible from his loyalty to party in his hatred of it, and then paid it.

Christmas was now a great season, a festival of the first magnitude, for it regularly brought to Bolton Lodge Mr. and Mrs. Cayley and their children. A large juvenile party formed an item of the programme of entertainment, and three of these pleasantly tumultuous feasts had already occurred. The visits of her grandchildren were the happiest epochs of Enid's years.

Sometimes the children were placed in her sole charge for longish periods. It was to happen this autumn, and Charles determined to redecorate several unused rooms in order to give them and their nurses greater space. Without consulting Enid he himself cleared one of these rooms before his departure with her for an August holiday.

The portfolio that held Roddy's manuscript poems, together with the letters written by Enid, he carried down to the library and locked in a drawer of his desk. Then he consulted Haynes as to the other relics.

"What shall I do with these things?"

"I should destroy them, Sir Charles," said Haynes, very solemn and firm. "What can be the good of keeping them? It will be easier for her ladyship when she knows that she'll never see them again."

They took them to the kitchen garden—the garments, the school books, the photographs, that empty cigarette box, everything—and burnt them all at the stove by the green-houses.

Arrived home again, when Enid was beginning to prepare for the children's visit, he told her what he had done.

She went up there at once. The door stood wide open. The furniture stacked in the middle of the newly varnished

floor was covered by a sheet, so that not a single familiar object met her gazing eyes. The room was different, bright and gay, with fresh white paint and a very modern wall-paper of violent colour and fantastic design. The room was unrecognisable. It seemed as if she had lost Roddy for the second time. He was gone now utterly. She wiped the moisture from her eyes. Then she went downstairs, to go on with the task in hand.

There was a great deal to do and much to think of. Day after day she was kept busy with her preparations.

It was during these that Charles came into her sitting-room, just when the gong had sounded for luncheon, with a face so dark and sad that she knew immediately that he was the bearer of bad news.

"Gregory has had a stroke."

"Oh, how dreadful!"

They talked about it. They were not altogether surprised. It was what they had both feared, if they had not seen it coming.

"Poor old Greg," she said, with an immense tenderness. "What can one do for him?"

"Nothing. That is, nothing that hasn't been done already. I went round there directly McGrigor telephoned."

"Oh, you have been round there! That was good of you."

Charles made a gesture to deprecate praise for an obviously necessary action, and then told her all that there was to tell. The poor old chap was conscious, but there had been interference with his speech, and one side of the body was immobile. Two excellent nurses were in attendance. Dr. McGrigor said he would recover. But of course he could never be the same again. It was the beginning of the end for him.

They had luncheon, still talking of this new sadness, and then went to Mr. Lake's flat, where Charles waited in the outer room while Enid sat at the bedside of their stricken friend. The nurse said that one at a time was enough for him. Charles, before they left, took a peep at him, touched his unimpeded hand, and murmured words of affection.

After that they went away, taking a stroll up the hill and along the Parade, still talking of him.

In the next weeks Enid was with him every day, giving him all the hours that could possibly be spared from her work at the hospital and her care of the children at home. He quickly regained his voice—or rather a voice, for it had muffled tones and queer struggling breaks that had not been in the old one. Then surprisingly soon Dr. McGrigor allowed him to go out. The strong male attendant that Charles had procured lifted him into the motor-car, or put him, more easily, into his bath-chair (also the provision of Charles) and wheeled him through the streets or upward to the gates of the Chase. Enid or Charles very often walked beside the chair, and sometimes both of them.

Often too, on sunny afternoons, he was wheeled into the garden of Bolton Lodge to stay there for a couple of hours. He liked this. The children playing under the trees or running along the terrace presently came to him and asked him questions. The disabled soldiers, if there were any of them there, gathered about the chair and talked to him. Care was taken to keep the chair in the sunlight. Directly a shadow fell upon it, the chair was moved.

Enid returning to the house asked at once "Is Mr. Lake here?" and then went straight out to the terrace. In the brightness and colour of the garden, with the sunlight flashing, the gravel and stone glittering, the air dancing, the other human figures moving, one could hardly see him at first; and one felt that before long one would look for him like this and he would not be there—or anywhere else.

Ages ago some doctor or other had said that Tudor Green was good for young people and old people, but not so good for adult and middle-aged people. Well, it had been good enough for Charles Derwent all his life. Changed as it was, he looked at it with contentment and affection. Sitting with Enid on the Parade one evening in early October when they had strolled further than usual and were glad to take a few minutes' rest, he spoke of his regard for the place. Go where you would, you couldn't beat it. Then what folly to

get tired of it and go elsewhere, as the Gordons, the Davenports, the Lyalls, and so many of their other friends had done!

Enid agreed. But for an occasional change of air she never wished to leave it. She did not mind the altered conditions in the least. This Parade, for instance, that used to be a quiet dignified promenade was now always crowded; the municipal band played in the new bandstand on most days; the innumerable canvas-covered chairs never lacked occupants. But the crowd, the music, the incessant movement, amused and interested her. In the roadway behind their bench, where once infrequent carriages and horses used to pass by, dozens of motor-cars had pulled up and the people inside them were admiring the famous view of the river and the valley and far-off hills.

That was as peaceful and as beautiful as it had ever been. The sunset lit it up. It would glow deliciously for another half hour before it began to fade.

She did not think of those who had looked at it and would see it never again—the friendly old park keeper in his top hat and brass-buttoned coat, Lady Adela, Mrs. Burroughes, the Miss Berwicks, Mr. Hopkinson the vicar, Captain Ford, or Colonel Mayhew; old Mrs. Derwent passing in her brougham, Mrs. Castleton in her victoria, Sir Geoffrey Thorne in his low phaeton. These men and women had been liked, respected, cherished, missed, regretted. But now one thought of them no more.

Survivors among the old inhabitants appeared in the crowd from time to time, greeting Charles and Enid; stopping, one or two of them, to say a few words. Thus they saw and talked to Mr. Fenn, churchwarden of St. Luke's, who had recently buried his wife. Of the others, nearly all had suffered loss. In the lives of some there had been tragedy. Yet all of them seemed to be cheerful, able to take interest in local matters, willing to hope for future comfort.

Enid's tone was more than cheerful as she walked homeward talking to Charles about their grandchildren. She narrated what Margaret's second girl—"that little tot"—had said to her. "Thank you so much, but I don't think I'll play with

you any more now. I hope it hasn't tired you, granny." Would you believe it? Margaret's other girl, Enid the younger, was amazingly sweet to her granny. In fact it seemed that this newest and latest generation showed a marvellous advance when compared with the one that went before. They were so intelligent as to be like grown-ups while still almost infants. They were courteous, kind. Yes, they were far more considerate for others than her own children had been—except Roddy.

Thinking of them, of the joy in having them with her again next Christmas, of Margaret's restored affection, of Charles's good health, of Vera's prettiness, of Charlie's prosperity, of the innumerable good things in her quiet yet always busy existence, she suddenly said something rather remarkably at variance with many previous statements.

"But for my great sorrow, I have been a very happy woman, Charles."

"Yes," he said, "on the whole Fate has been consistently kind to us, my dear."

And they were sincere, genuinely meaning what they said, both of them. Yet each of these two people had contemplated suicide; each had tried to get killed.

VII

CHARLES had had a cold in the head, but fortunately he was soon himself again. Wrapped in his capacious dressing-gown he talked about the annoying experience to Enid, who answered sympathetically from her vast throne-like bed while she sipped her tea and nibbled a dry biscuit. He said he believed that he had caught his cold by hanging about in here half clothed. These morning visits were fraught with danger. Nevertheless he would be loth to discontinue them.

"Oh, yes," said Enid. "I don't think I could begin the day without our chat."

"Just so."

Then he made a startling suggestion. Why should not he sleep in here? Let them get rid of that great clumsy old-

fashioned double bed and replace it with two nice modern single beds, one for him, one for her?

Enid demurred. It would be such a tremendous change in established custom. It would seem so very odd after all these years. Did not he see that? But he became fretful when she said the servants would wonder.

"The servants," he said loudly, "are my servants, not my masters. What the devil do I care what they think?"

"Well, you needn't be angry," said Enid, slightly huffed.

"I'm *not* angry," said Charles, very loud, and his face redder than usual. "It is so ridiculous that one can't discuss anything without your saying some such rubbish as that."

Enid replied quietly but huffily.

"Well," he said, still querulous, "perhaps you want me to get another cold?"

"Of course I don't."

"Or perhaps I bore you by being here at all;" and he stalked towards the door.

"Charles! Come back. Of course I should love to have you here always—if it could be managed."

Then they did the thing, deliberately, boldly, without any further doubts as to the opinions of their little world. Together at a grand London upholsterer's they chose two costly up-to-date beds of walnut and gold, with that attractive basket work in the panels. These were duly installed, after a brief delay during which a high-class firm of electricians fitted new wall lamps and reading lamps with the most ingenious and convenient arrangement of switches.

Thus Charles and his wife became again a united couple by night as well as by day.

They lay down side by side and talked and read before they slept.

"Tired, old man?"

"Not a bit. No, I'm glad to say I don't get tired as easily as I used to."

"Splendid!"

And they began to read.

"This book is rot," said Charles; "and yet I go on reading it."

But he did not go on very long. There came a click, and out went his lamp. She spoke to him after a few minutes.

"Are you sure my light isn't disturbing you?"

He did not answer. He was asleep. Then soon there was another click.

They lay there, in quiet sleep, in darkness, in profound oblivion, without care for the past, the present, or the future; while time went on with its imperceptible but ineffably merciful work, doing for them what it does for all of us; taking out the sharp outlines, the vividness, from memory's pictures, thickening the veils that had fallen over sights of horror and grief, silencing the echo of every cry of pain; blocking the old paths of thought, disconnecting the circuits, destroying the short cuts throughout the zone of associated ideas, so that no longer should one thing inevitably suggest another, so that no longer could the sound of an accidentally used word, the thought of a certain type of face, send flashing widely a sense of intolerable regret or the anguish of despair.

Enid knelt before an opened cupboard in the sitting-room with her adored grandchild standing beside her. The Christmas holidays had come again. She was looking in the cupboard for some old scrap-books and could not find them. The cupboard shelves were laden with all sorts of things that had been put in there because they were not wanted.

"Out of sight is out of mind," said Enid cheerily. "But, oh dear, it is a mess. I must tidy it one of these days."

"Will you tidy it?" said the little Enid, watching with enthralled interest.

Presently her grandmother brought out a small box, and rising from her knees, examined its contents. It was full of odds and ends.

"Oh, what's that?" said the little Enid, pushing a finger into the box.

Enid the elder drew forth a miniature locket of gold and coloured enamel with a piece of faded silk ribbon through its ring.

It was the locket given to her by Harold Wood. She recognised it as hers, but did not remember how she had ac-

quired it. Turning it over in her hand she thought that her father must have given it to her when she was quite young. Then she thought it might have belonged to Margaret as a young girl. Then again she seemed to know that it had always been her own—and she had hung it round her neck and worn it, feeling proud of it.

She explained it to the child.

"Do you see, dear? The flower. It's to imitate the flower. The Forget-me-not!"

As she said this she had the curious sensation, that we all experience, of words being used for the second time, of a repetition of events, so that one says to oneself, "But all this happened once before. I know what will be said and done next." Usually the sensation passes rapidly. But it did not with Enid. It seemed to deepen as she went on talking.

"Myosotis. That's the grand name. But Forget-me-not—that's what you and I call the flower. Much prettier."

"Yes, it is pretty," said the child, playing with the locket.

"Shall I give it to you, darling? Yes, I think I must give it to you to wear."

"Oh, thank you, granny. You *are* kind."

"And you must think of me while you look at it—and keep it till you're a grown woman. Then you will never forget me."

"Why should I forget you, granny?"

THE END

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"**Geraldine Hawthorne,**" Author of: *vide* Author of "Miss Molly."

Gerard, Dorothea (Madame Longard de Longgarde).
Lady Baby 2 v. — Recha 1 v. — Orthodox 1 v. — The Wrong Man 1 v. — A Spotless Reputation 1 v. — One Year 1 v. — The Supreme Crime 1 v. — The Blood-Tax 1 v. — The Eternal Woman 1 v. — Made of Money 1 v. — The Bridge of Life 1 v. — The Three Essentials 1 v. — The Improbable Idyl 1 v. — The Compromise 2 v. — Itinerant Daughters 1 v. — Restitution 1 v. — Pomp and Circumstance 1 v. — The Grass Widow 1 v. — A Glorious Lie 1 v. — The City of Enticement 1 v. — Exotic Martha 1 v. — The Unworthy Pact 1 v. — The Waters of Lethe 1 v.

Gerard, E. (Emily de Zaszowska).
A Secret Mission 1 v. — A Foreigner 2 v. — The Extermination of Love 2 v.

Gibbon, Perceval.
The Adventures of Miss Gregory 1 v.

Giberne, Agnes.
The Curate's Home 1 v.

Gissing, George, † 1903.
Demos 2 v. — New Grub Street 2 v.

Gladstone, W. E., † 1898.
Rome and the Newest Fashions in Religion 1 v. — Bulgarian Horrors, and Russia in Turkistan, with other Tracts 1 v. — The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem, with other Tracts 1 v.

Glyn, Elinor.
The Visits of Elizabeth 1 v. — The Reflections of Ambrosine 1 v. — The Vicissitudes of Evangeline 1 v. — Beyond the Rocks 1 v. — Three Weeks 1 v. — Elizabeth Visits America 1 v. — His Hour 1 v.

— The Reason Why 1 v. — Halcyone 1 v. —
The Contrast 1 v. — Guinevere's Lover 1 v.
— Man and Maid 1 v. — Six Days 1 v. —
The Great Moment 1 v. — Love's Blind-
ness 1 v. — "It," and Other Stories 1 v.

Godfrey, Hal: *vide* Charlotte O'Connor
Eccles.

Goldring, Douglas.

Nobody Knows 1 v. — Cuckoo 1 v. — The
Merchant of Souls 1 v. — The Façade 1 v.

Goldsmith, Oliver, † 1774.

Select Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Goodman, Edward J.

Too Curious 1 v.

Gordon, Julien (Am.).

A Diplomat's Diary 1 v.

Gore, Mrs., † 1861.

Castles in the Air 1 v. — The Dean's
Daughter 2 v. — Progress and Prejudice
2 v. — Mammon 2 v. — A Life's Lessons
2 v. — The Two Aristocracies 2 v. — Heck-
ington 2 v.

Grand, Sarah.

Our Manifold Nature 1 v. — Babs the
Impossible 2 v. — Emotional Moments 1 v.

Grant, Miss.

Victor Lescar 2 v. — The Sun-Maid 2 v.
— My Heart's in the Highlands 2 v. —
Artiste 2 v. — Prince Hugo 2 v.

Gray, Maxwell.

The Reproach of Annesley 2 v.

Grenville: Murray, E. C. (Trois-Etoiles),
† 1881.

The Member for Paris 2 v. — Young
Brown 2 v. — The Boudoir Cabal 3 v. —
French Pictures in English Chalk (*First
Series*) 2 v. — French Pictures in English
Chalk (*Second Series*) 2 v. — Strange
Tales 1 v. — That Artful Vicar 2 v. — Six
Months in the Ranks 1 v.

Grey, Zane (Am.).

Tappan's Burro, and Other Stories 1 v. —
The Call of the Canyon 1 v. — The Thunder-
ing Herd 1 v.

Grimwood, Ethel St. Clair.

My Three Years in Manipur 1 v.

Grohman, W. A. Ballile.

Tyrol and the Tyrolese 1 v.

Gunter, A. C. (Am.), † 1907.

Mr. Barnes of New York 1 v.

Guthrie, F. Anstey: *vide* Anstey.

"Guy Livingstone," Author of (George
Alfred Laurence), † 1876.

Guy Livingstone 1 v. — Sword and
Gown 1 v. — Border and Bastille 1 v. —
Maurice Dering 1 v. — Sans Merci 2 v.
— Breaking a Butterfly 2 v. — Anteros
2 v. — Haarene 2

Habberton, John (Am.).

Helen's Babies & Other People's Chil-
dren 1 v.

Haggard, Sir H. Rider, † 1925.

King Solomon's Mines 1 v. — She 2 v. —
Jess 2 v. — Allan Quatermain 2 v. — The
Witch's Head 2 v. — Maiwa's Revenge
1 v. — Mr. Meeson's Will 1 v. — Colonel
Quaritch, V. C. 2 v. — Cleopatra 2 v. —
Allan's Wife 1 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Dawn
2 v. — Montezuma's Daughter 2 v. — The
People of the Mist 2 v. — Joan Haste 2 v. —
Heart of the World 2 v. — The Wizard
1 v. — Doctor Therne 1 v. — Swallow
2 v. — Black Heart and White Heart,
and Elissa 1 v. — Uysbeth 2 v. — A Winter
Pilgrimage 2 v. — Pearl-Maiden 2 v. —
Stella Fregelius 2 v. — The Brethren 2 v.
— Ayesha. The Return of 'She' 2 v. —
The Way of the Spirit 2 v. — Benita 1 v.
— Far Margaret 2 v. — The Lady of
Blossholme 1 v. — Morning Star 1 v. —
Queen Sheba's Ring 1 v. — Red Eve 1 v.
— Marie 1 v. — Child of Storm 1 v. — The
Wanderer's Necklace 1 v. — Wisdom's
Daughter 1 v. — Heu-Heu, or The Mon-
ster 1 v. — Queen of the Dawn 1 v. — The
Treasure of the Lake 1 v. — Allan and the
Ice-Gods 1 v.

Haggard, Sir H. Rider, & Andrew Lang.
The World's Desire 2 v.

A E Hake: *vide* Gen. Gordon.

Hall, Mrs. S. C., † 1881.

Can Wrong be Right? 1 v. — Marian 2 v.

Hamerton, P. G., † 1894.

Marmorne 1 v. — French and English 2 v.

Hardy, Rev. E. J.

How to be Happy though Married 1 v. —
Still Happy though Married 1 v.

Hardy, Miss Iza: *vide* Author of "Not
Easily Jealous."

Hardy, Thomas.

The Hand of Ethelberta 2 v. — Far from the Madding Crowd 2 v. — The Return of the Native 2 v. — The Trumpet-Major 2 v. — A Laodicean 2 v. — Two on a Tower 2 v. — A Pair of Blue Eyes 2 v. — A Group of Noble Dames 1 v. — Tess of the D'Urbervilles 2 v. — Life's Little Ironies 1 v. — Jude the Obscure 2 v. — A Changed Man 1 v. — The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid 1 v.

Harraden, Beatrice.

Ships that pass in the Night 1 v. — In Varying Moods 1 v. — Hilda Strafford, and The Remittance Man 1 v. — The Fowler 2 v. — The Scholar's Daughter 1 v. — Interplay 2 v. — Out of the Wreck I Rise 1 v. — Patuffa 1 v. — Youth Calling 1 v. — Rachel 1 v. — Search Will Find It Out 1 v.

Harrison, Agnes.

Martin's Vineyard 1 v.

Harrison, Mrs.: vide Lucas Malet.**Harte, Bret (Am.), † 1902.**

Prose and Poetry (Tales of the Argonauts: — The Luck of Roaring Camp; The Outcasts of Poker Flat, etc. — Spanish and American Legends; Condensed Novels; Civic and Character Sketches; Poems) 2 v. — Drift from Two Shores 1 v. — Jeff Briggs's Love Story, and other Tales 1 v. — Flip, and other Stories 1 v. — By Shore and Sedge 1 v. — Snow-bound at Eagle's, and Devil's Ford 1 v. — The Crusade of the "Excelsior" 1 v. — The Heritage of Dedlow Marsh, and other Tales 1 v. — A First Family of Sasajara 1 v. — Sally Dows, etc. 1 v. — The Bell-Ringer of Angel's, etc. 1 v. — The Ancestors of Peter Atherly, etc. 1 v. — Tales of Trail and Town 1 v. — Mr. Jack Hamlin's Mediation, and other Stories 1 v. — From Sand-Hill to Pine 1 v. — Under the Redwoods 1 v. — Trent's Trust 1 v.

Sir Henri Havelock: vide Rev. W. Brock.**Hawthorne, Nathaniel (Am.), † 1864.**

The Scarlet Letter 1 v. — Transformation (The Marble Faun) 2 v. — Passages from his English Note-Books 2 v.

Hay, John (Am.), † 1905: vide "The Bread-Winners," Author of.**Hay, Marie.**

Mas'antiello 1 v. — The Evil Vineyard 1 v.

Hearn, Lafcadio, † 1906.

Kokoro 1 v. — Kwaidan 1 v. — Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan (*First Series*) 1 v.

— Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan (*Second Series*) 1 v. — Gleanings in Buddha-Fields 1 v. — Out of the East 1 v. — The Romance of the Milky Way, etc. 1 v.

Hector, Mrs.: vide Mrs. Alexander.

"Heir of Redclyffe, the," Author of: vide Charlotte M. Yonge.

Helps, Sir Arthur, † 1875.

Friends in Council 2 v. — Ivan de Biron 2 v.

Hemans, Mrs. Felicia, † 1835.

Select Poetical Works 1 v.

Henry, O. (Am.).

Cabbages and Kings 1 v.

Herbert, A. P.

The Trials of Topsy 1 v. — The Old Flame 1 v.

Hergeshelmer, Joseph (Am.).

Java Head 1 v. — Cytherea 1 v. — Mountain Blood 1 v. — The Three Black Pennys 1 v. — Linda Condon 1 v. — The Bright Shawl 1 v. — Balisand 1 v. — Tampico 1 v.

Hewlett, Maurice.

The Forest Lovers 1 v. — Little Novels of Italy 1 v. — New Canterbury Tales 1 v. — The Queen's Quair; or, The Six Years' Tragedy 2 v. — The Fool Errand 2 v. — The Stopping Lady 1 v. — The Spanish Jade 1 v. — Halfway House 2 v. — Open Country 1 v. — Rest Harrow 1 v. — Brazenhead the Great 1 v. — The Song of Renny 1 v. — Lore of Proserpine 1 v. — Bendish 1 v.

Hichens, Robert.

Flames 2 v. — The Slave 2 v. — Felix 2 v. — The Woman with the Fan 2 v. — The Garden of Allah 2 v. — The Black Spaniel, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Call of the Blood 2 v. — A Spirit in Prison 2 v. — Barbary Sheep 1 v. — Bella Donna 2 v. — The Spell of Egypt 1 v. — The Dweller on the Threshold 1 v. — The Fruitful Vine 2 v. — The Londoners 1 v. — An Imaginative Man 1 v. — The Way of Ambition 2 v. — The Holy Land 1 v. — The Last Time, and Other Stories 1 v. — After the Verdict 2 v. — The God Within Him 2 v.

Hobart Pasha, Admiral, † 1886.

Sketches from my Life 1 v.

Hobbes, John Oliver (Mrs. Craigie) (Am.), † 1906.

The Gods, Some Mortals and Lord Wickenham 1 v. — The Serious Wooing 1 v. — The Dream and the Business 2 v.

Hoey, Mrs. Cashel.
A Golden Sorrow 2 v. — Out of Court 2 v.

Holdsworth, Annie E.
The Years that the Locust hath Eaten 1 v. — The Gods Arrive 1 v. — The Valley of the Great Shadow 1 v. — Great Lowlands 1 v. — A Garden of Spinsters 1 v.

Holme Lee: *vide* Harriet Parr.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell (Am.), † 1894.
The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Professor at the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Poet at the Breakfast-Table 1 v.

Hope, Anthony (Hawkins).

Half a Hero 1 v. — Comedies of Courtship 1 v. — The Heart of Princess Osra 1 v. — Simon Dale 2 v. — Rupert of Hentzau 1 v. — The King's Mirror 2 v. — Quisanté 1 v. — The Intrusions of Peggy 2 v. — Double Harness 2 v. — A Servant of the Public 2 v. — Sophy of Kravonia 2 v. — Tales of Two People 2 v. — The Great Miss Driver 2 v. — Little Tiger 1 v.

Hopkins, Tighe, † 1919.

An Idler in Old France 1 v. — The Man in the Iron Mask 1 v. — The Dungeons of Old Paris 1 v. — The Silent Gate 1 v. — The Women Napoleon Loved 1 v. — The Romance of Fraud 1 v.

"Horace Templeton," Author of.
Diary and Notes 1 v.

Hornung, Ernest William.

A Bride from the Bush 1 v. — Under Two Skies 1 v. — Some Persons Unknown 1 v. — The Amateur Cracksman 1 v. — The Rogue's March 1 v. — Peccavi 1 v. — The Black Mask 1 v. — The Shadow of the Rope 1 v. — No Hero 1 v. — Denis Dent 1 v. — A Thief in the Night 1 v. — Dead Men Tell No Tales 1 v. — Mr. Justice Raffles 1 v. — The Camera Fiend 1 v. — Fathers of Men 2 v. — The Thousandth Woman 1 v. — The Crime Doctor 1 v.

"Household Words."

Conducted by Charles Dickens. 1851-56. 36 v. — NOVELS and TALES reprinted from Household Words by Charles Dickens. 1856-59. 11 v.

Houstoun, Mrs.: *vide* "Recommended to Mercy."

"How to be Happy though Married":
vide Rev. E. J. Hardy.

Howard, Blanche Willis (Am.), † 1898.
Aunt Serena 1 v. — Guenn 2 v. — Tony, the Maid, etc. 1 v.

Howard, Blanche Willis, † 1898, & William Sharp (Am.), † 1905.

A Fellow and His Wife 1 v.

Howells, William Dean (Am.).

A Foregone Conclusion 1 v. — The Lady of the Aroostook 1 v. — A Modern Instance 2 v. — The Undiscovered Country 1 v. — Venetian Life 1 v. — Italian Journeys 1 v. — A Chance Acquaintance 1 v. — Their Wedding Journey 1 v. — A Fearful Responsibility, and Tonelli's Marriage 1 v. — A Woman's Reason 2 v. — Dr. Breen's Practice 1 v. — Miss Bellard's Inspiration 1 v.

Hughes, Thomas, † 1898.

Tom Brown's School-Days 1 v.

Hungerford, Mrs. (Mrs. Argles), † 1897.
Molly Bawn 2 v. — Mrs. Geoffrey 2 v. — Faith and Unfaith 2 v. — Loys, Lord Berresford, and other Tales 1 v. — Rossmoyno 2 v. — A Maiden all Forlorn, etc. 1 v. — A Passive Crime, and other Stories 1 v. — Green Pleasure and Grey Grief 2 v. — A Mental Struggle 2 v. — Her Week's Amusement, and Ugly Barrington 1 v. — Lady Brankmere 2 v. — Lady Valworth's Diamonds 1 v. — A Modern Circle 2 v. — Marvel 2 v. — The Hon. Mrs. Vereker 1 v. — Under-Currents 2 v. — In Durance Vile, etc. 1 v. — A Troublesome Girl, and other Stories 1 v. — A Life's Remorse 2 v. — A Born Coquette 2 v. — The Duchess 1 v. — Lady Verner's Flight 1 v. — Nora Creina 2 v. — A Mad Prank, and other Stories 1 v. — The Hoyden 2 v. — Peter's Wife 2 v. — A Tug of War 1 v. — The Professor's Experiment 2 v. — A Point of Conscience 2 v. — A Lonely Girl 1 v. — Lovice 1 v. — The Coming of Chloe 1 v.

Hunt, Mrs.: *vide* Beaumont.

Hunt, Violet.

The Human Interest 1 v. — White Rose of Weary Leaf 2 v. — The Wife of Altamont 1 v.

Hutten, Baroness von (Am.).
Kingsmead 1 v. — The Lordship of Love 2 v. — The Green Patch 1 v. — Julia 1 v. — Candy, and Other Stories 1 v. — Flies 1 v. — Eddy and Edouard 1 v.

Huxley, Aldous

Two or Three Graces, etc. 1 v. — Those Barren Leaves 1 v.

Ingelow, Jean, † 1897.

Off the Skelligs 3 v. — Poems 2 v. — Fated to be Free 2 v. — Sarah de Berenger 2 v. — Don John 2 v.

Inglis, the Hon. Lady.
The Siege of Lucknow 1 v.

Ingram, John H.: *vide* Poe.

Iota: *vide* Mrs. Caffyn.

Irving, Washington (Am.), † 1859.
The Sketch Book 2 v. — The Life of Mahomet 1 v. — Lives of the Successors of Mahomet 1 v. — Oliver Goldsmith 1 v. — Life of George Washington 5 v.

Jackson, Mrs. Helen (H. H.) (Am.), † 1885.
Ramona 2 v.

Jacobs, W. W.
Many Cargoes 1 v. — The Skipper's Wooing, and The Brown Man's Servant 1 v. — Sea Urchins 1 v. — A Master of Craft 1 v. — Light Freights 1 v. — At Sun-which Port 1 v. — The Lady of the Barge 1 v. — Odd Craft 1 v. — Dialstone Lane 1 v. — Captains All 1 v. — Short Cruises 1 v. — Salthaven 1 v. — Sailors' Knots 1 v. — Ship's Company 1 v. — Sea Whispers 1 v. — The Castaways 1 v.

James, Charles T. C.
Holy Wedlock 1 v.

James, G. P. R., † 1860.
Forest Days 1 v. — The False Heir 1 v. — Arabella Stuart 1 v. — Rose d'Albret 1 v. — Arrah Neil 1 v. — Agincourt 1 v. — The Smuggler 1 v. — The Step-Mother 2 v. — Beauchamp 1 v. — Heidelberg 1 v. — The Gipsy 1 v. — Darnley 1 v. — Russell 2 v. — Sir Theodore Broughton 2 v.

James, Henry (Am.).
Daisy Miller; An International Episode; Four Meetings 1 v. — Roderick Hudson 2 v. — The Madonna of the Future, etc. 1 v. — Confidence 1 v. — Washington Square, etc. 2 v. — The Portrait of a Lady 3 v. — Foreign Parts 1 v. — Portraits of Places 1 v. — A Little Tour in France 1 v. — The Finer Grain 1 v.

Jeaffreson, J. Cordy.
A Book about Doctors 2 v. — A Woman in spite of Herself 2 v. — The Real Lord Byron 3 v.

Jenkin, Mrs. Charles, † 1885.
"Who Breaks—Pays" 1 v. — Skirmishing 1 v. — Once and Again 2 v. — Two French Marriages 2 v. — Jupiter's Daughters 1 v.

Jenkins, Edward.
Ginx's Baby, his Birth and other Misfortunes; Lord Bantam 2 v.

"Jennie of 'The Prince's,'" Author of:
vide B. H. Buxton.

Jerome, Jerome K., † 1927.
The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Diary of a Pilgrimage, and Six Essays 1 v. — Novel Notes 1 v. — Sketches in Lavender, Blue and Green 1 v. — The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Three Men on the Bummel 1 v. — Paul Kolver 2 v. — Tea-Table Talk 1 v. — Tommy and Co. 1 v. — Idle Ideas in 1905 1 v. — The Passing of the Third Floor Back 1 v. — The Angel and the Author—and Others 1 v. — They and I, 1 v. — All Roads Lead to Calvary 1 v. — Anthony John 1 v.

Jerrold, Douglas, † 1857.
History of St. Giles and St. James 2 v. — Men of Character 2 v.

"John Halifax, Gentleman," Author of:
vide Mrs. Craik.

Johnny Ludlow: *vide* Mrs. Henry Wood.
Jolly, Emily.
Colonel Dacre 2 v.

"Joshua Davidson," Author of: *vide* Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.

Kavanagh, Miss Julia, † 1877.
Nathalie 2 v. — Daisy Burns 2 v. — Rachel Gray 1 v. — Adèle 3 v. — A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies 2 v. — Seven Years, and other Tales 2 v. — French Women of Letters 1 v. — English Women of Letters 1 v. — Queen Mab 2 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Dora 2 v. — Silvia 2 v. — Bessie 2 v. — John Dorrien 3 v. — Two Lilies 2 v. — Forget-me-nots 2 v. (*vide* p. 29.)

Kaye-Smith, Shella.
The End of the House of Alard 1 v. — Iron and Smoke 1 v.

Keary, Annie, † 1879.
Oldbury 2 v. — Castle Daly 2 v.

Keary, C. F.
The Mount 1 v.

Keeling, D'Esterre: *vide* Esterre.

Kempis, Thomas A.
The Imitation of Christ. Translated from the Latin by W. Benham, B.D. 1 v.

Kennedy, Margaret.
The Constant Nymph 1 v.

Kimball, Richard B. (Am.), † 1892.
Saint Leger 1 v. — Romance of Student Life Abroad 1 v. — Was he Successful? 1 v.

Kinglake, A. W., † 1891.
The Invasion of the Crimea 14 v.

Kingsley, Charles, † 1875.
Westward ho! 2 v. — Two Years ago 2 v. — Hypatia 2 v. — Hereward the Wake 2 v. — At Last 2 v.

Kingsley, Henry, † 1876.
Austin Elliot 1 v. — Geoffrey Hamlyn 2 v. — The Hilliarys and the Burtons 2 v. — Leighton Court 1 v. — Reginald Hetheridge 2 v. — The Grange Garden 2 v.

Kinross, Albert.
An Opera and Lady Grasmere 1 v.

Kipling, Rudyard.
Plain Tales from the Hills 1 v. — The Second Jungle Book 1 v. — The Seven Seas 1 v. — "Captains Courageous" 1 v. — The Day's Work 1 v. — A Fleet in Being 1 v. — Stalky & Co. 1 v. — From Sea to Sea 2 v. — The City of Dreadful Night 1 v. — Kim 1 v. — Just So Stories 1 v. — The Five Nations 1 v. — Traffics and Discoveries 1 v. — Puck of Pook's Hill 1 v. — Actions and Reactions 1 v. — Rewards and Fairies 1 v. — Land and Sea Tales 1 v. — Debits and Credits 1 v.

Laffan, May.
Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor 1 v.

Lamb, Charles, † 1834.
The Essays of Elia and Eliana 1 v. (*Vide* p. 29.)

Lang, Andrew: *vide* H. Rider Haggard.
Langdon, Mary (Am.).
Ida May 1 v.

"Last of the Cavaliers, the," Author of (Miss Piddington).
The Last of the Cavaliers 2 v. — The Gain of a Loss 2 v.

Łaszowska, Mme de: *vide* E. Gerard.
Laurence, George Alfred: *vide* "Guy Livingstone."

Lawless, the Hon. Emily, † 1913.
Hurrish 1 v.

Lawrence, D. H.
England, My England 1 v.

Mrs. Lean: *vide* Florence Marryat.
"Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands": *vide* Victoria R. I.

Lee, Holme: *vide* Harriet Parr.

Lee, Vernon.
Pope Jacynth, etc. 1 v. — Genius Loci, and The Enchanted Woods 1 v. — Hortus Vitae, and Limbo 1 v. — The Spirit of Rome, and Laurus Nobilis 1 v. — Vanitas 1 v. — Louis Norbert 1 v. — The Sentimental Traveller 1 v. — The Tower of the Mirrors 1 v. — The Golden Keys 1 v.

Le Fanu, J. S., † 1873.
Uncle Silas 2 v. — Guy Deverell 2 v.

Lemon, Mark, † 1870.
Wait for the End 2 v. — Loved at Last 2 v. — Falkner Lyle 2 v. — Leyton Hall, and other Tales 2 v. — Golden Fetters 2 v.

Author of "Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to his Son"; *vide* George Horace Lorimer.

Author of "The Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth"; *vide* Trowbridge.

Lever, Charles, † 1872.
The O'Donoghue 1 v. — The Knight of Gwynne 3 v. — Arthur O'Leary 2 v. — Harry Lorrequer 2 v. — Charles O'Malley 3 v. — Tom Burke of "Ours" 3 v. — Jack Hinton 2 v. — The Daltons 4 v. — The Dodd Family Abroad 3 v. — The Martins of Cro' Martin 3 v. — The Fortunes of Glencore 2 v. — Davenport Dunn 3 v. — Confessions of Con Cregan 2 v. — One of Them 2 v. — Maurice Tiernay 2 v. — Barrington 2 v. — A Day's Ride 2 v. — Luttrell of Arran 2 v. — Tony Butler 2 v. — Sir Brook Fossbrooke 2 v. — The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly 2 v. — A Rent in a Cloud 1 v. — That Boy of Norcott's 1 v. — St. Patrick's Eve; Paul Gosslett's Confessions 1 v. — Lord Kilgobbin 2 v.

Levett-Yeats, S.
The Honour of Savelli 1 v. — The Chevalier d'Auriac 1 v. — The Traitor's Way 1 v. — The Lord Protector 1 v. — Orrain 1 v.

Lewes, G. H., † 1878.
Ranthorpe 1 v. — The Physiology of Common Life 2 v. — On Actors and the Art of Acting 1 v.

Lewis, Sinclair. (Am.)
Babbitt 1 v. — Our Mr. Wrenn 1 v. — Arrowsmith 1 v.

Linton, Mrs. E. Lynn, † 1898.
The true History of Joshua Davidson 1 v. — Patricia Kembell 2 v. — The Atonement of Leam Dundas 2 v. — The

World well Lost 2 v. — Under which Lord? 2 v. — Todhunters' at Loanin' Head, and other Stories 1 v. — Ione 2 v.

Lockhart, L. W. M., † 1882.
Mine is Thine 2 v.

Loftus, Lord Augustus.
Diplomatic Reminiscences 1837-1862 2 v.

London, Jack (Am.).
Burning Daylight 1 v. — The Call of the Wild 1 v. — When God Laughs 1 v. — The Sea-Wolf 2 v. — South Sea Tales 1 v. — Martin Eden 2 v. — A Son of the Sun 1 v. — The Son of the Wolf 1 v. — The Valley of the Moon 2 v.

Longard, Mme de: *vide* D. Gerard.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth (Am.), † 1882.
Poetical Works 3 v. — The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri 3 v. — The New-England Tragedies 1 v. — The Divine Tragedy 1 v. — Flower-de-Luce, and Three Books of Song 1 v. — The Masque of Pandora, and other Poems 1 v.

Lonsdale, Margaret.
Sister Dora 1 v.

Loos, Anita (Am.).
"Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" 1 v.

Lorimer, George Horace (Am.).
Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to his Son 1 v. — Old Gorgon Graham 1 v. — Jack Spurlock, Prodigal 1 v.

"Lost Battle, a." 2 v.

Lowndes, Mrs. Belloc.
The Uttermost Farthing 1 v. — Studies in Wives 1 v. — When No Man Pursueth 1 v. — Jane Oglander 1 v. — The Chink in the Armour 1 v. — Mary Pechell 1 v. — Studies in Love and in Terror 1 v. — The Lodger 1 v. — The End of her Honeymoon 1 v. — Why They Married 1 v. — The Terriford Mystery 1 v. — Some Men and Women 1 v. — Bread of Deceit 1 v. — What Really Happened 1 v. — "Thou Shalt Not Kill" 1 v. — The Story of Ivy 1 v. — Cressida: No Mystery 1 v.

Lubbock, Sir John (Lord Avebury), * 1834, † 1913.
The Pleasures of Life 1 v. — The Beauties of Nature (with Illustrations) 1 v. — The Use of Life 1 v. — Scenery of Switzerland (with Illustrations) 2 v. — Essays and Addresses 1900-1903 1 v.

"Lutfullah": *vide* Eastwick.

Lyall, Edna, † 1903.

We Two 2 v. — Donovan 2 v. — In the Golden Days 2 v. — Knight-Errant 2 v. — Wayfaring Men 2 v. — Hope the Hermit 2 v. — In Spite of All 2 v. — The Hinderers 1 v.

Lytton, Lord: *vide* E. Bulwer.

Lytton, Robert Lord (Owen Meredith), † 1891.
Poems 2 v. — Fables in Song 2 v.

Maartens, Maarten.

The Sin of Joost Avelingh 1 v. — An Old Maid's Love 2 v. — God's Fool 2 v. — The Greater Glory 2 v. — My Lady Nobody 2 v. — Her Memory 1 v. — Some Women I have known 1 v. — My Poor Relations 2 v. — Dorothea 2 v. — The Healers 2 v. — The Woman's Victory, and Other Stories 2 v. — The New Religion 2 v. — Brothers All 1 v. — The Price of Lis Doris 2 v. — Harmen Pols: Peasant 1 v. — Eve 2 v.

McAulay, Allan (Am.): *vide* Kate Douglas Wiggin.

Macaulay, Lord, † 1859.

History of England 10 v. — Critical and Historical Essays 5 v. — Lays of Ancient Rome 1 v. — Speeches 2 v. — Biographical Essays 1 v. — (See also Trevelyan).

Macaulay, Rose.

Told by an Idiot 1 v. — Orphan Island 1 v. — A Casual Commentary 1 v. — Crew Train 1 v. — Keeping up Appearances 1 v.

McCarthy, Justin.

The Waterdale Neighbours 2 v. — Dear Lady Disdain 2 v. — Miss Misanthrope 2 v. — A History of our Own Times 5 v. — Donna Quixote 2 v. — A Short History of our Own Times 2 v. — A History of the Four Georges. Vols. 1 & 2. — A History of our Own Times. Vols. 6 & 7 (supplemental). — A History of the Four Georges and of William IV. Vols. 3, 4 & 5 (supplemental). — A Short History of our Own Times. Vol. 3 (supplemental).

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- Elizabeth Robins (C. E. Raimond) (Am.).
The Open Question 2 v. — The Magnetic North 2 v. — A Dark Lantern 2 v. — The Convert 2 v. — The Florentine Frame 1 v. — "Where are you going to...?" 1 v. — Way Stations 1 v. — The Secret That Was Kept 1 v.
- Robinson, F.: *vide* "No Church."
- Ross, Charles H.
The Pretty Widow 1 v. — A London Romance 2 v.
- Ross, Martin: *vide* Somerville.
- Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, † 1882.
Poems 1 v. — Ballads and Sonnets 1 v. — "Roy Tellet."
- The Outcasts 1 v. — A Draught of Lethe 1 v. — Pastor and Prelate 2 v.
- Ruck, Berta.
Sir or Madam? 1 v. — The Dancing Star 1 v. — Lucky in Love 1 v. — The Clouded Pearl 1 v. — The Immortal Girl 1 v. — Kneel to the Prettiest 1 v. — The Pearl Thief 1 v. — Her Pirate Partner 1 v. — Money for One 1 v. — The Youngest Venus 1 v.
- Ruffini, J., † 1881.
Lavinia 2 v. — Doctor Antonio 1 v. — Vincenzo 2 v. — A Quiet Nook in the Jura 1 v. — The Paragreens on a Visit to Paris 1 v.

Ruskin, John, * 1819, † 1900.
 Sesame and Lilies 1 v. — The Stones of Venice (with Illustrations) 2 v. — Unto this Last and Munera Pulveris 1 v. — The Seven Lamps of Architecture (with 14 Illustrations) 1 v. — Mornings in Florence 1 v. — St. Mark's Rest 1 v.

Russell, W. Clark.
 A Sailor's Sweetheart 2 v. — The "Lady Maud" 2 v. — A Sea Queen 2 v.

Russell, George W. E.
 Collections and Recollections. By One who has kept a Diary 2 v. — A Londoner's Log-Book 1 v.

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Sala, George Augustus, † 1895.
 The Seven Sons of Mammon 2 v.

Saunders, John.
 Israel Mort, Overman 2 v. — The Shipowner's Daughter 2 v. — A Noble Wife 2 v.

Saunders, Katherine (Mrs. Cooper).
 Joan Merryweather, and other Tales 1 v. — Gideon's Rock, and other Tales 1 v. — The High Mills 2 v. — Sebastian 1 v.

Savage, Richard Henry (Am.), † 1903.
 My Official Wife 1 v. — The Little Lady of Lagunitas 2 v. — Prince Schamyl's Wooing 1 v. — The Masked Venus 2 v. — Delilah of Harlem 2 v. — A Daughter of Judas 1 v. — Miss Devereux of the Marigata 2 v. — Checked Through 2 v. — A Modern Corsair 2 v. — In the Swim 2 v. — The White Lady of Khaminavotka 2 v. — In the House of His Friends 2 v. — The Mystery of a Shipyard 2 v. — A Monte Cristo in Khaki 1 v.

Schreiner, Olive.
 Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland 1 v. — Woman and Labour 1 v.

Scott, Sir Walter, † 1832.
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Seeley, Prof. J. R., † 1895.
 Life and Times of Stein 4 v. — The Expansion of England 1 v.

Sewell, Elizabeth, † 1906.
 Amy Herbert 2 v. — Ursula 2 v. — A Glimpse of the World 2 v. — The Journal of a Home Life 2 v. — After Life 2 v. — The Experience of Life 2 v.

Shakespeare, William, † 1616.
 Plays and Poems (Second Edition) 7 v. — Doubtful Plays 1 v.

Shakespeare's Plays may also be had in 37 numbers, each number sold separately.

Sharp, William, † 1905: *vide* Miss Howard, Fiona Macleod and Swinburne.

Shaw, Bernard.
 Man and Superman 1 v. — The Perfect Wagnerite 1 v. — Cashel Byron's Profession 1 v. — Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant (The Three Unpleasant Plays 1 v. — The Four Pleasant Plays 1 v.). — Getting Married & The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet 1 v. — The Doctor's Dilemma & The Dark Lady of the Sonnets 1 v. — Three Plays for Puritans 1 v. — John Bull's Other Island etc. 1 v. — Androcles and the Lion; Pygmalion 1 v. — Misalliance 1 v. — Fanny's First Play, etc. 1 v. — Heartbreak House, etc. 1 v. — Back to Methuselah 1 v. — Saint Joan 1 v.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe, † 1822.
 A Selection from his Poems 1 v.

Sheppard, Nathan (Am.), † 1888.
 Shut up in Paris 1 v.

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 The Dramatic Works 1 v.

Shorthouse, J. Henry.
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Trollope, T. Adolphus, † 1892.
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Trowbridge, W. R. H.
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Twain, Mark (Samuel L. Clemens) (Am.), † 1910.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 1 v. — The Innocents Abroad; or, The New Pilgrims' Progress 2 v. — A Tramp Abroad 2 v. — "Roughing it" 1 v. — The Innocents at Home 1 v. — The Prince and the Pauper 2 v. — The Stolen White Elephant, etc. 1 v. — Life on the Mississippi 2 v. — Sketches 1 v. — Huckleberry Finn 2 v. — Selections from American Humour 1 v. — A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur 2 v. — The American Claimant 1 v. — The £ 1000000 Bank-Note and other new Stories 1 v. — Tom Sawyer Abroad 1 v. — Pudd'head Wilson 1 v. — Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc 2 v. — Tom Sawyer, Detective, and other Tales 1 v. — More Tramps Abroad 2 v. — The Man that corrupted Hadleyburg, etc. 2 v. — A Double-Barrelled Detective Story, etc. 1 v. — The \$30,000 Bequest, and Other Stories 1 v. — Christian Science 1 v. — Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven & Is Shakespeare Dead? 1 v.

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Zangwill, I., † 1864, † 1926.

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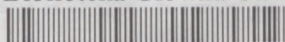
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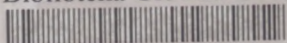
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