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C&F Writing Competition. Can you freaking believe it?

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Author: **PhilO** [Fri Jul 30, 2004 7:43 am]

Post subject:

Hey Em, if you learn anything about the current state of Hatteras, please let me know. We had vacationed there (right at the tip about 3/4 mile from the ferry) one week for the past four summers in a house by the beach. Then came that horrible washout. We couldn't go this year as our daughter has become enamored of all that is Spanish and is still in Spain and will drag us (🙂) to Mexico upon her return. Never did find out what happened to the house on Atlantic Drive. I know you'll be about 80 miles from there, but just in case you hear anything.

Have a great time.

Philo

Author: **Wanderer** [Fri Jul 30, 2004 7:52 am]

Post subject:

Another entry

Randall checked himself over with a critical eye. He sighed and wished again that his Pa could afford a mirror, so that he could check himself better. He knew he was clean, though, because he hadn't done any heavy lifting since he helped move hay last week, and he'd taken a bath immediately after. The stain on his breeches was hardly noticeable, and the jerkin he was wearing had only been mended once.

Today was the day! Randall was certain he wouldn't be passed over this year at the Job Faire. And besides, Melinda would be there…

He had been so preoccupied about his appearance lately that his brothers had begun teasing him at every opportunity. Eric, the eldest, had begun calling him "Lord Priss", an obvious play off of the name of King Prius, who was also known to be a vain man. Randall smiled a little when he thought about the whipping Eric had gotten when Pa had heard him making fun in the name of Tallia's sovereign lord. Eric liked to think of himself as too old for a whipping, but his taunting was dangerously close to sedition, and John Miller was a loyal man. Joshua still got away with calling Randall "Your Hiney-ness," though. He was only eight, after all.

It probably would have been easier to tolerate if Pa had ever gotten around to adding another bedroom, like he promised to do every year. As it was, all three Miller boys had to squeeze into one shared bedroom. During the coldest parts of the year, the boys spent much of their leisure time together in this room. Tensions often ran high as the winter wore on, and arguments were commonplace. outright fistfights weren't that rare either, though that kind of behavior often earned a hiding from Pa..

"Randall! Come get your breakfast! Hurry up or it'll get cold!"

Author: **MarkB** [Fri Jul 30, 2004 9:59 am]

Post subject:

Entry:

Corruption and degeneration

I don’t know when she left me or how long she has been gone, or the days and months that we were together. I don’t even remember her slamming the door, or screaming at me!

She is gone.

She wasn’t my muse, an inspiration, or the demon that drove me to the canvas. She was a warm body that my demon mistress couldn’t be.

She came to me out of curiosity after walking into a local gallery and seeing my work on the wall and talking to the gallery owner, who gave away more information that I would have.

Unbeknownst to me, I had become the hunted.

She finally showed up at one of our weekly studio bashes, a pot-luck affair that this small community of artist did every week. In most cases to make sure that we all ate something that week, although it always seem that drinking was to be the greater share of the evening.

She was pointed out to me as a whisper in my ear. Looking up and across the room, I didn’t have the chance of subtlety to read her message; my hide had all ready been mounted on the wall. Seconds later, she was introducing herself to me and spieling how my work did this or that to her and how she would really like to know the man/person/artist behind this.

“Really, can I use your body tonight?”

Without hesitating she moved into the couple’s intimate space that we have all shared.

“What was/were my secrets/thoughts/ideas/drive that put such and such colour/movement/dynasism on canvas like that!” And make her want to fly!

That was a beginning of a relationship sort of. She had moved in within a week.

And all was fine.

Then slowly I heard the words of couples doing this together and “You’re not painting another weekend away, are you?” “Are we going to such and such’s for dinner tonight?” “Are we blah blah blah blan or something like that….. “

She has had enough of the artistic romantic starving artist, “I have to paint” crap. It’s now a we thing, as we together doing this, going here etc. etc.

“Paintings don’t do themselves, that’s what you loved about me and this life!”

You can have the paintings and the artist, but you can’t have the artist without the painting!

Slam!

“Where’s that cadium yellow!”

MarkB

Author: **Lorenzo** [Fri Jul 30, 2004 2:49 pm]
Post subject:

Bloomfield wrote:
I am considering getting myself a little editorial staff for the selection process.

How about choosing your top five (or three) and starting a new thread with a poll and let the C&Fers vote.

Author: **Nanohedron** [Fri Jul 30, 2004 5:09 pm]
Post subject:

Entry:

It was time again to make the yearly trip from the townlands of Donegal to the bothies of Scotland. Diarmuid was one of the able-bodied, stocky, strong, and ruddy in both his cast and his hair; they used to call him Diarmuid Óg, but his arrival into manhood was wholly his own, and he was lately more referred to as Diarmuid Rua by those who talked about him, especially remembering the time he saved a boy from a drowning. Still, the old men and women called him Diarmuid Óg who knew him from a child in remembrance of his father, rest his soul, lost to the wild sea two autumns ago in a curragh and a hunt for cod.

There wasn't much of a choice in it. The life of a Scot's seasonal hireling was his if he was to make anything of himself. And there was Mórág, light of his day and the fever of his nights. He would marry her next year if she would have him; he knew she was waiting for him to only ask, but he still was anxious. Mórág was not one to be taken for granted, yet the fire of her was what drew him. Maybe in time he'd be able to save enough to afford arable land; just a spot would be fine. He wanted at least that much for her.

He finished packing, straightened up, and looked around. He scratched his head; something was unfinished.

-Now don't be forgetting your pet, his mother said pointing from her lacework to the kitchen wall.

And that was it: his fiddle. Diarmuid got it down from off its peg, put it snug in its case, and packed it away with the rest.

-What would I do without you, he said, and kissed her soft cheek. There's money in the box on the mantel, don't forget, now. And write if you'll be needing more *before* you run out this time! I've got to run. I'll write soon. And give Padraig a cuff on his ear for him.

Diarmuid smoothed his clothes, put on his cap, laid hold of his travel-bag, and walked out the cottage door into the soft grey light, westward to where the ships lay waiting.

Author: **dubhlinn** [Fri Jul 30, 2004 5:37 pm]
Post subject:

Entry:

God damm that Kesh Jig.
The apology would have to be immediate.There was no way back.Only forward
That was why he was stood outside a public phone kiosk in a downpour.
Standing there,cursing cell phone batteries to damnation,he wondered when the old Asian woman would get off the phone.She seemed to be shouting one minute,then crying the next.
Time passes slowly in the rain.
A car pulled up,one of those big German things that he often dreamed about owning. Two huge asian guys got out and approached the kiosk,nodding imperceptibly in his direction.from the car came a slow mournful sound,not unlike the sean nos style of singing which he always loved but never understood.
Without any apparent effort,the old woman was comforted and gently coaxed into the car. The melody faded and was gone.
"Thanks be to jaysus for that", he thought
Entering the booth,apology composed,he dropped his dime.
Nothing.Nada.Zilch.
Clicking the button,he looked down only to find that the handset was severed.surveying the damage,he thought " Help me Jesus!" From the decay and rust,the handset was

damaged weeks ago.
Off into the night he ran,seeking another kiosk.
In his mind was a sad,strange melody and in his heart the sound of faraway voices.

Slan,
D.

Author: **thurlowe** [Sat Jul 31, 2004 5:52 am]
Post subject:

I'm amazed by some of these entries. Wow. I was inspired to waste some time at work, too.

Entry

It was a dark and stormy night. Quit messing with the windshield wipers, he said. What is it with you and windshield wipers. She kept her hand on the speed selector. I don't like the squeaks when it gets too dry, she said. I'm trying to avoid the squeaks. This is the kind of rain that needs me to do this by hand. I was hoping you wouldn't notice. Yeah well, he said. Reaching over to mess with the controls is noticeable.

He moaned. Aagh, why does Saskatchewan have to be so flat. Is an S-curve too much to ask. A hill. She looked away from the windshield for a few beats. Let's pretend we're Columbus, she said, and we're about to sail off the edge of the world.

I think he knew the world was round, honey.

I know, I'm too tired to think of any explorers before him.

Huh.
...Okay, we're Joe & Janet medieval explorers, and we're about to sail off the edge of the world. Tell me, Janet, how does it feel. Well, Joe, it's really dark out there and I can't even *see* the edge of the world. But entering a spiritual dimension, that'll be nice. I'm feeling icky from eating McDonald's all day.

...Icky from McThighBones & Ale, you mean, fair maiden.

I stand corrected, kind sir. She adjusted the wiper controls from slow to intermittent. She gave a little smile. You know, I'm pretty sure I can't technically be called a maiden. What you and I do at night, when we're not on the most monotonous road trip of our lives, disqualifies me. Oh ho, he said. Well I'm not sorry about *that*. I know, she said, my only regret is I can't call the unicorns out of the woods anymore. She switched back to the higher setting. Alack, she added.

He took her hand from the windshield wiper wand and held it between them, over the cupholder still protecting long-cold Starbucks takeout. Please promise me we’ll never start dressing up and going to Renaissance Faires and speaking to each other in fake olde English, he said. And I’ll let you work the windshield wipers all you want. She squeezed. All right, my love, she said. For you. I promise.

Author: **FJohnSharp** [Sat Jul 31, 2004 6:50 am]
Post subject:

thurlowe wrote:
she said, and we’re about to sail off the edge of the world.

I think he knew the world was round, honey.

I know, I’m too tired to think of any explorers before him.
.

This is nice

Also, ever heard of this? http://www.bulwer-lytton.com/
Not to imply your piece qualifies--it's actually quite nice. But the opening sentence reminded me of Bulwer -Lytton, or Charlie Brown, whichever you prefer.

Nice work.

Author: **thurlowe** [Sat Jul 31, 2004 7:36 am]
Post subject:

Thanks John, that's funny (*very* funny), I hadn't heard of it, or if I had, it was in a sort of weekend-news-we're-desperate-for-human-interest-stories kind of way. I just used the line as a place to get started, in the absence of an original line.

By the way, apologies to those who enjoy dressing up and speaking in fake olde English accents, I'm sure it's a blast. 😄

I was motivated to try this by reading your stories, John, as well as several others. It's been edifying.

Cara

Author: **Zubivka** [Sat Jul 31, 2004 1:38 pm]
Post subject:

Entraille.

« No, it's an Entry. Like Enn-tree, she said.
--Entrez or Entrée? Make up your mind.
--Not enn-treh nor enn-tray, and certainly not your bloody entrails.
--You're telling me how to pronounce Entrée? You don't even know what Les Entrées are in a proper meal... And since you didn't ask, it's like zakuski, but without bliny.
--Are you going to name your entry "zakuski"?
--No. I can't get proper bliny here. Pancakes just don't do it.
--Doh! Don't DO it. Like "doo", not your "dough".
--It's your dough which isn't right. Proper bliny are sourdough.
--Oh, never mind. Just give me some bar dough, will you?
--What will you do with Bardot? She's way too old!
--I thought age was a quality in bardough? Beside, it's an it, not a she.
--Whatever her vintage, if a man said it, he'd be called an emancipee.
--It's emm-see-pee, but who cares! OK, Bordeaux. Bore and doh. Just gimme some wine, you hopeless Frog!
--Bardot is no hooker. Frogs are an entrée. The one with the wine is a sommelier. Beside, zakuski go with vodka, not wine.
--Ok, gimme a bliny, with the vodka.
--I told you I can't get a single blin. And it's one blin, two bliny.
--Then bring them both, for Pete's sake! »

Luckily, we couldn't find a common language.

Author: **BrassBlower** [Sat Jul 31, 2004 7:20 pm]
Post subject:

THE SNIPER

He sat behind a rock, exhaling the last puff of smoke from his cigarette into the crisp morning air before crushing it out on the rock.

He opened up his shotgun, inserted a single 16-gauge buckshot shell, and closed it back up. He knew his target could not be too far away.

Suddenly, a bearded figure appeared walking down the road. The sniper's pulse began to quicken as his target came into range.

The air was rent by the sound of the shotgun going off. The sniper's target had little time to react, and let out only a small bleat as the buckshot tore gaping holes in his skin.

"There's one more goat who will never become a bodhrán," said the sniper, smiling.

Author: **FJohnSharp** [Sat Jul 31, 2004 7:35 pm]

Post subject:

HA!

Author: **Nanohedron** [Sun Aug 01, 2004 5:35 am]
Post subject:

Yes: Ha. 😁

Remembering that a true story was offered in this thread, I thought I'd do the same. After this, you'll have to go back to guessing about me. 😉

Entry:

I never really fit in, not even in what was by seeming default my "circle". I wasn't handsome, burly, talented, a wit, an achiever, moneyed, or a Romeo, but all in all it didn't matter so much. I was me, and it was somehow enough. No one else could properly do the job of being me, and instinctively I knew that. It was all I had, so it had to do, and therefore it was enough. I was excellent at being me.

What I could say for myself was that I was a swimmer. Couldn't hack the football --not burly, remember?-- but I could swim. Sort of. Actually, I was a backstroker. That was my strongest form. I didn't really care for competition; I was a swimmer because that was what my siblings and I did, and our parents encouraged it. But I was secretly pleased with my ability in the backstroke; I had that, if nothing else. Crawl, breaststroke, and butterfly (in descending order, due to a dispropensity --if that is even a word-- toward pectoral muscles): my coaches urged me to develop myself in them to our mutual frustration and eventual parting of ways. But left alone, I would backstroke for hours if I could.

I decided that I could maybe be a lifeguard at the Y, and went to Water Safety Instructor training camp for it. I was up against the better, the stronger, the sexier, as ever. I was used to that, and had to work hard to succeed. At 129 lbs it wasn't a picnic "saving" a near 200 lb hulker from the chop of Storm Lake, but I kept at it, and doggedly went on to earn my WSI certification even if I wasn't star material. Not everybody could say they had that; it was enough.

Now to cap off and celebrate the end of our training (did anyone fail? I only now realise that I don't know), we held a swim meet. Naturally, I mainly entered the backstroking events: no point in flirting with your weak points when it's crunch time, after all. I didn't outright suck, but at the solid-honest-to-God-whatever-meter-it-was backstroke event, I just FLEW, passing even one of my coaches by at least a half length or better. As I was helped out of the pool, I saw the opprobium in their eyes, and heard the mutters chiding me for what I ought not to have done, as if I ought to have known. That's when I realised in full that even in the little things, the race goes not to the swift, but to the popular. I still don't care.

With that in mind, don't forget to vote, kids!

Author: **dubhlinn** [Sun Aug 01, 2004 5:39 am]
Post subject:

ENTRY.

The Letter.

She had been the supervisor of the sewing room for twenty years.In that time she had seen many girls come and go,some to husbands,some to better jobs.
Five years ago the management had erected a glass partition along the front of the gallery where her office was situated and every now and then she would have a look along the rows of machines to check on the progress of her girls.The girls were the closest thing she had to family.
The most recent addition to her family was an Irish girl who today ,on three separate occasions, had furtively removed a letter from her pocket and quickly read it while shaking her head from side to side.
The Supervisor could remember when she worked on a machine many years ago and had pulled a letter out from her own pocket,
" My dearest sister,I am so sorry to have to tell you this but last night ,our dear mother.....",the figures on the order sheet in front of her blurred as the tears came back.
She vowed to have a word with the Irish girl at the end of the shift.
"Molly,could I have a quick word,wont take a minute"
Molly blushed but before she could say anything the supervisior touched her arm gentlyand assured her there was no problem.
"I am not prying but is everything all right with you and your family"
"Grand" replied Molly,perplexed.
The Supervisor mentioned the letter that Molly had been reading from time to time.
Molly stared back for a moment then burst into laughter
" Ah God no,no,no." She spluttered through the laughter " that wasn't a letter,it's a song.I sing in a band and I really need to learn the words for tonight ye see."
"Listen to me now ,we're playing tonight in the Dalesman off the Main street and all the girls are going.Sure ye must come along it'll be a great crack"
"Oh, I see well i am sorry..."
"Dont worry,you just get yourself there for about eight and I'll get ye a lift home n'all. Ye dont want to be sitting in on a friday night wondering if your phone is broken do ye?"
"Well, thank you..."
"Right so, see ye there.."

As the Supervisor walked towards her car the security guard,who had worked there even longer than she had,noticed a spring in her step that he had not seen in a long,long time.

Author: **carrie** [Sun Aug 01, 2004 6:18 am]

Post subject:

I love this thread. I spent a number of years in community organizing, in large part because the approach our group used to form coalitions and develop an issue agenda was to seek out and listen hard to people's *stories*, and to share our own. The group had conservative, liberal, radical, white, black, Hispanic, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Unitarian (guess who?), Democrats, Republicans, independents, rich, middle-class, poor....and despite those considerable differences, through our shared stories we found solid common ground. It's one thing to believe in the idea of health care for the uninsured; quite another to hear a welder, struggling through his broken English, tell you how scared he is because he is losing his eyesight and he can't afford an operation and he has no insurance, but without an operation he won't be able to work as a welder anymore, and he has growing children....It's the stories that move you from just supporting an idea to getting out into the fray of public life and trying to make a change. And you realize along the way that you need not go back more than a generation or so to find the same stories in your own family, and even now you feel the same shared fears and hopes. People sitting around kitchen tables talking about what matters in their lives: *that's* politics. Getting out the instruments after dinner and playing around the table: *that's* music.

It is a real treat to read these stories! Plus, look at all the neat ways I can use this thread to avoid my work: I can try to write stories, I can read your stories, I can write about enjoying reading your stories, I can write about how I use this thread to avoid my work....neato!

Carol

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it^ll K^NX^~

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FICTION

FATHERS AND SONS
BY IVAN S. TURGENEV
TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN
BY C. J. HOGARTH

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FATHERS

AND SONS

BY IVAN S.

ITURGENEV

Translated from
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C.J. Hogarth.

LONDON &.TORONTO
PUBLISHED BYJ M DENT
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INTRODUCTION

Tn this masterly unromantic novel, Turgenev drew a character, Bazarov, who served to express what he taught us to call Nihilism, and made a movement into a man. In Russia itself the effect of the story was astonishing. The portrait of Bazarov was immediately and angrily resented as a cold travesty. The portraits of the "backwoodsmen," or retired aristocrats, fared no better. Turgenev had indeed roused the ire of both sides, only too surely.

The Petrovitchs, typical figures as he designed them of the Russian nobility, were intended he confessed to breathe " feebleness, nonchalance, narrowness of mind." His sense of fitness made him paint with extreme care these choice representatives of their class. They were the pick, and if they were humanly ineffective, what of their weaker kind? "Si la creme est mauvaise, que sera le lait? " as he put it. The bitterest criticism came, however, from the side of the revolutionaries and incompatibles. They felt in Turgenev the sharper artistry and the intimate irony as if he had only used these qualities in deahng with the specific case of Bazarov; whereas they were temperamental effects of his narrative art. He was ready to assert himself one of the party of youth. He was at one with Bazarov, he declared, in nearly all his ideas, a chief exception being Bazarov 's ideas on art, which in truth are apt to be more crudely delivered than the rest of that iconoclast's destructive opinions. Bazarov, he said once and again, was his favourite child

It is nearly forty years now (in 1921) since the novel appeared in The Ritssia)i Messenger, a weekly which was the recognised exponent of the new movement. That proverbial period has lent a softer cast to the lineaments of the people in the group, as time touches the canvas of the pictures in an old countiy-house gallery. But the

interesting tiling is to find that history in the large has terribly and irresistibly confirmed the history in little that Turgenm^ drew, with a sure instinct, for the potential anticipations of his saga.

But we should be wrong if we mistook its clear pervading realities for those of a tract-novel, or a document of any one particular generation. It is as its title declares in a sense another fable of the inevitable coil and recoil of the two generations. The sympathetic power of Turgenev is shown in his instinctive understanding of them both. An aristocrat by training, he was saved as Tolstoi was from sterilising his imaginative and dramatic powers by any sense of caste and privilege. He loved the play of human nature, knew how to reckon with its foibles, its pride, habitual prejudices, and all tragic and comic susceptibilities. So he drew Bazarov, as a protagonist of the revolt against the old order and the protective habit of age. When Bazarov enters the house of Arkady's father, he is like Don Quixote entering the inn of his direst probation. If the parallel seems a trifle fantastic, it was yet one that Turgenev would let pass, since he affirmed that Don Quixote himself was, in his inimitable extravagance, a type of the eternal spirit of revolution. And one would like, if there were room for it, to print as preamble to Fathers and Sons, the essay in which its writer has compared the deeper essentials of Hamlet and Quixote.

We must be satisfied instead to recall the direct event of the novel, as it falls in his own record. The present writer, some years ago, spent a spring at Ventnor in the Isle of Wight, and found the house on the sea - brink in which he stayed had been occupied by Turgenev at one time. Then and there it was, in i860 and at Ventnor, that he had the first idea of this novel; and it is scarcely being too fanciful to think that he imagined the home environment and the spacious vista of the Russian provinces more fondly and more freely, because of his being at a long remove from them in that small and confined seaside nook of Ventnor. Already, we mu.st remember, the liberation of the serf had taken place; and the ferment of liberal ideas was working in the new generation. As we look back.

INTRODUCTION ix

we see in our wisdom after the event, having reahsed Turgenev for the noveUst he was — an artist who was for ever adjusting the moment to the permanent in art — that it was inevitable he should write this book, this tragi-comedy of age and youth, of the old order and the new, the conservating fathers and the revolutionary sons.

E. R.

The following is the list of Turgenev's chief works :

English Tkansi-ations ok Works: Russian Life in the Interior: or, the Experiences of a Sportsman, from Juench version, by J. D. Meiklejohn, 1855; Annals of a Sportsman, from French version, by F. P. Abbott, 1855; Tales from the Notebook of a Sportsman, from the Russian, by E.Richter, 1895 ; Fathers and Sons, from the Russian, by E. Schuyler, 1867, 188^; Smoke: or. Life at Baden, from French version, 1868, by VV. !•". VVest, 1872, 1883; Liza: or, a Nest of Nobles, from the Russian, by W. R. S. Ralston, 1869, 1873, 1884; On the Eve, a tale, from the Russian, by C. E. Turner, 1871; Dimitri Roudine, from French and German versions, 1873, 1883; Spring Floods, from the Russian, by S. M. Batts, 1874; from the Russian, by E. Richter, 1895; A Lear of the Steppe, from the French, bv W. H. Browne, 1874; Virgin Soil, from the French, by T. S. Perry, 1877, 1883, by A. VV. Dilke, 1878; Poems in Prose, from the Russian, 1883; Senilia, Poems in Prose, with a liiographiral Sketch of the Autiior, by S. J. Macmillan, 1890; I'irst Love, and Punin and Baburin, from the Russian, with a Biographical Introduction, by S. Jerrold, 1884; Mumu, and the Diary of a Superfluous Man, from the Russian, by H. Gersoni, 1884; Annouchka, a tale, from the French version, by F. P. Abbott, 1884; from the Russian (with .An Unfortunate Woman), by H. Gersoni, 1886; The Unfortunate One, from the Russian, by .A. R. Thompson, 1888 (see above for Gersoni's translation); The Watch, from the Russian, by T- E. Williams, 1893.

V* Works: Novels, translated by Constance Garnett, 15 vols., 1894-99, 1906, 1921. Novels and Stories, translated by Isabel F. Hapgood, with an Introduction by Henry James, 1903. etc.

Life: See above. Biographical Introductions to Poems in Prose and First Love; E. M. Arnold, Tourgueneff and his French Circle, translated from the work of E. Halperine-Kaminsky, 1898; J. A. T. Lloyd, Two Russian Reformers: Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, 1910.

FATHERS AND SONS

" Well, Peter? Cannot you see them yet? " asked a harin ^ of about forty who, hatless, and clad in a dusty jacket over a pair of tweed breeches, stepped on to the verandah of a posting-house on the 20th day of May, 1859. The person addressed was the harin's servant — a round-cheeked young fellow with small, dull eyes and a chin adorned with a tuft of pale-coloured down.

Glancing along the high road in a supercilious manner, the servant (in whom everything, from the turquoise ear-ring to the dyed, pomaded hair and the mincing gait, revealed the modern, the rising generation) replied: " No, bar in, I cannot."

" Is that so? " queried the barin.

" Yes," the servant afiinned.

The barin sighed, and seated himself upon a bench. While he is sitting there with his knees drawn under him and his eyes moodily glancing to right and left, the reader may care to become better acquainted with his personality.

His name was Nikolai Petrovitch Kirsanov, and he owned (some fifteen versts from the posting-house) a respectable little property of about two hundred souls (or, as, after that he had apportioned his peasantry allotments, and set up a " farm," he himself expressed it, a property " of two thousand desiatini " -). His

^ Gentleman or squire. • The desiati it = 2' 86 acres.

father, one of the generals of 1812, had spent his life exclusively in militar}^ service as the commander, first of a brigade, and then of a division; and always he had been c^uartered in the provinces, where his rank had enabled him to cut a not inconspicuous figure. As for Nikolai Petrovitch himself, he was born in Southern Russia (as also was his elder brother, Paul — of whom presentl}'), and, until his fourteenth j'ear, received his education amid a circle of hard-up governors, free-and-easy aides-de-camp, and sundry staff and regimental officers. His mother came of the family of the Koliazins, and, known in maidenhood as Agathe, and subsequently as Agathoklea Kuzminishna Kirsanov, belonged to the type of " officer's lady," That is to say, she wore pompous mobcaps and rustling silk dresses, was always the first to approach the cross in church, talked volubly and in a loud tone, of set practice admitted her sons to kiss her hand in the morning, and never failed to bless them before retiring to rest at night. In short, she lived the life which suited her. As the son of a general, Nikolai Petrovitch was bound — though he evinced no particular bravery, and might even have seemed a coward — to follow his brother Paul's example by entering the army; but unfortunately, owing to the fact that, on the very day when there arrived the news of his commission, he happened to break his leg, it befell that, after two months in bed, he rose to his feet a permanently lamed man. When his father had finished wringing his hands over the mischance, he sent his son to acquire a civilian education; whence it came about that Nikolai, at eighteen, found himself a student at the University of St. Petersburg. At the same period his brother obtained a commission in one of the regiments of Guards; and, that being so, their father apportioned the two young men a joint establishment, and placed it under the more or less detached supervision of Ilya Koliazin, tlieir matcinal uncle and a leading tchinovnik.^ That done, the father returned to his division and his wife, and only at rare intervals sent his sons sheets of grey foolscap (scrawled and re-scrawled in flamboyant calligraphy) to which there was appended, amid a bower of laborious flourishes, the signature " Piotr Kirsanov, Major-General." In the year 1835 Nikolai Petrovitch obtained his university degree; and in tlie same year General Kirsanov was retired for incompetence at a review, and decided to transfer his quarters to St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, just as he was on the point both of renting a house near the Tavritchesky Gardens and of being enrolled as a member of the English Club, a stroke put an end to his career, and Agathoklea Kuzminishna followed him soon afterwards, since never had she succeeded in taking to the dull life of the capital, but ahvays had hankered after the old provincial existence. Already during his parents' lifetime, and to their no small vexation, Nikolai Petrovitch had contrived to fall in love with the daughter of a certain Uhinovnik named Prepolovensky, the landlord of his flat; and since the maiden was not only comely, but one of the type known as " advanced " (that is to say, she perused an occasional " Science " article in one newspaper or another), he married her out of hand as soon as the term of mourning was ended, and, abandoning the Ministry of Provincial Affairs to which, through his father's influence, he had been posted, embarked upon connubial felicity in a villa adjoining the Institute of Forestry. Thence, after a while, the couple removed to a diminutive, but in every way respectable, flat which could boast of a spotless vestibule and an icy-cold drawing-room; and thence, again, they migrated to the country, where they settled for good, and where, in due time, they had bom to them a son Arkady. The existence of husband and wife was one of perfect comfort and tranquillity. Almost never were they parted from one another, they read together, they played the piano together, and they sang duets. Also, she would garden or superintend the poultry-yard, and he would set forth a-hunting, or see to the management of the estate. Meanwhile Arkady led an existence of equal calm and comfort, and grew, and waxed fat; until, in 1847, when ten years had been passed in this idyllic fashion, Kirsanov's wife breathed her last. The blow proved almost more than the husband could bear — so much so that his head turned grey in a few weeks. Yet, though he sought distraction for his thoughts by going abroad, he felt constrained, in the following year, to return home, where, after a prolonged period of inaction, he took up the subject of Industrial Reform. Next, in 1855, he sent his son to the University of St. Petersburg, and, for the same reason, spent the following three winters in the capital, where he seldom went out, but spent the greater part of his time in endeavouring to fraternise with his son's youthful acquaintances. The fourth winter, however, he was prevented by various circumstances from spending in St. Petersburg; and thus in the May of 1859 we see him — greyheaded, dusty, a trifle bent, and wholly middle-aged — awaiting his son's home-coming after the elevation of the latter (in Nikolai's own footsteps) to the dignity of a graduate.

Presently either a sense of decency or (more probably) a certain disinclination to remain immediately under

^ Civil servant.

his master's eye led the servant to withdraw to the entrance gates, and there to light a pipe. Nikolai Petrovitch, however, continued sitting with head bent, and his eyes contemplating the ancient steps of the verandah, up which a stout speckled hen was tap-tapping its way on a pair of splayed yellow legs, and thereby causing an untidy, but fastidious-looking, cat

to regard it from the balustrade with marked disapproval. Meanwhile the sun beat fiercely down, and from the darkened interior of a neighbouring granary came a smell as of hot rye straw. Nikolai Petrovitch sank into a reverie. " My son Arkady a graduate! " — the words kept passing and repassing through his mind. Again and again he tried to think of something else, but always the same thought returned to him. Until eventually he reverted to the memory of his dead wife. " Would that she were still with me! " was his yearning reflection. Presently a fat blue pigeon alighted upon tlie roadway, and fell to taking a hasty drink from a pool beside the well. And almost at the instant that the spectacle of the bird caught Nikolai Petrovitch's eye, his ear caught the sound of approaching wheels.

"They are coming, I think," hazarded the servant as he stepped forward through the gates.

Nikolai Petrovitch sprang to his feet, and strained his eyes along the road. Yes, coming into view there was a iarantass,^ drawn by three stagehorses; and in the tarantass there could be seen the band of a student's cap and the outlines of a familiar, well-beloved face.

" x\rkasha, Arkasha! " was Kirsanov's cry as, running forward, he waved his arms. A few moments later he was pressing his lips to the sun-tanned, dusty, hairless cheek of the newly-fledged graduate.

^ A species of four-wheeled carriage.

B ''*-

II

" Yes, but first give me a rub down, dearest Papa," said Arkady in a voice which, though a little hoarsened with travelling, was yet clear and youthful. " See! I am covering you with dust! " he added as joj'ously he returned his father's caresses.

"Oh, but that will not matter," said Nikolai Petrovitch with a loving, reassuring smile as he gave the collar of his son's blue cloak a couple of pats, and then did the same by his own jacket. Thereafter, gently withdrawing from his son's embrace, and beginning to lead the way towards the inn 3'ard, he added: " Come this w^ay, come this way. The horses will soon be ready."

His excitement seemed even to outdo his son's, so much did he stammer and stutter, and, at times, find himself at a loss for a word. Arkady stopped him.

" Papa," he said, " first let me introduce my good friend Bazarov, who is the comrade whom I have so often mentioned in letters to you, and who has been kind enough to come to us for a visit."

At once Nikolai Petrovitch wheeled round, and, approaching a tail man who, clad in a long coat with a tasselled belt, had just alighted from the tar ant ass, pressed the bare red hand which, after a pause, the stranger offered him.

" I am indeed glad to see you ! " was Nikolai Petrovitch's greeting, " I am indeed grateful to you for your kindness in paying us this visit! Alas, I hope that,

that But first might I inquire your name? "

" Evgenii Vasiliev," replied the other in slow% but virile, accents as, turning down the collar of his coat. he revealed his face more clearly. Long and thin, with a high forehead which looked flattened at the top and became sharpened towards the nose, the face had large, greenish eyes and long, sandy whiskers. The instant that the features brightened into a smile, however, they betokened self-assurance and intellect.

" My dearest Evgenii Vasiliev," Nikolai Petrovitch continued, " I trust that whilst you are with us you will not find time hang heavy upon your hands."

Bazarov gave his lips a slight twitch, but vouchsafed no reply beyond raising his cap — a movement which revealed the fact that the prominent convolutions of the skull were by no means concealed by the superincumbent mass of indeterminate-coloured hair.

" Now, Arkady," went on Nikolai Petrovitch as he turned to his son, " shall we have the horses harnessed at once, or should you prefer to rest a httle? "

" Let us rest at home, Papa. So pray have the horses put to."

" I will," his father agreed. "Peter! Bestir yourself, my good fellow! "

Being what is known as a " perfectly trained servant," Peter had neither approached nor shaken hands with the young barin, but contented himself with a distant bow. He now vanished through the yard gates.

" Though 1 have come in the koliaska," said Nikolai Petrovitch, " I have brought three fresh horses for the iaranlass."

Arkad}' then drank some water from a yellow bowl proffered by the landlord, while Bazarov lighted a pipe, and approached the ostler, who was engaged in unharnessing the stagehorses.

" Only two can ride in the koliaska," continued Nikolai Petrovitch; " wherefore I am rather in a difficulty to know how your friend will "

" Oh, he can travel in the iarantass," interrupted Arkady. " Moreover, do not stand on an 5/ ceremony mth him, for, wonderful though he is, he is also quite simple, as you will find for yourself."

Nikolai Petrovitch's coachman brought out the horses, and Bazarov remarked to the ostler:

" Come, bestir yourself, fat-beard! "

"Did you hear that, Mitiusha? " added another ostler who was standing with his hands thrust into the back slits of his blouse. " The barin has just called j^ou a fat -beard. And a fat -beard you are."

For answer Mitiusha merely cocked his cap to one side and drew the reins from the back of the sweating shafts-horse.

" Quick now, my good fellows! " cried Nikolai Petrovitch. " Bear a hand, all of you, and for each there will be a glassful of vodka."

Naturally, it was not long before the horses were harnessed, and then father and son seated themselves in the koliaska, Peter mounted the box of that vehicle, and Bazarov stepped into the tarantas's, and lolled his head against the leather cushion at the back. Finally the cortege moved away.

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III

" To think that \-oii are now a graduate and home again! " said Nikolai Petrovitch as he tapped Arkady on the knee, and then on the shoulder. " There now, there now! "

"And how is Uncle? Is he quite well?" asked Arkady — the reason for the question being that though he felt filled with a genuine, an almost childish delight at his return, he also felt conscious of an instinct that the conversation were best diverted from the emotional to the prosaic.

" Yes, your uncle is quite well. As a matter of fact, he also had arranged to come and meet you, but at the last moment changed his mind."

" Did you have very long to wait ? " continued Arkady.

" About five hours."

" Dearest Papa! " cried Arkady as, leaning over towards his father, he imprinted upon his cheek a fervent kiss. Nikolai Petrovitch smiled quietly.

" I have got a splendid horse for 3'ou," he next remarked. " Presently you shall see him. Also, your room has been entirely repapered."

" And have you a room for Bazarov as well? "

" One shall be found for him."

" Oh — and pray humour him in every way 3'ou can. I could not express to you how much I value his friendship."

" But you have not known him very long, have you ? "

" No — not very long."

" I thought not, for I do not remember to have seen him in St. Petersburg last winter. In what does he most interest himself? "

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" Principally in natural science. But, to tell the truth, he knows practicaUy everything, and is to become a doctor next year."

"Oh! So he is in the Medical Faculty?" Nikolai Petrovitch remarked; after which there was silence for a moment.

" Peter," went on Nikolai, pointing with his hand, " are not those peasants there some of our own? "

Peter glanced in the direction indicated, and saw a few waggons proceeding along a narrow by-road. The teams were bridleless, and in eacii waggon were seated some two or three muzhiks with their blouses unbuttoned.

" Yes, they are some of our own," Peter responded.

" Then whither can they be going? To the town? "

" Yes — or to the tavern." This last was added contemptuously, and with a wink to the coachman that was designed to enlist that functionary's sj-mpathy: but as the functionary in question was one of the old school which takes no share in the modem movement, he stirred not a muscle of his face.

" This year my peasants have been giving me a good deal of trouble," Nikolai Petrovitch continued to his son. " Persistently do they refuse to pay their tithes. What ought to be done with them? "

" And do you find your hired workmen satisfactory? "

" Not altogether," muttered Nikolai Petrovitch. " You see, they have become spoilt, more's the pity! Any real energy seems quite to have left them, and they not only ruin my implements, but also leave the land unfilled. Does estate-managernent interest you? "

" The thing we most lack here is shade," remarked Arkady in evasion of the question.

" Ah, but I have had an awning added to the north balcony, so that we can take our meals in the open air."

" But that will give the place rather the look of a villa, will it not? Things of that sort never prove effectual.

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But oh, the air here! How good it smells! Yes, in my opinion, things never smell elsewhere as they do here. And oh, the sky! "

Suddenly Arkady stopped, threw a glance of apprehension in the direction of the taraniass, and relapsed into silence.

" I quite agree with you," replied Nikolai Petrovitch. " You see, the reason is that you were bom here, and that therefore the place is bound to have for you a special significance."

" But no significance can attach to the place of a man's birth. Papa."

" Indeed? "

" Oh no. None whatsoever."

Nikolai Petrovitch glanced at the speaker, and for fullv half a verst let the vehicle proceed without the conversation between them being renewed. At length Nikolai Petrovitch obser^^ed:

" I cannot remember whether I wrote to tell you that your old nurse, Egorovna, is dead."

" Dead? Oh, the poor old woman ! But Prokovitch — is he still alive? "

" He is so, and in no way changed — that is to say, he grumbles as much as ever. In tact, you will find that no really important alterations have taken place at Marino."

" And have you the same steward as before? "

" No; I have appointed a fresh one, for I came to the conclusion that I could not have any freed serfs about the place. That is to say, I did not feel as though I could trust such fellows with posts of responsibility." Arkady indicated Peter with his eyes, and Nikolai Petrovitch therefore subdued his voice a little. " Hei^ Oh, il est libre, en effet. You see, he is my valet. But as regards a steward, I have appointed a miestchanin} at a salary of

1 A member of the trading or shopkeeping class.

250 roubles a year, and he seems at least capable. But " — and here Nikolai Petrovitch rubbed his forehead, which gesture with him always implied inward agitation — " I ought to say that, though I have told 5'ou that you will find no alterations of importance at Marino, the statement is not strictly true, seeing that it is mj' duty to warn you that, that— — -" Nikolai Petrovitch hesitated again — then added in French: " Perhaps b}' a stem moralist my frankness might be considered misplaced; yet I will not conceal from you, nor can you fail to be aware, that always 1 have had ideas of my own on the subject of the relations which ought to subsist between a father and his son. At the same time, this is not to say that you have not the right to judge me. Rather, it is

that at m}'' age Well, to put matters bluntly, the

girl whom you will have heard me speak of "

" You mean Thenichka? " said Arkady.

Nikolai Petrovitch's face went red.

" Do not speak of her so loudly," he advised. " Yes, she is living with us. I took her in because two of our smaller rooms were available. But of course the arrangement must be changed."

" Why must it. Papa? "

" Because this friend of yours is coming, and also because — well, it might make things awkward."

" Do not disturb yourself on Bazarov's account. He is altogether superior to such things."

" Yes, so you say; but the mischief lies in the fact that the wing is so small."

" Papa, Papa! " protested Arkady. " Almost one would think that you considered yourself to blame for something; whereas you have nothing to reproach yourself with."

" Ah, but I have," responded Nikolai Petrovitch. His face had turned redder than ever.

" No, you have not, Papa," repeated Arkady with a

loving smile, while adding to himself with a feeling of indulgent tenderness for his good, kind father, as well as with a certain sense of "superiority": " WTiy is he making these excuses? "

" I beg of you to say no more," he continued with an involuntary feeling of exultation in being " grown up " and " emancipated." As he did so Nikolai Petrovitch glanced at him from under the fingers of the hand which was still rubbing his brows. At the same moment something seemed to give his heart a stab. Mentally, as before, he blamed himself.

" Here our fields begin," he observed after a pause.

" I see," rejoined Arkady. " And that is our forest in front, I suppose? "

" It is so. Only, only — I have sold it, and this year it is to be removed."

" Wliy have you sold it ? "

" Because I needed the money. Moreover, the land which it occupies must go to the peasants."

" WTiat ? To the peasants who pay you no tithes? "

" Possibly. But some day they will pay me."

" I regret the forest's loss," said Arkady, and then resumed his contemplation of the landscape.

The scenery which the party were traversing could not have been called picturesque, for, \\dth sUght undulations, only fields, fields, and again fields, stretched to the very horizon. True, a few patches of copse were visible, but the ditches, with their borderings of low, sparse brushwood, recalled the antique land-measurement of Katherine's day. Also, streams ran pent between abruptly sloping banks, hamlets with dwarfed huts (of which the blackened roofs were, for the most part, cracked in half) stood cheek by jowl \vith crazy grinding-byres of plaited willow, empty threshing-floors had their gates sagging, and from churches of wood or of brick which stood amid dilapidated graveyards the stucco was peeling,

and the crosses were threatening at any moment to fall. As he gazed at the scene Arkad3''s heart contracted. Moreover, the peasants encountered on the road looked ragged, and were riding sorry nags, while the laburnum trees which stood ranged like miserable beggars by the roadside had their bark hanging in strips, and their boughs shattered. Lastly, the lean, mud-encrusted cows which could be seen hungrily cropping the herbage in the ditches were so " staring " of coat that the animals might just have been rescued from the talons of some terrible, death-dealing monster; and as one gazed at those weak, pitiful beasts, almost one could fancy that one saw uprisen from amid the beauty of spring, the pale phantoms of Winter — its storms and its frost and its snow.

" Evidently this is not a rich district," reflected Arkady. " Rather, it is a district which gives one the impression neither of abundance nor of hard work. Yet can it be left as it is ? No ! Education is what we need. But how is that education to be administered, or, for that matter, to be introduced? "

Thus Arkady. Yet, even as the thought passed through his mind. Spring seemed once more to regain possession of her kingdom, and everj^hing around him grew golden-green, and trees, shrubs, and herbage started to wave and glimmer under the soft, warm breath of the vernal zephyrs, and larks took to pouring out their souls in endless, ringing strains, and siskins, circling high over sunken ponds, uttered their cry, then skimmed the hillocks in silence, and handsome black rooks stalked among the tender green of the short corn-shoots, or settled among the pale-white, smokelike ripples of the young rye, whence at intervals they protruded their heads.

Arkady gazed and gazed; and gradually, as he did so, his late thoughts grew dimmer and disappeared, and,

throwing off his travelling-cloak, he peered so joyously, with such a boyish air, into his father's face that Nikolai Petrovitch bestowed upon him yet another embrace.

" We have but little further to go now," he remarked. " In fact, when once we have topped that rise the house will come into view. And what a time we are going to have together, Arkasha! For you will be able to help me with the estate (if 3'ou care to, that is to say?), and you and I will draw nearer to one another, and make one another's better acquaintance."

"We will!" cried Arkady. "And what splendid weather for us both! "

"Yes; specially for your home-coming is spring in all its glory. Yet I am not sure that I do not agree with Pushkin where he says, in Eugene Onegin:

" How sad to me is your coming,
O spring, spring, season of love! "

" Arkady," shouted Bazarov from the tarantass, " please send me a match or two, for I have nothing to light my pipe with."

Instantly Nikolai Petrovitch ceased quoting poetry, and Arkady (who had listened with considerable surprise, though also with a certain "measure of sympathy, to his father) hastened to produce from his pocket a silver matchbox, and to dispatch the same by the hand of Peter.

" In return, would you care to have a cigar? " called Bazarov.

" I should," replied Arkad}'.

The result was that when Peter returned to the koliaska he handed Arkady not only the matchbox, but also a fat black cigar. This Arkady lit at leisure, and then proceeded to diffuse around him so strong and acrid an odour of tobacco that Nikolai Petrovitch (a non-smoker from birth) found himself forced to avert his

nose (though he did this covertly, for fear of offending his son),

A quarter of an hour later the vehicles drew up at the steps of a new wooden mansion, painted grey, and roofed with red sheet -iron. The mansion was Marino, or Novaia Sloboda, or, to quote the peasants' name, " Bobih Chutor."

IV

There issued on to the verandah to greet the arrivals no throng of household serfs — only a solitar}- girl of twelve. Presently, however, she was joined by a young fellow much resembling Peter, but dressed in a grey livery coat to which embossed, silver-gilt buttons were attached. This was Paul Kirsanov's valet. In silence he opened the door of the koliaska, and unhooked the apron of the tarantass; whereupon the three gentlemen alighted, passed through a dark, bare hall (the face of a \'Oung woman peered at them for a moment from behind a door), and entered a drawing-room upholstered in the latest fashion.

" So here we are at home again! " exclaimed Nikolai Petrovitch, taking off his cap, and shaking back his hair. " Let us have supper, and then for bed, bed! "

" Yes, something to eat would undoubtedly be welcome," remarked Bazarov as, yawning, he seated himself upon a sofa.

" Quite so; I will have supper served at once." Nikolai Petrovitch, for no apparent reason, tripped over his own feet. " And here comes Prokofitch," he added.

As he spoke entered a man of about sixty who, white-haired, and of thin, swarthy features, was wearing a cinnamon-coloured tail-coat with brass buttons and a crimson coUar. He smiled with delight as he approached and shook hands with Arkady. Then, with a bow to the guest, he retired to the doorway, and folded his hands behind his back.

" So here is the young master, Prokofitch! " said

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Nikolai Petrovitch. " He is home at last. And how, think you, is he looking? "

" Very well, very well," the old man said with another smile. The next moment, however, he knit his shaggy brows, and suggested: " Shall I lay the table? "

" If you please, if you please." Nikolai Petrovitch turned to Bazarov.

" Before supper," he said, " would you care to go to your room? "

" I thank you, no. But please have my trunk convej'ed thither, and also this wrap." And Bazarov divested himself of his cloak.

" Certainly. Prokofitch, take the gentleman's cloak."

The old butler received the garment gingerly, held it well away from him with both hands, and left the room on tiptoe.

" And you, Arkady? " continued Nikolai Petrovitch. " Do you not wish to go to your room? "

" Yes ; for a wash I should be thankful," was Arkad3;''s reply as he moved towards the door. At that moment it opened to admit a man of medium height who was dressed in a dark Enghsh suit, a fashionably low collar, and a pair of patent leather boots. This was Paul Petrovitch Kirsanov. Although forty-five, he had close-cropped grey hair of the sheen of new silver, and his sallow, unwrinkled face was as clear-cut and regular of outline as though carved with a light, fine chisel. Still retaining traces of remarkable comeliness, his bright, black, oblong eyes had a peculiar attraction, and his every well-bred, refined feature showed that symmetry of youth, that air of superiority to the rest of the world which usually disappears when once the twenties have been passed.

Drawing from his trouser pocket a slender hand the long, pink nails of which looked all the slenderer for the snowy whiteness of the superimposed cuff and large opal

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sleeve-link, he offered it to his nephew; after which, this prefatory European " handshake " over, he thrice kissed Arkady in the Russian fashion — that is to say, touched his nephew's cheek with his perfumed moustache, and murmured: " I congratulate you."

Next Nikolai Petrovitch presented to him Bazarov. Inclining his supple figure with a faint smile, Paul Petrovitch this time did not offer his hand. On the contrary, he replaced it in his pocket.

" I was beginning to think that you never meant to arrive," he said with an amiable hoist of his shoulders and a display of some beautiful white teeth. " What happened to you? "

" Nothing," replied Arkady, " except that we lingered a little. For the same reason are we as hungry as wolves ; so pray tell Pro ko fitch to be quick. Papa, and I shall be back in a moment."

"Wait; I will go with you," added Bazarov as he rose from the sofa ; and the two young men left the room together.

" WTio is your guest? " asked Paul Petrovitch.

" A friend of Arkady's, and, according to Arkady's showing, a man of intellect."

" He is going to stav here? "

" He is."

" A long-haired fellow like that? "

" Certainly."

In that particular direction Paul Petrovitch said no more, but, tapping the table with his finger-nails, added :

" Je pense que noire A rkady s'esf degotirdi} And in any case I am pleased to see him back again."

At supper little was said. In particular did Bazarov scarcely speak, though he ate heartily; and only Nikolai Petrovitch proved garrulous as he related various incidents in what he termed his " agricultural life," and

1 " I think that our friend Arkady has acquired some polish."

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gossiped of forthcoming administrative measures, committees, deputations, the need of introducing machinery, and other such topics.

For his part, Paul Petrovitch paced the room (he never took supper), and sipped a glassful of red wine, and occasionally interjected some such remark — ^rather, exclamation— as " Ah! " or " Oh, ho! " or " H'm! " Arkady's contribution consisted of a little St. Petersburg gossip, even though, throughout, he vvas conscious of a touch of that awkwardness which overtakes a young man when, just ceased to be a boy, he returns to the spot v.-here hitherto he has ranked as a mere child. In other words, he drawled his phrases unnecessarily, carefully avoided the use of the term " Papasha," ^ and, once, even went so far as to substitute for it the term " Otety " ^ — though, true, he pronounced it with some difficulty. Lastly, in his excessive desire to seem at his ease, he helped himself to more wine than was good for him, and tasted some of every brand. Meanv/hile Prokofitch chewed his lips, and never removed his eyes from his young master.

Supper over, the company dispersed.

" A queer fellow is that uncle of yours," Bazarov said to Arkady as, clad in a dressing-gown, he seated himself by his friend's bed, and sucked at a short pipe. " To think of encountering such elegance in the country! He would take a prize with his finger-nails."

" You do not know him yet," said Arkady. " In his day he was a leading lion, and some time or another I will tell you his history. Yes, many and many a woman has lost her head over his good looks."

" Then I should think that he has nothing to live on save memories," observed Bazarov. " At all events, there is no one here for him to enslave. I looked him over to-night, and never in my life have beheld a collar of

1 Dear Papa. * Father.

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such marvellous gloss, or a chin so perfectly shaven. Yet such things can come to look ridiculous, do not you think? " ^

" Yes — perhaps they can. But he is such an excellent fellow in himself! "

" Oh, certainl}' — a truly archangelic personage! Your father, too, is excellent; for though he may read foolish poetry, and though his ideas on the subject of industry may be few, his heart is in the right place."

" He is a man with a heart of gold."

" Nevertheless, did you notice his nervousness to-night?"

Arkady nodded as though to himself such a weakness was a perfect stranger,

" Curious indeed! " commented Bazarov, " Ah, you elderly Romanticists! You over-develop the nervous system until the balance is upset. Now, good-night. In my room there is an English washstand, yet the door will not shut! But such things (English washstands I mean) need to be encouraged : they represent ' progress.' "

And Bazarov departed, while Arkady surrendered himself to a sensation of comfort. How pleasant was it to be sinking to sleep in one's comfortable home, and in one's own familiar bed, and under a well-known coverlet worked by loving hands — perhaps those of his good, kind, tireless old nurse ! And at the thought of Egorovna he sighed, and commended her soul to the Heavenly Powers. But for himself he did not pray.

Soon both he and Bazarov were asleep; but certain other members of the household there were who remained wakeful. In particular had Nikolai Petrovitch been greatly excited by his son's return ; and though he went to bed, he left the candle burning, and, resting with his head on his hands, lay thinking deeply.

Also, his brother sat up in his study until nearly midnight. Seated in an ample armchair before a comer
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where a marble stove was smouldering, he had effected no alteration in his costume beyond having exchanged his patent leather boots for a pair of heelless, red felt slippers. Lastly, he was holding, though not reading, the latest number of Galignani, and his eyes were fixed upon the stove, where a quivering blue spurt of flame kept alternately disappearing and bursting forth again. Whither his thoughts were wandering God only knows; but that they were not meandering through the past alone was proved by the fact that in his expression there was a concentrated gloom which is never in evidence when a man's mind is occupied with memories and no more.

Finally, seated on a chest in a small room at the back of the house, and wearing a blue dressing- jacket and, thrown over her dark hair, a white scarf, was the girl Thenichka. As she sat there she kept listening, and starting, and gazing towards an open door which at once afforded a glimpse of an infant's cot and admitted the sound of a sleeping child's respiration.

Next morning Bazarov was the first to awake and go out of doors.

" Ah," thought he to himself as he gazed about him, " this is not much of a place to look at."

When apportioning allotments to his peasantry, Nikolai Petrovitch had found himself forced to exclude from the new " farm " four desiatins of level, naked land, and upon this space had built himself a house, quarters for his servants, and a homestead. Also, he had laid out a garden, dug a pond, and sunk two wells. But the young trees had fared badly, very little water had risen in the pond, and the wells had developed a brackish taste. The only vegetation to attain robust growth was a clump of lilacs and acacias, under the shade of which the household was accustomed to take tea or to dine. Within a few minutes Bazarov had traversed all the paths in the garden, visited the stables and the cattlesheds, and made friends with two young household serfs whom he happened to encounter, and with whom he set forth to catch frogs in a marsh about a verst from the manor.

" For what do you want frogs, barin? " asked one of the lads.

" To make them useful," replied Bazarov (who possessed a peculiar gift for winning the confidence of his inferiors, even though he never cozened them, but, on the contrary, always treated them with asperity). " You see, I like to open them, and then to observe what their insides are doing. You and I are frogs too, except that

we walk upon our hind legs. Thus the operation helps me to understand what is taking place in ourselves."

" And what good will that do you? "

" This. That if you should fall sick, and I should have to treat you, I might avoid some mistakes."

" Then you are a doctor? "

" I am."

" Listen to that, Vasika! The bariit says that you and I too are frogs. My word ! "

" I don't like frogs," remarked Vasika, a barefooted boy of seven with a head as white as tow, and a costume made up of a grey blouse and a stiff collar.

" Why don't you like them? " asked Bazarov. " Do you think they will bite you ? Nay ! Into the water, my young philosophers! "

Nikolai Petrovitch too had left his bed, and, on going to visit Arkady, found him fully dressed; wherefore father and son proceeded to repair to the terrace, and there seated themselves under the shade of the awning. Amid nosegay's of lilac, a tea-urn was simmering on a table by the balustrade, and presently there appeared upon the scene also the damsel who, on the previous night, had met the arrivals on the verandah. She announced in shrill tones :

" Theodosia Nikolaevna is not very well this morning, and cannot come to breakfast. So she has told me to ask \'0U whether you will pour out tea for yourselves, or whether she is to send Duniasha? "

" I will pour it out myself," Nikolai Petrovitch replied with some haste. " Will you have cream or lemon in your tea, Arkady? "

"Cream," he replied. After a pause he continued:

" Papasha "

Nikolai Petrovitch glanced confusedly in his direction.

"Yes? "said he.

Arkady lowered his eyes.

" Pardon me if my question should seem to you indiscreet," he began, " but, owing to your frankness of last night, I am emboldened to return it. You will not take offence, will you ? "

" Oh no! Pray go on."

" Then I feel encouraged to ask you whether it — whether it is because I am here that she — that is to say, Thenichka — ^has not joined us at breakfast? "

Nikolai Petrovitch slightly averted his face.

" It may be so," he said at length. " At all events, I presume that — ^that she prefers, she prefers — in fact, that she is shy."

Arkady glanced at his father.

" But why should she be shy? " he inquired. " In the first place, you know my views " (he uttered the words with no little complacency), " and, in the second place, surely you cannot suppose that I would by a hair's breadth intrude upon your life and your habits? No; sure am I that never could you make a bad choice ; and if you have asked this girl to reside under your roof, that is tantamount to saying that she has well deserved it. In any case, moreover, it is not for a son to summon his father to judgment — least of all for me, who possess a father like yourself, a father who has never restricted his son's freedom of action."

At first Arkady's voice had trembled a little, since not only did he feel that he was doing the " magnanimous," but also he knew that he was delivering something like a " lecture " to his father; but such an effect does the sound of his own voice exercise upon a human being that towards the end Arkady pronounced his words firmly, and even with a certain degree of empressement.

" I thank you, Arkady," Nikolai Petrovitch said faintly as his fingers began their customary perambulation of his forehead. " Nor is your conjecture mistaken, for if this girl had not deserved the invitation, I should not, of course, have — ^in other words, as you imply, this is no frivolous whim on my part. Nor need I have spoken of the matter, were it not that I desired you to understand that she might possibly have felt embarrassed at meeting you on the very day after your arrival."

" Then let me go and meet herj' exclaimed Arkady with another access of " magnanimity " as he sprang from his chair. " Yes, let me go and explain to her why she need not shun me."

Nikolai Petrovitch also rose.

" Arkady," he began, " pray do me a favour. Hitherto I had not warned you that "

But, without listening to him, Arkady darted from the terrace. For a moment or two Nikolai Petrovitch gazed after him — -then, overcome with confusion, relapsed into a chair. His heart was beating rapidly. Whether or not he was picturing to himself a strangeness of future relations with his son ; whether he was imagining that, had his son refrained from interfering, the latter might have paid him more respect in future; whether he was reproaching himself for his own weakness — it is difficult to say what his thoughts were. Probably in them there was a combination of the feelings just indicated, if only in the fomi of apprehensions. Yet those apprehensions cannot have been deeply rooted, as was proved by the fact that, for all the beating of his heart, the colour had not left his face.

Soon hasty footsteps were heard approaching, and Arkady reappeared on the terrace.

" I have made her acquaintance! " he shouted with a kindly, good-humoured, triumphant expression. " That Theodosia Nikolaievna is not well to-day is a fact ; but also it is a fact that she is going to appear later. And why did you not tell me that I had a little brother? Otherwise I should have gone and kissed him last night, even as I have done this moment."

Nikolai Petrovitch tried to say something — to rise and to make an explanation of some sort ; but Arkady cut him short by falling upon his neck.

"What is this? Again embracing?" said Paul Petrovitch behind them.

As a matter of fact, neither father nor son was ill-pleased to see him appear, for, however touching such situations may be, one may be equally glad to escape from them.

" At what are you surprised? " asked Nikolai Petrovitch gaily. " Remember that I have not seen Arkesha for several centuries — at all events, not since last night!"

" Oh, I am not surprised," said Paul Petrovitch. " On the contrary, I should not mind embracing him myself."

And Arkady, on approaching his uncle, felt once more upon his cheek the impression of a perfumed moustache. Paul Petrovitch then sat down to table. Clad in an elegant morning suit of English cut, he was flaunting on his head a diminutive fez which helped the carelessly folded tie to symbolise the freedom of a country life. At the same time, the stiff collar of the shirt (which was striped, not white, as best befitted a matutinal toilet) supported with its usual rigour an immaculately shaven chin.

"Well, Arkady?" said he. "Where is your new friend?"

" Out somewhere. He seldom misses going for an early morning walk. But the great thing is to take no notice of him, for he detests all ceremony."

" So I have perceived." And with his usual deliberateness Paul Petrovitch began to butter a piece of bread, " Will he be staying here very long? "

" Well, as long as he may care to stay. As a matter of fact, he is going on to his father's place."

" And where does his father live? "

" Some eighty versts from here, in the same province as ourselves. I believe he has a small property, and used to be an army doctor."

" H'm! Ever since last night I have been asking myself where I can have heard the name before. Nikolai, do you remember whether there was a doctor of that name in our father's division? "

" Yes, there used to be."

" Then that doctor will be this fellow's father. H'm ! " And Paul Petrovitch twitched his moustache. " What exactly is your Bazarov? " he enquired of Arkady.

" What is he? " Arkady repeated smiling. " Do you really want me to tell you what he is, Uncle? "

" If you please, my nephew."

" He is a Nihilist."

"A what?" exclaimed Nikaloi Petrovitch, while even Paul Petrovitch paused in the act of raising a knife to the edge of which there was a morsel of butter adhering.

" A Nihilist," repeated Arkady.

" A Nihilist ? " queried Nikolai Petrovitch. " I imagine that that must be a term derived from the Latin nihil or ' nothing.' It denotes, I presume, a man who — a man who — well, a man who declines to accept anything."

" Or a man who declines to respect anything," hazarded Paul Petrovitch as he re-applied himself to the butter.

" No, a man who treats things solely from the critical point of view," corrected Arkady.

" But the two things are one and the same, are they not? " queried Paul Petrovitch.

" Oh no. A Nihilist is a man who declines to bow to authority, or to accept any principle on trust, however sanctified it may be."

" And to what can that lead ? " asked Paul Petrovitch.

" It depends upon the individual. In one man's case, it may lead to good; in that of another, to evil."

" I see. But we elders view things differently. We folk of the older generation believe that without principles " (Paul Petrovitch pronounced the word softly, and with a French accent, whereas Arkady had pronounced it with an emphasis on the leading syllable) — " without principles it is impossible to take a single step in life, or to draw a single breath. Mais vons avez change tout cela. God send you health and a general's rank. Messieurs Nihil — how do you pronounce it? "

" Ni-hi-lists," said Arkady distinctly.

" Quite so (formerly we had Hegelists, and now they have become Nihilists) — God send you health and a general's rank, but also let us see how you will contrive to exist in an absolute void, an airless vacuum. Pray ring the bell, brother Nikolai, for it is time for me to take my cocoa."

Nikolai Petrovitch did as requested, and also shouted for Duniasha; but, instead of the latter, there issued on to the terrace Thenichka in person. A young woman of twenty-three, she was pale, and gentle-looking, with dark eyes and hair, a pair of childishly red, pouting lips, and delicate hands. Also, she was clad in a clean cotton gown, a new blue kerchief was thrown lightly over her rounded shoulders, and she was carrying in front of her a large cup of cocoa. Sh^-ly she placed the latter before Paul Petrovitch, while a warm, rosy current of blood suffused the exquisite skin of her comely face, and then she remained standing by the table, with lowered eyes and the tips of her fingers touching its surface. Yet, though she looked as though she were regretting having come, she looked as though she felt that she had a right to be there.

Paul Petrovitch frowned, and Nikolai Petrovitch looked confused.

" Good morning, Thenichka," the latter muttered.

" Good morning," she replied in a low, clear voice. Then she glanced askance at Arkady, and he smiled at her in friendly fashion. Finally she departed with a quiet step and slightly careless gait — the latter a peculiarity of hers.

Silence reigned on the terrace. For a while Paul Petrovitch drank his cocoa. Then he suddenly raised his head, and muttered :

" Monsieur Nihilist is about to give us the pleasure of his company."

True enough, Bazarov could be seen stepping across the flowerbeds. On his linen jacket and trousers was a thick coating of mud, to the crown of his ancient circular hat clung a piece of sticky marshweed, and in his hand he was holding a small bag. Also, something in the bag kept stirring as though it were alive. Approaching the terrace with rapid strides, he nodded to the company and said :

" Good morning, gentlemen ! Pardon me for being so late. I shall be back presently, but first my captures must be stowed away."

"What are those captures?" Paul Petrovitch inquired. " Leeches? "

" No. frogs."

" Do you eat them? Or do you breed them? "

" I catch them for purposes of experiment," was Bazarov's only reply as carelessly he entered the house.

" In other words, he vivisects them," was Paul Pctrovitch's comment. " In other words, he believes in frogs more than in principles."

Arkady threw his uncle a reproachful look, and even Nikolai Petrovitch shrugged his shoulders, so that Paul Petrovitch himself felt his bon mot to have been out of place, and hastened to divert the subject to the estate and the new steward.

VI

Bazarov, returning, seated himself at the table, and fell to drinking tea. The brothers contemplated him in silence. Arkady glanced covertly from his father to his uncle, and back again.

" Have you walked far this morning? " at length Nikolai Petrovitch inquired.

" To a marsh beside an aspen coppice. By the way, Arkady, I flushed five head of woodcock. Perhaps you would like to go and shoot them? "

" Then you yourself are no sportsman? "

" No." "^

" That is to say, you prefer physics to am^thing else? " This from Paul Petrovitch.

" Yes, I prefer physics — in fact, the natural sciences in general- — to anything else."

" Well, 1 am told that the Germanics have made great strides in that department ? " (Paul Petrovitch used the term " Germanics " instead of " Germans " ironically, but no one noticed it.)

" True," was Bazarov's careless reply. " In fact, the Germans are, in the same respect, our masters."

" You think highly of the Germans? " Paul Petrovitch's tone was now studiously polite, for he was beginning to feel irritated with the man — his aristocratic nature could not altogether stomach Bazarov's absolute lack of ceremony, the fact that this doctor's son not only knew no diffidence, but actually returned snappish and reluctant answers, and infused a brusquerie akin to rudeness into his tone.

" At least the savants of that part of the world have some energy in them," retorted Bazarov.

" Quite so. And your opinion of our Russian savants is — well, perhaps less flattering? "

" It is, with your leave."

" That constitutes a piece of laudable modesty on your part," Paul Petrovitch observed with a slight hitch of his figure and a toss of his head. "But how comes it about that Arkady has just told us that you recognise no authorities whatsoever? Do you not tmst authorities ? "

"Why should I? Is anything in the world trustworthy? Certainly, should I be told a fact, I agree with it, but that is all."

" Oh! Then the Germans confine themselves solely to facts? " Paul Petrovitch's face had now assumed an expression of detachment, as though he had suddenly become withdrawn to the ultimate heights of the empyrean.

"No, not all Germans," replied Bazarov with a passing yawn. Clearly he had no mind to continue the controversy. Meanwhile Paul Petrovitch glanced at Arkady as much as to say: " Admit that your friend has beautiful manners! "

" For my own part," he continued, ostentatiously, and with an effort, " I, a fallible mortal, do not favour the Germans. Of course, I am not including in that category the Russo-Germa.ns, who, as we know, are birds of passage. Rather, it is the Germans of Germany proper whom I cannot abide. Once upon a time they used to produce men like Schiller and like — ^what's his name? — Goethe: for both of which authors my brother has a marked predilection. But now the German nation has become a nation solely of chemists and materialists."

" A good chemist is worth a score of your poets," remarked Bazarov.

" Quite so." Paul Petrovitch hitched his eyebrows a little, as though he had come near to falling asleep. " Er — I take it then that you decline to recognise art, but believe only in science? "

" I have told you that I believe in nothing at all. What after all, is science — that is to say, science in the mass? A science may exist, even as a trade or a profession may exist; but with regard to science in the mass, there is no such thing."

" Very good. And, with regard to such other postulates as usually are granted in human affairs, the attitude which you adopt is negative in the same degree? "

" What is this? " suddenly countered Bazarov. " Is it an examination in tenets? "

Paul Petrovitch turned pale, and Nikolai Petrovitch thought it time to intervene in the dispute.

" Nay, we will debate the subject later," he said. " And then, while recognising your views, good Evgenii Vasilitch, we will state our own. Individually speaking, I am delighted that you should be interested in the natural sciences. For instance, I am told that recently Liebig ^ has made some surprising discoveries in the matter of the improvement of soils. Consequently you might be able to help me in m}^ agricultural labours, and to give me much useful advice."

" Always I shall be at your service, Nikolai Petrovitch," replied Bazarov. " But what has Liebig to do with us? First the alphabet should be learnt before we try to read books. We have not even reached the letter A."

" You are a Nihilist — that is plain enough," reflected

Nikolai Petrovitch; while aloud he added: "Yet allow me to seek your occasional assistance. Brother

^ Justus Freiherr von Liebig (i 803-1 873), the great German chemist— in particular, the founder of agricultural chemistry.

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Paul, I believe it is time that we interviewed our steward."

Paul Petrovitch rose from his chair.

" Yes," he said, without looking at an}' one in particular, "it is indeed a terrible thing to have lived five years in the country, and to have stood remote from superior intellects! If one is ab origine a fool, one becomes so more than ever, seeing that, however much one may try not to forget what one has learnt, there will dawn upon one, sooner or later, the revelation that one's knowledge is all rubbish, that sensible men have ceased to engage in such futilities, and that one has lagged far behind the times. But, in such a case, what is one to do ? Evidently the younger generation know more than we do."

And, slowly turning on his heel, he moved away as slowly, with Nikolai Petrovitch following in his wake.

" Does Paul Petrovitch always reside here? " asked Bazarov when the door had closed upon the pair.

" Yes, he does. But look here, Evgenii. You adopted too sharp a tone with my uncle. You have offended him."

" What? Am I to fawn upon these rustic aristocrats, even though their attitude is one purely of conceit and subservience to custom? If such be Paul Petrovitch's bent, he had better have continued his career in St. Petersburg. Never mind him, however. Do you know, I have found a splendid specimen of the water beetle dytiscus marginahis. Are you acquainted with it ? I will show it you."

" Did I not promise to tell you his history? " observed Arkady musingly.

" Whose history ? The water beetle's ? "

" No; my uncle's. At least you will see from it that he is not the man you take him for, but a man who deserves pity rather than ridicule."

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" I am not prepared to dispute it. But how come you to be so devoted to him? "

" Always one ought to be fair."

" The connection I do not see."

" Then Hsten."

And Arkady related the story to be found in the following chapter.

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VII

" Like his brother, Paul Petrovitch Kirsanov received his early education at home, and entered the Imperial Corps of Pages. Distinguished from boyhood for his good looks, he had, in addition, a nature of the self-confident, quizzical, amusingly sarcastic type which never fails to please. As soon, therefore, as he had received his officer's commission, he began to go everywhere in society, to set the pace, to amuse himself, to play the rake, and to squander his money. Yet these things somehow consorted well with his personality, and women went nearly mad over him, while men called him ' Fate,' and secretly detested him. Meanwhile he rented a flat with his brother, for whom, in spite of their dissimilarity, he had a genuine affection. The dissimilarity in question lay, among other things, in the fact that, while Nikolai Petrovitch halted, had small, kindly, rather melancholy features and narrow black eyes, and was of a disposition prone to reading omnivorously, to bestirring himself but little, and to feeling nervous when attending social functions, Paul Petrovitch never spent a single evening at home, but was renowned for his physical dexterity and daring (he it was who made g3'mnastics the rage among the gilded youth of his day), and read, at most, five or six French novels. Indeed, by the time that he reached his twenty-eighth year Paul had risen to be a captain, and before him there seemed to lie a brilliant career; but everything suddenly underwent a change, as shall be related forthwith.

" Among the society of St. Petersburg of that period there was accustomed to appear, and to disappear, at irregular intervals a certain Princess R. whose memory survives to this day. Though wedded to a highly placed and very presentable (albeit slightly stupid) husband, she had no children, and spent her time between making unexpected visits abroad and unexpected returns to Russia. In short, she led a very curious life, and the world in general accounted her a coquette, in that she devoted herself to every sort of pleasure, and danced at balls until she could dance no more, and laughed and jested with young men whom she received before dinner in the half-light of a darkened drawing-room. Yet, strangely enough, as the night advanced she would fall to weeping and praying and wringing her hands, and, unable to rest, would pace her room until break of day, or sit huddled, pale and cold, over the Psalter. But no sooner would daylight have appeared than she would once more become a woman of the world, and drive, and laugh, and chatter, and fling herself upon anything which seemed to offer any sort of distraction. Also, her power to charm was extraordinary; for though no one could have called her a beauty (seeing that the one good feature of her face lay in her eyes — and even then it was not the small, grey eyes themselves which attracted, but the glance which they emitted), she had hair of the colour and weight of gold which reached to her knees. That glance ! — it was a glance which could be careless to the point of daring or meditative to the point of melancholy; a glance so enigmatical that, even when her tongue was lisping fatuous nonsense, there gleamed in her aspect something intangible and out of the common. Finally, she dressed with exquisite taste.

" This woman Paul Petrovitch met at a ball; and at it he danced a mazurka with her. Yet, though, during the dance, she uttered not a single word of sense, he straightway fell in love with her, and, being a man accustomed to conquests, attained his end in this case also. Yet, strangely enough, the facility of his triumph in no way chilled him, but led him on to become more and more resolutely, more and more painfully, attached, and that though she was a woman in whom, even after she had made the great surrender, there still remained something as immutably veiled, as radically intangible, as before — something which no one had yet succeeded in penetrating. What was in that soul God alone knows. Almost would it seem as though she were subservient to a mysterious force of which the existence was absolutely unknown to her, but which sported with her as it willed, and whose whims her mentality was powerless to control. At all events, her conduct constituted a series of inconsistencies, and even the few letters which she wrote to Paul Petrovitch — missives which would undoubtedly have aroused her husband's suspicions had he seen them — ^were written to a man who was practically a stranger to her. And in time her love began to be succeeded by fits of despondency ; she ceased to smile and jest with the lover whom she had selected, and looked at him, and listened to his voice, with reluctance. In fact, there were moments — for the most part, unexpected moments — when this reluctance bordered upon chill horror, and her face assumed a wild, corpse-like expression, and she would shut herself up in her bedroom, whence her maid, with ear glued to the keyhole, would hear issue sounds as of dull, hopeless sobbing. Paul Petrovitch himself frequently found that, when returning home after one of these tender interviews, there was naught within his breast save the bitter, galling sensation which comes of final and irrevocable failure. ' What more could I want ? ' he would say to himself in his bewilderment; yet always he spoke with an aching heart.

" It happened that on one occasion he gave her a ring having a stone carved in the figure of the Sphinx.

"'What?' she exclaimed. 'Do you offer me the Sphinx? '

" ' I do,' he replied. ' The Sphinx is yourself.'

" ' I? ' she queried with a slow lift of her enigmatical eyes. ' You are indeed flattering ! '

" With the words went the ghost of a smile, while her eyes looked stranger than ever,

" Even during the time that the Princess loved him things were difficult for Paul Petrovitch; but when she cooled in her affection for him (as soon happened) he came near to going out of his mind. Distracted with jealousy, he allowed her no rest, but followed her to such an extent that at length, worn out with his persistent overtures, she betook herself on a tour abroad. Yet even then Paul Petrovitch listened to neither the prayers of his friends nor the advice of his superior officers, but, resigning his commission, set out on the Princess's track. Thus four years were spent in hunting her down, and losing sight of her again: and though, throughout, he felt ashamed of his conduct, and disgusted with his lack of spirit, all was of no avail — her image, the baffling, bewitching, alluring image which ever flitted before his eyes, had implanted itself too deeply in his breast. At last — it was at Baden — the pair once more came together ; and though it seemed that never had she loved him as she did now, before a month was over another rupture had occurred, and, this time, a final one, as, with a last flicker, the flame died down and went out. True, that the parting would come he had foreseen; yet still he sought to be friends with her (as though friendship with such a woman could have been possible!), and only the fact that she quietly withdrew from Baden, and thenceforth studiously avoided him, baffled his purpose.

Returning to Russia, he endeavoured to resume his former mode of life: but neither by hook nor crook could he regain the old rut. As a man with a poisoned system wanders hither and thither, so did he drive out, and retain all the customs of a society habitue. Nay, he could even have boasted of two or three new conquests. But no. What he wanted was obtainable neither through himself nor others, since his whole power of initiative was gone, and his head gradually growing grey. To sit at his club, to consume his soul in jaundice and ennui, to engage in bachelor disputes which failed to interest him — such was now become his sole occupation. And, as we know, it is an occupation which constitutes the worst of signs. Nor, for that matter, seems he to marriage to have given a thought.

" Thus ten years elapsed in colourless, fruitless pursuits. Yet Paul found time pass swiftly, indeed, with amazing swiftness, for nowhere in the world does it fly as it does in Russia (in prison only is its passage said to be still swifter) ; wherefore there came at length a night when, while dining at his club, he heard that the Princess was dead — that she had died in Paris in a state bordering upon insanity. Rising from the table, he fell to pacing the rooms of the club with a face like that of a corpse, and onh' at intervals halting to watch the tables of the card-players; until, his usual time for returning home having arrived, he departed. Soon after he had reached his flat there was delivered for him a package containing the ring which he had given to the Princess. The Sphinx on it was marked with a mark like the sign of the cross, and enclosed also was a message to say that through the cross had the enigma become solved.

" These things took place just at the time (early in '48) when Nikolai Pctrovitch had lost his wife, and removed to St. Petersburg; and since, also, the period of Nikolai's

marriage had coincided with the earlier days of Paul's acquaintance with the Princess, Paul had not seen his brother since the day when the latter had settled in the country. True, on returning from abroad, Paul had paid Nikolai a visit with the intention of staying with him for a couple of months, as a congratulatory compliment on his happiness ; but the visit had lasted a week only, since the difference in the position of the two brothers had been too great, and even now, though that difference had diminished somewhat, owing to the fact that Nikolai Petrovitch had lost his wife, and Paul Petrovitch his memories (after the Princess's death he made it his rule to try and forget her) — even now, I say, there existed the difference that, whereas Nikolai Petrovitch could look back upon a life well spent, and had a son rising to manhood, Paul Petrovitch was still a lonely bachelor, and, moreover, entering upon that dim, murky period when regrets come to resemble hopes, and hopes are beginning to resemble regrets, and youth is fled, and old age is fast approaching. To Paul Petrovitch that period was particularly painful, in that, in losing his past, he had lost his all.

" ' I shall not invite you to come to Marino,' were Nikolai Petrovitch's words to his brother. ' Even when my wife was alive, you found the place tedious; and now it would kill you.'

" ' Ah, but in those days I was young and foolish and full of vanity,' replied Paul Petrovitch. ' Even though I may not have grown wiser, at least am I quieter. So, if you should be willing, I will gladly come and make your place my permanent home.'

" For answer Nikolai Petrovitch embraced him; and though a year and a half elapsed before Paul Petrovitch decided to carry out his intention, once settled on the estate, he has never left it — no, not even during the three

winters spent by Nikolai Petrovitch with his son in St. Petersburg. Meanwhile he has taken to reading books — more especially Enghsh books, and, in general, to ordering his life on the English pattern. Rarely, also, does he call upon his neighbours, but confines his excursions, for the most part, to attending election meetings, where, as a rule, he holds his tongue, but occasionally amuses himself by angering and alarming the older generation of landowners with Liberal sallies. From the representatives of the younger generation he holds entirely aloof. Yet both parties, though they reckon him haughty, accord him respect. They do so because of his refined, aristocratic manners, and of what they have heard concerning his former conquests, and of the fact that he dresses with exquisite taste, that he always occupies the best suites in the best hotels, that he dines sumptuously every day, that once he took dinner with the Duke of Wellington at the Court of Louis Philippe, that invariably he takes about with him a silver necessaire and a travelhng bath, that he diffuses rare and agreeable perfumes, that he is a first-rate and universally successful whist-player, and that his honour is irreproachable. The ladies too look upon him as a man of charming melancholy: but with their sex he has long ceased to have anything to do.

" You see, then, Evgenii," wound up Arkady, " that you have judged my uncle very unfairly. Moreover, I have omitted to say that several times he has saved my father from ruin by making over to him the whole of his money (for they do not share the estate), and that he is always ready to help any one, and, in particular, that he stands up stoutly for the peasants, even though, when speaking to them, he pulls a wry face, and, before beginning the interview, scents himself well with eau-de-Cologne."

" We all know what nerves like his mean," remarked Bazarov.

" Perhaps so. Yet his heart is in the right place, nor is he in any way a fool. To myself especially has he given much useful advice, especially on the subject of women."

"Ah, ha! 'Scalded with milk, one blows to cool another's water.' That is a truism."

" Finally, and to put matters shortly," resumed Arkady, " he is a man desperately unhappy, not one who ought to be despised."

" Who is despising him? " exclaimed Bazarov. " All that I say is that a man who has staked his whole upon a woman's love, and, on losing the throw, has turned cnist}', and let himself drift to such an extent as to become good for nothing — I say that such a man is not a man, a male creature, at all. He is unhappy, 3'ou say; and certainly you know him better than I do ; but it is clear also that he has not yet cleansed himself of the fool. In other words, certain am I that, just because he occasionally reads Galignani, and because, once a month, he saves a peasant from distress for debt, he believes himself really to be a man of action."

" But think of his upbringing! " expostulated Arkad\\ " Think of the period in which he has lived his life ! "

" His upbringing? " retorted Bazarov. " Why, a man ought to bring himself up, even as I had to do. And with regard to his period, why should I, or any other man, be dependent upon periods? Rather, we ought to make periods dependent upon us. No, no, friend 1 Sensuality and frivolity it is that are at fault. For of what do the so-called mysterious relations between a man and a woman consist ? As physiologists, we know precisely of what they consist. And take the anatomy of the eye. What in it justifies the guesswork whereof you speak ? Such talk is so much Romanticism and nonsense and

unsoundness and artificiality. Let us go and inspect that beetle."

And the two friends departed to Bazarov's room, where he had already succeeded in creating a medical-surgical atmosphere which consorted well with the smell of cheap tobacco.

VIII

At his brother's interview with the steward (the latter was a taU, thin man of shifty eyes who to every remark of Nikolai's replied in an unctuous, mellifluous voice: " Very well, if so it please you ") Paul Petrovitch did not long remain present. Recently the system of estate-management had been reorganised on a new footing, and was creaking as loudly as an ungreased cartwheel or furniture which has been fashioned of unseasoned wood. For the same reason, though never actually giving way to melancholy, Nikolai Petrovitch often indulged in moodiness and sighing, for the reason that it was clear that his affairs would never prosper without money, and that the bulk of the latter had disappeared. As for Arkady's statement that frequently Paul Petrovitch had come to his brother's assistance, it had been perfectly true, for on more than one occasion had Paul been moved b}' the sight of his brother's perplexity to walk slowly to the window, to plunge a hand into his pocket, to mutter, " Mais je puis vous donner de I' argent," and, lastly, to suit the action to the word. But on the day of which we are speaking Paul had no spare cash himself; wherefore he preferred to remove himself elsewhere, and the more so in that the miniitice of estate-management wearied him, and that he felt certain that, though powerless to suggest a better way of doing business than the present one, he knew at least that Nikolai's was at fault.

"He is not sufficiently practical," would be his

reflection. " He lets these fellows cheat him right and left."

On the other hand, Nikolai had a high opinion of Paul's practicality, and always sought his advice.

" I am a weak, easy-going fellow," he would say, " and have spent the whole of my life in retirement ; whereas you cannot have lived in the world for nothing — you know it well, and have the eye of an eagle."

To this Paul Petrovitch would make no reply: he would merely turn away without attempting to undeceive his brother.

After leaving Nikolai Petrovitch's study, Paul traversed the corridor which separated the front portion of the house from the rear, and, on reaching a low doorway, halted in seeming indecision, tugged at his moustache for a moment, then tapped with his knuckles upon the panels.

"Who is there?" replied Thenichka from within.
" Pray enter."

" It is I," said Paul Petrovitch as he opened the door.

Springing from the chair on which she had been seated with her baby, she handed the latter to the nurse-girl (who at once bore it from the room), and hastened to rearrange her bodice.

" Pardon me for having disturbed you," said Paul Petrovitch without looking at her, " but my object in coming here is to ask you (for I understand that you are sending in to the town to-day) if you would procure me a little green tea for my own personal use."

" I will," replied Thenichka. " How much ought I to have ordered? "

" I think that half a pound will suffice. But what a change! " he went on glancing around the room with an eye which included also in its purview Thenichka's features. " It is those curtains that I am referring to," he explained on seeing that she had failed to grasp his meaning.

" Yes — those curtains. They were given me by Nikolai Petrovitch himself, and have been hung a long while."

" But it is a long time, remember, since last I paid you a visit. The room looks indeed comfortable, does it not ? "

" Yes, thanks to Nikolai Petrovitch's kindness," whispered Thcnichka.

" And you find things better here than in the wing? " continued Paul Petrovitch politely — also, without the least shadow of a smile.

" I do."

" And who is lodged in the wing in your place? "

" The laundry women."

"Ah!"

Paul Petrovitch relapsed into silence, while Thenichka thought to herself: " I suppose he will go presently." So far from doing so, however, he remained where he was, and she had to continue standing in front of him with her fiingers nervelessly locking and unlocking themselves.

" Why have you had the little one taken away? " at length he inquired. " I love children. Pray show him to me."

Thenichka reddened with confusion and pleasure; and that though Paul Petrovitch was accustomed to make her nervous, so seldom did he address her.

" Duniasha! " she cried (Duniasha she addressed, as she did every one in the house, in the second person pluraP). "Bring Mitia here, and be quick about it! But first put on his clothes." With that she moved towards the door.

1 Used, as in French, in formal speech or that of a person addressing a social superior.

" Never mind, never mind," said Paul Petrovitch.

" But I shall soon be back." And she disappeared.

Left alone, Paul looked about him with keen attention. The small, low room in which he was waiting was clean and comfortable, and redolent of balm, camomile, and furniture polish. Against the walls stood straight -backed, lyre-shaped chairs which the late General had purchased during the period of the Polish campaign ; in one comer stood a bedstead under a muslin coverlet, with, flanking it, a large, iron-clamped, convex-lidded chest; in the opposite comer burnt a lamp before a massive, smoke-blackened ikon of Saint Nikolai the Miracle Worker — the Saint's halo suspended by a red riband, and a tiny china egg resting on his breast; on the window-sills were ranged some carefully sealed jars of last year's jam, which filtered the light to green, and of which the parchment covers were inscribed, in Thenichka's large handwriting, " Gooseberry "—a jam of which Nikolai Petrovitch was particularly fond ; from the ceiling hung, by a long cord, a cage containing a short-tailed siskin which kept up such a perpetual twittering and hopping that its cage rocked to and fro as it sang, and stray hemp seeds came pattering lightly to the floor; on the wall space above a small chest of drawers hung a few poorly executed photographs of Nikolai Petrovitch in various attitudes (the work of a travelling photographer) ; alongside these photographs hung a very unsuccessful one of Thenichka herself, since it revealed nothing but an eyeless face peering painfully from a dark frame; and, lastly, above the portrait of Thenichka hung a picture of Ermolov in a big cloak and a portentous frown — the latter directed principally towards a distant mountain range of the Caucasus, while over the forehead of the portrait dangled a silken pincushion in the shape of a shoe.

For five minutes or so there came from the adjoining room a sound as of rustUng and whispering. From the chest of drawers Paul Petrovitch took up a greasy, dog's-eared volume of Masalsky's The Strielitsi, and turned over a few of its pages. Suddenly the door opened, and Thenichka entered with Mitia, whom she had now vested in a red robe and beaded collar, while his little head had been brushed, and also his face washed. Though he was breathing stertorously, and wriggling his whole body about, and twitching his tiny arms after the manner of all healthy children, the dainty robe had had its effect, and his face was puckered with delight. Also, Thenichka had tidied her own hair, and rearranged her bodice — well enough though she would have done as she was. For, in all the world, is there a more entrancing spectacle than that of a young, handsome mother with, in her arms, a healthy child?

" What a little beauty! " Paul Petrovitch exclaimed indulgently as he tickled Mitia's double chin with the tip of his forefinger. The baby fixed its eyes upon the siskin, and smiled.

" This is Uncle," said Thenichka as she bent over the boy and gave him a gentle shake. For fumigating purposes Duniasha deposited upon the window-siU a lighted candle, and, beneath it, a two-kopeck piece.

" How old is he? " asked Paul Petrovitch.

" Six months. On the eleventh of this month he will be seven."

" No, eight, will he not, Theodosia Nikolaievna? " timidly corrected Duniasha.

" No, seven."

Here the infant crowed, fixed his eyes upon the chest in the corner, and suddenly closed his five tiny fingers upon his mother's mouth and nose.

"The little rascal!" she said, without, however, freeing her features from his grasp.

" He is very like my brother," commented Paul Petrovitch.

" Whom else should he be like? " she thought.

" Yes," he continued, half to himself. " Undoubtedly I see the likeness." He gazed pensively, almost mournfully, at the young mother.

" This is Uncle," again she said to the child: but this time she said it under her breath.

" Oh, here you are, Paul! " cried Nikolai Petrovitch from behind them.

Paul Petrovitch faced about and knit his brows. But so joyously, and with such a grateful expression, was his brother regarding the trio that Paul could only respond with a smile.

" He is a fine little fellow, this baby of yours," the elder brother observed. Then, glancing at his watch, he added: " I came here merely to arrange about the purchase of some tea." With which he assumed an air of indifference, and left the room.

"He came here of his own accord, did he? " was Nikolai Petrovitch's first inquiry,

" Yes, of his own accord," the girl replied. " He just knocked at the door and entered."

" And what of Arkasha ? Has he too been to see you ? "

" No, Nikolai Petrovitch. By the way, might I return to the rooms in the wing of the house? "

" Why do you want to? "

" Because they suit me better than these."

" I think not," said Nikolai Petrovitch, rubbing his forehead with an air of indecision. " Before there was a reason for your being there, but that reason no longer exists."

" Good morning, little rascal! " was his next remark

as, with a sudden access of animation, he approached and kissed the baby's cheek. Then, bending a httle, he pressed his Hps to Thenichka's hand— a hand, against the red of Mitia's robe, as white as milk.

" Why have you done that, Nikolai Petrovitch? " she murmured with downcast eyes. Yet when she raised them, their expression, as she glanced from under her brows and smiled her caressing, but slightly vacant, smile, was charming indeed!

Of the circumstances of Nikolai Petrovitch's first meeting with Thenichka the following may be related. Three years ago it had fallen to his lot to spend a night at an inn in a remote country town; and, while doing so, he had been struck with the cleanliness of the room assigned him, and also with the freshness of the bed-linen. " Clearly," he had thought to himself, " the landlady must be a German." But, as it had turned out, she was not a German, but a Russian of about fifty, well-dressed, and possessed both of a comely, intelligent countenance and of a refined manner of speaking, ^^^len breakfast was over, he had had a long conversation with her, and conceived for her a great liking. Now, as fate would have it, he had just removed to his new house, and, owing to a reluctance to continue keeping bonded serfs, was on the look-out for hired domestics; while she, for her part, was in despair over the question of the hard times, which caused only a limited number of visitors to resort to the town. In the end, therefore, Nikolai Petrovitch proposed to her to come to his house as housekeeper ; and to this proposal, (since her husband was dead, and her family consisted only of a young daughter named Thenichka) she eventually agreed. Accordingly, within two weeks Arina Savishna (such was the new housekeeper's name) arrived at Marino with her child, and took up her abode in the wing of the

new manor-house; nor was it long before she had put the place to rights. To Thenichka, however, then a girl of sixteen, she never referred; and few people even caught a glimpse of the maiden, since she lived a life so modest and retired that only on Sundays could Nikolai Petrovitch contemplate the delicate profile of her face in an aisle of the parish church. More than a year thus elapsed. But one morning Arina entered his study, bowed to him as usual, and requested him to be so good as to come and help her with her daughter, one of whose eyes had been injured with a spark from the stove. It so happened that, like most men of sedentary habit, Nikolai Petrovitch had picked up a smattering of medicine — nay, he had even compiled a list of homoeopathic remedies for one and another emergency ; wherefore he hastened to order Arina to produce the sufferer. As soon as she heard that the barin had sent for her, Thenichka turned very nervous, but followed her mother as in duty bound ; whereupon Nikolai Petrovitch led her to the window, took her head in his hands, and, after an inspection of the red, inflamed eye, wrote out a prescription for a lotion, compounded the stuff himself, and, lastly, tore off a portion of his handkerchief, and showed her how best the eye could be bathed. Meanwhile Thenichka listened attentively, and then tried to leave the room. " But the idea of going away without kissing the barin' s hand, foolish one! " cried Arina; whereupon, in heu of offering the girl his hand, Nikolai Petrovitch felt so embarrassed that in the end he himself kissed her bent head at the spot where the hair lay parted. Soon Thenichka's eye healed, but the impression produced upon Nikolai Petrovitch did not pass away so quickly. Continually there flitted before him a pure, tender, timidly upturned face ; continually he could feel between the palms of his hands soft coils of hair; continuallv

appearing to his vision there would be a pair of innocent, half-parted lips between which a set of pearl-like teeth flashed back the sunlight. Consequently he began to observe the girl more in church, and to try to engage her in conversation. But shyness always overcame her, and, on one occasion when she happened to meet him on a narrow path through a rye field, she turned aside, and plunged into the mass of tall grain and undergrowth of cornflowers and wormwood. Yet, despite her endeavours to escape, his eye discerned her head amid the golden mesh of comblades, and he called to her, as she gazed at him with wild eyes :

" Good morning, Thenichka! I shall not hurt you."

" Good morning, barinl " she whispered in reply, but did not leave her retreat.

As time went on, however, she grew more accustomed to his presence ; and by the time that she was beginning really to get over her bashfulness, her mother died of cholera. Here was a dilemma indeed ! For what was to be done with the young Thenichka, who had inherited her mother's love of orderliness, and also her mother's good sense and natural refinement ? In the end, she was so young and lonely, and Nikolai Petrovitch was so good-hearted and modest, that the inevitable came about. The rest need not be related.

" So my brother has been to you ? "he inquired again. " You say that he just knocked at the door and entered ?

" Yes, he just knocked at the door and entered."

" Good ! Now, hand me Mitia."

And Nikolai Petrovitch fell to tossing the baby up and down towards tlie ceiling — a proceeding which greatly delighted the little one, but as greatly disquieted the mother, who, at each upward flight, stretched her hands in the direction of the infant's naked toes.

Meanwhile Paul Petrovitch returned to his study, of

which the walls were lined with a paper of red wild roses, and hung with weapons; the floor was covered with a striped Persian carpet; and the furniture, consisting of a Renaissance bookcase in old black oak, a handsome writing-table, a few bronze statuettes, and a stove, was constructed, for the most part, of hazelwood, and upholstered in dark-green velvet. Stretching himself upon a sofa, he clasped his hands behind his head, and remained staring at the celling. Did presently the thoughts which were passing through his mind need to be concealed even from the walls, seeing that he rose, unliooked the heavy curtains from before the windows, and replaced himself upon the sofa ?

IX

The same day also saw Bazarov make Thenichka's acquaintance. This was when he was walking in the garden with Arkady, and discussing the question of why certain trees in the garden, especially oaks, had not prospered as they might have done. Said he:

" You ought to plant the place with as many silver poplars as you can, and also with Norwegian firs — limes too, if loam should first be added. For instance, the reason why this clump has done so well is that it is made up of lilacs and acacias, of which neither require much room. But hullo! There is some one sitting there! "

The persons seated in the arbour were Thenichka, Duniasha, and little Mitia. Bazarov halted, and Arkady nodded to Thenichka as to an old acquaintance. Then the pair passed on again, and Bazarov inquired of his companion :

" Who was she? "

" To whom are you referring? "

" You know to whom. My word, she is good-looking! "

Arkady explained, with a touch of embarrassment, the identity of Thenichka.

" Ah! " Bazarov remarked. " Then your father has not at all bad taste. Indeed, I commend it. But what a young dog he is! I too must be introduced."

And he turned back in the direction of the arbour.

" Evgenii ! " exclaimed Arkady nervously as he followed his friend. " For God's sake be careful what you do! "

" You need not be alarmed. I know what is what. I am no rustic."

And, approaching Thenichka, he doffed his cap.

" Allow me to introduce myself," he said with a polite bow. " I am a friend of Arkady's, and a perfectly harmless individual."

Rising from her seat, Thenichka gazed at him in silence.

"Oh, and what a fine baby! " he continued. " Pray do not disturb yourself. Never yet have I cast upon a child an evil spell. But why are his cheeks so red ? Is he cutting teeth? "

" Yes," replied Thenichka. " He has now cut four of them, and the gums are a little swelled."

" Then let me see them. Do not be afraid. I am a doctor."

With that he took the baby into his arms, and both Thenichka and Duniasha were astonished at the fact that it made no resistance, showed no fear.

" I see," he continued. " Well, everything is going right with him, and he will have plenty of teeth. Nevertheless, should he in any way ail, please let me know. Are you yourself well? "

" Yes, thank God ! "

" ' Thank God,' say I too, for health on the part of the mother is the chief point of all. And you ? " he added, turning to Duniasha. The latter, ultra-prim of demeanour in the drawing-room, and ultra-frivolous of behaviour in the kitchen, answered with a giggle.

" Well, you look all right. Here ! Take your hero back again."

He replaced the baby in Thenichka's arms.

" How quiet he has been with you! " she exclaimed under her breath.

" Always children are quiet with me," he remarked. " You see, I know how to handle them."

" And they know when people are fond of them," put in Duniasha.

" True," assented Thenichka. " Though it is seldom that Mitia will go to any one's arms but mine."

"Would he come to me? " ventured Arkady, who, until now standing in the background, at this moment came forward towards the arbour. But on his attempting to wheedle Mitia to his arms, the infant threw back its head, and started to crj' — a circumstance which greatly perturbed Thenichka.

" Another time — ^when he has come to be more used to me," said Arkady indulgently. And the two friends departed.

" What is her name? " asked Bazarov.

" Thenichka — ^Theodosia," replied Arkady.

" And her patronymic? "

" Nikolaievna."

" Bene ! What I like about her is her total absence of shyness. True, that is a trait which some might have condemned in her, but I say, ' What rubbish! ' For why need she be bashful? She is a mother, and therefore justified."

" I agree," said Arkady. " And my father — - — "

" Also is justified," concluded Bazarov.

" No, I do not agree in that respect."

" You do not altogether welcome a superfluous heir? "

" For shame, Evgenii! " cried Arkady heatedly, " How can you impute such motives? What I mean is that my father is not justified from one point of view. That is to say, he ought to marry her."

" Oh, ho! " said Bazarov quietly. " How high and mighty we are getting ! So you still attribute importance to the marriage rite? This I should not have expected of you."

For some paces the friends walked on in silence. Then Bazarov continued :

" I have been inspecting your father's estabHshment. The cattle look poor, the horses seem broken-down, the buildings have a tipsy air, the workmen manifest a tendency to loaf, and I cannot yet determine whether the new steward is a fool or a rogue."

" You are censorious to-day? "

" I am; and the reason is that these good peasants are cheating your father — exemplifying the proverb that ' The Russian muzhik wiU break even the back of God.' "

" Soon I shall have to agree with my uncle in his opinion that you think but poorly of Russia."

" Rubbish! The Russian's very best point is that he holds a poor opinion of himself. Two and two make four. Nothing but that matters."

" And is nature also rubbish? " queried Arkady with a musing glance at the mottled fields where they lay basking in the soft, kindly rays of the morning sun.

" Nature is rubbish — at least in the sense in which you understand her. She is not a church, but a workshop wherein man is the labourer."

At this moment there came wafted to their ears the long-drawn strains of a violoncello, on which a sensitive, but inexperienced, hand was playing Schubert's Erwartung. Like honey did the voluptuous melody suffuse the air.

" Who is the musician? " asked Bazarov in astonishment.

"My father."

" What? Your father plays the 'cello? "

" He does."

" At his age?

" Yes — he is only forty-four."

Bazarov burst out laughing.

" Why do you laugh? " asked Arkady.

" Pardon me, but the idea that vour father — a man of

forty-four, a paterfamilias, and a notable in the county — should play the 'cello! "

And he continued laughing, though Arkady, for all his reverence for his mentor, failed to accomplish even a smile.

X

During the next two weeks life at Marino pursued its normal course. Arkady took things easily, and Bazarov worked. In passing, it may be said that, for all his careless manner and abrupt, laconic speech, the latter had become an accepted phenomenon in the house. In particular had Thenichka so completely lost her shyness of him that one night she sent to awake him because Mitia had been seized with convulsions ; whereupon Bazarov arrived, and, half-joking, half-yawning, according to his usual manner, helped her for two hours in the task of attending to the baby. Only Paul Petrovitch disliked the man with the whole strength of his soul, for he accounted him a proud, cynical, conceited plebeian, and suspected him not only of failing to respect, but even of holding in contempt, the personality of Paul Petrovitch Kirsanov. Also, Nikolai Petrovitch stood in slight awe of the young Nihilist, since he doubted the likelihood of any good accruing from Bazarov's influence over Arkady. Yet always he would listen with pleasure to Bazarov's discourses, and gladly attend the chemical or physical experiments with which the young doctor (who had brought a microscope with him) would occupy himself for hours at a stretch. On the other hand, in spite of Bazarov's domineering manner, all the servants had become attached to him, for they felt him to be less a barin than their brother ; and in particular did Duniasha readily joke and talk with him, and throw him many meaning glances as she sped past in quail-hke fashion, while Peter himself, though a man full of conceit and stupidity, with a forehead perpetually puckered, and a dignity which consisted of a deferential

demeanour, a practice of reading journals syllable by syllable, and a habit of constantly brushing his coat ; even Peter, I say, would brighten and strike an attitude when he was noticed by Bazarov. In fact, the only servant to disapprove of Bazarov was old Prokofitch, the butler, who looked sour whenever he handed the young doctor a dish, and called him a " sharper " and a " flaunter," and declared that, for all his whiskers, Bazarov was no better than " a dressed-up pig," whereas he, Prokofitch, was practically as good an aristocrat as Paul Petrovitch himself.

In the early daj/s of June, the best season of the year, the weather became beautiful. True, from afar there came threatenings of cholera, but to the local inhabitants such visitations had become a commonplace. Each day Bazarov rose early to set forth upon a tramp of some two or three versts; nor were those tramps undertaken merely for the sake of the exercise (he could not abide aimless expeditions), but, rather, for the sake of collecting herbs and insects. Sometimes, too, he would succeed in inducing Arkady to accompany him; and whenever this was the case the pair would, on the way back, engage in some dispute which always left Arkady vanquished in spite of his superior profusion of argument .

One morning the pair lingered considerably by the way, and Nikolai Petrovitch set out across the garden to meet them. Just as he reached the arbour, he heard their voices and brisk footsteps approaching, though he himself was invisible to the returning friends.

" You do not understand my father," Arkady was saying.

Nikolai Petrovitch halted instead of revealing himself.

" Oh, he is a good fellow enough," replied Bazarov. " But also he is a man on the shelf, a man whose song has been sung."

Though Nikolai Petrovitch strained his ears, he failed

to catch Arkady's reply. So the "man on the shelf " lingered for a minute or two — then walked slowly back to the house.

" For the past three days I have noted him reading Pushkin," continued Bazarov. " You ought to explain to him that no good can come of that, for he is no longer a boy, and ought to have shaken himself free of such fiddlesticks. Who would desire to be a Romanticist ? Give him something practical."

" For instance? "

" Let me consider. For a start, give him Biichner's^ Stoff und Kraft."

" Good! " Arkady's tone was approving. " Stoff und Kraft is at least written in a popular style."

The same day Nikolai Petrovitch was sitting with his brother. At length he said :

" I find that you and I are men on the shelf, that our songs have been sung. Eh? And perhaps Bazarov is right. Yet I confess that one thing hurts me: and that is that, though I had hoped to draw nearer to Arkady, I am being left in the rear, and he is for ever marching ahead. No longer do he and I understand one another."

" And why is he for ever marching ahead? " asked Paul Petrovitch indignantly. " How comes he to stand at such a distance from us? The reason is simply the ideas which that precious ' Nihilist ' is putting into his head. For myself, I detest the fellow, and think him a charlatan. Also, I am certain that, in spite of his frogs, he is making no real progress in physics."

" We ought not to say that, brother. For my own part, I look upon him as a man of culture and ability."

" If so, a detestably conceited one."

" Perhaps he is conceited," Nikolai Petrovitch allowed. " But then it would appear that nothing can be done

^ Ludwig Biichner (1824-1899), German physician and materialist philosopher.

without something of the kind. What I cannot make out is the following. As you know, I have done everj^hing possible to keep up with the times — T have organised my peasantry, I have set up such a farm that throughout the province I am known as ' Fine Kirsanov,' persistently I read and educate myself, in general I try to march abreast of the needs of the day. Yet, though I do all this, I am now given to understand that my day is past and gone ! And, brother, I do not say that I am not partially inclined to accept that view."

" For what reason ? "

" For the following. To-day, as I was reading Pushkin (I think it was ' The Gipsies ' that I had lighted upon), there suddenly entered the room Arkady. Silently, and with an air of kindly regret, and as gently as a child, he withdrew the book from my hand, and laid before me another book — a German production of some kind. That done, he gave me another smile, and departed with my volume of Pushkin under his arm."

" Good gracious! And what might be the book which he has given you? "

"This."

Nikolai Petrovitch extracted from the tail pocket of his frock-coat a cop3' (ninth edition) of Biichner's well-known work.

Paul Petrovitch turned it over in his hands.

"H'm!" he grunted. " Arkady does indeed seem solicitous for your education! Have you tried reading the book? "

"Yes."

" And how do you like it ? "

" Well, either I am a fool or the thing is rubbish. Of the two views, the former seems to me the most probable."

" It is not because you have forgotten your German, I suppose ? "

" Oh no. I understand the language perfectly."

Again Paul Petrovitch turned over the book, and again he glanced at his brother from under his brows. A moment's silence ensued.

" By the way," continued Nikolai Petrovitch with an evident desire to change the conversation, " I have received a letter from Koliazin."

" From Matvei Ilyitch? "

" From the same. It seems that he has just arrived

at , for the purpose of carrying out the Revision ^

of the province, and he WTites very civilly that, as our kinsman, he would be glad to see Arkady and you and myself."

" Do you intend to accept his invitation ? " asked Paul Petrovitch.

" I do not. Do you? "

" No. We have no need to drag ourselves fifty versts to eat blanc-mange. The good Mathieu wants to show off a little— that is all. He can do without us. But what an honour to be a Privy Councillor! Had I continued in the Service, continued hauling at the old tow-rope, I myself might have been Adjutant -General! As it is, I, like yourself, am on the shelf."

" Yes, brother. Clearly it is time that we ordered our tombstones, and folded our hands upon our breasts."

A sigh concluded Nikolai Petrovitch's speech.

" But / do not intend to give in so soon," muttered his brother. " There is first going to be a skirmish between that chirurgeon of Arkady's and myself. That I can see beyond a doubt."

And, sure enough, the " skirmish " occurred the same evening. Ready for battle as soon he repaired to the drawing-room for tea, Paul Petrovitch entered angrily, but firmly, and sat waiting for an excuse to advance upon the foe. Yet for a while that excuse hung fire, since

^ i.e. the census-taking of the serf population.

Bazarov never said much in the presence of " the old Kirsanovs," and to-night was feeHng out of spirits, and drank his tea in absolute silence. However, Paul Petrovitch was so charged with impatience that his wish was bound to attain fulfilment.

It happened that the conversation became turned upon a neighbouring landowner.

"He is just a petty aristocrat," Bazarov drily remarked (it seemed that he and the landowner had met in St. Petersburg).

" Allow me," put in Paul Petrovitch, his lips quivering. " In your view, do the terms ' good-for-nothing ' and ' aristocrat ' connote the same thing? "

" I said ' petty aristocrat,' " replied Bazarov as he lazily sipped his tea.

" Quite so. Then I take it that you hold the same opinion of aristocrats as of ' petty aristocrats ' ? Well, I may remark that your opinion is not mine. And to that I would add that, while I myself possess a reputation for Liberal and progressive views, I possess that reputation for the very reason that I can respect real aristocrats. For instance, my dear sir " (the latter term was so heatedly uttered that Bazarov raised his eyebrows), " for instance, my dear sir, take the aristocracy of England. While yielding upon their rights not an iota, they yet know how to respect the rights of others. While demanding fulfilment of obligations due to themselves, they yet fulfil their own obligations. And for those reasons it is to her aristocratic caste that England stands indebted for her freedom. It is because the English aristocratic caste itself supports that freedom."

"A tale which we have heard many times before! " commented Bazarov. " But what are you seeking to prove ? "

" I am seeking to prove this," replied Paul Petrovitch. " That without a certain sense of personal dignity, without a sense of self-respect (both of which senses are inborn in the true aristocrat), the social edifice, the bten public, cannot rest upon a durable basis. It is personality that matters, my dear sir: and the human personality requires to be as firm as a rock, in that there rests upon it the entire structure of society. For example, I know that you ridicule my customs, my dress, my fastidious tastes. Yet do those very things proceed from that sense of duty — yes, of duty, I repeat — to which I have just alluded. In other words, I may live in the depths of the country, yet I do not let myself go. For I respect in myself the man."

" Allow me, Paul Petrovitch," said Bazarov. " You say that you respect yourself. Very good. Yet you can sit there with your hands folded! How will that benefit the bien public, seeing that inaction would scarcely seem to argue self-respect ? "

Paul Petrovitch blanched a little.
" That is another question altogether," he said.
" However, I do not feel called upon to explain the reason why I sit with my hands folded (according to your own estimable term). It will suffice merely to remark that in the aristocratic idea there is contained a principle, and that nowadays men who live without principles are as destitute of morahty as they are of moral substance. The same thing did I say to Arkady on the day after his arrival, and I say it now to you. You agree with me, Nikolai, do you not ? "

Nikolai Petrovitch nodded assent, while Bazarov exclaimed :

" The aristocratic idea, forsooth ! Liberalism, progress, principles! VVhy, have you ever considered the vanity of those terms ? The Russian of to-day does not need them."

"Then what, in your opinion, does he need? To listen to you, one would suppose that we stood wholly divorced from humanity and humanity's laws ; whereas, pardon me, the logic of history demands "

" What has that logic to do with us? We can get on quite well without it."

" How can we do so ? "

" Even as I have said. When you want to put a piece of bread into your mouth do you need logic for the purpose? What have these abstractions to do with ourselves? "

Paul Petrovitch waved his hand in disgust.

" I cannot understand you," he said. " You seem to me to be insulting the Russian people. How you or any one else can decline to recognise principles and precepts is a thing which passes my comprehension. For what other basis for action in life have we got ? "

Arkady put in a word.

" Both I and Bazarov have told you," he said, " that we recognise no authorit}/ of any sort."

" Rather, that we recognise no basis for action save the useful," corrected Bazarov. " At present the course most useful is denial. Therefore we deny."

" Deny everything? "

" Deny everything."

" What ? Both poetry and art and — I find it hard to express it? — -^ — "

" I repeat, everything," said Bazarov with an ineffable expression of insouciance.

Paul Petrovitch stared. He had not quite expected this. For his part, Arkady reddened with pleasure.

" Allow me," interposed Nikolai Petrovitch. " You say that you deny everything — rather, that you would consign everything to destruction. But also you ought to construct."

" That is not our business," said Bazarov. " First must the site be cleared."

"Yes ; for the present condition of the people demands it," affirmed Arkady. " And that demand we are bound to fulfil, seeing that no one has the right merely to devote himself to the satisfaction of his own personal egotism."

With this last Bazarov did not seem altogether pleased, since the phrase smacked too much of philosophy — ^rather, of " Romanticism," as Bazarov termed that science; but he did not trouble to confute his pupil.

" No, no! " Paul Petrovitch exclaimed with sudden heat. " I cannot believe that gentlemen of your type possess sufficient knowledge of the people to be rightful representatives of its demands and aspirations. For the Russian people is not what you think it to be. It holds traditions sacred, and is patriarchal, and cannot live without faith."

" I will not dispute that," observed Bazarov. " Nay, I will even agree that 3'ou are right."

" And, granting that I am right - — "

" You have proved nothing."

" Yes, proved nothing," echoed Arkady with the assurance of a chess-player who, having foreseen a dangerous move on the part of his opponent, awaits the attack with expert composure.

" But how have I proved nothing? " muttered Paul Petrovitch, rather taken aback. "Do you mean to say that you are opposed to, not in favour of, the people? "

" Good gracious! Do not the common folk believe, when it thunders, that the Prophet Elijah is going up to Heaven in his chariot ? You and I do not agree with that ? The point is that the people is Russian, and that I am the same."

"Not after what you have just said! Henceforth must I decline to recognise you as any countryman of mine."

With a sort of indolent hautciiy Bazarov replied:

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" With his own hand did my grandfather guide the plough. Ask, therefore, of your favourite peasant which of us two — you or myself — he rates most truly as his countryman. Why, you do not know even how to speak to him! "

" And you, while speaking to him, despise him."

" Should he merit contempt, j^es. Reprobate, therefore, my views as much as you like, but who told j^ou that the3' have come to me fortuitously rather than been derived from the very national spirit of which j^ou are so ardent an upholder? "

" Phaugh! We need you Nihilists, do we not ? "

" Not ours is it to decide the need or otherwise, seeing that even a man like yourself considers that he has a use."

" Gentlemen, gentlemen! " interposed Nikolai Petrovitch as he rose to his feet. " I beg of you to indulge in no personalities! "

Paul Petrovitch smiled. Then, laying his hand upon hib brother's shoulder, he forced him to resume his seat.

" Do not be alarmed," he said. " That very sense of dignity at which this gentleman pokes such bitter fun vvill keep me from forgetting myself."

And he turned to Bazarov again.

" Do you suppose your doctrine to be a new one? " he continued. " If so, you are wasting your time. More than once has the Materialism which you preach been mooted; and each time it has been proved bankrupt."
"Another foreign term!" muttered Bazarov. He was now beginning to lose his temper, and his face had turned a dull, copperish tint. " In the first place, we Nihilists preach nothing at all. For to preach is not our custom."

" What, then, is your custom ? "

" To proclaim facts such as that our civil servants

accept bribes, that we lack highways, commerce, and a single upright judge, and that "

" Of course, of course! In other words, you and yours are to act as our ' censors ' (I believe that to be the correct term?). Well, I agree with many of your censures, but "

" Other tenets which we hold are that to chatter, and to do nothing but chatter, concerning our differences is not worth the trouble, seeing that it is a pursuit which merely leads to pettiness and doctrinairism ; that beyond question are our so-called leaders and censors not worth their salt, seeing that they engage in sheer futilities, and waste their breath on discussions on art and still hfe and Parliamentarism and legal points and the devil only knows what, when all the time it is the bread of subsistence alone that matters, and we are being stifled with gross superstition, and all our commercial enterprises are failing for want of honest directors, and the freedom of which the Government is for ever prating is destined never to become a reality, for the reason that, so long as the Russian peasant is allowed to go and drink himself to death in a dram-shop, he is ready to submit to any sort of despoilment."

" You have decided, then, you feel conscious, that your true mdtier is to apply yourselves seriously to nothing? "

" Even so," came the sullen reply, for Bazarov had suddenly become vexed with himself for having exposed his mind with such completeness to this bann.

" You have decided merely to deny everything? "

" We have decided merely to deny everything."

" And that you call Nihilism? "

" That we caU Nihilism." In Bazarov's repetition of Paul Petrovitch's words there echoed, this time, a note of pride.

Paul Petrovitch knit his brows.

" So, so! " he said in a voice that was curiously calm. " Nihilism is designed to combat our every ill, and vou alone are to act as our saviours and our heroes ! Well, well! But in what consider you yourselves and your censorious friends to excel the rest of us? For you chatter as much as does every one else."

"No, no!" miittered Bazarov. "At least we are not guilty of that, however we may err in other ways."

" You do things, then? At all events, you are preparing to do things? "

Bazarov did not reply, although, in his excitement, Paul Petrovitch had started up and then quickly recovered his self-command.

" H'm ! " continued Paul Petrovitch. " With you to act is to demolish. But how is such demolition to benefit when you do not even know its purpose? "

" We demolish because we are a force," interposed Arkad5^

Paul Petrovitch stared — then smiled.
" And a force need render account to no one," added Arkady \vith a self-conscious straightening of his form.

" Fool! " gasped Paul Petrovitch. Evidently he could contain himself no longer. " Have you ever considered what you are maintaining with your miserable creed? Even an angel would lose patience! ' A force,' forsooth ! You might as well say that the wild Kalmuck, or the barbaric Mongol, represents a force. What boots such a force? Civilisation and its fruits are what we value. And do not tell me that those fruits are to be overlooked, seeing that even the meanest barbouilleur,^ the meanest piano-player who ever earned five kopecks a night, is of more use to society than j^ou. For men of that kind at least stand for culture rather than for some rude, Mongolian propelUng-power. Yes, you may look upon yourselves as ' the coming race,' yet you are fft but to

^ Scribbler.

sit in a Kalmuck shanty. 'A force,' foorsoth! Good and ' forceful ' sirs, I beg to tell you that you number but four men and a boy, whereas those others number millions, and are folk of the kind who will not permit such as you to trample upon their sacred beliefs, but will first trample upon your worthy selves."

" Let them trample upon us," retorted Bazarov. " We are more in number than you think."

" What? You really believe that you will succeed in inoculating the nation as a whole? "

" From a little candle," replied Bazarov, " there arose, as you know, the conflagration of Moscow." ^

" A pride almost Satanic in its nature, and then banter! And thus you would seek to attract our youth, thus you would attempt to win the inexperienced hearts of our boys ! For sitting beside you is one of those very-boys, and he is absolutely worshipping you! " (Upon this Arkady knit his brows, and averted his head a little.) " Yes, the canker has spread far already. For instance, they tell me that in Rome our artists decline to enter the Vatican, and look upon Raphael as next-door to a fool, just because he is an ' authority ' ! Yet those very artists are themselves so barren and impotent that their fancy cannot rise above ' Girls at Fountains,' and so forth, villainously executed! And such artists you account fine fellows, I presume? "

" Like those artists," said Bazarov, " I consider Raphael to be worth not a copper groat. And as for the artists themselves, I appraise them at about a similar sum."

"Bravo, bravo!" cried Paul Petrovitch. "Listen, O Arkady — ^listen to the way in which the young men of the present day ought to express themselves ! Surely our youth will now rally to your side ? For once upon a time they had to go to school, since they did not like to be

^In 1812.

taken for dunces, and therefore worked at their studies ; but now they have but to say : ' Everything in the world is rubbish,' and, behold! the trick is done. They consider that delightful — and naturally ! In other words, the blockheads of former days are become the Nihilists of the present."

" Your self-sufficiency — I mean, your self-respect — is carrying you away," Bazarov remarked nonchalantly (as for Arkady, his eyes had flashed, and his whole form was quivering with indignation). " But our dispute has gone far enough. Let us end it. Whenever you may feel that you can point out to me a single institution in our family or our public life which does not call for complete and unsparing rejection, I shall be pleased to accept your view."

' ' Of institutions of that kind I could cite you millions," exclaimed Paul Petrovitch. " For example, take the village commune."

Bazarov's lips twisted themselves into a contemptuous smile.

" The village commune," said he, " is a subject which you would do better to discuss with your brother, since he is learning by experience the meaning of that commune, and of its circular guarantee, and of its enforced sobriety and other contrivances."

" Take the family, then — yes, take the family, since at least among the peasantry it is still a surviving institution."

" And that question, too, I should imagine were best not dissected by you in detail. But see here, Paul Petrovitch. Allow yourself a minimum of two days to think over these things (you will need quite that amount of time to do so) ; and cite to yourself in succession our various social conditions, and give them your best attention. Meanwhile Arkad}- and mvself will go and "

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" Go and make sport of everything, I presume? "

" No, go and dissect frogs. Come, Arkady ! An revoir, gentlemen."

And the two friends departed. Left alone, the brothers looked at one another.

" So," at last said Paul Petrovitch, " you see the young men of the day — you see our successors! "

"Our successors — ^yes," re-echoed Nikolai Petrovitch despondently. Throughout the conversation he had been sitting simply on pins and needles; throughout it he had dared do no more than throw an occasional pained glance at Arkady. " My brother, there came to me just now a curious reminiscence. It was of a quarrel which once I had with my mother. During the contest she raised a great outcry, and refused to listen to a single word I said ; until at length I told her that for her to understand me was impossible, seeing that she and I came of different generations. Of course this angered her yet more, but I thought to myself: ' What else could I do ? The pill must have been a bitter one, but it was necessary that she should swallow it.' And now oitr turn is come ; now is it for us to be told by our heirs that we come of a different generation from theirs, and must kindly swallow the pill."

" You are too magnanimous and retiring," expostulated Paul Petrovitch. " For my part, I feel sure that we are more in the right than these two youngsters, even though we may express ourselves in old-fashioned terms, and lack their daring self-sufficiency. Indeed, what a puffed-up crowd is the youth of to-day ! Should you ask one of them whether he will take white wmc or red, he wiU reply, in a bass voice, and with a face as though the whole universe were looking at him : ' Red is my customary rule.' "

" Should you like some more tea? " interrupted Thenichka, who had been peeping through the doorway,

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but had not dared to enter during the progress of the dispute.

" No," was Nikolai Petrovitch's reply as he rose to meet her, " So you can order the samovar to be removed."

Meanwhile, with a brief " Bon soir," Paul Petrovitch betook himself to his studv.

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XI

Half an hour later Nikolai Petrovitch sought his favourite arbour. Despondent thoughts were thronging through his brain, for the rift between himself and his son was only too evident. Also, he knew that that rift would widen from day to day. For nothing had he spent whole days, during those winters in St. Petersburg, in the perusal of modem works ! For nothing had he listened to the young men's discourses ! For nothing had he been delighted when he had been able to interpolate a word into their tempestuous debates !

" My brother says that we are more in the right than they," he reflected. " And certainly I too can say without vanity that I believe these young fellows to stand at a greater distance from the truth than ourselves. Yet also I believe that they have in them something which we lack — something which gives them an advantage over us. What is that something ? Is it youth ? No, it is not youth alone. Is it that there hovers about them less of the harin than hovers about ourselves ? Possibly ! "

Bending his head, he passed his hand over his face.

" Yet to reject poetry! " he muttered. " To fail to sympathise with art and nature! "

And he gazed around as though he were trying to understand how any one could be out of sympathy with the natural world. Evening was just closing in, and the sun sinking behind a small aspen copse which, situated half a verst from the garden, was trailing long shadows over the motionless fields. Along the narrow, dark track beside the copse a peasant on a white pony was trotting ; and though the pair were overshadowed by the trees, the rider was asclearly visible, even to a patch on his shoulder, as the twinkling legs of his steed. Piercing the tangled aspens, the sun's beams were bathing the trunks in so brilliant a glow that trunks and beams were one bright mass, and only the foliage on the boughs above formed a dusky blur against the lighter tints of the flame-coloured sky. Overhead bats were whirling; the wind had sunk to rest ; a few late-homing bees were buzzing somnolently, sluggishly amid the lilac blossoms; and a pillared swarm of gnats was dancing over a projecting bough.

" God, how fair ! " was Nikolai's involuntary thought as his lips breathed a favourite couplet.

Suddenly he remembered Arkady and Staff und Kraft ; and though he continued to sit where he was, he quoted poetry no more, but surrendered his mind wholly to the play of his lonely, irregular, mournful thoughts. At all times he was a man fond of dreaming; and to this tendency his life in the country had added confirmation. To think of what only a short while ago he had been dreaming as he waited for his son on the post-house verandah ! For since that hour a change had come about, and in the vague relations between himself and his son there had dawned a more definite phase. Next, he saw before him his dead wife. Yet he saw her, not as she had appeared to him during the later years of her life — -that is to say, as a kindly, thrifty chatelaine — -but as a young girl slim of figure and innocently inquiring of eye. Yes, there flitted before his vision a picture only of neatly plaited tresses falling over a childish neck. And he thought of his first meeting with her when, as a student, he had encountered her on the staircase leading to his suite of rooms. He remembered how, having accidentally brushed against her, he had stopped to apologise, but had only succeeded in muttering "Pardon, monsieur" ', whereupon she had bowed, and smiled, and fled as in sudden alarm — but only to turn, the next moment, at the bend of the staircase, to look swiftly back, and then, as swiftly, to blush, and assume a more demure demeanour.

Ah, those first timid meetings, those half-spoken words, those bashful smiles, those alternate fits of rapture and despair, that courtship that was destined to be crowned with swooning joy! Whither was it all fled? True, she had become his wife, and had conferred upon him such happiness as falls to the lot of few men on earth; but ever the thought recurred to him, and recurred again: " Why could those days of sweetness not have lasted for ever, so that we might have lived a life which should never have known death? "

He made no attempt to co-ordinate his thoughts. The predominant feeling in his mind was that he would give worlds to be able to connect himself with those blessed days by something stronger than the mere power of memory. He wanted to feel his Maria near him once more, to scent her dear breath, A curious mood had him in its grip.

" Nikolai Petrovitch! " came the voice of Thenichka from a spot somewhere in the vicinity. " Where are you?"

As he heard the call, a feeling that was neither vexation nor shame passed over him. No comparison between his dead wife and Thenichka was possible, yet he gave a start, and felt a passing regret that Thenichka had seized thai moment to seek him. For in some way did the sound of her voice bring back to him his gre}' hairs, his old age, all that constituted the present. So for an instant the enchanted world which he had just entered, and which he had just seen emerge from the misty waves of the past, quivered — ^then disappeared .

" I am here, Thenichka," he called. " Please go away. I will come presently."

" Another reminder that I am a barin," he reflected.

Thenichka retired, and suddenly he became aware of the fact that since the moment when he had sunk into a reverie nightfall had come. Yes, all around him there lay a motionless obscurity, with, gleaming amid it, as a small, pale blur, Thenichka's face. Rising, he started to return to the house, but his unstrung nerves could not calm themselves, and, glancing now at the ground, now towards the heavens where there swarmed myriads of twinkling stars, he fell to pacing the garden. He continued this pacing until he was almost worn out; for still did the vague, despondent, insistent sense of agitation refuse to leave his breast. Could Bazarov have divined his thoughts, how the Nihilist would have laughed ! And even Arkady would have condemned him. For from the eyes of Nikolai Petrovitch — from the eyes of a man of forty-four who was the proprietor of an estate and a household — there were welling slow, uncalled-for tears. This was a hundred times worse than the 'cello-playing!

And still he continued his pacing, for he could not make up his mind to enter the peaceful, inviting retreat which beckoned to him so cheerfully with its lighted windows, and to leave the darkness of the garden, to forego the touch of fresh air upon his face, to throw off his present mood of sadness and emotion.

At a turn in the path he encountered Paul Petrovitch.

"What is the matter with you?" Paul inquired.
"You are looking as white as a ghost. Are you ill?
Why not go to bed ? "

Nikolai Petrovitch explained to him in a few words his frame of mind — then moved towards the house. Paul Petrovitch sauntered down towards the other end of the garden, and ever and anon, as he did so, indulged in wrapt contemplation of the heavens. Yet, save for the reflection of the starlight, there was nothing to be seen in his dark, handsome eyes; for he had not been born a Romanticist, and his drily fastidious, passionate, Frenchified, misanthropic soul was incapable of castle-building.

" I tell you what," Bazarov said to Arkady the same night. " A splendid idea has come into my head. You know that to-day your father said tliat a certain eminent relation had sent him an invitation which he had no intention of accepting. Well, how would it be if you and I were to accept it, seeing that you too have been included in the honour? The weather has turned beautiful, and we might drive over and look at the town, and thus, incidentally, secure a few days' uninterrupted talk together."

" Should you then return here? "
" No. I should go on to my father's. You see, he lives thirty versts away only, and it is a long time since last I saw either him or my mother. Moreover, the old folk deserve to be humoured a little, seeing that they have been very good to me — especially my father — and that I am their only son."

" And shall you stay long? "
"No. Staying in that place is dull work."
" Then pav us a second visit on your way back? "
" I will if possible. We will go, then, eh? "
" At your pleasure," Arkady replied with a show of indifference. But, as a matter of fact, he was delighted with Bazarov's proposal; and only the thought that he must keep up his " Nihilism " prevented him from manifesting his feelings.

So, the next day, the pair set out for the town of

; while with one consent the youth of Marino

broke into lamentations over their going, and Duniasiia even went so far as to weep. Only their elders breathed more freely.

XII

The town of , whither our friends now proceeded,

lay under the dominion of one of those young, progressive, despotic provincial governors who afflict Russia in an unending sequence. As early as the first year of his rule this particular potentate had succeeded in quarrelling, not only with the President of the Provincial Council (who was a retired staff officer, a horse breeder, and an agriculturist), but also with his whole gubernatorial staff of tchinovniks: with the result that at the time of our story the commotion therefrom had attained a pitch which had just necessitated the sending dov;n of a commissary empowered to hold an investigation. The

Government's choice for this purpose had fallen upon Matvei Ilyitch Kohazin, the son of the Koliazin who had once acted as guardian to the brothers Kirsanov, and a man of the younger school — that is to say, a man who, though a little over forty, stiU aimed at attaining the dignity of a statesman, and having a breast covered with stars (including at least one of a foreign minor order), and who, also like the Governor whom he had come to examine, was accounted a Progressive, and held a high opinion of himself. Yet never did Matvei allow his boundless vanity to prevent him from affecting a stereotyped air of simplicity and good humour, or from listening indulgently to anything that might be said to him, or from cultivating so pleasant a laugh that everywhere he contrived to pass for " not a bad sort of a fellow." True, he could on important occasions (if I may quote the trite saying) " make dust fly " (" Energy is indispensable for a State worker," was a frequent saw of his — " L'energie est la premiere qualite d'un homme

d'etat"); yet almost invariably did he end by being set down as a fool, while tchinovniks of more experience rode roughshod over him. Amongst other things, he had a custom of expressing a great respect for Guizot,^ and also of striving to convince every one that he (Koliazin) was not one of " your men of routine, your retired bureaucrats," but, rather, a man who noted " every new and more important phenomenon of our social life." In fact, such phrases he had at his finger ends, and also he studied (though with a sort of careless pomposity only) the development of contemporary literature. Lastly, it not seldom befell that, on meeting a street procession of students, he would, though maturer of years than the majority of its members, add himself to its ranks. In short, only his circumstances and his epoch caused Matvei Ilyitch in any way to differ from those officials of the Alexandrine period who, before setting out to attend a reception at Madame Svietchin's - (then resident in St. Petersburg), would read a few pages of Condillac's^ works. Yet, though an adroit courtier, Matvei was a mere glittering fraud, since, save that he knew how to hold his own against all comers (though, certainly, that is a great achievement in life), he was, in all matters of State, a complete stranger to common sense.

On the present occasion he welcomed Arkady with all the bonhomie, all the jocosity, of an " enlightened " bigAvig. Nevertheless his face fell a little when he learned that the other relatives whom he had invited had preferred remaining in the country. " Your father ahvavs

' Fran9ois Pierre Guillaume Guizot (1787-1874), the great French minister, ambassador, litt.raleur, and educationaUst.

^ Madame Svietchin (1782-1857), wife of the Russian General Svietchin. For more than forty years she maintained a famous saloo.

' Etienne Bonnot de MablydeCondillac (1715-1780), a French philosopher who based knowledge solely upon the physical senses.

was a queer fish," he remarked as he parted the tails of a velvet " cutaway." And, having said this, he turned to a young tchinovnik in a tightly buttoned uniform, and asked him irritabh' what he wanted ; at which onslaught the young tchinovnik (whose lips looked as though a confirmed habit of keeping their own counsel had gummed them permanently together) straightened himself with a sharp, apprehensive look at his superior. But, once Matvei had effected this " settling " of his subordinate, the great man paid the little one no further attention.

In passing, I may observe that to most of our bigwigs is this species of " settling " very dear, and that many are the expedients resorted to for its achievement. Particularly is the following method " quite a favourite," as the English say — in other words, much in request. Suddenly a given bigwig will cease to be able to grasp with his intelligence even the simplest sentence, and assume an air of abysmal density. For example, he will inquire what the day of the week may be, and be told (with great and stammering deference) that the day is, say, Friday.

" What? " will roar the bigwig with an air of being forced to strain his ears to the utmost. "Eh? what do you say? "

" I-It is F-Friday, your E-E-Excellency."

"Eh, what? Friday? What mean you by Friday ? "

" Y-Your Excellency, F-Friday is, is — F-F-Friday is a day in the week."

" Come, come ! You need not have taken so much time to tell me that."

Matvei Ilyitch was just such a bigwig, although he called himself a Liberal.

" My good fellow," he now continued to Arkady, " I should advise you to go and leave your card upon the Governor, Of course you understand that my reason for counselling you to adopt this procedure is, not that I

in any way hold with any bygone ideas about kow-towing to authority, but, rather, because the Governor is a good fellow, and I know that you would like to see a little society. For you too are not a bear, I hope ? No ? Well, the Governor is giving a grand ball the day after to-morrow."

" And shall you be there? " asked Arkady.

" I shall, of course, receive tickets for it," replied Matvei Ilyitch with an assumed air of regret. " You dance, I presume? "

" I do — though very badly."

" Never mind, never mind. There exists here plenty of good society, and it would never do for a young fellow like yourself to be a non-dancer. Again I sav this, not because I in any way revere antiquated notions, nor yet because I think that intellect ought to go kicking its heels about, but because Byronism has become absurd — il a fait son temps."

" But I belong to neither the Byronists nor "

"Well, well! I will introduce you to some of our ladies — I myself will take you under my wing." And Matvei Ilyitch smiled in a self-satisfied way. " In fact, you shall have a gay time here."

At this point a servant entered to announce the President of the Provincial Treasury. The latter, a mild-eyed veteran with wrinkles around his lips and a great love for nature, was accustomed to remark on summer days that " of every little flower each little bee is now taking its toll." So Arkady seized the occasion to depart.

He found Bazarov at the hotel where the pair were putting up, and had great difficulty in persuading him to join in the projected call upon the Governor.

" Well, well! " eventually said Bazarov. " I have laid a hand upon the tow-rope, so it ill becomes me to complain of its weight. As we are here to inspect the local lions, let us inspect them."
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To the young men the Governor accorded a civil enough welcome, but neither bade them be seated nor set the example himself. A man in a perpetual hurry and ferment, he, on rising in the morning, was accustomed to don a tight uniform and stiff collar, and then to give himself up to such an orgy of orders-giving that he never finished a single meal. As the result, he was known throughout the province as " Bardeloue " — in reference, be it said, not to the great French preacher,^ but to burda, fermented liquor. After inviting Arkady and Bazarov to the coming ball, the Governor, two minutes later, repeated the invitation as though he had never given it ; while likewise he mistook the pair for brothers, and addressed them throughout as " the Messieurs Kaiserov."

Subsequently, as the pair were proceeding homewards, a man of small stature, and dressed in a "Slavophil" costume, leapt from a passing drozhki, and, with a cry of " Evgenii Vasilitch! " flung himself upon Bazarov.

" Is that you, Herr Sitnikov? " remarked Bazarov without even checking his stride. " What chance brings you hither? "

" A pure accident," was the other's reply as, turning to the drozhki, he signed to the coachman to foUow at a foot's pace. " You see, I had business to do with my father, and he invited me to pay him a visit." Sitnikov hopped across a puddle. " Also, on learning of your arrival, I have been to call at your place." (True enough, on subsequently reaching the hotel, the two friends found awaiting them Sitnikov's visiting-card, with the comers turned down, and one side of it inscribed with his name in the French fashion, and the other with his name in Slavonic characters.)

"You are from the Governor's, I suppose?" continued the little man. " I sincerely hope not, however."

^ Louis Bourcialoue (1632-1704), a professor in the Jesuit College of Bourges.

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" Your hopes are vain."

" Then I too, alas, must pay him my devoirs. But first introduce me to your friend."

" Sitnikov — Kirsanov," responded Bazarov without halting.

" Delighted! " minced Sitnikov as he stepped back, struck an attitude, and hurriedly doffed his super-elegant gloves. " I have heard much of you, Monsieur Kirsanov. I too am an old acquaintance — I might even say, an old pupil — of Evgenii VasHitch's. Through him it was that I came by my spiritual regeneration."

Arkady glanced at Bazarov's " old pupil," and saw that he had small, dull, pleasant, nervous features; also that his narrow, sunken eyes expressed a great restlessness, and that his lips were parted in a perpetual smile of a wooden and ingratiating order.

" Do you know," Sitnikov continued, " when Evgenii Vasilitch first told me that we ought to ignore every species of authority I experienced a sense of rapture, I felt as though I had suddenly ripened. ' Ah,' I thought, ' at last have I found my man ! ' By the way, Evgenii Vasilitch, you must come and see a certain lady of my acquaintcince — one who, beyond all others, is the person to understand you, and to look upon your coming as a red-letter event. Perhaps you have heard of her already?"

" No. Who is she? " asked Bazarov reluctantly.

" A Madame Kukshin — a Madame, I should say, Evdoksia Kuvshin. And she is not merely a remarkable character and a woman of light and leading ; she is also representative of the emancipee, in the best sense of the word. But look here. How would it be if all three of us were to go and see her ? She lives only two steps away, and she would give us luncheon. You have not lunched already, I presume? "

" No, we have not."

' ' Then the arrangement would suit us all. By the way, she is independent, but a married woman."

" Good-looking? " queried Bazarov.

" N-No — one could not exactly say that."

" Then why ask us to go and see her ? "

"Ah, ha! You will have your jest, I see. But remember that she will stand us a bottle of champagne."

" The practicality of the man ! "

Sitnikov gave a shrill giggle.

" Shall we go? " he added.

" I cannot decide."

Here Arkad}- put in a word.

" We have come to inspect the local people," he remarked, " so let us inspect them."

" True enough," seconded Sitnikov. " And, of course, you must come, Monsieur Kirsanov. We could not go without you."

" What ? Are all three of us to descend upon her? "

" What matter? She herself is an odd person."

" And you say that she will stand us a bottle of champagne."

" Yes; or even a bottle apiece," asserted Sitnikov. " I will go bail upon that."

" Go bail with what ? "

" With m^' head."

" Your purse would have been better; but lead on."

XIII

The villa in which Avdotia, or Evdoksia, Nikitishna

Kukshin resided was one of the usual Moscow pattern, and stood in one of the recently consumed streets (for as we know, every fifth year sees each of our provincial

capitals burnt to the ground) of the town of . Beside

the front door there hung (over a cracked, crooked visiting-card) a bell-handle, while in the hall the visitors were met by a female who constituted, not exactly a maidservant, but a mob-capped " lady companion." And it need hardly be added that these two phenomena, the bell-handle and the " lady companion," constituted clear evidence of the " progressiveness " of the hostess's views.

On Sitnikov inquiring whether Avdotia Nikitishna were within, a shrill voice interrupted him from an adjoining room:

" Is that you, Victor ? Pray enter."

The female in the mob-cap disappeared.

" I have not come alone," Sitnikov responded as, after an inquiring glance at Arkady and Bazarov, he divested himself of his greatcoat, and revealed thereunder a sort of sack jacket.

" Never mind," the voice replied. " Entrez, s'il vons plait."

The young men did as bidden, and found themselves in a room which resembled a workshop rather than a parlour. On tables were piled promiscuous papers, letters and Russian magazines (most of the latter uncut); everywhere on the floor were to be seen gleaming the fag-ends of cigarettes; and on a leather-padded sofa a lady — youngish, flaxen-li aired, and clad in a negligee

soiled silk gown — ^was lolling in a semi-recumbent position. About her stumpy wrists were clasped a large pair of bracelets, and over her head was thrown a lace mantilla. Rising, she draped her shoulders carelessly in a velvet tippet with faded ermine trimming, and, saying indolently, " Good daj/, Victor," pressed Sitnikov's hand.

" Bazarov — Kirsanov," he said in abrupt imitation of the former; whereupon she responded, " How do you do? " and then added, as she fixed upon Bazarov a pair of large eyes between which glimmered a correspondingly small, pink, upturned nose: " I have met you before."

That said, she pressed his hand even as she had done Sitnikov's.

Bazarov frowned, for though the plain, insignificant features of the emancipated lady contained nothing actually to repel, there was something in their mien which produced upon the beholder the sort of unpleasant impression which might have inclined him to ask her: " Are you hungry, or bored, or afraid? At all events, what is it you want? " Also, like Sitnikov, she kept pawing the air as she spoke, and her every word, her every gesture, revealed such a lack of control as at times amounted to sheer awkwardness. In short, though she conceived herself to be just a simple, goodhearted creature, her bearing was of the kind to lead the beholder to reflect that, no matter what she did, it was not what she had intended to do, and that everything was done (to use the children's term) " on purpose " — that is to say, non-simply and non-naturally.

" Yes, I have met you before, Bazarov," she repeated (like many other contemporary females of Moscow and the provinces, she had adopted the fashion of calling men by thpir surnames alone on first introduction). " Will you have a cigar? "

" I thank you," interposed Sitnikov (who had deposited his person in an armchair, and crossed his legs). " Also, pray give us some luncheon, for we are absolutely ravenous. Also, you might order us a bottle of champagne."

" You Sybarite! " exclaimed Evdoksia with a smile (a smile always brought her upper gum prominently into view). " Is he not, Bazarov? "

"No; it is merely that I love the comforts of life," protested Sitnikov pompously. " Nor need that in any way prevent me from being a Liberal."

" But it does, it does," cried Evdoksia. However, she gave orders to her servant to see both to the luncheon and to the champagne. " What is your opinion on the matter? " she added, turning to Bazarov. " I feel convinced that you share mine."

" No, I do not," he replied. " On the contrary, I think that, even from the chemical point of view, a piece of meat is better than a piece of bread,"

"Then you study chemistry?" she exclaimed.
" Chemistry is my passion also. In fact, I have invented a special liniment."

" A liniment? You? "

" Yes, I. And please guess its use. It is for making unbreakable dolls and pipe-bowls. You sec that, like yourself, I am of a practical turn of mind. But, as yet, I have not completed my course of study. It still remains for me to read up my Liebig. Apropos, have you seen an article in the Viedomosti on Woman's Work — an article by Kisliakov? If not, you should read it (for I presume that you take an interest in the Feminine Question, and also in the Question of the Schools?). But what is your friend's line ? Apropos, what is his name ? "

These questions Madame Kukshin, as it were, mouthed, and did so with an affected carelessness which waited for no reply, even as a spoilt child propounds conundrums to its nurse.

" My name is Arkady Nikolaievitch Kirsanov," Arkady answered for himself. " And my particular line is doing nothing at all."

Evdoksia tittered.

" How nice ! " she exclaimed. " Then you do not even smoke? Victor, I am furious with you! "

" Why? " enquired Sitnikov.

" Because I have just heard that you are again standing up for Georges Sand, that played-out woman. How is she even to be compared (that creature, who lacks a single idea on education or physiology or anything else) with Emerson? In fact, I believe that never in her life has she so much as heard of embryology — though in these days no one can get on without it." The speaker flung out her arms in an expressive gesture. " But what a splendid article was that of Elisievitch's ! He is indeed a talented gentleman ! " (This was another habit of Evdoksia's — the habit of persistently using the term " gentleman " for the ordinary word " man "). " Bazarov, pray come and sit beside me on the sofa. You may not know it, but I am dreadfully afraid of you."

" Why are you afraid of me (if you will forgive my curiosity)? "

" Because you are a dangerous gentleman — ^you are a critic so caustic that in your presence my confusion leads me to begin speaking like a lady-landowner of the Steppes. Apropos, I am a lady-landowner myself; for, though I employ a local steward named Erothei (a sort of Cooper's ' Pathfinder/ but compounded with a blend of independence in his composition), I retain the ultimate reins of management in my own hands. But how unbearable this town is! — ^yes, even though I have made it my permanent home, seeing that nothing else was to be done! "

" The town is what a town always is," remarked Bazarov indifferently.

" But its interests are so petty! " continued Evdoksia.

" That is what troubles me. Once upon a time I used to winter in Moscow, but now good Monsieur Kukshin has to dwell there alone. And Moscow itself is, is — ^well, not what it used to be. As a matter of fact, I contemplate going abroad. I have spent the whole year in making my preparations for the journey."

" You will go to Paris, I presume ? "

" Yes, and to Heidelberg."

" Why to Heidelberg? "

" Because there the great Herr Bunsen ^ has his home."

Bazarov could not think of a suitable reply.

" Do you know Pierre Sapozhnikov? " continued she.

" No, I do not."

" He is alwavs to be found at Lydia Khostatov's."

" Even with her I am not acquainted."

" Well, Sapozhnikov is going to escort me on my travels. For at least I am free — I have no children, thank God ! Why I should have put in that ' Thank God ! ' I scarcely know."

She rolled another cigarette between her nicotine-stained fingers, licked it, placed it between her lips, and struck a match. The servant entered with a tray.

"Ah! Here comes luncheon! Will you have some? Victor, pray uncork the bottle. It is your function to do so."

" Mine, yes, mine," he hummed; then gave another of his shrill giggles.

" Have you any good-looking ladies in this town? " Bazarov asked after a third glassful of champagne.

" Yes," replied Evdoksia. " But uniformly they are futile. For example, a friend of mine, a Madame Odintsov, is not bad-looking, and has nothing against her except a doubtful reputation (a thing of no consequence in

1 Robert Wilhelm Bunsen (1811-1899), chemist and physicist; inventor of Bunsen's burner and magnesium light; and originator (with Kirchhov) of spectrum analysis.

itself) ; but, alas ! she combines with it such a complete lack of freedom, or of breadth of view, or, in fact, of anything ! The system of bringing up women needs a radical change. I myself have given much thought to the matter, and come to the conclusion that our women are ill-educated."

" Yes ; the only thing to be done with them is to hold them in contempt," agreed Sitnikov. To him any opportunity of despising, of expressing scornful sentiments, was the most agreeable of sensations. Yet, though he thus chose women for his especial censure, he little suspected that before many moriths were over he himself would be grovelling at the feet of a wife — and doing so merely for the reason that she had been bom a Princess Durdoleosov!

" No, to none of them would our conversation convey anything," he continued. " Nor is there a single one of them upon whom the attention of a serious-minded man would be anj/thing but thrown away."

" Scarcely need they desire to have anything conveyed to them by our conversation," remarked Bazarov.

" Of whom are you speaking? " interposed Evdoksia.

" Of the smart women of the day."

"What? I suppose you agree with Proudhon's ^ opinion on the subject? "

Bazarov drew himself up.

" I agree with no man's opinions," he remarked. " I have some of my own."

" A bas les autorites! " cried Sitnikov, delighted at this unlooked-for opportunity of showing off in the presence of the man whom he worshipped.

"But even Macaulay " began Madame Kukshin.

" A bas Macaulay! " roared Sitnikov. " How can you defend those dolls of ours? "

^ Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), a French doctrinaire who taught that anarchy is the culmination of all social progress.

"I'^am not defending them at all," said Madame Kukshin. " I am mcrel}- standing up for the rights of women — rights which I have sworn to defend to the last drop of my blood."

" A has " began Sitnikov — then paused. " I do

not reject them," he added in a lower tone.

" But you do reject them, for you are a Slavophil, as I can see very clearly."

" On the contrary, I am 7iot a Slavophil; although, of course, I "

" But you are a Slavophil : you believe in the principles of the Domostroi,^ and would like always to be holding over women a scourge."

" A scourge is not a bad thing in its proper place," observed Bazarov. " But, seeing that we have reached the last drop of, of "

" Of what? " said Evdoksia.

" Of champagne, most respected Avdotia Nikitishna — not of your blood."

" Never when I hear my sex abused can I listen with indifference," resumed Evdoksia. " It is all too horrible, too horrible! Instead of attacking us, people ought to read Michel's^ De I' Amour. What a wonderful work it is ! Let us talk of love."

She posed her arm gracefully upon the tumbled cushions of the sofa.

There fell a sudden silence.

" What is there to say concerning love ? " at length said Bazarov. " In passing, you mentioned a certain Madame Odintsov (I think that was the name?). Who is she? "

" A very charming woman," squeaked Sitnikov, " as

^ A curious old sixteenth- century work which, usually attributed to the monk Sylvester, purports to be a " guide to household management," and, incidentally, gives a terrible picture of the power of the Russian husband over his wife.

* Louise Michel (1830-1906), a French anarchist long resident in London.

well as clever, rich, and a widow. Unfortunately, she is not sufficiently developed, and a closer acquaintance with our Evdoksia would do her a world of good. Evdoksia, I drink to your health ! Let us sing the honours. ' Et toe, et toe, et tin, tin, tin! Et toe, et toe, et tin, tin, tin! ' "

" You scamp, Victor! "

The luncheon proved a lengthy affair, for to the first bottle of champagne there succeeded a second, and to the latter a third, and to that a fourth. Meanwhile Evdoksia kept up an unceasing flow of chatter., and received effective assistance from Sitnikov. In particular did the pair discuss the nature of marriage (" the outcome of prejudice and vice "), the question whether people are born " single," and the consistency of " individuality." Then Evdoksia seated herself at the piano, and, red in the face with wine which she had drunk, clattered her fiat finger-nails upon the keys, and essayed hoarsely to sing, first of all some gipsy ditties, and then the ballad, "Dreaming Granada lies asleep"; while, throwing a scarf over his head to represent the dying lover, Sitnikov joined her at the words " Your lips meet mine in a burning kiss."

At length Arkady could stand it no longer.

" Gentlemen," he exclaimed, " this is sheer Bedlam! "

As for Bazarov, he yawned, for he had done little more than interject a satirical word or two — his attention had been devoted, rather, to the champagne. At length he rose, and, accompanied by Arkady, left the house without so much as a word of farewell to the hostess. Sitnikov pursued the pair.

"Ah, ha!" he exclaimed as he skipped about the roadway. " Did I not tell you that she would prove a most remarkable personality? Would that more of our women were like her! In her way, she is a moral phenomenon."

" And your father's establishment? " remarked Bazarov as he pointed to a tavern which they happened to be passing. " Is that also a moral phenomenon? "

Sitnikov vented another of his shrill giggles. But, being also ashamed of his origin, he felt at a loss whether to plume himself upon, or to take offence at, Bazarov's unexpected pleasantry.

XIV

A FEW days later, the ball was held at the Governor's, and Matvei Ilyitch figured thereat as the guest of honour. For his part, the President of the Provincial Council (who was at loggerheads with the Governor) explained at large that only out of respect for Matvei had he deigned to be present, while the Governor continued, even when stationary', his usual process of orders-giving. With Matvei's suavity of demeanour nothing could be compared save his pomposity. Upon every man he smiled — ^upon some with a hint of superciliousness, upon others with a shade of deference; whilst to the ladies he bowed and scraped en vrai chevalier frangais, and laughed, throughout, the great, resonant, conspicuous laugh which a bigwig ought to do. Again, he clapped Arkady upon the back, addressed him loudly as " young nephew," and honoured Bazarov (who had been with difficulty coaxed into an ancient tail-coat) both with a distant, yet faintly condescending, glance which skimmed that individual's cheek, and with a vague, but affable, murmur in which there could be distinguished only the fragments " I," " Yes," and " 'xtremely." Lastly, he accorded Sitnikov a finger and a smile (in the very act, turning his head away), and bestowed upon Madame Kukshin (who had appeared minus a crinoline and in dirty gloves, but with a bird of paradise stuck in her hair) an " Enchants ! " The throng present was immense ; nor was a sufficiency of cavaliers lacking. True, most of the civilian element crowded against the walls, but the military section danced with enthusiasm, especially an officer who, being fresh from six weeks in Paris, where he had become acquainted with daring cries of the

type of "Zut!" "Ah, fichtrrre!" " Pst, pst, mon bibi!" and so forth, pronounced these quips to perfection, with true Parisian chic; while also he said " Si faurais" for " Si j'avais," and " absohtment" in the sense of " certainly." In short, he employed that Franco-Russian jargon which affords the French such intense amusement whenever they do not think it more prudent to assure their Russian friends that the latter speak the tongue of France comma des anges.

As we know, Arkady was a poor dancer, and Bazarov did not dance at all ; wherefore the pair sought a corner, and were there joined by Sitnikov. Summoning to his visage his accustomed smile of contempt, and emitting remarks mordantly sarcastic in their nature, the great Sitnikov glanced haughtily about him, and appeared to derive some genuine pleasure from thus striking an attitude. But suddenly his face underwent a change. Turning to Arkady, he said in a self-conscious way: " Here is Madame Odintsov just entering."

Looking up, Arkady beheld, halted in the doorway, a tall woman in a black gown. In particular was he struck with the dignity of her carriage, and with the manner in which her bare arms hung beside her upright figure.

From her gleaming hair to her sloping shoulders trailed sprays of fuchsia flowers, while quietly, intelligently — I say quietly, not dreamily — there gazed, with a barely perceptible smile, from under a white and slightly prominent forehead a pair of brilliant eyes. In general, the countenance suggested latent, but gentle, kindly force.

" Do you know her? " Arkady inquired.

" I do — intimately," replied Sitnikov. " Shall I introduce you? "

" If you please ; but only when this quadrille has come to an end."

Bazarov's attention also had been caught by this Madame Odintsov.

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" What a face ! " he exclaimed. " No other woman in the room has one anything Hke it."

As soon, therefore, as the quadrille was over, Sitnikov conducted Arkady to Madame Odintsov ; and though at first — whether through the excessive " intimacy " of Sitnikov's acquaintance, or whether through the fact that he happened to stumble over his words — she gazed at him with a shade of astonishment, she no sooner heard Arkady's family name than her face brightened, and slic inquired whether he was the son of Nikolai Petrovitch.

" I am," replied Arkady.

' ' Then I have twice had the pleasure of meeting your father. Also, I have heard much about him, and shall be most glad to know you."

At this point an aide-de-camp sidled up, and requested the honour of a quadrille: which request she granted.

"Then you dance?" exclaimed Arkady, but with great deference.

" I do. What made you think that I do not ? Is it that I look too old? "

" Oh no, pardon me! By no means! Then perhaps I too might ask for a mazurka? "

Smiling indulgently, she replied, " If you wish," and then looked at him not so much in a " superior " manner as in that of a married sister who is regarding a very, very young brotlier. Though she was not greatly older than Arkady (she had just attained her twenty-ninth year), her presence made him feel the veriest schoolboy, and caused the difference of years to seem infinitely greater than it was. Next, Matvei Ilyitch approached her with a majestic air and a few obsequious words; whereupon Arkady moved away a little, while continuing to observe her. In fact, not until the quadrille was over did he find himself able to withdraw his eyes from her

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bewitching person. Tiiroughout, her conversation with her partner and the guest of honour was accompanied with small movements of the head and eyes, and twice she uttered a low laugh. True, her nose erred a little on the side of thickness (as do those of most Russian women), nor was the colour of her skin unimpeachable; yet Arkady came to the conclusion that never in his life had he encountered a woman so charming of personality. Continuously the sound of her voice murmured in his ears, and the very folds of her dress looked different from those of other women — they seemed to hang straighter and more symmetrically, and her everj- movement was smooth and natural.

Nevertheless, when the strains of the mazurka struck up, and, reseating himself beside his partner, he prepared to enter into conversation with her, he felt a distinct touch of diffidence. Nor, though he kept passing his hand over his hair, could he find a word to say. However, this timidity, this state of agitation, did not last long, for soon her calmness infected him, and within a quarter of an hour he was talking to her of his father, his uncle, and life in St. Petersburg and the country. For her part, she listened with kindly interest, while gently opening and closing her fan. Thus only at moments when other cavaliers came to ask her for dances (Sitnikov did this twice) did Arkady's chatter become interrupted; and whenever she returned to her place, to reseat herself with her bosom heaving not a whit more rapidly than it had done before, he would plunge into renewed conversation, so delighted was he at the fact that he had found some one to sympathise vvdth him, to whom he could talk, at whose beautiful eyes and forehead and gentle, refined, intellectual features he could gaze at leisure. She herself said little, but her every word showed a knowledge of life which pointed to the fact that already this young woman had thought and felt much.

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" Who was the man with you before Sitnikov brought you to me ? " she inquired.

"So you noticed my friend?" exclaimed Arkady. " Has he not a splendid face? His name is Bazarov."

And, once launched upon the subject, Arkady descanted so fully, and with such enthusiasm, that Madame Odintsov turned to observe his friend more closely. But soon the mazurka began to draw to a close, and Arkady found himself regretting the prospect of losing the companion with whom he had spent such a pleasant hour. True, he had felt, throughout, that he was being treated with condescension, and ought to be grateful; but upon young hearts such an obligation does not press with any great weight.

The music stopped with a jerk.

" Merci! " said Madame Odintsov — then rose. " You have promised to come and see me. Also, bring with you your friend, for I am filled with curiosity to behold a man who has the temerity to believe in nothing."

Next, the Governor approached Madame v/ith a distraught air and an intimation that supper was ready; whereupon she took his proffered arm, and, as she departed, turned with a last smile and nod to Arkady, who, in answer, bowed and stood followng her with his eyes. How straight her figure looked under the sheen of her black gown !

" Already she will have forgotten m}' existence," he thought to himself, while an exquisite humilit}' pervaded his soul. Then he rejoined Bazarov in their joint comer.

" Well ? " his friend said. " Have 3^ou enjoyed yourself ? Some man or other has just been teUing me that the

lady in question is- But in all probability the man

was a fool. What do you think of her ? "

" The allusion escapes me," replied Arkady.

" Come, come, young innocence! "

" Or at all events your informant's meaning escapes

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me. Madame is nice, but as cold and formal as, cis ■'

" As a stagnant pool," concluded Bazarov. " Yes, we all know the sort of thing. You say that she is cold, but that is purely a matter of taste. Perhaps you yourself like ice? "

" Perhaps I do," the other muttered. " But of such things I am no judge ; and in any case she \\'ishes to make your acquaintance as well as mine, and has asked me to bring you with me to call."

" The description of me which you gave is easily imagined! On the other hand, you did rightly to offer her us both, for no matter who she may be — whether a provincial lioness or only an ' emancipee ' like the Kukshin woman, she has at least such a pair of shoulders as I have not seen this many a day."

Arkady recoiled from this cynicism, yet, as often happens in such cases, started to reproach his friend for something wholly uncomiected \vith the utterance which had given umbrage.

" Why do you refuse women freedom of thought ? " he asked under his breath.

" For the reason, dear sir, that, according to my observation of life, no woman, unless she be a frealc, thinks with freedom."

And here the conversation terminated, for supper had come to an end, and the friends departed. As they left the room Madame Kukshin followed them with a nervous and wrathful, yet slightly apprehensive, smile in her eyes. The reason of this was that she felt wounded in her conceit at the fact that neither of the young men had taken any notice of her. Nevertheless, she remained at the ball until most of the rest of the company had left ; whereafter, it being four o'clock in the morning, she danced a polka-mazurka, a la Parisienne, with Sitnikov, and with this edifying spectacle brought the Governor's fete to a close.

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XV

" Now let us see to what category of mortals to assign this young person," said Bazarov to x^rkady as, on the following day, the pair mounted the staircase of the hotel where Madame Odintsov was staying. " Somehow I seem to scent impropriety in the air."

" You surprise me! " burst forth Arkady. " Do you, Bazarov, do you hold with the narrow-minded morality which — • — "

" Idiot! " exclaimed Bazarov contemptuously. " Do you not know that both in our jargon and in the understanding of the ordinary person the term ' improper ' has now come to mean the same as ' proper ' ? In any case I seem to scent money here. You yourself told me, did you not, that Madame's marriage was a very strange one ? — though, for my part, I look upon marrying a rich old man as anything but a strange proceeding — rather, as a measure of prudence. True, I place httle reUance upon the gossip of townsfolk, but at least I prefer to suppose that that gossip has, as our cultured Governor would say, ' a basis in fact.' "

Arkady did not respond, but knocked at the door of Madame's suite; and, the door having been opened, a liveried man-servant ushered the visitors into a large, hideously furnished room of the type which is always to be found in Russian hotels — the only exception in the present case being that the apartment was adorned with flowers. Presently Madame herself entered, clad in a plain morning gown, and looking even younger in the spring sunlight than she had done in the ballroom. Arkady duly presented Bazarov, and, as he did so, remarked with surprise that his friend seemed confused.

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while Madame was as imperturbable as ever. This gauchene on his part Bazarov realised, and felt vexed at.

" Phaugh! " he thought to himself. " The idea that I should be afraid of a woman! "

Yet, hke Sitnikov, he could only subside into a chair, cind fall to talking with an exaggerated emphasis to the woman who sat with her brilliant ej^es riveted with such attention upon him.

Arma Sergievna Odintsov had had for father one Sergei Nikolaievitch Loktev, a well-known gambler, speculator, and beau. After fifteen years of flaunting it in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and dissipating his whole substance, he had been forced to retire to the country, where soon afterwards he had died and left to his daughter Anna (aged twenty) and his daughter Katerina (aged twelve) only a small joint competence. As for the girls' mother (who had come of the impoverished house of the Princes X.), she had expired during the heyday of her husband's career in St. Petersburg. Anna's position after her father's death was therefore a very difficult one, for the brilliant education which she had received in the capital had in no way fitted her for the care of a household and an estate, nor yet for the endurance of a life in the country. Moreover, she possessed not a single acquaintance in that country neighbourhood, nor anv one to whom to turn for advice, since her father had done his best to avoid associating with his neighbours, in that he had despised them as much as they, in their several ways, had despised him. Howbcit, Anna kept her head, and straightway sent for her mother's sister, the Princess Avdofia Stepanovna X., who, a malicious, presuming old woman, annexed, on the day of her arrival, all the best rooms in the house, raged and stormed from morning till night, and even declined to walk in the garden unless she could be accompanied by her only serf, a sullen-looking lacquey who wore a faded green livery, a blue collar, and

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a three-cornered hat. Nevertheless Anna put up with these tantrums of her aunt's, superintended the education of her sister, and resigned herself to the idea of living in seclusion for the rest of her life. But fate had ordained otherwise. That is to say, a certain Odintsov — a rich, bloated, unwieldy, soured, semi-imbecile hypochondriac of forty-six who was, nevertheless, neither stupid nor cruel — happened to see her, and became so enamoured that he offered her marriage: and to this proposal she consented. For six years the pair lived together, before the husband died, leaving her all his property. The following year she spent in the country ; after which she went abroad with her sister — ^but only as far as Germany, since she quickl\- wearied of foreign parts, and was only too thankful to return to her beloved Nikolskoe, which lay some forty versts from the provincial town of .

At Nikolskoe she had at her disposal a splendid, tastefully furnished mansion, a beautiful garden, and a range of orangeries (the late Odintsov having denied himself in nothing) ; but inasmuch as she made but rare appearances in the town, and then only on flying visits connected with business, the provincial gentry conceived a grudge against her, and took to gossiping of her marriage with Odintsov, and relating such impossible tales as that she had assisted her father in his nefarious schemes, that she had had her reasons for going abroad, and that certain unfortunate results of that tour had had to be concealed. " I tell you," the ardent retailer of such fables would say, " that she has been through the mill right enough." Eventually these rumours reached her ears, but she ignored them altogeither, since her nature was at once bold and independent.

Seating herself at full length in an armchair, and crossing one hand over the other, she set herself to listen to Bazarov's harangue. Contrary to his usual custom, he spoke without restraint, for he was clearly anxious to

interest his listener. Arkady again felt surprised at this, though he failed to detect whether or not Bazarov was succeeding in his aim, seeing that Anna Sergievna's face gave no clue to the effect produced, so fixedly did her features retain their faintly polite expression, so unvaryingly did her beautiful eyes reflect unruffled attention. True, at first Bazarov's vehemence gave her an unpleasant impression as of a bad smell or a jarring note ; but in time she began to understand that it came of his being ill at ease, and she felt flattered at the fact. Only the paltry repelled her; and no one could well have accused Bazarov of that quality. Indeed wonders were never to cease for Arkady, since, though he had expected Bazarov to talk to Madame Odintsov as to a woman of intellect — to speak to her of his views and convictions (seeing that she had expressed a desire to behold a man who had " the temerity to believe in nothing "), he discoursed only on medicine, homoeopathy, and botanv.
At the same time, Madame had not wasted her life of solitude, but had read a large number of standard works, and could express herself in the best of Russian; and though at one point she diverted the conversation to music, she no sooner perceived that he declined to recognise the existence of the art than she returned to botany, even though Arkady would gladl}- have continued the discussion of the importance of national melodies. In passing, her treatment of Arkady as a younger brother remained the same. What she valued in him was, evidently, the good humour and simplicity of youth — nothing more. Thus there was held, for three hours, an animated, but intermittent, discursive conversation.

At length the friends rose to say farewell. With a kindly glance Anna Sergievna offered them her beautiful white hand; then, after a moment's reflection, said irresolutely, but with a pleasant smile :

" If neither of you fear finding the time tedious, will you come and pay me a visit at Nikolskoe ? "

"I should deem it the greatest pleasure!" cried Arkady.

" And you, Monsieur Bazarov? "

Bazarov merely bowed : which again surprised Arkady, while also he noticed that his friend's face looked flushed.

" Well? " the younger man said as the pair issued into the street. " Are you still of the opinion that she is, is ? "

" I cannot say. But what an icicle she has made of herself!" There was a pause. " At all events, she is an imposing personage, a grande dame who lacks but a train to her gown and a coronet to her head."

" But none of our grandes dames speak Russian as she does," remarked Arkady.

"No; for she has undergone a rebirth, and eaten of our bread."

" And what a charm is hers ! "

" You mean, what a splendid body — the very thing for a dissecting theatre! "

" Stop, stop, for God's sake ! Her body differs from all other women's."

" No need to lose your temper, young innocent. Have I not said that she stands in the front rank of women ? Yes, we must pay her that visit."

"When?"

" The day after to-morrow. Nothing else is to be done here, for we need not stay to drink champagne with the Kukshin woman, and listen to the harangues of your kinsman, the Liberal bigwig. Not we! The day after to-morrow, therefore, let us give the whole thing the go-by. Apropos, my father's place lies near Nikolskoe. For Nikolskoe is on the — - — road, is it not? "

"It is."

" Optime ! Then we shall gain nothing by delay : only

fools and clever people procrastinate. Her anatomy, I repeat, is splendid."

Within three days, in bright, but not too warm, weather, the two friends were bowling along the road to Nikolskoe. With a will did the well-fed stage horses trot out, and lightly swish their flanks with their plaited, knotted tails; and as Arkady glanced along the road, he, for some unknown reason, smiled.

"Congratulate me!" cried Bazarov of a sudden. " To-day is the 22nd of June — the feast of my Patron Saint. Certainly he looks after me, does he not?" Then the speaker added in a lower tone: " But to-day, also, they are expecting me at home. . . . Well, let them expect me."

XVT

The manor-house in which Anna Sergievna resided stood on an open hillock, and close to a yellow stone church with a green roof, white columns, and an entrance surmounted by a fresco representative of Our Lord's Resurrection — the latter executed in the " Italian " style, and having as its most noticeable feature the figure of a swarthy warrior whose rounded contours filled the entire foreground. Behind the church, the village extended into two long wings, and had thatched roofs surmounted by a medley of chimneys ; while the manor-house itself was built in a style homogeneous with the design of the church— that is to say, in the style commonly known as " Alexandrine," and embracing yellow-painted walls, a green roof, white columns, and a front adorned with a coat-of-arms. In fact, both buildings had been erected by a provincial architect to the order of the late Odintsov, a man impatient (so he himself alwaj^s expressed it) of " vain and arbitrary innovations." Lastly, to right and left of the house there showed the trees of an antique garden, while an avenue of clipped firs led the way to the principal entrance.

The friends having been met in the hall by two strapping lacqueys in livery, one of the latter immediately ran for the butler; who (a stout man in a black tail-coat) proceeded to usher the guests up a carpeted staircase, and into a room which contained a couple of beds and the usual appurtenances of the toilet. Evidently neatness was the order of the day in the establishment, for everj^hing was both spotlessly clean and as fragrant as the chamber wherein a Minister of State holds his receptions.

" Anna Sergievna will be glad to see you in half an hour," the butler said. " Meanwhile, have you any orders for me? "

" No, worthy one," rephed Bazarov. " Except that you might so far condescend as to bring me a small glassful of vodka."

" It shall be done, sir," said the butler with a shade of hesitation; whereafter he departed with creaking boots.

" What grandeur! " commented Bazarov. " In 3^our opinion, how ought our hostess to be addressed ? In the style of a duchess? "

" Yes, and of a very great duchess," replied Arkady. "The more so, seeing that she has invited such influential aristocrats as ourselves to visit her."

" I presume that 570U are referring to your humble servant — a future doctor, the son of a doctor, and the grandson of a sexton ? By the way, are you aware that my grandparent was a sexton, even as was Speransky's? " ^ A smile curled his lips. " Thus you see that the lady is mistaken, woefully mistaken. We haven't such a thing as a tail-coat, have we? "

Arkady shrugged his shoulders bravely; but he too was feeling a little awe-stricken.

At the close of the half-hour the pair entered the drawing-room, which they found to be a large, lofty apartment of rich, but tasteless, appointments. Against the walls, in the usual affected style, stood heav}', expensive furniture, the walls themselves were hung with brown curtains to which were florid gilt borders (all these things the late Odintsov had ordered through a Muscovite friend who kept a wineshop), and above a divan in the centre of the room hung a portrait of a

^A "Westemist" statesman (1772-1839), who propounded various schemes of reform in connection with the Russian peasantry.

wrinkled, sandy-haired individual who seemed to be regarding the newcomers with extreme distaste.

" He," whispered Bazarov.

The hostess herself then entered. She was clad in a light dress, and had her hair dressed behind the ears — a style which communicated to her pure, fresh countenance an air of almost girlish juvenility.

" Thank you for having kept your promise," she said. " And now that you are come, I think that you will find the time not altogether dull. For one thing, I intend to introduce you to my sister, who is a skilful piano-player (of course, Monsieur Bazarov, to you such things are a matter of indifference, but you, Monsieur Kirsanov, I know, adore the art of music). Also, an elderly aunt lives with me as my companion, and at intervals a neighbour looks in for a game of cards. You see our home circle. Now let us seat ourselves."

Madame delivered this little speech with the precision of a lesson which she had learnt by heart, and then turned to converse with Arkady. On finding that her mother had known his, and that the latter had made the former her confidant during her love affair with Nikolai Petrovitch, the lad fell to speaking enthusiastically of his dead parent, while Bazarov applied himself to the inspection of some albums.

" What a domesticated individual I am! " thought he to himself.

Presently, with much pattering of paws, there burst into the room a splendid Russian greyhound with a blue collar; and it was followed by a young girl of eighteen with a dark complexion, dark hair, a round, but pleasant, face, and small, dark eyes. She was carrying a basket of flowers.

" My sister Katia," said Madame Odintsov, indicating the girl with her head.

Katia seated herself beside Madame, and fell to

arranging her flowers; while the greyhound (whose name was Fifi) approached each of the guests in turn, laid his cold nose in their hands, and wagged his tail.

" Have you gathered those flowers yourself? " asked Madame Odintsov.

" Yes, Anna Sergievna," the girl rephed.

" And is vour aunt going to join us at tea? "

"Yes." "

These replies of Katia's were accompanied with a frank, but gentle and bashful, smile, and an upward glance half grave, half sportive. Everything in her betokened youth and freshness — her voice, the down on her cheeks, her little pink hands with their white, dimpled palms, and the slightly contracted shoulders. Also, she blushed without ceasing, and drew her breath with a fluttering respiration.

Presently Madame Odintsov turned to Bazarov.

" Surely it is only out of pohteness that you are looking at those photographs? " she said. " They cannot possibly interest you. Pray move nearer to us, and lee us engage in an argument."

Bazarov approached her.

" What shall we argue about ? " he inquired.

" About anything you like. But first let me warn you that I am a redoubtable opponent."

"You?"

" Yes, certainly. You look surprised? WTi}' so? "

" Because, so far as I can tell, your temperament is one of the cold and lethargic order, whereas argument needs impulsiveness."

" How have you contrived so quickly to appraise me? To begin with, I am both impatient and exacting. Ask Katia if I am not. Also, I am easily moved to impulse."

Bazarov darted a glance at her.

" Possibly," he said. " Certainly you ought to know best. But, since you desire to argue, let us argue. While looking at those views of Saxon Switzerland, I heard you remark that they could not interest me. This you said, I presume, because you suppose me to be lacking in the artistic sense. Well, I am so. But might not those pictures be interesting to me solely from the geological point of view — from the standpoint of an observer, say, of the formation of mountains? "

" Pardon me, but, as a geologist, you would prefer to resort to some special work on that science, not to a few pictures."

" Oh, not necessarily. For a picture may instantly present what a book could set forth only in a hundred pages."

Anna Sergievna made no reply.

" Well," she resumed, leaning forward upon the table — a movement which brought her face closer to Bazarov's, " since you possess not a grain of the artistic instinct, how do you contrive to get on without it ? "

" Rather, I would ask you : What is the artistic instinct able to effect ? "

"It is able at least to help one to examine and to instruct one's fellow man."

Bazarov smiled.

" In the first place," he retorted, " the prime requisite in that connection is experience of hfe ; and, in the second place, the study of detached personalities is scarcely worth the trouble. For all we human beings are alike, in body as in spirit. In each of us there is an identical brain, an identical spleen, an identical heart, an identical pair of lungs, an identical stock of the so-called moral quahties (trifling variations between which we need not take into account). Therefore from a single specimen of the human race may all the rest be judged. In fact, human beings are like trees in a forest. You never find a botanist studying its individual trunks."

Katia, who had been arranging her flowers, glanced at Bazarov in amazement, and, in so doing, encountered his keen, contemptuous gaze, and blushed to her ears. Anna Sergievna shook her head.

"Trees in a forest! " she exclaimed. "Think you, then, that there is no difference between the wise man and the fool, the good and the bad ? "

" No, I do not," replied Bazarov. " On the contrary, I believe that such differences do exist. The point is that they exist only as between the soimd and the ailing. For instance, a consumptive's lungs are not as yours and mine; yet they have been fashioned precisely as our own have been. Also, whereas, to a certain extent, we know whence bodily disorders arise, moral disorders come of faulty education, the thousand and one follies with which the hmnan brain is afflicted, in short, any irregular condition of the social body. Rectify that body, and moral sickness will soon cease to be."

Speaking as though he were saying to himself, " Beheve me or not as you Uke, it is all one to me," Bazarov drew his long fingers through his whiskers, while his eyes glowed hke coals.

" Then you think," pursued Anna Sergievna, " that, once the social body has been rectified, stupid and evil people will cease to exist ? "

" At all events, once the social body is properly organised, the fact that a man be wise or stupid, good or bad, will cease to be of importance."

"Ah! I understand! That is because we all possess an identical spleen? "

" Precisely so, madam."

She turned to Arkady.

" And what is your opinion, Arkady Nikolaievitch ? " she enquired.

" I agree vdih Evgenii," was his reply as, in his turn, he received a glance of astonishment from Katia.

" I am surprised, gentlemen," said Madame. " However, I can hear my aunt approaching, so let us spare her ears, and discuss this later."

Anna Sergievna's aunt — a small, spare woman with a maJlet-shaped face, a pair of narrow, malicious eyes, and a gre}^ false front — bestowed scarcely so much as a bow upon the guests, but at once relapsed into a huge velvet armchair which no one but herself was allowed to use. And even when Katia hastened to place for her a footstool, the old woman did not thank her, nor even look at her, but chafed her hands under the yellow shawl which covered the whole of her frail figure. Beyond all things was she fond of yellow; wherefore she had had her cap trimmed with ribands of the same hue.

" Have you slept well, Auntie? " Madame Odintsov inquired with a raising of her voice.

" That dog is here again! " the old woman muttered on noticing that Fifi was taking an irresolute step or two in her direction. " Turn the beast out, I say! Out with it ! "

Calling Fifi, Katia opened the door for the animal to leave the room ; whereupon, though it bounded out in joyous mood (under the impression that it was about to be taken for a walk), it no sooner found itself marooned outside than it fell to whining and scratching at the panels; which caused the Princess to frown, and necessitated Katia's exit to rectify matters.

" Tea is ready, I believe," Madame Odintsov continued. " Gentlemen, pray come. Will you have some tea. Auntie? "

The Princess rose from her chair in silence, and headed a procession to the dining-room, where a Cossack footman pulled a padded armchair from under the table (like the last, it was reserved for the Princess alone), and she subsided into its depths. Katia poured out tea, and handed her aunt the first cup — a cup adorned with a coat-of-arms ; whereafter the old woman added some honey to the beverage (she looked upon tea-drinking with sugar as a sin of extravagance, and the more so since never at any time would she consent to spend an unnecessary kopeck), and then asked hoarsely:

" What has Prince Ivan to say in his letter? "

No one answered, and in time Bazarov and Arkady apprised the fact that, though treated, certainly, with respect, the old woman attracted no one's serious attention.

" They keep her here for show," Bazarov reflected, " She is kept because she comes of a princely house."

Tea over, Anna Sergievna proposed a walk ; but since at that moment a drop of rain came pattering down, the company (with the exception of the Princess) returned to the drawing-room. Presently the neighbour addicted to a game of cards came in, and proved to be one Porphyri Platonitch — a stout, grey-headed, affable, diverting individual who, in addition, could boast of a pair of legs as shapely as though turned with a lathe. Anna Sergievna then inquired of Bazarov (with whom she had again been in conversation) whether he would care to join them in the old-fashioned game of " Preferences "; and he consented on the ground that he could not too soon prepare himself for the post of a district physician.

" But take care," remarked his hostess. " Porphyri Platonitch and I are not unlikely to beat you. Meanwhile, do you, Katia, go and play something on the piano for the benefit of Arkady Nikolaievitch. I know that he loves music, and we too shall be glad to listen to you."

Reluctantly Katia approached the piano; nor, in spite of Arkady's fondness for music, did he follow her any more eagerly.

The truth of it was that he felt himself to be being " got rid of " by Madame Odintsov, and already there was simmering in his heart, as in the heart of any young man of his age, that vague, oppressive feeling which is the harbinger of love.

Raising the lid of the piano, Katia murmured under her breath, and without looking at Arkady:

"What shall I play? "

" Anything you wish," he replied with indifference.

" But what sort of music do you prefer? " she persisted with unchanged attitude.

" Classical music," was the reply delivered with equal nonchalance.

"Mozart? "

" Certainly— Mozart."

So Katia produced the Viennese master's Sonata-Fantasia in C minor. She played it well, but coldly, and not with any excess of precision. Likewise, she kept her lips compressed, her eyes upon the keys, and her form erect and motionless. Only towards the close of the piece did her face kindle at all, while at the same moment a tin}' curl detached itself from, her loosely-bound hair, and feU over her dusky forehead.

Arkady also felt moved by the closing portion of the Sonata — the portion where the charming, careless gaiety of the melody gives place to sudden bursts of mournful, almost tragic lamentation. Yet the thoughts which Mozart's strains aroused in him bore no relation to Katia. He merely looked at her now and then, and reflected :

" She plays well; nor is she bad-looking."

The Sonata over, Katia inquired, without removing her hands from the keyboard: " Is that enough? " and Arkady replied that he would not think of troubling her further. Then he went on to talk of Mozart, and to ask her whether she herself had selected the Sonata, or whether it had been selected for her by some one. Katia answered in monosyllables, and from time to time went into hiding, retired into herself; and on each occasion of this sort she made her reappearajice but reluctantly, and with a face composed to a stubborn, almost a stupid, air. Yet she was not timid so much as diffident and a trifle overawed by the presence of the sister who had brought her up (not that the sister in question ever suspected it). Finally, she returned to her flowers, and Arkady found himself reduced to calling Fifi to his side, and stroking the dog's head with a kindly smile.

As for Bazarov, he had to pay forfeit after forfeit, for Anna Sergievna was fairly clever at cards, and Porphyri Platonitch was a player fully able to look after himself. Consequently the young doctor rose a loser, not by a considerable sum, but by one which, at all events, was sufficient to be scarcely agreeable. After supper Anna Sergievna started a discussion on botany.

" I wish you would take me for a walk to-morrow morning," she said. " I want you to teach me the Latin names of our field flowers, and also their characteristics."

" But how could the Latin names benefit you? " he inquired.

" System is in all things necessary," she replied,

"A truly wonderful woman!" Arkady commented the same evening, on finding himself alone with his friend in the bedroom.

" Yes," replied Bazarov. " She certainly possesses brains. Also, she has dreamed dreams."

' ' In what sense ? ' '

" In the best sense, my friend — in the very best sense, O Arkady Nikolaievitch. Certain also am I that she manages her property well. But the marvellous phenomenon is not she, but her sister."

"What? That hoyden?"

" Yes, that hoyden. The hoyden contains an element of freshness and virginity and timidity and reticence and anything else you like which makes her really an object worthy of interest. Of the one you could make

whatsoever you might desire, whereas of the other there is nothing to be said save that she represents a yesterday's loaf."

Arkady made no reply, and soon the two men were asleep and dreaming their own dreams.

The same night Anna Sergievna devoted much thought to her two guests. Bazarov she liked both for his total lack of affectation and for the piquancy of his criticisms ; so that she seemed to divine in him something new, something which had hitherto remained unknown to her experience. All of which excited her curiosity.

And she too was a strange being. Free from all prejudice, and devoid of all strong beliefs, she rendered obeisance to nothing, and had in view no goal. Again, though much was open to her sight, and much interested her, nothing really satisfied her, and she had no wish for such satisfaction, since her intellect was at once inquiring and indifferent, and harboured doubts which never merged into insensibility, and aspirations which never swelled into unrest. True, if she had been dowered with less wealth and independence, she might have plunged into the fray, and learnt the nature of passion ; but, as things stood, she took life unhastingly, and, though often finding it tedious, spent her days in a deliberate, rarely agitated manner. True, at times rainbow colours gleamed even before her eyes; yet no sooner had they faded than she would draw her breath as before, and in no way regret their disappearance. Again, though, at times, her imagination exceeded the bounds of what is considered permissible by conventional morality, her blood still coursed tranquilly through her lethargic and bewitchingly shaped frame ; and only when she was issuing in a warm and tender glow from her comfortable bathroom would she fall to pondering upon the futility of life, its sorrow and toil and cruelty, and feel her soul swell to sudden temerity, and begin

to seethe with noble aspirations. Yet even then, let but a draught happen to blow in her direction from an open window, and at once she would shrug her shoulders, commiserate herself, come very near to losing her temper, and become conscious of nothing but the thought that the one thing necessary was to ensure that by hook or by crook that abominable draught should be averted.

Again, like all women who have never known what it is to fall in love, she was sensible of a persistent yearning for something wholly undefined. There was nothing that she actually lacked, yet she seemed to lack everything. The late Odintsov she had merely tolerated (the marriage having been one de convenance only — though she would never have consented to become his wife had he not also been kindly of heart), and from the experience she had derived a certain aversion to the male sex in general, which she conceived to be composed exclusively of creatures slovenly, idle, wearisome, and weakly exacting in their habits. In fact, only once had she met (it was somewhere abroad) a man who had in any way attracted her. He had been a young Swede of a knightly countenance, honest blue eyes, and an open brow; but, for all the impression that he had made upon her, the impression in question had not prevented her from shortly afterwards returning to Russia.

"A strange man, that Bazarov," she thought to herself as she reposed in her magnificent bed with its lace-embroidered pillows and its light silken coverlet. It may be said, that, in addition to having inherited her late father's fastidious and luxurious tastes, she still cherished for that way^vard, but kindhearted, parent a considerable affection, since during his lifetime he had not only adored her and cracked jokes with her on equal terms, but also accorded her his whole confidence.

and made it his invariable custom to seek her advice. Of her mother she had but the scantiest of remembrance.

" Yes, a strange man is that Bazarov," she repeated; after which she stretched her hmbs, smiled, clasped her hands behind her head, ran an eye over the pages of t\^o foolish French novels, let fall the second of these volumes from her hands, and relapsed into slumber — a cold, spotless figure in spotless, fragrant white.

When breakfast was over next morning, she set forth upon the botanising expedition with Bazarov; to return home just before luncheon time. Meanwhile Arkady did not leave the house, but spent an hour with Katia, nor found the time wearisome, seeing that of her own accord Katia volunteered to repeat the Sonata. Yet the instant that his eyes beheld Madame Odintsov returning his heart leapt within him. She was crossing the garden with a slightly tired step, but with her cheeks rosy of hue, her eyes shining under her round straw hat with even greater brilliancy than usual, and her fingers twirling between them the stalk of some field flower. Also, her light mantilla had slipped to her shoulders, and the broad ribands of her hat were floating over her bosom. Behind her walked Bazarov with his usual air of superciliousness and self-assurance, while on his face there was an expression cheerful, and even good-humoured. Yet somehow, Arkady did not like that expression.

Muttering " Good-morning," Bazarov passed towards his room, while Madame Odintsov accorded the young man a ncghgent handshake — then similarly continued her way.

'"Good morning!'" thought Arkady to himself. "One would think that she and I had made one another's acquaintance only to-day! "

XVII

As we know, time either flies like a bird or crawls like a snail. Thus a man is in best case when he fails to notice either the rapidity or the slowness of its flight. Similarly did Bazarov and Arkady spend their fortnight at Madame Odintsov's. Of this another contributory cause was the fact that alike in her household and in her daily life she maintained a regime to which she herself strictly adhered, and to which she constrained others to adhere; so that the daily domestic round accomplished itself according to a fixed programme. At eight o'clock the company would assemble for breakfast; whereafter, until luncheon time, individuals could do whatsoever they chose (the hostess herself devoting her attention to her steward — she administered her estate on the obrok or tithes system — her household servants, and her head housekeeper). Next, before dinner, the company would reassemble for conversation or for reading aloud; and the rest of the evening would be devoted to a walk, to cards, or to music. Lastly, at half-past ten Anna Sergievna would withdraw to her room, issue her orders for the following day, and retire to bed.

But to Bazarov this measured, slightly formal regularity was not wholly agreeable. " Somehow it reminds one of running on a pair of rails," he used to declare; while so much did the sight of liveried lacqueys and graded serfs offend his democratic instincts that once he averred that one might as well dine in the English fashion outright, and wear white ties and black tail-coats. These views he expressed to Anna Sergie\Tia (something in her always led men to lay bare their opinions in her presence); and, after she had heard him out, she said:

" From your point of view, the matter is as you say, and perhaps I play the fine lady too much; but in the country one cannot live anyhow; such a course always leads one to grow slovenly."

So she continued her regime as before. Yet, though Bazarov grumbled, he and Arkady found that to that very formality they owed the fact that everything in the establishment " ran as on rails." In passing it may be mentioned that between the two young men there had taken place a change which dated from the day of their arrival at Nikolskoe, and manifested itself, as regards Bazarov (for whom Anna Sergievna evidently entertained a liking, though seldom did she agree with his dicta), in the form of an unwonted captiousness which led him easily to lose his temper, to speak always with reluctance, to glare about him, and to be as unable to sit still as though mines had been exploding beneath his seat. As for Arkady (now come finally to the conclusion that he was in love with Madame Odintsov), the change manifested itself, rather, in his falling a prey to a melancholy which in no way prevented him from making friends with Katia, and even helped him to maintain with her kindly and cordial relations.

" Whereas Madame cares nothing for me," he would reflect, " this good-hearted creature does not give me the cold shoulder."

And these reflections would cause his heart to taste once more the sensuous joy of " magnanimity." Dimly Katia herself divined that her society afforded him a sort of comfort; wherefore she saw no reason to deny either him or herself the pleasure of this innocent, half-diffident, half-trustful camaraderie. True, in the presence, and under the keen eye, of the elder sister (who always caused Katia to retire precipitately into her shell) the pair never exchanged a single word (indeed, as a man in love, Arkad\- could not well have paid attention to

any one but the object of his adoration while in the latter's vicinity) ; but as soon as he found himself alone with Katia he began, to a certain degree, really to enjoy himself. That is to say, whereas he knew himself to be incompetent to interest Madame (seeing that whenever he found himself alone with her he blushed and lost his head, while she, on her side, did not know what to say to him, so jejune was his mind as compared with her own), in Katia's presence he felt perfectly at home, and could treat her with condescension, and let her expound to him the impressions which she derived from music and the reading of tales, poems, and other " trifles." Nor did he notice, nor would he have consented to recognise had he noticed, the fact that those same " trifles " interested him as much as they did Katia. At the same time, the latter in no way acted as a clog upon his melancholy; wherefore, just as Madame was at her ease with Bazarov, so the young man was at his with Katia, and, after a short period of joint converse, the two couples would usually diverge. This happened especially during walks, and the more readily in that, whereas Katia adored nature, and Arkady too loved it (though he would never have admitted the fact), to Madame and Bazarov the charms of the natural world represented more or less a matter of indifference. Hardly need I add that from this constant separation between Arkady and Bazarov there flowed inevitable results which brought about in the relations of the pair a gradual change. That is to say, Bazarov ceased to discourse on Madame Odintsov — he ceased even to censure her for her " aristocratic manners"; and while, with regard to Katia, he sang her praises as usual (at the same time advising the placing of a check upon her sentimental tendencies), he took to uttering these encomiums only in a half-hearted and a perfunctory^ way, and, in general, to lecturing his pupil less than he had formerly done.

Rather, he seemed to avoid him, to feel in some way uncomfortable in his presence.

These things Arkady duly noted, but kept his observations to himself.

The real cause of the innovation was the feeling which Madame Odintsov inspired in Bazarov's breast, and which he found to be a torture and a madness to him. Yet, had any one hinted to him, ever so distantly, that what was taking place in his soul could ever have been possible, he would have denied it with a contemptuous laugh and a cynical imprecation, seeing that, though a great devotee of feminine society and feminine beauty, he looked upon love in the ideal, the " romantic " (to use his own term) aspect as unpardonable folly, and upon the sentiment of chivalry as a sort of aberration or malady which moved him frequently to express his astonishment that Toggenburg and his Minnesingers and troubadours never ended by being clapped in a madhouse.

" Should a woman please you," he would say, " strive to attain your goal ; but if you cannot attain that goal, waste no further trouble — ^just turn away. For the world does not rest upon a single keystone."

In similar fashion Madame Odintsov " pleased " Bazarov: yet, though the widespread reports in circulation about her might, with the freedom and independence of her views and the undoubted penchant which she entertained for himself, have been reckoned to tell in his favour, he soon discovered that, in her case, the " goal " was not to be attained. Also, he found to his surprise that he could not " turn away " — ^rather, that the mere thought of her made his blood boil. True, that symptom, if it had been the only one, might have been dealt with ; but there became implanted in him something else — something which he had hitherto refused to admit, something of which he had hitherto made

sport, but something which now aroused his pride. Therefore, although, when conversing with Anna Sergievna, he poured added scorn upon everything " romantic," he recognised, during his hours of solitude, that even in his own personahty there lurked an element of " Romanticism." And at such times there was nothing for it but to rush out of doors into the woods, and to stride along at a pace which snapped off chance-met boughs, and found vent in curses at both them and himself. Or he would seek a hayloft or stable, and, stubbornly closing his eyes, strive to woo sleep, and almost invariably fail. Yet, as he sat there, there would come to him delusions that those proud lips had once responded to his kisses, that those chaste arms had embraced his neck, that those soulful eyes had gazed tenderly — ^yes, tenderly — into his: and at such times his head would whirl, and for a second or two, and until his discontent returned, he would relapse into a state of trance, and, as though urged by a demon, think thoughts of unavowable import. Again, there were times when he would conceive a change similar to his own to have taken place in her, and the expression of her face already to be charged with a special significance. Yet, this point reached, he would end merely by stamping his feet, grinding his teeth, and mentally shaking liis ft?t at himself.

Once, when walking with her in the garden, he annoimced to her in curt, gruff tones that he intended soon to depart for his father's place; whereupon Anna Sergievna turned pale, as though something had pricked her heart, and pricked it in such a manner as to surprise even herself, and to leave her wondering what it could portend. Yet not for the sake of testing her, nor of seeing what might possibly come of it, had he mentioned his purposed departure (never at any time did he indulge in "scheming"). Rather, the reason was that, earlier

that morning, he had had an interview with his father's steward, Timotheitch, a rough, but quick-witted, old fellow who, in past da37s, had acted as his nurse, and had now presented himself — with tousled, flaxen hair, red, weather-beaten face, watery, sunken eyes, short, stout jacket of grey-blue cloth, leathern girdle, and tarred boots — at Nikolskoe.

" Good-day to you, ancient ! " had been Bazarov's greeting.

" Good-day to you, batiushkal " had responded the old man with a gleeful smile which had covered his face with wrinkles.

" And how is it that I see you here? " Bazarov had continued. " Is it that they have sent you to fetch me ? "

" By no means, pardon me, batiushkal " Timotheitch had stammered out this denial for the reason that he had suddenly recollected certain strict injunctions imposed upon him before starting. " No, it is merely that I am on my way to the town on affairs connected with the estate, and turned aside a little to pay my respects to your honour. No, not to disturb you at all— oh dear no ! "

" Do not lie," Bazarov had said. " Is this the way to the town?"

Timotheitch, cringing, had returned no reply.

" And how is my father? " Bazarov had continued.

" Quite well, thank God! "

" And my mother? "

" Your mother is the same, thank God! "

" And they are, I suppose, expecting me? "

The old man had cocked his head with a knowing air.

" Evgenii Vasilitch, why should they not be expecting you ? Yes, as God is my trust, I know that their hearts are simply aching for a sight of you."

" Well, well ! Do not make too long a stay of it, but tell them that I will come presently."

" I will, hatitishka."

Yet it had been with a sigh that Timotheitch had replaced his cap on his head with both hands, left the house, remounted the shabby drozhki which he had left waiting at the gates, and disappeared at a trot — though not in the direction of the town.

The same evening saw Madame sitting in her boudoir with Bazarov, and Arkady pacing the salon, and listening to Katia's music. As for the Princess, she had gone to bed, for she could not abide the presence of guests — least of all, of " those upstarts and good-for-nothings " as she termed our friends. In fact, though she confined herself, in the drawing-room or the dining-room, to sulking, she resorted, when alone with her maid in the bedroom, to abuse of Arkady and Bazarov which made her cap and her false front fairly dance on her head. These things, of course, Madame Odintsov knew.

" Why need you depart ? " she said to Bazarov. " Have you forgotten your promise ? "

Bazarov started.

" What promise? " he asked.

" Then you have forgotten it ! I mean the promise to give me a few lessons in chemistry ? "

" How can I fulfil it ? My father is expecting me at home, and I ought not to stay a day longer. You had better read through Notions Generates de Chimie, by Pelouse and Fremy. It is an excellent work, and clearh-written — the very thing you want."

" But you said that no book can adequately replace — I forget the exact phrase you used, but you know what I mean, do you not ? "

" I cannot help myself," he muttered.

" Nevertheless, why go? " She lowered her voice as she spoke. Bazarov glanced at her as she leant back in her chair and crossed her arms (which were bare to the elbow), and saw that by the fight of the lamp (softened with a shade of pleated paper) she was looking paler than

usual — also that the outlines of her figure were almost buried in a soft white gown, from underneath which there peeped forth the tips of her toes, posed crosswise.

"What reason should I have for remaining?" he replied.

She gave her head the faintest toss.

" "What reason should you have?" she re-echoed. " Well, are you not happy here ? Do you think that there will be no one to regret your departure ? "

" There will be no one. Of that I am certain."

" Then you are wrong," came the reply after a pause. " But I do not believe you — I have an idea that you are not speaking seriously."

Bazarov said nothing.

" Why do you not answer me ? " she persisted.

" What is there to say? In general, to regret people's absence is not worth while, and, least of all, the absence of people like myself."

" Why, again? "

" Because I am a prosaic and eminently uninteresting individual. Nor do I know how to talk."

" But you know how to play the esquire ? "

" No, not even that. And, as you know, the softer aspect of life, the aspect which you hold so dear, lies altogether beyond me."

Madame Odintsov nibbled the corner of her handkerchief.

" Think what you like," she said, " but at least / shall find things dull when you are gone."

" Arkady wiD remain," he hazarded.

She shrugged her shoulders.

" Nevertheless I shall find the time wearisome," she repeated.

" Not for long."

" Why not ? "

" Because, as you have very truly said, things never

seem dull to you save when your regime is infringed. In fact, with such faultless regularity have you ordered your hfe that there abides in it no room for dullness or depression or any other burdensome feeling."

" And I too am faultless, I suppose — I have ordered my life too regularly ever to err ? "

" I daresay. Take an example of it. In a few minutes it will be ten o'clock; when, as I know by experience, you will request me to leave your presence."

" Oh no, I shall not. You may remain. By the way, please open that window. The room is simply stifling."

Bazarov rose and unfastened the casement, which swung backwards with a snap, for the reason that he had not expected it to open so easily, and that his hands were trembling. Into the aperture glanced the soft, warm night with its vista of dark vault of heaven, faintly rustling trees, and pure, free, sweet-scented air.

"Also, please pull down the blind, and then resume your seat. I wish to have a little further talk with you before you go. Tell me something about yourself — a person to whom, by the way, you never refer."

" I would rather converse with you on more profitable subjects."

" What modesty! Nevertheless I wish to learn something of you, and of your family, and of the father for whose sake you are soon going to abandon me."

"Why the word 'abandon'?" reflected Bazarov. Then he added aloud: " Things of that kind interest no one — least of all you. I and my people are obscure folk."

" Whereas I, you imagine, am an aristocrat? "

Bazarov looked up,

" Yes," he replied with emphasis.

She smiled.

" Then I can see that your knowledge of me is small," she remarked. " But of course — ^you believe all human beings to be identical, and therefore not worth the

trouble of studying. Some day I will tell you my history. But first tell me yours."

"You say that my knowledge of you is small?" queried Bazarov. " You may be right. Possibly every human being is an enigma. Let us take an example of that. You have withdrawn from society, and find it irksome, and limit your visitors' list to a couple of students. Yet why, with your intellect and your beauty, do you live in the country ? "

" Why? " came the sharp rejoinder. " But first be so good as to explain what you mean by my ' beauty.' "

Bazarov frowned.

"That lies beside the point," he muttered. "The point is that I cannot understand why you settle in a rural spot of this kind."

" You cannot understand it, you cannot explain it? "

" No. There is only one possible explanation : and that is that you remain here because you are a person of self-indulgence who love comfort and the amenities of life, and are indifferent to aught else."

Again Madame Odintsov smiled.

" Then you are still determined to believe that I am incapable of being moved? " she said.

Bazarov glanced at her from under his brows.

" By curiosity, yes," he said. " But by nothing else."

' ' Indeed ? Then I cease to wonder that you and I do not get on together. You are exactly like myself."

" That you and I do not get on together? " echoed Bazarov vaguely.

" Yes, But I had forgotten — ^you must be longing to retire? "

Bazarov rose. The lamp was casting a dim light, while into the fragrant, darkened, isolated room there came wafted at intervals, under the swinging blind, the sensuous freshness of the night, and the sounds of its mysterious whisperings. Madame Odintsov did not stir.

Over her was stealing the same strange agitation which had infected Bazarov. Suddenly he realised that he was alone with a young and beautiful woman.

" Need you go? " she asked slowly.

He made no reply — ^he merely resumed his seat.

" Then you think me a spoilt, pampered, indolent person? " she continued in the same slow tone as she fixed her eyes upon the window. " Yet this much I know about myself: that I am very unhappy."

" Unhappy? For what reason? Because you attach too much importance to petty slanders? "

She frowned. Somehow she felt vexed that he should have understood her thus.

" No ; things of that kind do not disturb me," she said. " Never should I allow them to do so — I am too proud. The reason why I am unhappy is that I have no wish, no enthusiasm, to live. I daresay you will not believe me, and wiU think that a mere ' petty aristocrat,' a person who is lapped in lace and seated in an armchair, is saying all this (and I will not conceal from you that I love what you call ' the comforts of life ') : yet all the whUe I feel as though I had no desire to continue my existence. Pray reconcile that contradiction if you can. But perhaps you consider what I say ' Romanticism ' ? "

Bazarov shook his head.

" You are yet young," he said. " Also, you are rich and independent. What more could you have ? What more do you desire? "

" What more ? " she re-echoed with a sigh. " I do not know. I only know that I feel tired, antiquated; I feel as though I had been living a long, long time. Yes, I am growing old," she continued as she drew the ends of her mantilla around her bare shoulders. In doing so, she glanced at Bazarov. Her eyes met his, and the faintest of blushes stole into her face. " Behind me lie many memories — ^memories of my Hfe in St. Petersburg, of a period of wealth followed by poverty, of my father's death, of my marriage, of my travels abroad — yes, many such memories there are. Yet none of them are worth cherishing. And before me lies only a weary road with no goal to it, along which I have no desire to travel."

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" You are disenchanted," said Bazorov.

" No," she replied with a shiver. " Rather, I am dissatisfied. Oh that I could form a strong attachment of some kind! "

" To fall in love might save you," remarked Bazarov. " But you are incapable of that. That is where your misfortune lies."

Madame dropped her eyes upon the sleeve of her mantilla.

" I am incapable of falling in love ? " she murmured.

" Not altogether. Moreover, I did wrong to call it a misfortune : for the person most to be pitied is the person who meets with that experience."

" What experience do you mean? "

" The experience of falling in love."

" How^ come you to know that ? "

" By hearsay," he replied irritably, while to himself he added: " You are a mere coquette whom sheer idleness is leading to weary and madden me." And his heart swelled within him.

" On the other hand," he went on, " it may be that 3'ou are too exacting? "

As he spoke he bent forward and fell to playing with the tassels of his chair.

" Possibly I am," she agreed. " But, you see, I conceive that it ought to be everything or nothing. ' A life for a Ufe.' ' Take my all, give your all, and put a truce to regrets and any thought of return.' That is the best rule."

" Indeed? " queried Bazarov, " Well, it is not a bad rule, and I am surprised that you should have failed to attain your desire."

"Self-surrender, you think, is an easy thing? "

" Not if one considers matters first, and appraises oneself, and sets upon oneself a definite value. It is only surrender without consideration that is easy."

" But how could one not value oneself? If one had value, no one would desire one's surrender."

" That would not be your concern nor mine : some one else's business would it be to determine our respective values. The one thing that would immediately concern us would be to know how to surrender."

Madame Odintsov sat up sharply.

" I still believe you to be speaking from experience," she said.

"No; words, idle words — -words not meant to be taken personally."

" Then you yourself might be capable of surrendering? "

" I might. But in any case I should not care to boast."

Both remained silent for a moment. From the drawing-room came the notes of the piano.

"How late Katia is playing!" remarked Anna Sergievna.

Bazarov raised his head.

" Yes, it is late," he said. " Time for you to go to rest."

" Wait a moment, however. Why should you hurry away? I have something more to say to you."

" What may it be? "

" Wait," she repeated. As she did so, her eyes gazed at him as though studying his personality. For a few moments he paced the room— then suddenly approached her, said " Good night," squeezed her hand until she could have shrieked with the pain, and departed.

Raising her fingers to her lips, she blew after him a kiss. Then, rising with an abrupt, convulsive movement, she ran towards the door as though to call him back. But at that moment her maid entered with a decanter on a silver tray, and Madame halted, bid the maid begone, reseated herself, and sank into a reverie. Her hair, like a winding black snake, had broken loose from its fastenings. Dimly illumined by the lamp, she sat motionless, save that at intervals she chafed her hands, for the night air was beginning to grow chilly.

Two hours later Bazarov re-entered his bedroom in a state of dishevelment and despondency, and with his boots soaked with dew. Arkady was seated, fully dressed, at the writing-table, with a book in his hands.

" So you are not in bed yet ? " Bazarov remarked irritably.

Arkady's only reply was to ask the counter-question:

" You have been sitting with Anna Sergievna, have you not ? "

" I have," replied Bazarov. " I was sitting there while you and Katia were playing the piano."

" Oh, / was not playing," retorted Arkady. Then he stopped, for he felt the tears to be very near his eyes, and had no wish to let them fall in the presence of his satirical mentor.

XVIII

When Madame"' Odintsov entered the breakfast-room next morning, Bazarov had been sitting over his cup for a considerable time. He glanced sharply at her as she opened the door, and she turned in his direction as inevitably as though he had signed to her to do so. Somehow her face looked pale, and it was not long before she returned to her boudoir, whence she issued again only at luncheon time. Since dawn the weather had been too rainy to admit of outdoor expeditions, and therefore the party adjourned to the drawing-room, where Arkady began to read aloud the latest nimiber of some journal, while the Princess manifested her usual surprise at his conduct (as though it had been conduct of an indecent nature!), and fixed upon him a gaze which, though one of lasting malignancy, proved also to be one of which he took not the slightest notice.

" Pray come to my boudoir, Evgenii VasiUtch," said Anna' Sergievna. " I have something to ask you. I think that last night you mentioned some textbook or another? "

Rising, she moved towards the door, whilst the Princess stared around the room as much as to say: "i Dear, dear ! This does surprise me ! " Then she brought her eyes back to Arkady, who, raising his voice, and bending towards Katia (by whose side he was sitting), continued his reading as before.

Meanwhile Madame Odintsov walked hurriedly to her boudoir, and^^Bazarov followed with his eyes fixed upon the floor, and his ears open to no sound but the faint rustling of a silk dress. Axrived at her destination, Madame seated herself in the chair which she had

occupied overnight, and Bazarov also took a seat where he had sat on the occasion in question.

" What is the title of the book? " she asked after a brief pause.

" Notions Generales, by Pelouse and Fremy. " I can also recommend Ganot's Traite Elementaire de Physique Experimentale, which is more detailed in its plates than the other work, and, in general, is "

But Madame Odintsov held up her hand.

" Pardon me," she interrupted. " I have not brought you here to discuss textbooks. I have brought you here to renew our conversation of last night, at the point where you left the room so abruptly. I hope that 1 shall not weary you? "

" I am entirely at your service. What was it we were discussing? "

She glanced at him.

" Happiness, I think," she said. " In fact, I was speaking to you of myself. The reason why I mention happiness is the following. Why is it that when one is enjoying, say, a piece of music, or a beautiful summer evening, or a conversation with a sympathetic companion, the occasion seems rather a hint at an infinite felicity existent elsewhere than a real felicity actually being experienced? Perhaps, however, you have never encountered such a phenomenon ? "

Where we are not, there do we wish to be,' — you know the proverb. Last night you said that you are dissatisfied. Such a thought never enters into my head."

" Is it that such thoughts seem to you ridiculous ? "

" No — rather, that they never occur to me."

" Indeed? Well, to know' what your thoughts are is a thing which I greatly wish to attain."

" I do not understand you."

" Then Usten. For a long time past I have been wishing to have this out with you. Do not tell me —

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you yourself know that it is useless to do so — that you are a man apart. As a matter of fact, you are a man still young, with all your life before you. I wish to know for what you are preparing, and what future awaits you, and what is the goal which 3^ou are seeking to reach, and whither you are travelling, and what you have in your mind — in short, who and what you are."

" I am surprised! Already you know that I dabble

in natural science; while, as regards my future "

" Yes ? As regards your future ? "
" I have told you that I purpose to become a district physician."

Anna Sergievna waved her hand impatiently.
" Why tell me that, when you yourself do not believe it ? It is for Arkady to return me such answers, not you."
" And is Arkady in any way — --? "
" Wait. Do you mean to tell me that such a modest r61e will really satisfy you, when you yourself have asserted that the science of medicine does not exist? No, no ! You have given me that answer for the reason that you desire to keep me at arm's length, that you have no faith in me. Then let me tell you that I am capable of understanding you, that I too have known poverty and ambition, that I too have had my experiences."

" I daresay: yet pardon me when I intimate that I am not accustomed to bare my soul. Moreover, there

is fixed between you and me such a gulf that "

" A gulf? Do you again say that I am an aristocrat ? Come, come, Evgenii Vasilitch! Have I not already told you that I^ — ? "

" Can it avail anything to discuss the future when, for the most part, our futures are wholly independent of ourselves? Should the occasion arise to be up and doing, well and good: but, should the occasion not arise, at least let us leave ourselves room for thankfulness that we did not waste time in useless chatter."

" What? You call a friendly talk ' useless chatter ' ? Then do you deem me, as a woman, unworthy of your confidence, or do you despise all women? "

" You I do not despise : and that you know full well."

" I know nothing of the kind. Of course I can understand your reluctance to speak of your future career; but as to what is taking place within you at the present moment "

" ' Taking place within me at the present moment ' ? " Bazarov exclaimed. " One would think I was a state or a community ! Nor is it a process which interests me ; while, in addition, a man cannot always put into words ' what is taking place within him.' "

" I do not see it. Why should you hesitate to express what may be in your soul ? "

" Could you do as much? " asked Bazarov.

" I could," came the reply after a brief hesitation.

Bazarov bowed in an ironical manner.

" Then you have the advantage of me," he said.

Her glance quickened into a note of interrogation.

" Very well," she said. " Yet I will venture to say that you and I have not met in vain, and that we shall always remain good friends. Moreover, I feel certain that in time your secretiveness and reserve will disappear."

" Then have you noticed in me much such ' secretiveness and reserve ' ? "

" I have."

Bazarov rose, and moved towards the window.

" Do you really want to know the cause of that ' secretiveness, and reserve ' ? " he asked. " Do you really want to know 'what is taking place within ' me ? "

" I do," she replied. Yet even as she spoke she felt run through her a tinge of apprehension for which she could not account.

" And you will not be angry with me if I tell you ? "

"No."

"No?"

He approached her and halted behind her.

" Learn, then," he said, " that I love you with a blind, insensate passion. You have forced it from me at last!"

She stretched out her arms before her, while Bazaro\', turning, pressed his forehead against the window-pane. His breath caught in his throat, and his whole body was quivering. Yet this was not the agitation bom of the diffidence of youth, nor was it the awe inspired by a first confession of love. Rather, it was the beating of a strong and terrible emotion which resembled madness and was, perhaps, alcin to it. As for Madame Odintsov, a great horror had come over her — also a great feeling of compassion for him.

" Evgcnii Vasilitch! " she cried. In the words there rang an involuntary note of tenderness.

Wheeling about, he devoured her with his glance. Then he seized her hands in his, and pressed her to his bosom.

She did not free herself at once. Only after a moment did she withdraw to a comer, and stand looking at him. He rushed towards her again, but she whispered in hurried alarm:

" You have mistaken me! "

Had he taken another step, she would have screamed.

Biting his lips, he left the room.

Half an hour later her maid brought her a note. It consisted of a single line only, and said : " Must I depart to-day, or may I remain until to-morrow ? "

To it Anna Sergievna replied: " Wh}- depart? I have failed to understand you, and you have failed to understand me — that is all."

But mentally she added: " Rather, I have failed to understand myself,"

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Until dinner time she remained secluded, and spent the hours in pacing her room with her hands clasped behind her. Occasionally she would halt before the window-panes or a mirror, to draw a handkerchief across a spot on her neck which seemed to be burning like fire. And every time that she did so she asked herself what had led her to force Bazarov's confidence; also, whether or not she had had any suspicion that such a thing might result.

" Yes, I am to blame," she finally decided. " Yet I could not have foreseen the whole denouement."

Then she recalled Bazarov's almost animal face as he rushed to seize her in his arms. And at the thought she blushed.

" Or is it that ? " Here she stopped, and shook back her curls. The reason was that she had seen herself in a mirror, and, as in a flash, had learnt from that image of a head thrown back, with a mysterious smile lurking between a pair of half-parted lips and in a pair of half -closed eyes, something which confounded her.

" No, no! Again no! " she cried. " Only God knows what might come of it. Such things are not to be played with. Freedom from worry is the chief thing in the world."

Nor had her sangfroid really been shattered. Rather, she was a little agitated — so little that, when, for some unknown reason, she shed a tear or two, those tears owed their origin not to any deep emotion, to the fact that she was wounded, but to a sense of having involuntarily been at fault in permitting certain vague yearnings — a certain consciousness of the transience of life, a certain desire for novelty — to urge her towards the boundary line. And over that boundary line she had peeped. And in front of her she had beheld, not an abyss, but a waste, a sheer ugliness.

XIX

In spite of her self-command, in spite of her superiority to convention, Madame Odintsov could not but feel a little uncomfortable when she entered the dining-room for the evening meal. Nevertheless the meal passed off mthout incident, and after it Porphyri Platonitch came in, and related various anecdotes on the strength of a recent visit to the neighbouring town — among other things, a story to the effect that Governor " Bardeloue " had commanded his whole staff of officials to wear spurs, in order that, if need be, he could dispatch them on their errands on horseback! Meanwhile, Arkady talked in an undertone to Katia, and also paid diplomatic attention to the Princess; while Bazarov maintained such an obstinate, gloomy silence that Madame, glancing at him (as she did twice, and openly, not covertly), thought to herself, as she scanned his stern, forbidding face, downcast eyes, and all-pervading expression of rigid contempt : " No, no! Again, no! "

Dinner over, she conducted her guests into the garden, and, perceiving that Bazarov desired a word with her, walked aside a little, halted, and waited for him. Approaching with his eyes on the ground, he said in a dull way :

" I must beg your pardon, Anna Sergievna. Surely you must be feeling extremely angry with me ? "

" No, not angry so much as grieved," she repUed.

" So much the worse! But I have received sufficient punishment, have I not? My position now (I am sure that you will agree with me) is a very awkward one. True, you wrote in your message : ' Why need you depart ? ' but I cannot and will not remain. By to-morrow, therefore, I shaU have departed."

" But why need you, need you ? "

" Why need I depart ? "

" No, I was going to have said something quite different."

" We cannot recover the past," he continued, " and it was only a question of time before this should happen. I know only of one condition under which I could remain. And that concUtion is never Hkely to arise. For (pardon my presumption) I suppose you neither love me now nor could ever do so? "

With the words there came a flash from under his dark brows.

She did not reply. Through her brain there flitted only the one thought : " I am afraid of this man! "

" Farewell," he continued, as though he had divined that thought. Then he moved away towards the house.

Entering the house a little later, Anna Sergievna called to Katia, and took the girl by the arm: nor throughout the rest of the evening did she once part from her. Also, instead of joining in a game of cards, she sat uttering laugh after laugh of a nature which ill consorted with her blanched and careworn face. Gazing at her perplexedly, as a young man will do, Arkady kept asking himself the question: "What can this mean? " As for Bazarov, he locked himself in his room, and only appeared to join the rest at tea. When he did so, Anna Sergievna yearned to say something kind to him, but could think of no words for the purpose. To her dilemma, however, an unexpected incident put an end. This was the entry of the butler to announce Sitnikov !

To describe the craven fashion in which the young Progressive entered the room would be impossible. Although, with characteristic importunity, he had decided to repair to the residence of a lady with whom he was barely acquainted, and who had not accorded him an invitation (his pretext for such presumption being that, according to information received, she happened to be entertaining guests who were both intellectual and " very intimate " with himself), he had since felt his courage ebb to the marrow of his bones, and now, instead of proffering all the excuses and compliments which he had prepared in advance, blurted out some ridiculous story to the effect that Evdoksia Kukshin had sent him to inquire after the health of Anna Sergie\Tia, and that Arkady Nikolaievitch had always spoken of him in terms of the highest respect. But at this point he began to stammer, and so lost his head as to sit down upon his own hat ! No one bade him depart, however, and Anna Sergievna even went so far as to present him to her aunt and sister. Accordingly it was not long before he recovered his equanimity, and shone forth with his accustomed brilHancy. Often the appearance of the paltry represents a convenient phenomenon in life, since it relaxes over-taut strings, and sobers natures prone to conceit and self-assurance by reminding them of their kinship with the newcomer. Thus Sitnikov's arrival caused everything to become duller and a trifle more futile, but also rendered things simpler, and enabled the company to partake of supper with a better appetite, and to part for the night half an hour earlier than usual.

■■ Let me recall to you some words of your own," said Arkady when he had got into bed, and Bazarov was still undressing. " I refer to the words: ' Why are you downhearted ? Have you just fulfilled a sacred duty ? ' "

Between the two there had become established those half-quizzical relations which are always a sign of tacit distrust and' a smouldering grudge.

" To-morrow I intend to set out for my father's place," remarked Bazarov, in disregard of what Arkady had said.

The latter raised himself on his elbow. Though surprised, he also, for some reason, felt glad.

" Ah! " he exclaimed. " Then that is why you are down-hearted? "

Bazarov yawned.

" When you are come to be a little older," he rephed, " you will know more."

" And what of Anna Sergievna? " continued Arkady.

" WeU? What of her?"

" Is it likely that she will let you go ? "

" I am not her hireling."

Arkady relapsed into thought, and Bazarov sought his bed, and turned his face to the wall.

For a few moments silence reigned.

" Evgenii," said Arkady suddenly.

"Yes?"

" I too intend to leave to-morrow."

Bazarov made no reply.

" True, I shall be returning to Maiino," continued Arkady, " but we might bear one another company as far as Khokhlovskie Viselki, and there you could hire horses of Thedot. Of course, I should have been delighted to make your family's acquaintance, but, were I to accompany you, I might act as a source of constraint upon them and yourself alike. You must pay us another visit at Marino later."

" I wiD. As a matter of fact, I have left some of my things there." Bazarov still had his face turned to the wall.

" Why does he not ask me the reason of my departure — a departure as sudden as his?" reflected Arkady. " Why is either of us departing, for that matter? "

As he continued to reflect he realised that, while unable to return a satisfactory answer to the question

propounded, he seemed to have got a heartache somehow, to be feeling that he would find it hard to part with the life at Nikolskoe to which he was grown so accustomed. Yet he could not remain there alone. That would be worse still.

" Between him and her there is something in the wind," he reflected. "That being so, what would my sticking here avail after he had gone ? I should weary Anna Sergievna,and lose my last chance of pleasing her." Then he began to draw a mental picture of the lady whom he had just named : until there cut across the fair presentment of the young widow another set of features. " Katia too I shall miss," he whispered to his pillow (which had already received one of his tears). At length, raising his curly poll, he exclaimed :

" What, in the devil's name, brought that idiot Sitnikov here? "

He heard Bazarov stir under the bedclothes, then remark :

" You yourself arc an idiot. We need the Sitnikovs of this world. Such donkeys are absolutely necessary to us, to me. The gods ought not to have to bake pots."

" Ah ! " reflected Arkady. For, as in a flash, there had become revealed to him the bottomless profundity of Bazarov's conceit.

" Then you and I are the gods? " he said aloud. " Or are you a god, and I a donkey ? "

" You are," came the gruff reply. " As yet, at all events, you are."

No particular astonishment was evinced by Madame Odintsov when, on the following day, Arkady infonned her that it was his intention to accompany Bazarov.

Rather, she looked distraught and wearw Katia glanced at him gravely and in silence, and the Princess went so far as to cross herself under her shawl — a precaution against the young men observing the gesture. Sitnikov

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too was dumbfounded at having just entered the breakiast-room in a new and most elegant suit (this time not of " Slavophil " cut, not to mention the fact that he had also had the pleasure of amazing his temporary valet with the multitude of his shirts), only to find himself confronted with the prospect of being deserted by his comrades ! He shufiQed and wriggled like a hare driven to the edge of a covert, and blurted out, almost in panic-stricken fashion, that he too had a great mind to depart. Nor did Madame Odintsov make any great effort to dissuade him.

" I have an exceedingly comfortable koliaska," the unfortunate young man said to Arkady, " and I could give you a lift in it, and leave Evgenii Vasilitch to use your taraniass, which would suit him better than the koliaska."

" But I should not like to take you so far out of your way, for the distance to my home is considerable."

" That would not matter, that would not matter. I have plenty of time to spare, and also some business to do in that direction."

"What? Leasehold business again?" inquired Arkady disparagingly. But Sitnikov was so distraught that he forbore to giggle in his usual fashion.

" I can guarantee that the koliaska is comfortable," he repeated. " Indeed, it could hold all three of us."

" Do not vex Monsieur Sitnikov by refusing," put in Madame Odintsov.

So, with a meaning glance at her, Arkady nodded assent to Sitnikov.

Breakfast over, the guests departed. Anna Sergievna offered Bazarov her hand.

" I hope we shall meet again? " she said.

" Only if you wish it," he replied.

" Then we shall meet again."

The first to issue upon the verandah and enter

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Sitnikov's koliaska was Arkady. The butler assisted him obsequiously, although Arkady could with equal readiness have struck the man or burst into tears. As for Bazarov, he took possession of the tarantass.

Khokhlovskie Viselki reached, Arkady waited until Thedot, the local posting-master, had harnessed fresh horses, and then, approaching the tarantass, said to Bazarov with his old smile:

" Evgenii, take me with you. I should like to come to your place, after all."

" Get in, then," muttered Bazarov.

This made Sitnikov, who had been walking up and down beside his conveyance, and whistling, fairly gasp. Nevertheless the heartless Arkady removed his luggage from the koliaska, seated himself beside Bazarov, and, according his late fellow-traveller a courteous bow, shouted: " Right away! " The tarantass started, and soon was lost to view. Much taken aback, Sitnikov gazed at his coachman. But the latter was flicking the flanks of the trace horse with his whip, and therefore Sitnikov had no choice but to leap into the vehicle, to shout to a couple of peasants: " Off with your caps, you rascals! " and be driven to the town, whither he arrived at a late hour, and where, on the following day, he declared to Madame Kukshin that he had had enough of " those odious churls and upstarts."

On Arkady seating himself beside Bazarov in the tarantass, he pressed his hand, and Bazarov seemed to divine the meaning of the silent hand-clasp, and to appreciate it. During the previous night the elder man had never once closed his eyes. Also, for several days past he had neither smoked a cigar nor eaten more than the merest scrap of food. Indeed, as he sat in the tarantass, his fine-drawn profile, under the overshadowing cap, looked sharper and grimmer than ever.

"Give me a cigar, will you?" he said. "Also,
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pra}' look at my tongue, and tell me if it has a bilious appearance."

" Yes, it has," replied Arkady.

" I thought so, for this cigar seems tasteless. Moreover, the infernal thing has come unrolled."

" You have changed a good deal of late? " hazarded Arkady.

" I daresay. But I shall be myself again, soon. The only thing now troubling me is the fact that my mother is so good-naturedly fussy. Should one's paunch not be projecting, or should one not eat at least ten meals a day, she relapses into despair. M\^father,of course, is different, for he has been all over the world, and knows what is what. This cigar is simply unsmokable." And Bazarov consigned it to the dust of the roadwa^^

" The distance to your place is twenty-five versts, I suppose? " queried Arkady.

" It is so. But inquire of that sage there." And Bazarov pointed to the peasant (an employe oi Thedot's) who was seated on the box.

The " sage " in question rephed that he " could not say exactly," since the verst-posts in those parts had not been measured out ; after which he went on to swear at the shaft horse for " kicking " its " jowl about " — that is to say, jerking its head up and down.

" Aye, aye," commented Bazarov. " Take warning from me, my young friend. An instructive example sits before you — an example of the vanity of this world. By a single thread does the destiny of every man hang, and at any moment there may open before him an abyss into which he and his may plunge. For always he is laying up for himself misfortune."

" At what are you hinting? " asked Arkady.

" At nothing. I am merely saying outright that you and I have behaved very foolishly. However, why talk of it ? I have noticed that in surgical operations it is

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the patient who fights against his hurt who soonest gets well."

"I do not understand you," Arkady said. " So far as I can see, you have nothing whatsoever to complain of."

" You cannot understand me? Well, mark this: that you had far better go and break stones by the roadside than allow a woman to obtain even the least hold over you. Such a thing is sheer " (he nearly said " Romanticism," but changed his mind) " rubbish."

"Perhaps you do not believe me?" he went on. " Nevertheless, I tell you that, though you and I have been cultivating feminine society, and enjojdng it, the sense of rehef when such society is abandoned is like taking a cold bath on a summer's day. Never ought a man to touch such folHes. Always he ought, as the excellent Spanish saying has it, 'to remain as the beasts of the field.' Look here," he added to the peasant on the box. '"Do you, my man of wisdom, possess a wife? "

The peasant turned a porUon of a flat, near-sighted visage in the friends' direction.

" A wife? " he repeated. " Yes, I do. \Miy shouldn't I?"

" Never mind that. Do you ever beat her? "

"My wife? Sometimes. But never without good cause."

" Excellent ! And does she ever beat you ? "

The peasant gave his reins a jerk.

" What a thing, barin\ " he exclaimed. " Surely you must be joking? " Evidently the question had offended him.

"You hear that, Arkady Nikolaievitch? " said Bazarov. " You and I have been similarly beaten. That is what comes of being gentry."

Arkady laughed in spite of himself, but Bazarov

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turned away, and did not speak again until the end of the journey.

To Arkady the twenty-five versts seemed Uke fift}^; but at length there came into view, on the slope of a low hill, the homestead of the manor where Bazarov's parents resided. On one side of it, amid a clrmip of young birch trees, there could be seen the servants' quarters under their thatched roofs; while at the door of the nearest hut a couple of fur-capped peasants were engaged in a contest of mutual abuse.

" You are an old pig! " one of them said to the other. " And that is worse than being a young one."

" Your wife is a witch," retorted the other.

" From the lack of restraint in their bearing," commented Bazarov, " as well as from the playfulness of their terms of speech, you will gather that my father's peasantry are not downtrodden. But here is my father himself. I can see him stepping out on to the verandah. He will have heard the sound of our collar-bells. Yes, it is he! I recognise his figure. But how grey he looks, poor old fellow! "

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XX

Bazarov leant forward from the tarantass, and Arkady, peering over his friend's shoulder, beheld, on the entrance steps of the manor-house, a tall, thin man with dishevelled hair and a narrow, aquiline nose. Clad in an old military tunic of which the front was flying open, he was standing with legs apart, a long pipe in his mouth, and eyes blinking in the glare of the sunlight.

The horses pulled up.

" So you have come at last ! " exclaimed Bazarov's father, still continuing to smoke (though, as he did so, the stem of the pipe was rattling and shaking between his fingers). " Now, jump out, jump out ! "

Again and again he embraced his son.

" Eniusha, Eniusha! " ^ the tremulous voice of an old woman also cried as the door of the house opened and there appeared on the threshold a short, rotund old dame in a white cap and a short striped blouse. Gasping and staggering, she would have fallen had not Bazarov hastened to support her. As he did so her fat old arms clasped him around the neck, and her head sank upon his bosom. All then w-as still for a moment. Only her convulsive sobs broke the silence. Meanwhile Bazarov Senior breathed hard, and blinked more vigorously than ever.

" Enough, enough, Arisha! " he said at length with a glance at Arkady, who had remained standing beside the tarantass (and even the peasant on the box-seat had turned away his head). " Pray cease, I tell you. This is not necessary. I beg of you to cease."

"Ah, Vasih Ivanitch! " whimpered the poor old
^ An endearing diminutive of Evgenii.

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woman. " To think of the long while since last I saw my Eniusha, m}' own, my darling boy! " StiU keeping her arms clasped around Bazarov, she withdrew her ruffled, convulsed, tear-stained face from his breast, looked at him for a moment with blissful, yet comical, eyes, and glued herself again to his bosom.

" Yes, yes," said VasiH Ivanitch. " Such is in the nature of things. But had we not better go indoors ? See ! Evgenii has brought a guest! "

With a slight scrape and a bow, he added to Arkady:

" Pray pardon us, sir, but you wiU understand the situation. A woman's weakness — ^ahem ! — and a mother's heart."

His lips, chin, and eyebrows too were working. Evidently he was striving to master himself, and to appear totally indifferent. Arkady responded to his bow with a like salutation.

" Yes, yes, dear mother; let us go indoors," said Bazarov. Leading the shaking old lady into the house, he seated her in a cosy chair, bestowed upon his father another hurried embrace, and then presented Arkady.

"I am glad indeed to make your acquaintance!" said Vasili Ivanitch. " I am glad indeed! But do not expect too much of us, my dear sir. My establishment is organised on simple lines; it is placed on what I might call ' a war footing.' Come, come, Arina! Pray calm yourself, and attend to your duties as a hostess. Oh, fie, to give way in such a manner! What will our guest think of you ? "

" My dear, I do not know the gentleman's name," the old lady sobbed through her tears.

" Arkady Nikolaievitch," prompted Vasili Ivanitcli in an undertone, but with great ceremony.

" Then pray pardon a foolish old woman, sir." Arina Vlasievna blew her nose, inclined her head to right and left, and wiped each eye in turn as she did so. " Yes,

pray pardon me, but I had thought never again to see mv darling boy before I died."

" But, you see, we have seen him again," said Vasili Ivanitch. " Here, Taniushka! " — this to a barefooted serf girl of thirteen who, clad in a bright red cotton frock, had been an interested, but timid, observer in the doorway. " Bring your mistress a glass of water on a salver. Do you hear? And you, gentlemen," he continued with old-fashioned sprightliness, " will you be so good as to step into the study of a retired veteran ? "

" First another kiss, Eniusha," gasped Arina Vlasievna. Then, as Bazarov bent over her form, she added : " How handsome you have gro\\Ti ! "

" Handsome or not, he is human," said Vasili Ivanitch. " Wherefore, now that you have satisfied your mother's heart, I look to you to see also to the satisfaction of our honoured guests. For than yourself no one knows better that nightingales cannot be fed on air."

This caused the old lady to rise from her chair, and to exclaim :

"Yes, yes: in one moment, Vasih Ivanitch. The table shall be laid, and I myself will hurry to the kitchen, and see that the samovar be got ready. Everything shall be done. Why, it must be three years since last I gave Eniusha a meal."

" Yes, three years, dear wife. But now bustle about, and do not let yourself get flurried. Gentlemen, accompany me, I beg of you. But here is Timotheitch coming to pay you his respects. How delighted he looks, the old rascal ! Now, pray favour me with your company."

And he strode fussily ahead with much shuffling and creaking of fiat-soled slippers.

The Bazarovian establishment consisted of six small rooms, of which one — the room to which Vasili Ivanitch was now conducting our friends — was looked upon as

the study. Between its two windows there stood a fat-legged table, strewn with dusty, fusty papers; on the walls hung a number of Turkish weapons, nagaiki,^ and swords, a couple of landscapes, a few anatomical plates, a portrait of Hufeland,^ a black-framed monogram done in hair, and a diploma protected with a glass front; between two large birchwood cupboards stood a ragged, battered leathern sofa; on shelves lay huddled a miscellany of books, boxes, stuffed birds, jars, and bladders; and, lastly, in a corner reposed a broken electric batter3^

" Already I have warned you," said Vasili Ivanitch to Arkady, " that we live here, so to speak, en bivouac."

" Make no excuses," put in Bazarov. " Kirsanov knows that you and I are not Croesuses, and that no butler is kept. But where can we find Arkady a bed? That is the question."

" We have an excellent room in the wing, where he would be most comfortable."

" You have added a wing, then ? "

" Yes, Evgenii Vasilitch," Timotheitch interposed. " At least, a bathroom."

" But it is to a room next the bathroom that I am referring," Vasili Ivanitch hastened to explain. " However, that will not matter, since it is now summer time. I will run up there at once, and see that it is put in order. Meanwhile, Timotheitch, fetch in the luggage. To you, Evgenii, I will allot the study. Cuique stium." ^

"There!" said Bazarov to Arkady as soon as his father had left the room. " Is he not just such a jolly, good-hearted, queer old fellow as your own father, though in a different way? He chatters just as he always used to do."

^ Cossack whips.

* Christoph Wilhelm Huf eland (1762-1836), a well-known German physicist whose treatise Makrobiotik, or The A rt of Prolonging Life, has been translated into almost every European language.

^ " To each his own."

" Yes; and your mother seems an excellent woman."

" She is. Moreover, you can see that she does not attempt to hide her feelings. Only wait and see what a dinner she will give us! "

" But as vou were not expected to-day," put in Timotheitch, who had just re-entered with Bazarov's portmanteau, " no beef has been got into the house."

" Never mind. Let us dine without beef — or, for that matter, without an^-thing at all. ' Poverty is no crime.' "

" How many souls ^ are there on your father's property?" asked Arkady,

" It is not his property; it is my mother's. The number of souls on it is, I think, fifteen."

" No, twenty-two," corrected Timotheitch with an air of pride, the next moment the sound of shuffling slippers was heard once more, and VasiU Ivanitch re-entered.

" Your room will be ready for 5'ou in a few minutes," lie announced grandiloquently to Arkady. " Meanwhile, here is your servant." He pointed to a close-cropped urchin who, clad in an out-at-elbows blue kaftan and an odd pair of shoes, had also made his appearance, " His name is Thedika, and, for all my son's injunction, I had better repeat to you not to expect too much of him — though certainly he will be able to fill your pipe for you. I presume that you smoke? "

" I do, but only cigars."

" A commendable rule! I too prefer cigars, but find them extremely difficult to procure in this isolated part of the count r}-."

" Have done with bewaihng your poverty," Bazarov goodnaturedly interrupted. " Rather, seat yourself on this sofa, and take a rest."

Vasili Ivanitch smilingly did as he was bidden. Extremely like his son in features (save that his forehead
^ i.e. serfs.

was lower and narrower, and his mouth a trifle wider), he was for ever on the move — now shrugging his shoulders as though his coat cut him under the armpits, now blinking, now coughing, now twitching his fingers. In this he was sharply differentiated from his son, whose most distinguishing characteristic was his absolute immobility.

" Have done wath bewailing my poverty? " repeated the old man. " Why, you cannot surely think that 1 would weary our guest with complaints concerning our isolation ? As a matter of fact, a man of brains need never be isolated, and I m3^self do everything in my power to avoid becoming moss-grown, and falling behind the times."

Extracting from his pocket a new yellow handkerchief which he had contrived to lay hands upon while proceeding to Arkady's room, he continued, as he flourished the handkerchief in the air :

" Of the fact that, at some cost to myself, I have organised my peasantry on the obrok system, and apportioned them one-half, even more, of my land, I wiU not speak, since I conceive that to have been my duty, as well as a measure dictated by prudence (though no other landowner in the neighbourhood would have done as much). Rather, I am referring to scholarships and to science."

" I see that you have here The Friend of Health for 1855," remarked Bazarov.

" Yes, a friend sent it me," Vasili Ivanitch hastened to explain. " Phrenology too we take into account " (he addressed this last to Arkady rather than to Bazarov, while accompanying it with a nod towards a small plaster bust of which the cranial surface was divided into a series of numbered squares). " Yes indeed! Nor are we ignorant of Schonlein ^ and Rademacher."

^ Johann Lukas Schonlein (1793-1864), a noted German physician.

" In the province of you still believe in Rade-

macher? " queried Bazarov.

Vasili Ivanitch laughed.

" In the province of we still beheve in ? Ah,

gentlemen ! Hardly could you expect us to move as fast as you do. You find us in a state of transition. In my day, the humoralist Hoffmann and the vitahst Braun had already come to be looked upon with ridicule (and their fulminations undoubtedly seem absurd) ; but now you have replaced Rademacher with a new authority, and are making obeisance to that authority exactly as though in twenty years' time he too will not have fallen into contempt."

" Let me tell you, for your comforting," said Bazarov,

" that we ridicule all medicine, and render obeisance to no one."

" What ? Do you not wish to become a doctor ? "

" Yes ; but the one thing does not preclude the other."

Vasili Ivanitch raked out his pipe until only a glowing morsel of ash remained.

" Perhaps so, perhaps so," he said. " That point I win not dispute. For who am I that I should dispute such things — -I who am a mere retired army doctor, et voild totii — an army doctor who has taken to agriculture? "

With that he turned to Arkady.

" Do you know, I served under your grandfather," he said. " He was then in command of a brigade. Many and many a review have I seen. And the society in which I mixed, the men whom I had as comrades! Yes, this humble individual has felt the pulses of Prince Vitzentschein and Zhukovsky, and also known all the leaders of the Southern Army of '14." He pursed his lips impressively. " At the same time, of course, my department was a separate one from theirs. It was the department of the lancet, you understand. Your grandfather stood high in the esteem of every one, and was a true soldier."

" We will agree that he was a decent old curmudgeon," drawled Bazarov.

"To think of speaking so, Evgenii!" exclaimed the old man. " General Kirsanov was not one of those who "

" Never mind him. As we were driving hither I greatly admired your birch plantation. It is doing splendidly."

Vasih Ivanitch's face brightened instantly.

" Yes, and see what a garden I have made! " he exclaimed. "Every tree in it has been planted with my own hands — orchard trees, and bush fruit trees, and every sort of medicinal herb. Ah, young sirs, though you may be wise in your generation, many a truth did old Paracelsus ^ discover in herbis et verbis et lapidibus. For myself, I have now retired from practice; yet twice a week am I given a chance to refurbish my ancient store of knowledge, since folk come to me for advice, and I cannot well turn them away. In particular do the poor seek my help, since there is no other doctor hereabouts. Yet stay! A certain retired major dabbles in the art. Once I asked him whether he had ever studied medicine, and he replied that he had not, that all that he did he did * out of philanthropy ' ! ' Out of philanthropy ' ! Ha, ha, ha! What think you of that, eh ? Ha, ha, ha! "

" Fill me a pipe, Thedika," said Bazarov curtly.

" And there was another doctor who came to visit a patient in this neighbourhood," continued Vasili Ivanitch in a tone of mock despair. " But by the time he arrived the patient had already joined his forefathers, and the servant of the house would not admit the doctor, saying that the latter's services were no longer required. This

^ Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493-1541), most coininonly known by his self-coined name of Paracelsus, and a German-Swiss traveller and physician.

the doctor had scarcely expected, and he was rather taken aback. ' Did the barin gasp before he died ? ' he inquired. ' He did, sir,' was the reply. ' Very much? ' ' Yes, very much.' ' Good! ' And the doctor returned home. Ha, ha, ha! "

Yet no one laughed except the old man himself. True, Arkady contrived to summon up a smile, but Bazarov only stretched himself and yawned. The conversation lasted about an hour, and then Arkady managed to get away to his room, which he found to consist of the vestibule to the bathroom, but at the same time to be clean and inviting. Soon afterwards Taniushka arrived to announce dinner.

The meal, though hastily prepared, was excellent, and even simiptuous. Only the wine proved to be rather of the " gooseberry " order — the dark-coloured sherry procured by Timotheitch from a certain wine merchant in the town smacking in equal parts of resin and of honey. Also, in addition, the flies made themselves a nuisance, owing to the fact that the page boy whose duty it was to keep them at bay with a gieen whisk had, for the nonce, been banished, lest he should excite too much comment on the part of the up-to-date visitors. Lastly, Arina Vlasievna had robed herself in gala attire — that is to say, in a high-peaked cap with yellow ribands and a blue, embroidered shawl. She burst into renewed weeping on beholding her beloved Eniusha, but, this time, gave her husband no occasion to chide her, so speedily did her own fear of staining her shawl cause her to wipe away the tears. None but the two young men ate anything, for the host and hostess had long ago dined ; while as waiters there ofl&ciated Thedika (much burdened with the novelty of wearing shoes) and a woman of a masculine type of face, and with a hump on her back, who was also accustomed to execute the functions of housekeeper, keeper of the poultry, and sempstress. During the meal Vasili Ivanitch paced to and fro, and discussed, in cheerful, and even rapturous, terms, the grave fears which Napoleon's ^ policy and the intricacy of the Italian question inspired in his breast. Arina Vlasievna, for her part, quite disregarded Arkady, and offered him not a single dish, but, seated with her hand supporting her face (to which a pair of puffy, cherry-coloured lips and a few moles communicated a kindly expression), kept her eyes fixed upon her son, while her breath came in a succession of pants. Her great desire was to ask her son how long he was going to stay, but she dared not do so for fear he should repty: " Only for two days," or something of the kind — which was a prospect of a nature to make her heart die within her. On the roast being served, Vasili Ivanitch disappeared, and returned, the next moment, with an uncorked bottle of champagne.

" See here," he exclaimed. " Rustic though we may be, we still keep something to make merry with on state occasions."

That said, he fiUed three tumblers and a wine-glass, proposed a health to " our inestimable guests," heel-tapped his glass in the military fashion, and forced his wife to drain hers to the dregs. Presently the pastry course supervened ; during which, though Arkady could not bear anything sweet, he deemed it his duty to partake of no less than four out of the many confections which had been prepared for his benefit. And this obligation he felt to be the more binding in that Bazarov bluntly declined all, and lit a cigar. Lastly there appeared tea, cream, biscuits, and butter; after which Vasili Ivanitch conducted the party into the garden, in order that the guests might admire the beauty of the evening. As he passed a certain bench he whispered in Arkady's ear:

" This is where I love to sit and meditate as I watch the sun sinking. It is just the spot for a hermit like ^ Napoleon III.

myself. And, further on, I have planted a few of Horace's favourite trees."

"What trees?" asked Bazarov, who had partially overheard.

" Acacia trees."

The other yawned, and, on observing this, Vasili Ivanitch hastened to say :

" I expect that you travellers would like now to seek the arms of Morpheus? "

" We should," Bazarov assented. " Yes, that is a true saying."

Upon which the son said " Good night " to his mother, and kissed her on the forehead, while she bestowed upon him a threefold embrace and (covertly) a blessing; while Vasili Ivanitch conducted Arkady to his room, and wished him " such God -given rest as I myself used to enjoy during the happier years of my life."

And certainly Arkady slept splendidly in the mint-scented annexe to the bathroom, where the only sound to be heard was that of a cricket chirping lustily against a rival from behind the stove.

Meanwhile, on leaving Arkady, Vasili Ivanitch repaired to the study, where, squatting at the foot of the sofa, he was about to enter into a discursive conversation with his son when the latter dismissed him, on the plea that he desired, rather, to go to sleep. Yet never once did Bazarov close his eyes that night, but lay staring into the darkness, since his memories of childhood had less power to move him than had the remembrance of the bitter experience through which he had recently passed.

For her part, Arina Vlasievna said her prayers with an overflowing heart, and then indulged in a long talk with Anfisushka; who, planted like a block before her mistress, with her solitary eye fixed upon the latter, communicated in a mysterious whisper her opinions and prognostications on the subject of Evgcnii Vasilitch.

Finally Arina Vlasievna's pleasurable emotion, coupled with the wine and the tobacco smoke, so caused the old lady's head to start whirling that, when her husband came to bed, he found himself obliged to moderate her exuberance with a gesture.

Arina Vlasievna was a true Russian housewife of the old school. That is to say, she ought to have lived a couple of hundred years earlier, during the period when the ancient Muscovite Empire was in being. At once pious and extremely nervous, she believed in every species of portent, divination, proverb, and vision; also in such things as urodivie,^ household demons, wood spirits, unlucky encounters, spells, popular medicines, Thursday salt, and an ever-imminent end to the world. Again, she placed much faith in such ideas as that, if a lighted candle lasts through the night preceding Easter Day, the buckwheat crops will come up well; that, should a human eye chance to fall upon a mushroom during the process of its growth, such growth will terminate forthwith; that the devil loves to be wheresoever there is water; and that all Jews bear on their breasts a blood-red stain. Again, she stood in great awe of mice, adders, frogs, sparrows, leeches, thunder, cold water, draughts, horses, billy-goats, fair men, and black cats, and also looked upon crickets and dogs as unclean creatures. Again, she never ate veal, pigeons, crabs, cheese, asparagus, artichokes, hare, or water melons (the last-named for the reason that, when split open, they reminded her of the head of John the Baptist!). Nor could she ever speak of oysters without a shudder. Again, though she loved eating, she observed every fast; though she slept ten hours out of the twenty-four, she

^ Urodivie, or " sacred imbeciles," were persons who, deficient of intellect in the ordinary sense, were yet believed by ancient Russia to enjoy particularly intimate communication with the divine and the lanseen.

never even went to bed if Vasili Ivanitch had got a headache; she read no books beyond Alexis or Siskins of the Forest; she wrote, at most, two letters a year; she knew every wrinkle as regards the departments of housekeeping, boiling, and baking (and that even though she herself never laid a finger upon anything, and hated even to have to stir from her place) ; she was aware that there-were certain folk in the world who must command, and others who must serve — ^wherefore she loved servility and genuflexions ; she treated all her subordinates with kindness and consideration; she sent never a beggar away empty; and she condemned no one for a fault, although at times she had a tendency to talk scandal. Likewise, in her youth she had been comely, and a player of the clavichord, and able to speak a little French ; but, owing to long residence with a husband whom she had married purely for love, she had grown rusty in those accomplishments, and forgotten alike her French and her music ; she loved and feared her son to a degree almost beyond expression ; she deputed the management of her property entirely to Vasili Ivanitch, and never interfered with it, but would fall to gasping, and waving her handkerchief about, and affrightedly raising her eyebrows, whenever her helpmeet happened to broach some new plan or some necessary reform which he had in his mind's eye; and, lastly, she was of so apprehensive a temperament that she lived in constant fear of some unknown misfortune, and would burst into tears should any one mention anything of a mournful character.

Such women are now extinct; and only God knows whether we ought to be glad of the fact.

XXI

When, in the morning, Arkady rose and opened the window, the first object to greet his eyes was Vasili I vanitch. Clad in a smock-frock, and belted with a handkerchief, the old man was busily digging in his vegetable garden. As soon as he noticed his young guest, he leaned upon his spade, and cried:

" Good morning ! How have you slept ? "

" Splendidly," replied Arkady,

" And I, as you see, am imitating Cincinnatus, and preparing a bed of late turnips. By the mercy of God do the times compel every man to win his bread with his own hands. At all times, indeed, is it useless to rely upon others : it is best to work oneself. Thus Jean Jacques Rousseau was right. Half an hour ago, however, you would have seen me in a very different r61e — ^first of all, injecting opium into a woman who had come to me with what the peasants call ' the goad,' and we dysentery, and then pulling out some teeth for a second woman. And, would you believe it, when I proposed administering ether to the second woman she would have none of it! These things I do gratis, you know, and as an amateur. Yet, let that not surprise you, for, after all, I am but a plebeian, but a homonovus. Come downstairs to sit in the shade and enjoy the freshness of the morning until breakfast shall be ready."

Arkady did as invited,

" You confer a favour upon me," said Vasili Ivanitch, raising his hand in military fashion to the battered skull-cap which adorned his head. " You see, I know

you to be used to luxury and ease. Yet even the folk of the great world need not disdain to snatch a brief respite under the roof of a cottage."

" I neither belong to the great world nor am used to luxury," protested Arkady.

"Come now ! " Vasili Ivanitch indulged in an amiable affectation of incredulity. " I myself, though I am now on the shelf, have rubbed about in my time, and can tell a bird by its flight. Also, I dabble a little in ph\siognomy and psychology. For that matter, I will not hesitate to say that, had I not enjoyed those advantages, I should long ago have come to rack and ruin, for the reason that, being one of the small fry, I should soon have been jostled out of the way by the crowd. Also, without flattery, I may say that the friendship which I discern to be existing between you and my son affords me the greatest pleasure. Only this moment I was speaking to him; for (as probably you know) he jumps out of bed at a very early hour, and goes careering all over the countryside. M-might I make so bold as to ask you whether you have known him long? "

" Only since last winter."

" Indeed? Also, might I make so bold as to ask whether — ^But sit you down, will you not? — might I also, as his father, venture to ask your frank opinion of him?"

" Your son is the most remarkable man that I have ever met," came the enthusiastic reply.

Vasili Ivanitch's eyes closed suddenly, while his cheeks quivered, and the spade slipped from his hand.

" Then you think ? " he began.

" I do not think — I am certain that there lies before your son a future which will make your name famous, i have felt certain of this since the first moment I met him."

"Indeed? Indeed?" Vasih Ivanitch could scarcely

articulate the words, but on his capacious hps there had dawned, and become fixed, a smile of triumph.

" Would you like to hear how our first meeting came about?"

" Indeed I should! And any other details you like."

Arkady therefore plunged into a discourse on Bazarov of the same ardour and the same enthusiasm as he had displayed on the night of the mazurka with Madame Odintsov. As Vasili Ivanitch listened, he blew his nose, rolled his handkerchief into a ball, coughed, and ruffled his hair; until, no longer able to contain himself, he reached over in Arkady's direction, and pressed his lips to the young man's shoulder.

" You have indeed cheered my heart ! " he exclaimed, still smiUng. "I simply idolise my son! But while my dear old wife is able to stand on rather a different footing with Evgenii — she is his mother, you know — I myself dare not express my whole feelings in his presence, for the reason that he dislikes such things, and is opposed to any manifestations of emotion. For the same reason some folk accuse him of hardness of heart and pride and insensibility; but men like Evgenii cannot be measured by ordinary standards, can they ? For example, any one but he would have gone on acting as a drag upon his parents; but, would you believe it? never once since his birth has he asked us for a kopeck more than he absolutely needed ! There, by God I "

" Yes, your son is a sincere, single-minded man," agreed Arkady.

" Yes, single-minded," affirmed Vasili Ivanitch. "And not only do I idolise him — I am proud of him, and have as my one conceit the hope that some day there may stand in his biography the following words : ' He was the son of a plain military doctor who, nevertheless, had the wit to divine the merits of the subject of this book, and to spare no pains in his education.' "

The old man's voice faltered for a moment, but presently resumed :

" What think you? Will the field of medicine bring him the fame which you have foretold? "

" Not the field of medicine alone — though in it, as elsewhere, he will become a leader."

"What field, then, Arkady Nikolaievitch? "

" I could not say. But in any case he wUl rise to fame."

" ' He will rise to fame ' ! " The old man relapsed into a state of ecstatic contemplation.

Presently Anfisushka arrived with a large plate of raspberries and the message :

" Arina Vlasievna has sent me to say that breakfast is ready."

Vasih Ivanitch started from his reverie.

" Bring us also some nice cool plums," he said.

" I will, sir."

" Yes, mind that they are cool. Arkady Nikolaievitch, do not stand on ceremony, but help yourself. Is Evgenii VasHitch yet back, Anfisushka? "

" I am," called Bazarov from Arkady's room.

Vasili Ivanitch wheeled about.

" Aha! " he cried. " So you have gone to pay your friend a visit? But you are too late, amice: he and I have been having a long conversation together, and it is now breakfast time, and your mother is calling us. By the way, Evgenii, a word or two with you."

" Concerning what ? "

" Concerning a peasant who is suffering from jaundice."

" Jaundice ? "

" Yes, of a very chronic and stubborn kind. I have prescribed scurvy grass and St. John's wort, and ordered the man to eat carrots, and given him a dose of soda; but such things are mere palliatives — I want something of a more drastic nature. That you laugh at medicine I am, of course, aware; but none the less I feel certain that you could give me some good, practical advice. But that you can do later. At the present moment, let us go in to breakfast."

And he leapt from the bench on which he had been seated, trolling gaily the couplet:

" Let us take for our rule, for our rule let us take it,
To live but for pleasure, and never forsake it! "

"What high spirits!" Bazarov remarked as he retired from the window.

Later, when the noontide sun was glowing from behind a thin canopy of dense, pale vapour, and all was still save that the chirping of a few birds in the trees lulled the hearer to a curious, drowsy lethargy, and the incessant call of a young hawk on a topmost bough made the air ring with its strident note, Arkady and Bazarov made for themselves pillows of sweet, dry, fragrant, crackling hay, and stretched themselves in the shadow of a rick.

" Do you see that aspen tree ? " remarked Bazarov. " I mean the one growing at the edge of a depression, where a brick kiln used to stand ? Well, when I was a boy I used to believe that, together, the depression and the aspen tree constituted a special talisman, in that, when near them, I never found time hang heavy upon my hands. Of course, the explanation is that in those days I failed to understand that that immunity from ennui was due to the very fact of my being a boy. But, now that I am grown up, the talisman seems to have lost its power."

" How long were you here in those days? "

" Only two years. After that we moved elsewhere. In fact, we led a wandering life, and spent it mostly in towns."

" Is the house an old one ? "

" It is. My maternal grandfather built it."

" Who was he? "

" The devil only knows! I think a major of some sort, a man who had served under Suvorov/ and could tell all manner of tales about crossing the Alps — though I daresay he told plenty of lies too."

" Ah ! I noticed a portrait of Suvorov in the drawing-room. Cheerful-looking old houses like this I simply love. Somehow they seem to have a smell of their own."

" Yes — a smell of lamp-oil mingled with trefoil," agreed Bazarov with a yawn. " But what flies they contain as well! "

There was a pause. Then Arkady resumed :

" Were you strictly kept when you were a boy? "

" You have seen for yourself what my parents are like. Surely they do not seem very severe folk."

" And do you love them very much? "

" I do."

" Certainly they seem to love you."

Bazarov was silent. Presently, however, clasping his hands behind his head, he asked :

" Do 3'ou know what is in my mind ? "

"No. What?"

" I am thinking of the pleasant life that my parents must lead. To think that at sixty my father can still fuss about, and talk of ' palUatives,' and doctor people, and do the bountiful to the peasants, and, in short, enjoy himself, and that my mother has her days so crammed full of occupations (including sighing and groaning) that she does not know which to begin upon first ! On the other hand, / "

" Yes, you? "

^Alexander Vasilievitch Suvorov (1720-1800), the great Russian general who, after defeating Napoleon in Italy, crossed the Alps to join hands with Korsakov, but found the latter to have been routed by Massena.

" Am doing what you see — lying under a rick. The space occupied by my body is small indeed compared with the surrounding immensity in which it has neither part nor lot, and the portion of time allotted to me here on earth is insignificant indeed compared with the eternity which I have never known, and shall never enter ! Yet in this same atom, in this same mathematical point which I call my body, the blood circulates, and the brain operates at will. A fine discrepancy for you — a fine futihty! "

" I would remark that what you have just said appUes to every human being in creation."

" True. What I mean is that my parents know not a single tedious moment, nor are in the least distressed with the thought of their insignificance — it is a thought which never stinks in their nostrils; whereas / — well, I feel nothing but weariness and rancour in my breast."

" Rancour? "UTiy rancour? "

" How can you ask ? Have you forgotten the recent past ? "

"No: only, I do not recognise your right to be angry. unhappy, perhaps, but not "

" I perceive you to understand love as it is understood by all our modern young men. That is to say, chirping ' Tsip, tsip, tsip ! ' like pullets, you take to your heels as soon as ever you see love approaching. I, however, am different. — But enough of this. What is past help is best not talked about." Bazarov rolled over on to his elbow. " Ah ! Here is a young ant towing in its wake a half -dead fly. Pull, brother, pull! Never mind that the fly hangs back, but avail yourself of your animal right to abjure all sympathy, seeing that our friend has only himself to thank for his trouble."

" Do not speak like that," expostulated Arkady. " How are you yourself to thank for your trouble? "

Bazarov raised his head.

" Nay," he said, " I was but jesting. Never have I got myself into trouble, and never shall any woman do it for me. Amen ! I have spoken. Never will you hear from me another word on the subject."

For a while the two friends lay without speaking.

" Yes," continued Bazarov, " man is a strange being. Contemplating from a distance the dull Ufe led by my parents, one would almost feel inchned to say to oneself: ' WTiat could be better than that, seeing that in that existence one merely eats and drinks and knows oneself to be acting in a sane and regular manner ? ' Yet a man will still become depressed, and yearn for company, even though he may curse it when he has got it."

" One ought so to order one's life that every moment in it shall be of significance," said Arkady sententiously.

" Of course; but while the significant, and even the pseudo-significant — yes, the absolutely insignificant as well — may be bearable, it is trifles, trifles that matter."

" Unless a man recognise their existence, they do not exist."

" H'm! A contra-platitude."

" What is that ? "

" This — that, should 3'ou say that education is useful, you will be uttering a platitude; but, should you say that education is harmful, you will be uttering a contra-platitude. The one is identical with the other, except that they differ a little in elegance of expression."

" And which has right on its side? "

Which has right on its side? ' I can only re-echo: 'Which? '"

" Come! You are out of spirits to-day."

" Am I ? Then the sun must have touched me a little, or else I must have eaten too man\' raspberries to be good for me."

" Then j^ou would do well to have a sleep."

" I think you are right. Only, do not look at me while I sleep, for a man cuts his very worst figure at such a time."

" Surely you do not care for people's opinion? "

"I do, even though a man in the best sense of the term ought never to trouble his head about such things, seeing that such a man is either above criticism or too feared and hated for critics to wish to tackle him."

" Curious! For I myself never hate any one."

" And I hate a great many people. You, you see, are a tender soul, you are so much pap, and therefore hatred could never come within your purview. People as retiring, as devoid of self-confidence as you are ■"

" What about 5^our own self-confidence? " interrupted Arkady. " What about your own opinion of yourself? "

Bazarov paused — then replied :

" As we were passing the hut of your starosta to-day (what a neat, pretty little place it looked !) you said to me: ' Not until every peasant shall have come to own such a place as this, and every one of us shall have contributed his mite to that end, will Russia attain perfection.' But, for my part, I abominate the scurvy churl for whom I am supposed to jump out of my skin, even though never a ' thank you ' should I get from him for doing so. For why should he thank me? His metier happens to be living in a white hut, and mine to be "

"Come, come, Evgenii! One is almost forced to agree with those who accuse us of being unprincipled."

" You talk like your uncle. No such thing as principle exists. That you seem never to have divined. Instincts only exist, and upon them everything depends."

" How so? "

" Thus. We will take myself as an example. Owing to the nature of my instincts, I am prone to deny — I am prone to deny because my brain is so constituted. In the same way, if you were to ask me why I am interested in chemistry, and why you Hke apples, I should reply that the same reason holds good in each case — that our respective instincts are what they are. In other words, there exists between your instincts and mine a certain affinity. Deeper it is not given us to probe."

" Then is honour an instinct? "

" It is."

" Oh, Evgenii! " cried Arkady sorrowfully.

"Do you dislike the conversation? Then let us philosophise no more, but ' permit nature to waft upon us the silence of sleep,' to quote Pushkin."

" Pushkin never said any such thing," objected Arkady.

" Then, if he did not, he ought, being a poet, to have done so. Perhaps he had served in the army? "

" Never did he serve in the army."

" Indeed? Why, in his every line we come across ' To battle, to battle, for the honour of Russia! ' "

" That is a mere invention on your part. The statement is an absolute calumny."

"A calumny? What matters a calumny? What is there in the term to be afraid of? Slander a man as much as you like, yet for himself he will hear things twenty times worse."

" Suppose we sleep," said Arkady irritably.

" With pleasure," Bazarov replied.

Nevertheless neither succeeded in the effort, for almost ever>' sleep-destroying sentiment happened to be in the ascendant. So, after five minutes of such ineffectual striving, both opened their eyes, and lay mutely gazing about them.

" Look! " cried Arkady after a pause. " Do you see that withered maple leaf fluttering to the ground ? Are not its movements exactly like those of a butterfly? Strange that an object so joyous and full of life should be able so to counterfeit an object mournful and dead!"

" My friend," protested Bazarov, " let me make at least this request of you: that you do not talk in ' beautiful language.' "

" I talk as I am able. I decline to be domineered over. Should a thought chance to enter my head, why should I not express it? "

" Similarly am I at liberty to express the thought that to talk in ' beautiful language ' is sheerly indecent."

" Indecent? Then swearing is not indecent? "

"Aha! I perceive you still to be minded to follow in your uncle's footsteps. How the idiot would have rejoiced if he could have heard you! "

" What did you call Paul Petrovitch? "

" I called him merely what he is — merely an idiot,"

" Have done! " shouted Arkady.

" Therein I detect the tie of blood," said Bazarov calmly. " It is a very stubborn factor, I have noticed, in some people. A man may abjure everything else, and cut himself adrift from every other prejudice, yet still remain powerless to confess that the brother who habitually steals his shirts is a thief. You see, the difficulty lies in the word ' my.' Is not that so? "

" No. It was from a sense of justice, rather than from a sense of kinship, that I spoke. But since you have no understanding of the former, as an instinct which you simply do not possess, you are not in a position to pass judgment upon such a feeling."

" In other words, ' I, Arkady Kirsanov, am altogether above your comprehension.' Well, I make mute obeisance to that."

" Come, come, Evgenii! We shall end by quarrelling."

" Oh that you would do me the favour to quarrel! We could have a real set-to a outrance, and with our coats off."

" To the end that ? "

" To the end that we might rend one another in pieces. Why not ? Here, amid the hay, in this idyllic setting, far from the madding crowd and every human eve, it would be not at all a bad thing. No, you shall not make it up with me ! Rather will I seize you by the throat! "

As he extended his long, sharp fingers, Arkady rolled over and prepared jestingly to grapple with his assailant. But the next moment the sight of Bazarov's face, with its expression of malice and the non-jesting menace which lurked in the twisted smile and the flashing eyes, gave him a shock, and filled him with involuntary^ awe.

" This, then, is where you have got to! " cried Vasili Ivanitch from behind them as, vested in a home-made cotton pea-jacket and a home-made straw hat, the old military' doctor suddenly confronted the pair. " I have been searching for you everywhere, and certainly you have chosen a capital spot, and are engaged also in a capital occupation— in the occupation of lying on the earth and gazing at the heavens. For my part, I beHeve that such an occupation can have its uses."

" I gaze at the heavens only when I am going to sneeze," said Bazarov. Then, turning to Arkady, he added in an imdertone: " Forgive me if I hurt you."

" Do not mention it," was Arkady's rejoinder in a similar undertone, as covertly he pressed his friend's hand.

Shocks of such a kind, however, were bound, in time, to react upon their friendship.

" As I look at you, 3'oung gentlemen," Vasili Ivanitch continued as, nodding his head, he rested his hands upon a crooked stick, his owti manufacture, whicli had a Turk's head for a handle, " I cannot sufficiently admire

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you. What strength you embody ! How you speak of the flower of youth, of capacity, and of talent ! You resemble Castor and Pollux themselves."

" To think of your flaunting your mythology like that ! " said Bazarov. "At the same time, you must have been a fine Latin scholar in your day. In fact, did not you once receive a silver medal for an essay ? "

" The Dioscuri, the Dioscuri themselves! " continued the old man ecstatically.

" Come, come, father! Do not play the fool."

" Ah, well ! No, I have not sought you out to pay you compliments: I have come to inform the pair of you that dinner is nearly ready, and also to give you, Evgenii, a warning. I know that, as a man of sense, as well as a man well versed in the world, you will be charitable. The case is this. This morning your mother took it into her head to organise a thanksgiving ceremony on the occasion of your return. — No, do not think that I am inviting you to the ceremony: on the contrary, it is over. All that I am going to say is that Father Alexis "

" The priest ? "

" Yes, and our private confessor. Well, this Father Alexis is going to dine with us, even though I had not expected it, and it was not my suggestion, but merely an arrangement which has come about somehow — probably through his having failed to understand me aright. Not that we look upon him as anything but a man of rectitude and good sense."

" Surely you do not mean to imply that he is likely to devour my portion of the food, do you? "

Vasili Ivanitch burst out laughing.

" Ha, ha, ha! " he cried.

" I feel easy, then," continued Bazarov. " In fact, never do I mind with whom I sit at table."

Vasili Ivanitch's face brightened at once.

" I felt sure of that in advance," he said. " Yes, I knew that you, a young man, are as superior to prejudice as I am at sixty-two " (Vasili had none the less shrunk from confessing that he had wished for the thanksgiving ceremony as much as his wife had, since his piety was fully equal to hers). " In any case Father Alexis would like to make your acquaintance; while you, for your part, will very likely take to him, seeing that he not only plays cards, but also (though this' is quite between ourselves) smokes a pipe! "

" Indeed? After dinner, then, we will have a game, and I will despoil him utterly."

" Ha, ha, ha! We shall see, we shall see "

" Then at times you hark back to old days ? " Bazarov asked with a tinge of surprise.

Vasili Ivanitch's bronzed cheeks took on a faint flush.

" For shame, Evgenii! " he muttered. " Remember that the past is the past. Nevertheless, even in this gentleman's presence I am ready to confess that in my youth I had my addictions, and that, since, I have paid for them. But how hot the weather is! Let me seat myself beside you; though I hope that, in doing so, I shall not interrupt your conversation? "

" By no means," replied Arkady with alacrity.

Vasili Ivanitch subsided with a grunt and the remark:

" Your logement reminds me of my military bivouacking days — this rick being a dressing-station." There followed a sigh. " Aye, many and many an experience have I had in my time. For instance, let me tell you a curious story about the black death in Bessarabia."

" When you received the order of St. Vladimir ? " said Bazarov. " Yes, I know the story. But why do you never wear the badge of the order? "

" As I have told you, I care not a jot for appearances," protested Vasili Ivanitch (though only on the previous

day had he had the red riband of the order removed from his coat). He then embarked upon the story.

" Evgenii has gone to sleep," presently he whispered to Arkady with a good-humoured wink and a pointing finger. " Come, come, Evgenii! " he added in a louder tone. " It is time to get up! Time for dinner! "

Father Alexis — a stout, good-looking man with thick, well-combed hair and an embroidered girdle over a lilac cassock — proved a clever, resourceful guest who, taking the initiative as regards shaking hands with Arkady and Bazarov (somehow he seemed to divine that they did not require his blessing), bore himself, in general, with complete absence of restraint, and, while neither demeaning himself nor imposing general constraint, made merry over scholastic Latin, defended his archbishop, quaffed a couple of glasses of wine (refusing a third), and accepted one of Arkady's cigars, though, instead of smoking it, he put it into his pocket to take home with him. The only thing that was at all unpleasant was the fact that every now and then, on raising a stealthy hand to brush from his face a fly, he, in lieu of doing so, crushed the insect flat !

Dinner over, he seated himself with modest zest at the card-table, and ended by despoiling Bazarov of two-and-a-half roubles in paper money (this rural establishment took no account of the system of computing cash in silver). During the game the hostess sat beside her son with her cheek resting on her hand as usual, and only rose from the table when it became necessary to order further relays of refreshment. Yet to caress Bazarov was more than she dared do; nor did he give her the least encouragement in that direction; in addition to which Vasili Ivanitch further restrained her ardour by whispering at intervals: " Do not worry our Evgenii. Young men do not like that sort of thing." Also, hardly need it be said that the dinner of which the company had just partaken had been of the usual sumptuousness, seeing that at break of day Timotheitch had set out for Circassian beef, and that the starosta also had galloped in quest of trout, eels, and crabs, while a sum of forty-two kopecks had been paid to peasant women for mushrooms. Arina Vlasievna's eyes, fixed immovably upon Bazarov, had in them something more than tenderness and affection. In them there were also sadness, curiosity, a touch of apprehension, and a kind of painful deference. Yet never did he mark their expression, since never did he turn in her direction, save to put to her the curtest of questions, and, once, to ask her to lay her hand in his, " for luck." On the latter occasion she shpped her plump fingers into his hard, capacious palm, waited a Uttle, and then asked him:

" Has that helped you at all in your play? "

" It has not," he replied with a contemptuous grimace. " On the contrary, things are even worse than they were before."

" Yes, the cards seem to be against you," remarked Father Alexis with an assumed air of sj^mpathy as he stroked his handsome beard.

" But beware of the Code Napoleon, my father," observed Vasili Ivanitch as he played an ace. " Beware of the Code Napoleon."

" Which, in the end, brought Napoleon to St. Helena," retorted the father as he trumped tlie ace.

"A glass of currant wine, Eniushka dear? " asked Arina Vlasievna.

Bazarov replied with a shrug of his shoulders.

Next day he said to Arkady :

" To-morrow I must depart. The place wearies me, for I wish to work, and it is impossible to do so here. I will come to your place, I think, for all my chemical preparations are there. Moreover, one can at least lock one's door at \our place; whereas here, though my father keeps £a\dng, ' My study is entirely at your disposal, and no one shall disturb you,' he himself is never absent for a moment. And, for that matter, I should be ashamed to lock him outside, or my mother either. Sometimes I can hear her groaning in the next room. Yet no sooner do I go out to her than I find that I have not a word to say."

" She will be much distressed at your departure," said Arkady. " And so will he."

" But I intend to return."

" Exactly when? "

" When i am on my way back to St. Petersburg."

" I am particularly sorry for your mother,"

" Why so ? Has she been stuffing you with fruit ? "

Arkady lowered his eyes.

" You do not know her," he said. " She is not only a good woman, but also a very wise one. This morning I had half an hour's ven.' practical and interesting talk with her."

" A talk in which she told you all about me? "

" We spoke of other topics besides yourself."

" Possibly. Possibly, too, you, as an outsider, may see things clearer than I do. Yet when a woman can talk for half an hour it is a good sign, and I will depart as I have said."

" But you will not ftnd it easy to break the news to her, for her plans for us extend over a couple of weeks."

" No, it may not prove easy, as you say; and the less so since the devil led me to vex my father this morning. It was like this. A few days ago he had one of his serfs flogged, and therein did rightly. No, you need not look at me with such indignation. I say my father did rightly for the reason that the peasant in question had proved himself to be an arrant thief and drunkard. Unfortunately, my father had not expected me to get to hear

of the occurrence; wherefore he was the more put out when he found that I had done so. Well, now his vexation will be twofold ! However, no matter. He will get over it before long."

Yet, though Bazarov had said " No matter," he let the whole of the rest of the day elapse before he could make up his mind to acquaint Vasili Ivanitch with his intention. Finally, just as he was saying good-night to his father in the study, he observed with a prolonged yawn:

" By the way, I had almost forgotten to request you to have our horses sent forward to Thedot's."

Vasili Ivanitch looked thunderstruck.

"Then is Monsieur Kirsanov leaving us ? " he inquired.

" Yes, and I am going with him."

Vasili Ivanitch fidgeted for a moment or two.

" You say that you are going with him? " he murmured.

" Yes. I must go. So pray have the horses sent forward as requested."

" I — I will, I will," the old man stuttered. " So they are to go to Thedot's? Yes, yes, very well Only, only — is there any particular reason for this change of plan ? "

" There is. I am engaged to pay Arkady a short visit. That done, I will return to you."

"Only to be a short visit? Good!" And Vasili Ivanitch pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, and blew his nose. In doing so, he bent his head very low — almost to the ground. " Well, well! Things shall be as you desire. Yet we had hoped that you would have stayed with us a little longer. Three days only! Three days after three years of absence! Ah, that is not much, Evgenii — it is not much! "

" But I tell you I intend to return soon. You see, I must go."

" You have no choice, eh? Very well, ver}' well. Of course, engagements must be kept. Yes, yes; of course

the}' must be kept. And I am to send the horses forward ? Very good. Naturally, Arina and I had not altogether looked for this. Only to-day she has been to a neighbour to beg flowers for your room."

Nor of the fact that, each morning, he had gone downstairs in his slippers to confer with Timotheitch ; nor of the fact that, producing, with tremulous fingers, one ragged banknote after another, he had commissioned his henchman to make various purchases with special reference to the question of eatables (in particular, of a certain red wine which he had noticed the young men to Uke) ; no, of none of these facts did Vasili Ivanitch make any mention.

" The greatest thing in the world is one's freedom," he went on. " I, too, make it my rule. Never should one let oneself be hampered or "

A sudden break occurred in his voice, and he made for the door.

" I promise you that we will return soon, my father. I give you my word of honour upon that."

But Vasili Ivanitch did not look round — ^he just waved his hand and departed. Mounting to the bedroom, he found Arina asleep, so started to say his prayers in an undertone, for fear of awaking her. But at once she opened her eyes.

" In that you, Vasili Ivanitch? " she asked.

" Yes, mother."

" Have you just left Eniusha? Do you know, I am anxious about him. Does he sleep comfortably on the sofa? To-day I told Anfisushka to lay him out your travelling mattress and the new pillows. Also, I would have given him our feather bed had he not disliked soft lying."

" Do not fret, mother dear. He is quite comfortable. ' Lord, pardon us sinners! ' " And Vasili Ivanitch went on with his prayers. Yet his heart was full of an aching

compassion for his old companion ; nor did he want to tell her overnight of the sorrow which was awaiting her on the morrow.

Next day, therefore, Arkady and Bazarov departed. From earliest mom an air of woe pervaded the household. Anfisushka let fall some crockery, and Thedika's perturbation ended in his taking off his shoes. As for Vasili Ivanitch, he fussed about, and made a brave show — he talked in loud tones, and stamped his feet upon the floor as he walked; but his face had suddenly fallen in, and his glance could not meet that of his son. Meanwhile Arina \^asievna indulged in quiet weeping. Indeed, but for the fact that her husband had spent two hours that morning in comforting her, she would have broken down completely, and lost all self-control.

But at last, when, after reiterated promises to return within, at most, a month, Bazarov had freed himself from the arms which sought to detain him, and entered the tarantass; when the horses had started, and their collar-bow had begun to tinkle, and the wheels to revolve ; when to gaze after the vehicle any longer had become useless, and the dust had subsided, and Timotheitch, bent and tottering, had crawled back into his pantry; when the old couple found themselves alone in a house which seemed suddenly to have grown as dishevelled and as decrepit as they^ — then, ah, then did Vasili Ivanitch desist from his brief show of waving his handkerchief in the verandah, and sink into a chair, and drop his head upon his breast.

" He has gone for ever, he has gone for ever," he muttered. " He has gone because he found the life here tedious, and once more I am as lonely as the sand of the desert ! "

These words he kept repeating again and again; and, each time that he did so, he raised his hand, and pointed into the distance.

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But presently Anna Vlasievna approached him, and, pressing her grey head to his, said :

" Never mind, my Vasia. True, our son has broken away from us; he is like a falcon — he has flown hither, he has flown thither, as he willed: but you and I, Uke hchen in a hollow tree, are still side by side, we are not parted. . . . And ever I shall be the same to you, as you will be the same to me."

Taking his hands from his face, Vasili Ivanitch embraced his old comrade, his wife, as never — no, not even during the days of his courtship — he had done before. And thus she comforted him.

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XXII

In silence, or merely exchanging a few unimportant words, the travellers made their way to Thedot's posting-house. Arkady felt anything but pleased with Bazarov, and Bazarov felt anything but pleased with himself. Moreover, the younger man's heart was heavy with the sort of unreasoning depression which is known only to youth.

The driver hitched his horses, and then, mounting to the box, inquired whether he was to drive to the right or to the left.

Arkady started. The road to the right led to the town, and thence to his father's house; while the road to the left led to Madame Odintsov's establishment.

He glanced at Bazarov.

" To the left, Evgenii ? " he queried.

Bazarov turned away his head.

" Why that folly again? " he muttered.

" Folly, I know," said Arkady, " but what does that matter? We need but call in passing."

Bazarov pulled his cap over his eyes.

" Do as you like," he said.

"To the left, then," cried Arkady to the coachman; and the tarantass started in the direction of Nikolskoe. Nevertheless, for all that the friends had decided upon this foolish course, they remained as silent and downcast as ever.

Indeed, Madame Odintsov's butler had not even made his appearance upon the verandah before the pair divined that they had done unwisely to yield to such an impulse. The fact that no one in the house had expected them was emphasised by the circumstance that when Madame entered the drawing-room they had already

spent a considerable time there in awkward silence. However, she accorded them her usual suave welcome, though she seemed a little surprised at their speedy return, and, at heart, not over-pleased at it. For this reason they hastened to explain that theirs was a mere passing call, and that in about four hours they would be continuing their journey to the town. In reply she said nothing beyond that she requested Arkady to convey her greetings to his father, and then sent for her aunt ; and inasmuch as the Princess entered in a state of having just overslept herself, her wrinkled old face betokened even greater malignity than usual. Katia was not well, and did not leave her room at all: and this caused Arkady suddenly to realise that he would have been as glad to see her as Anna Sergievna. The four hours were filled with a desultory conversation which Anna Sergievna carried on without a single smile: nor until the very moment of parting did her usual friendliness seem to stir within her soul.

" I am out of humour to-day," she said, " but that you must not mind. Come again soon. I address the invitation to you both."

Bazarov and Arkady responded with silent bows, re-entered the taraniass, and drove forward to Marino, whither they arrived, without incident, on the following evening. En route, neither of the pair mentioned Madame Odintsov, and Barazov in particular scarcely opened his mouth, but gazed towards the horizon with a hard look in his eyes.

But at Marino every one was delighted to see them, for Nikolai Petrovitch had begun to feel uneasy at the prolonged absence of his son, and now leapt from the sofa 'Aith a cry of joy when Thenichka ran to announce that " the young gentlemen " were arriving. Yes, even Paul Petrovitch felt conscious of a touch of pleasant excitement, and smiled indulgently as he shook hands with the

wanderers. Ensued then much talking and questioning, in which Arkady took the leading part, and more especially during supper, which lasted far into the night, since

Nikolai Petrovitch ordered up several bottles of porter which had just arrived from Moscow, and made so merry that his cheeks assumed a raspberry tint, and he fell to venting half-boyish, half-hysterical laughs. Moreover, the general enlivenment extended even to the kitchen, where Duniasha kept breathlessly banging doors, and at three o'clock in the morning Peter essayed to execute on the guitar a Cossack waltz which would have sounded sweet and plaintive amid the stillness of the night had not the performance broken down after the opening cadenza, owing to the fact that nature had denied the cultured underUng a talent either for music or for anything else.

Indeed, of late, hfe at Marino had been far from comfortable. In particular had poor Nikolai Petrovitch been in a bad way, for his troubles in connection with the estate — troubles of an exclusively futile and hopeless order — were gro\ving greater from day to day. The worst of them came of the system of hired labour, which enabled some of the workmen to keep demanding either their discharge or an increase of wages, and others to depart as soon as ever they had received their earnest - money. Also, some of the horses had fallen sick, certain implements had been burnt, all hands were performing their tasks in a slovenly manner, a milUng machine ordered from Moscow had turned out to be useless owing to its weight, a second such machine had broken down on its first being used, half the cattle sheds had disappeared in a conflagration caused by a blind old serf woman " smoking " her cow with a firestick during blustery weather (though she herself asserted that the trouble had come of the harin's manufacturing new-fangled cheeses and lacteal products in general), and, lastly, the

steward had grown so fat and lazy (as do all Russians who fall upon " easy times "), and permitted his dislike of Nikolai Petrovitch so to limit his activities, that he had come to doing no more than bestowing an occasional prod upon a passing pig, or threatening some half-naked serf boy, while spending the rest of the time in bed. Again, such of the peasants as had received allotments under the ohrok system had failed to pay their dues, as well as applied themselves to stealing timber to such an extent that, almost every night, the watchman had to apprehend a culprit or two, as well as to impound horses which peasants had turned out to graze in the meadows attached to the manor. For illicit grazing of this sort Nikolai Petrovitch had decreed forfeiture of the horses; but usually the matter ended in the animals being kept for a day or two at the barin's expense, and then restored to their owners. Lastly, the peasants had taken to quarrelling among themselves, through brothers conceiving the idea of demanding a share of each other's earnings, and through their wives suddenly finding themselves unable to get on in the same hut ; wherefore feuds had arisen which had caused whole households to spring to their feet as at a word of command, and to flock to the portico of the estate office, where, breaking in upon the barin's privacy (very often with bruised faces and drunken gait), they demanded justice and an immediate settlement, while female sobs and whimperings mingled with the curses of the male portion of the throng. Whenever this had happened Nikolai Petrovitch had had to part the hostile factions from one another, and to shout himself hoarse, even though he had known in advance that no equitable decision was feasible. Finally, there had been a deficiency of hands for the harvest, since a neighbouring odnovorzty ^ of benign aspect who had under-

^ A freeholder, a ntembcr of the class which, in the days of this story, ^.tood midway between the pomiestchik, or landowner, and the Krestianin, or serf.

taken to provide harvesters at two roubles per desiatin had cheated without compunction, and supphed women workers who also demanded extortionate wages. Meanwliile the grain had rotted in the fields, and, later on, the women had not got through the mowing before the Board of Overseers had begun to press for immediate payment of percentage dues and arrears.

" I can do nothing," would be Nikolai Petrovitch's despairing exclamation " My principles forbid me either to contend with these people or to send for the stanovoi: ^ yet, without the power to threaten punishment, one can make no headway with such folk."

" Du calme, du calme," Paul Petrovitch would advise. Then he would growl, frown, and twist his moustache.

From these brawls Bazarov kept entirely aloof: nor, as a guest, was he called upon to interfere in them, but was free, from the day of his arrival, to apply himself solely to his frogs, infusoria, and chemical compositions. On the other hand, Arkady considered himself bound, if not to help his father, at all events to offer to help him; wherefore he listened to Nikolai's complaints with patience, and on one occasion even tendered him advice (though not advice meant to be taken, but advice designed to manifest the interest felt b}^ him, Arkady, in current affairs). As a matter of fact, estate-management was not wholly distasteful to him, and he could find pleasure in thinking out agricultural problems; but his mind was filled with other preoccupations. For one thing, he discovered to his surprise that his thoughts were constantly turning in the direction of Nikolskoe; and though there had been a time when he would have shrugged liis shoulders upon being told that he would ever come to find residence under the same roof as Bazarov — least of all, when that roof was his father's — a dull affaii-, he found time hang heavy on his hands, and his attention easily

^ Magistrate.

stray elsewhere. So he tried the expedient of walking until thoroughly worn out, but even this did not help him; until eventually he learnt, in conversation with his father, that recently some letters of great interest had been chanced upon — letters which Arkady's mother had indited to the mother of Madame Odintsov. And from that moment onwards he never rested until he had induced Nikolai Petrovitch to re-discover the said letters, and to turn out, during the search, a score of boxes and drawers. Then only, when the half-mouldy documents had been dragged to hght, did the young man feel easier in his soul, and bear himself as though now he saw before him the goal of his existence.

" ' I address the invitation to both of you,' " he kept whispering to himself. " Yes, that is what she said. Damn it, I will go."

But next there would recur to his memory the recent visit and its cold reception; until once more he would be seized with his old timidity and awkwardness. In the end, however, the spirit of adventurous youth, aided by a secret desire to try his luck, to test his strength unaided, and without a protector, contrived to win the day.

Ten days later, therefore, he invented a pretext, in the shape of a desire to study the working of Sunday schools, to drive to the town, and thence to Nikolskoe. As he drove, the manner in which he encouraged his postilion communicated to his progress the character, rather, of a young officer's trip to fight his first duel, for diffidence, impatience, and delight were well-nigh choking him.

" Above all things," he kept reflecting, " 1 must not think too much of myself." And though the postilion who had fallen to his lot was of the type of rascal who pulls up at every tavern door, there hove in sight, before long, the famihar, high-pitched roof of the mansion.

" But what am 1 doing? " now occurred to him the thought. " Indeed, would it not be better to go back ? "

Unfortunately, to the sound of the postilion's whist - Hngs and tongue-clickings the troika of horses trotted bravely forward, and presently the bridge thundered under the combined weight of the hooves and wheels. Ah, there was the avenue of clipped firs ! Yes, and tkere was a glimpse of a pink dress amid some dark fohage ! Yes, and there a glimpse of a young face peering from the shade of a silken parasol! Yes, yes — it was Katia! He had recognised her in an instant, as she him! Bidding the postilion pull up, Arkady leapt from the carriage, and approached the maiden.

"So it is you? " she exclaimed. And at the same moment a blush overspread her face. " Let us go and look for my sister. She is in the garden" and will be delighted to see you."

So she conducted him thither. How lucky that he had met her as he had done ! More pleased he could not have felt if she had been his own sister. Yes, things were indeed fortunate ! Now there would have to be no butler, and no formal announcement of his arrival.

Of Anna Sergievna he caught sight at a turn in the path. She had her back to him, but presently, on hearing the sound of approaching footsteps, faced about.

Once more confusion seized Arkady in its grip. Yet no sooner had she spoken than he felt his courage return.

" How do you do? " she said in her even, kindly way as she advanced to meet him with a smile that was shghtly tempered with the sun and wind. " Where did you find him, Katia? "

" I have brought with me something which you are unlikely to have been expecting." he said. " For I "

" But you have brought me yourself," she rejoined. " And that is the best bringing of all."

XXIII

After speeding Arkady on his way with satirical expressions of regret (as well as giving him to understand that the satirist laboured under no delusions as to the object of the 3^oung man's journey), Bazarov withdrew into complete seclusion, since a perfect fever for work had come upon him. Nor did he quarrel any longer with Paul Petrovitch, and the less so since the latter had now come to adopt an exclusively aristocratic attitude, and to express his sentiments only in monosyllables, not in words. Once, and once only, did he allow himself to engage in a controversy with Bazarov over the then current question of the rights of the dvoriane. But suddenly he checked himself, and said with an air of cold politeness :

" It is clear that we shall never understand one another. At all events I have not the honour to understand wm."

" True," agreed Bazarov. " For a man may understand the precipitation of ether, and be au fait with what is taking place in the sun, yet, confront him with the fact that another man blows his nose differently from the manner in which he blows his own, and at once that man will become lost in perplexity."

At the same time, there were occasions when Paul Petrovitch requested permission to attend the other's experiments; and once he went so far as to apply his perfumed, clean-shaven features to the microscope, for the purpose of observing how a transparent infusorium could swallow a greenish-looking particle, and then masticate the same with fang-hke protuberances which grew in its throat. Still more frequently was Nikolai Petrovitch present in Bazarov's room. Indeed, but for the counter-distraction of estate-management, he would have spent his whole time in the process of what he called " self-improvement." Yet he never hampered the young naturaUst: on the contrary, he would seat himself in a remote corner of the room, and, but for a guarded question or two, confine himself solely to silently and absorbedly watching the experiments. Also, at meal times he always endeavoured to turn the conversation in the direction of physics or geology or chemistry, for the reason that he divined in any other direction (that of industry, or, still more, that of politics) there lay a greater danger of collisions, or, at all events, of mutual soreness. For rightly did he divine that his brother's enmity towards Bazarov had by no means abated. And to this conclusion an incident which occurred at a juncture when cholera had just made its appearance in the neighbourhood, and carried off two victims from Marino itself, lent additional colour. One night Paul Petrovitch happened to be seized wth a fainting fit, yet refused to apply to Bazarov for assistance; and when Bazarov, on meeting him on the following day, inquired why such a course had not been adopted, Paul Petrovitch — still pale, but as carefully brushed and combed as ever — retorted: " Did not you yourself tell me that you have no belief in medicine? " Thus day followed day. Yet, though Bazarov devoted himself wholly to work, there was one person in the house whom he did not hold at arm's length, but was always willing to talk to. That person was Thenichka, Mostly he encountered her in the early mornings, when she was walking in the garden or the courtyard; but never did he enter her room, nor did she ever come to his door, save once, for the purpose of asking him to help her with Mitia's bath. And she not only trusted Bazarov; she also held him in no awe, and allowed herself more freedom in his presence than she did in that of Nikolai Petrovitch himself. The reason is difficult to determine. Perhaps it was the fact that unconsciously she detected in Bazarov none of the dvorianin element, none of that superiority which at once attracts and repels; the young Niliiilist, to her, was just a clever doctor, and no more. At all events, she was so free from shyness in his presence that she would dandle her child unabashed, and, on one occasion, when seized with a headache, went so far as to accept at his hands a spoonful of medicine. True, in Nikolai Petrovitch's presence she seemed to shun Bazarov; but this was done more out of a sense of decorum than through subtlety. As for Paul Petrovitch, she feared him as much as ever, for he had taken to watching her with a keen, steady eye, and to making his appearance behind her as though his figure, clad in its inevitable English suit, and posed in its usual attitude of hands in trousers pockets, had suddenly sprung from the floor. " Whenever I see him I feel cold all over," once she complained to Duniasha;

whereupon that maiden's thoughts reverted longingly to another " unfeehng " individual who had, all unwittingly, come to be " the cruel tyrant " of her heart. Thenichka, therefore, hked Bazarov, and Bazarov liked Thenichka. Indeed, no sooner did he speak to her than his face would undergo a change, and, assmning a bright, almost a good-humoured, expression, exchange its habitual superciUousness for something hke playful soUcitude. Meanwhile she grew more beautiful daily. In the lives of young women there is a season when they begin to unfold and bloom hke the roses in summer: and to that period Thenichka had just come. Everything, even the July heat then prevalent, contributed to it. Dressed in a gown of some light white material, she looked even lighter and whiter than it ; and though she escaped actual simburn, the heated air imparted to her cheeks and ears a faint tan, and, permeating her

frame with gentle indolence, imbued her exquisite eyes with dreamy languor. No longer could she do any work ; she could only let her hands sink upon her lap, and there remain. Seldom going even for a stroll, she spent the most of her time in a state of gently querulous and panting, but not distasteful, inertia.

" You should go and bathe as often as you can," Nikolai Petrovitch said to her one day (he had had a large, canopied bathing-place constructed in one of the last few ponds on the estate).

" Ah ! " she gasped. " Even to walk to the pond half-kills me: and to walk back from it half-kills me again. There is no shade in the garden, you see."

" True," he agreed, wiping his forehead.

At seven o'clock one morning, when Bazarov was returning from a walk, he encountered Thenichka in the midst of a hlac clump which, though past the season of flowering, was still green and leafy. As usual, she had a white scarf thrown over her head, and beside the bench on which she was sitting there was a bunch of red and white roses with the dew yet glistening on their petals. He bade her good morning.

" It is you, then, Ev^genii Vasilitch! " she exclaimed as she put aside a corner of her scarf to look at him — a movement which bared her arm to the elbow.

" What are you doing? " he asked as he seated himself beside her. " Is it a nosegay you are making? "

" Yes, for the breakfast table. Nikolai Petrovitch is so fond of such things."

" But breakfast is not yet. What a waste of flowers! "

" I know, but I gather them now because later the weather becomes too hot for walking. This is the only time when it is possible even to breathe. The heat makes me faint, and I am afraid of falhng ill with it."

" Mere fancy. Let me feel your pulse."

He took her hand in his, and found the pulse to be
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beating with such regularity that he did not trouble even to count its throbs.

" You will live to be a hundred," he said as he relinquished her wrist.

" God preserve me from that! " exclaimed she.

"Why so? Surely you would hke to hve a long time?"

" Yes — I should; but not for a hundred years. You see, my grandmother lived to be eighty-five, but suffered terribly. Long before she died she had a constant cough, and was also blind and deaf and crooked, and had become a burden to herself. What would be the use of a life Mke that ? "

" You think that it is better to be young? "

" I do. And why not ? "

" How is it better? Tell me that."

" How is it better? Oh, as long as one is young one can do what one wants to do — one can walk about, and carry things, and not be dependent upon other folk. Is not that the best way? "

" I do not know. At all events / care not whether I be young or old."

" What makes you say that ? Surely you cannot mean it ? "

" No? Well, think of what my youth means to me. I am a lonely man, a man without home or "

" But all depends upon yourself."

" No, it does not. I only wish that some one would take pity upon my loneliness! "

She glanced at him, but said nothing. After a pause she resumed:

" What is that book of yours? "

" This? It is a learned, scholarly work."

" How you study! Do you never grow tired of it? By this time, I should think, you must know everything."

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" Indeed I do not. . . . But try reading a few lines of the book."

" I should never understand them. Is it a Russian book? " (She took the heavily bound volume into her hands.)

" What a large book! " she continued.

" Yes. Also, it is a Russian book."

" Nevertheless I should not be able to understand it."

" I do not want you to understand it. I merely want to be able to watch you as you read. For when you read you twitch your little nose most charmingly! "

She began to read aloud a page " on Creosote," but soon burst out laughing, and replaced the book upon the bench, whence it slipped to the ground.

" I love to see you laugh," said Bazarov.

" Say no more," she interrupted.

" Also, I love to hear you speak. Your voice is like the bubbling of a brook."

She turned away her head, and fell to sorting her flowers. Presently she resumed:

" Why do you love to hear me speak? You must have talked to many much finer and cleverer ladies? "

" I assure you, nevertheless, that all the ' fine and clever ladies ' in the world are worth less than your little finger."

" Oh, come! " And she crossed her hands.

Bazarov picked up the book.

" It is a work on medicine," he observed. " Why did you throw it away? "

"It is a work on medicine?" she re-echoed, and turned to him again. " Do you know, ever since you gave me those capsules — you remember them, do you not? — Mitia has slept splendidly! I can never sufficiently thank you. You are indeed good! "

" But the physician ought to be paid his fee," remarked

he Nv-ith a smile. " Doctors never do their work for nothing."

Upon this she raised her eyes. They looked all the darker for the brilhant glare which was beating upon the upper portion of her face. As a matter of fact, she was tr}dng to divine whether he was speaking in earnest or in jest.

" Of course I should be delighted to pay you! " she said. " But first I must mention the matter to Nikolai Petrovitch."

"What?" he exclaimed. "You really think it is money I want ? No, I do not require of you money."
" What, then? " she queried.
"What? Well, guess."
" How can I guess? "

" Then I must tell you. I want, I want— I want one of those roses."

She burst into a peal of laughter, and clapped her hands with delight at the request. Yet the laughter was accompanied \\ith a certain sense of rehef. Bazarov e3'ed her.

" Ah, you must excuse my laughing, Evgenii Vasihtch," she said (bending over the seat of the bench, she fumbled among the roses). " WTiich sort should you prefer ? A red rose or a white one ? "
" A red one, and not too large."
" Then take this one," she said, sitting up again. Yet even as she spoke she drew back her outstretched hand, and, biting her lips, glanced in the direction of the entrance to the arbour, and hstened intently.

"What is it?" asked Bazarov. "Do you hear Nikolai Petrovitch coming? "

" No. Besides, every one has gone out to the fields. Nor do I fear any one except Paul Petrovitch. I merely thought that, that-

" You thought what

" That some one might be coming this way. It seems I was wrong. Take this rose."

She handed Bazarov the gift.

" Why do 3^ou fear Paul Petrovitch ? " he asked.

"I do so because he frightens me — when I speak to him he returns me no answer; he just stares at me in a meaning sort of way. You, too, do not Hke him, I beUeve ? It was with him that you had such a quarrel, was it not ? What it was all about I do not know, but at least I know that you worsted him like, like "

With a gesture she signified the manner in which she considered Bazarov to have routed Paul Petrovitch.

" And, had he worsted me," he inquired, " would you have taken my part ? "

" How could I ? We should have agreed no better than you and he."

" You think so? Then let me tell you that a certain little hand could twist me around its little finger."

" Whose hand is that ? "

" I expect you can guess. But smell this rose which you have just given me."

She bent forward in the direction of the flower, and as she did so her scarf slipped from her head to her shoulders, and revealed a mass of dark, soft, fluffy, glossy hair.

" Wait," said Bazarov. " I, too, will smell the rose."

And, reaching forward, he kissed her full on her parted lips.

She started back, and pressed her hands against his breast as though to repel him ; but so weak was the act of repulsion that he found it possible to renew and to prolong his kiss.

Suddenly there sounded from among the lilac bushes a dry cough, and just as Theiiichka darted to the other end of the bench Paul Petrovitch appeared, bowed slightly to the pair, said with a sort of melancholy acidity

in his tone: " It is you, then? " and turned on his heel and departed. The next moment Thenichka picked up her roses and rushed from the arbour. As she passed Bazarov she whispered in his ear: "That was indeed wrong of you, Evgenii Vasihtch! " And the words voiced a note of reproach that was palpably genuine and unfeigned.

Instantly Bazarov's thoughts recurred to another scene in which he had recently taken part, and he became conscience-stricken, as also contemptuous of himself, and vexed. He shook his head, congratulated himself ironically on his folly, and departed to his room.

As for Paul Petrovitch, he left the garden and walked slowly into the forest. He remained there a considerable time; and, on returning to breakfast, looked so dark of mien that Nikolai Petrovitch inquired anxiously whether he were not ill.

" As you know," rephed the other quietly, " I suffer habitually from biliousness."

XXIV

Two hours later he knocked at Bazarov's door.

" I feel that I must apologise for disturbing you in your pursuits," he said as he seated himself near the window and rested both hands upon a fine ivory-headed cane which he had brought with him (as a rule he did not carry one). " But the fact is that circumstances compel me to request five minutes of your time."

" The whole of my time is at your disposal," repUed Bazarov, across whose features, as Paul Petrovitch had crossed the threshold, there had flitted a curious expression.

" No; five minutes will be sufficient. I have come to ask you a simple question."

" And what might that question be? "

" Listen. When first you came to stay in my brother's house, and I had not yet been forced to deny mj^self the pleasure of conversing with you, it fell to my lot to hear you hold forth on many different subjects. But, unless my memory deceives me, never once did the conversation between you and myself, or in my presence, happen to fall upon the subject of the duel or single combat. Would you, therefore, mind putting yourself out to the extent of giving me the benefit of your views on the subject mentioned? "

Bazarov, who had risen to receive his visitor, now reseated himself upon the edge of the table, and folded his arms upon his breast.

" My views are as follows," he replied. " From the theoretical standpoint, the duel is a sheer absurdity. From the practical standpoint, it is another matter altogether."

" You intend to convey (if I have understood you aright ?) that, apart from your theoretical views on the duel, you would not, in practice, allow yourself to be insulted without subsequently demanding satisfaction ? "

" You have guessed my meaning precisely."

" Good ! It is a view which I am indeed glad to hear you express, in that it delivers me from a dilemma."

" You mean, from a state of indecision ? "

" They are one and the same thing. I express myself in this manner to the end that you may understand me. I am not one of your college rats. Consequently I repeat that through your words I am relieved of the necessity of resorting to what would have been a painful expedient. To speak plainly, I have made up my mind to light 5'Ou."

Bazarov raised his eyebrows a httle.

" To fight me ? " he said.

" Yes, to fight you."

" And for what reason — if you do not mind telling me?"

" For a reason which I might explain, but concerning which I prefer to remain silent. Suffice it for me to intimate that your presence offends me, that I detest and despise your person, and (should the foregoing be insufficient) that I "

"Enough!" interrupted Bazarov. His eyes had flashed even as Paul's had done. " Further explanations would be superfluous. You have presumed to whet upon me your chivalrous spirit; wherefore, though I might have refused it, I will afford you satisfaction to the top of your bent."

" I have to express to you my sincere obligation. From the first did I feel encouraged to hope that j^ou would accept my challenge without constraining me to resort to more forcible measures."

" In other words, and speaking without metaphor, to that cane? " said Bazarov in a tone of supreme indiffer-

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ence. " Well, that is fair enough. Further insults are not needed — nor would you have found the offering of them altogether free from danger. Pray, therefore, remain a gentleman. It is as one that I accept your challenge."

" Good! " replied Paul Petrovitch; and he laid aside nis cane. " Next, a few words on the subject of the conditions of our duel. First, pray be so good as to inform me whether or not you deem it necessarj' to resort to the formalit}' of some such small difference of opinion as might serve as an ostensible excuse for my challenge? "

" I think that unnecessary. Such things are best done without formalities of any kind."

" I agree — that is to say, I, like you, consider that to go into the true reasons for our antagonism would be inexpedient. Let us therefore allege to the world that we could not abide one another. 'WTiat need would there be to say more? "

" WTiat indeed ? " echoed Bazarov in a tone decidedly ironical.

" Also, with regard to the actual conditions of the duel. Inasmuch as we have no seconds — for where could we find them ? "

" Quite so. Where indeed ? "

" I have the honour to propose to 30U the following. Let us fight to-morrow morning — say, at six o'clock: the rendezvous to be behind the copse, the weapons to be pistols, and the distance ten paces."

" Ten paces. Quite so! You and I abhor each other even at ten paces."

" Eight, then, if you \\ash? "

" The same apphes to eight."

" And the number of shots to be two apiece. Also, in case either of us should fall, let each of us previously place in his pocket a letter lading upon himself the entire blame for his demise."

" To that condition I Vvholly demur," said Bazarov,

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" I think that you are straying into the pages of a French novel, and away from reality."

" Possibly I am. But, also, you will agree that to incur an unmerited suspicion of murder is a prospect not pleasant to contemplate? "

" I do. Yet still there remains another method of avoiding such an awkward imputation. That is to say, though we shall have no seconds, we can have a witness."

" Whom precisely, if I might ask? "

" Peter."

" Peter? What Peter? "

" Peter the valet, a man who stands at the apex of contemporary culture, and could therefore play the role, and perform the functions, proper to such an occasion pre-eminently comme il fatit."

" I think that you are jesting, my good sir ? "

" No, I am not. If you \\\\\ deign to give my proposal consideration you will speedily arrive at the conviction that it is as simple as it is charged with good sense. Schiller it would be impossible to hide in a bag, but I will undertake to prepare Peter for the part, and to bring him to the rendezvous."

"Still you are pleased to jest," said Paul Petrovitch as he rose. " But as you have so kindly met me, I have not the right to make further claims upon your time. All is arranged, then? In passing, have you any pistols? "

" How should I have any pistols? I am not a man of war."

" Then perhaps you will allow me to offer you some of mine ? Rest assured that they have not been fired by me for five years."

" A very comforting assurance! "

" Lastly," said Paul Petrovitch as he reached for his cane, " it only remains for me to thank you, and to leave you to your pursuits. I have the honour to bid you good-day."

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" And I to say farewell until our pleasant meeting."

With which Bazarov escorted his visitor to the door.

Paul Petrovitch gone, Bazarov stood awhile in thought. Then he exclaimed;

"Splendid indeed! Yet also unutterably stupid! What a comedy to play ! Talk of educated dogs dancing on their hind legs! . . . However, I could not have refused him, for, otherwise, he would have struck me and then " — Bazarov turned pale, for his pride had been aroused — " well, then I should have strangled him like a kitten! "

He returned to his microscope, but found his heart to be still beating, and the coolness necessary to scientific observation to have disappeared.

" I suppose he saw us this morning," he continued to himself. " Yet surely he is not doing this on his brother's behalf? For what is there in a kiss? No; something else is in the background. Bah ! What if it should be that he himself is in love with her? Yes, that is it. It is as clear as day. WTiat a mess I Truly a horrible mess, however it be viewed ! For first of all I am to have my brains blown out, and then I am to be made to leave this place! And there is Arkady to consider, and that old heifer Nikolai Petrovitch. Awkward! Awkward indeed! "

However, the day dragged its slow length along. Thenichka remained practicall}^ non-existent (in other words, she kept to her room as closely as a mouse to its hole), Nikolai Petrovitch walked about with a careworn air (it had been reported to him that mildew had begim to attack the wheat), and Paul Petrovitch's mien of icy urbanity succeeded in damping the spirits of Prokofitch himself.

Presently Bazarov sat down to write a letter to his father, but tore it up, and threw the pieces under the table.

" Should I be kiUed," he reflected, " my parents will

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hear of it soon enough. But I shall not be killed — I have yet far to wander about the world."

Next he ordered Peter to call him at dawn ; and inasmuch as the order was accompanied with a mention of important business, Peter jumped to the conclusion that it was Bazarov's intention to take him to St. Petersburg. Bazarov then retired to rest. Yet, late though he had done so, he was troubled with fantastic visions. Ever before him there flitted Madame Odintsov, who was also his mother. And ever behind her there walked a black cat, which was also Thenichka. For his part, Paul Petrovitch figured as a forest which the dreamer was engaged to fight.

At length, when lour o'clock arrived, Peter came to rouse him. Hastily dressing himself, he left the house with the valet. The morning was fine and fresh, and though a few wisps of cloud were trailing across the pale-blue transparency of the zenith, a light dew had coated the grass and folias;e with drops, and was shining like silver on spiders' webs. The steaming earth seemed still to be seeking to detain the roseate traces of dawn in her embrace; but present l}^ every quarter of the sky became lit up, and resounded again to the songs of larks.

Bazarov walked straight ahead until he reached the copse — ^then seated himself at the shadowy edge of the trees, and explained to Peter the services which he looked to the latter to perform; upon which the " cultured " menial came near to fainting, and was calmed only with an assurance that he would but have to stand at a distance, as a looker-on, and that in no case would responsibility attach to his person.

" And think," Bazarov concluded, " in what an important role you are about to figure ! "

But Peter, extending his hands deprecatingly, only turned up his eyes, became green in the face, and went and leant against a birch tree.

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The copse was skirted b}^ the road from Marino, and the Hght coating of dust bore no mark of having been disturbed since the previous evening, whether by wheel or by foot. Involuntarily Bazarov kept glancing along this road as, plucking and chewing stems of grass, he repeated again and again to himself: " What a piece of folly! " More than once, too, the morning air made him shiver, and Peter gaze plaintively in his direction ; but Bazarov only laughed, for he at least was no coward.

At length hoofs sounded along the road, and there came into sight from behind the trees a peasant driving two horses with traces attached. As the man passed Bazarov he looked at him inquisitively, but failed to doff his cap; and this circumstance impressed Peter unfavourably, since the valet considered it a bad omen.

" Like ourselves, that peasant has risen early," thought Bazarov. " But whereas he has risen to w'ork, we ! "

" Some one else is coming, I beUeve," whispered Peter.

Bazarov raised his head, and saw Paul Petrovitch, in a light check jacket and a pair of snow-white trousers, walking briskly along the road. Under his arm was a green, baize-covered box.

" Pardon me for having kept you waiting," lie said with a bow to Bazarov, and then one to Peter (for even to the latter he, for the nonce, seemed to accord something of the respect due to a second). *' As a matter of fact, 1 was loth to arouse my valet."

" I beg that you will not mention it," rephed Bazarov. " We ourselves have only just arrived."

" So much the better! " And Paul Petrovitch glanced about him. " There will be no one to see us or disturb us. Are you agreeable to proceeding? "

" Quite."

" And I presume that you require no further explanations? '

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" None whatsoever."

" Then kindly load these." Paul Petrovitch took from the box a brace of pistols.

" No. Do you load, while I measure the distance — my legs are longer than yours." This last Bazarov added \nth a drj^ smile. " Now, one, two, three "

" I beg your pardon, sir," gasped Peter, who was trembling as \vith ague. " I beg your pardon, but might I move further SLwa.y? "

" Four, five — — Certainly, my good fellow! Pray do so. You can go and stand behind that tree there, and stop your ears — provided that you do not also stop your eyes. Lastly, should either Monsieur Kirsanov or myself fall, you are to run and pick up the fallen. Six, seven,

eight " Bazarov halted. " That will do, I suppose ? "

he added to Paul Petrovitch. " Or would you prefer me to add another couple of paces? "

" Do as you please," the other replied as he rammed home the second of the two bullets.

" Then 1 will add those two paces." And Bazarov scratched a line in the soil with his toe. " Here is the mark. Apropos, how many paces is each of us to retire from our respective marks? "

" Ten, I presume," said Paul Petrovitch as he proffered Bazarov a brace of pistols. " Will you kindly make choice of these? "

" I will. Nevertheless you will agree that our duel is singular, even to the point of absurdity? For pray observe the countenance of our second! "

" It is still your pleasure to jest," Paul Petrovitch responded coldly. " Of the singularity of our contest I make no denial. I merely consider it my duty to warn you that I intend to fight you in grim earnest. So, a bon enfendeur, salui ! "

" Yet, even though we intend to exterminate one another, why should we not enjoy our jest, and thus combine utile with duke ? You have spoken to me in French. I repl^' in Latin."

" I repeat that I intend to iight you in grim earnest," said Paul Petrovitch; with which he moved to his place, and Bazarov, after counting ten paces from his mark, turned, and halted.

" Are you ready? " inquired Paul Petrovitch.

" I am."

" Then engage."

Bazarov started to advance, and Paul Petrovitch did the same, ^vith his left hand thrust into his coat pocket, and his right gradually elevating the muzzle of his pistol.

" The fellow is aiming straight for my nose," thought Bazarov to himself. " And how the rascal is screwing up his eyes as he marches! This is not a wholly pleasing sensation. I had better keep my eyes fixed upon his watch-chain."

Past Bazarov's ear something suddenly whistled, while ahnost at the same moment there came the sound of a report.

" I seemed to hear something, but no matter," was the thought which flashed through Bazarov's brain. Then he advanced another step, and, without aiming, pulled the trigger.

As he did so Paul Petrovitch gave a faint start, and clapped his hand to his thigh, downi the white trouser-leg of which there began to trickle a thin stream of blood.

Bazarov threw aside his pistol and approached his antagonist.

" Are you wounded? " he inquired.
" Pray recall me to the mark," said Paul Petrovitch.
" You have the right so to do, and we are merely wasting time. The conditions of the contest allow of a second shot apiece.,"

" Pardon me, that can be deferred," said Bazarov,

catching hold of Paul Petrovitch, who was beginning to turn pale in the face. " I am no longer a duellist, but a doctor, and must examine your wound. Peter! Here! Where the devil has the man got to? "

" This is sheer folly," gasped Paul Petrovitch. " I

need no help. Let us " Yet, even as he tried to

twirl his moustache, his arm fell to his side, his eyes closed, and he collapsed in a swoon.

" Something new! " involuntarily cried Bazarov as he laid his antagonist upon the grass. " A swoon! Let us see what is the matter with him."

Taking out his pocket-handkerchief, he wiped away the blood, and probed the neighbourhood of the wound.

" The bone is intact," he muttered. " Yes, and the bullet has merely pierced the flesh a little below the surface. Nothing but the musculiis vastus externus is so much as touched. In three weeks' time we shall have him trotting about again. A swoon! Oh these men of nerves! What thin skins, to be sure! "

" Is — is he dead? " came in Peter's tremulous voice from behind.

Bazarov looked up.

" No," he said. " Run for a Uttle water, and he will outlive us both."

Unfortunately the " perfect servant " did not understand what was said to him, but remained stock still. In fact, even when, the next moment, Paul Petrovitch opened his eyes Peter went on crossing himself and repeating: " He is dying! "

" Monsieur Bazarov," the wounded man said with a twisted smile, " you were perfectly in the right when you said that the face of that man was the face of a fool."

"It is so," agreed Bazarov. " Damn you, will you fetch some water! " (The latter to the valet.)

" There is no need," put in Paul Petrovitch. " It was only a passing vertigo. Kindly assist me to sit up. That

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is it. A scratch like this will require only to be bandaged for me to walk home again. There will be no necessity to have the drozhki sent. For that matter, the duel need not be renewed unless you wish it. At least to-day you have acted like a gentleman. Kindly note that I have said so."

" To the past we have no need to refer," said Bazarov. " And, as regards the future, it calls for equally little remark, seeing that I intend to leave here at once. Allow me to bind your leg. The wound is not dangerous, but one of a nature which wiU make it as weU to have the blood staunched. But first I must restore that stuck pig to Ufe."

Shaking Peter vigorously by the collar, he dispatched him in search of the drozhki.

" But see that you do not alarm my brother," was Paul Petrovitch's injunction also to the man. " You are not to breathe a word of what has happened."

Peter set off at full speed. During the time that he was hastening for the drozhki, the two antagonists sat silently side by side on the ground, while Paul Petro^atch tried his best not to look at Bazarov, for the reason that he did not feel inclined to become reconciled with him, while at the same time he felt ashamed alike of his impulsiveness, his failure, and the scheme which had had this ending, though he realised that it might have been worse.

" At least will the fellow swagger here no more," he thought to himself by way of consolation. " And, for that, much thanks! "

The silence was a heavy, awkward silence, for neither of the pair felt comfortable — each of them recognised that the other had taken his measure. To friends, such a recognition may be very agreeable, but to foes it is far from welcome — least of all, when neither explanations nor a parting are feasible.
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" I hope that I have not bound 3'our leg too tightly ? "

said Bazarov at last.

" Oh no," replied Paul Petrovitch. " As a matter of fact, it is doing splendidl}'." After a pause he added: " But we cannot deceive my brother. How would it be if we were to tell him that we fell out over pohtics? "

" Capital! " agreed Bazarov. " Tell him, for instance, that I started cursing Anglomaniacs."

" A good idea ! But what can that man be thinking of us? I cannot imagine." The speaker pointed to the same peasant who, shortly before the duel, had driven a pair of loose horses past Bazarov, and was now shuffling homewards, while doffing his cap at the sight of the gentlemen.

" Who can say? " replied Bazarov. " Probably he is thinking of nothing at all. As Madame Radchffe ^ frequently reminds us, the Russian muzhik is an unknown quantit3\ Does any one understand him ? He does not even understand himself."

" There you go again! " began Paul Petrovitch, but suddenly broke off to say in a still louder tone: " See what that fool Peter has done! Here comes my brother himself! "

Sure enough, on turning his head, Bazarov saw Nikolai Petrovitch's pale face peering from the drozhki. Nor had the vehicle come to a halt before Nikolai had sprung from the step, and rushed towards his brother.

" What is this? " he cried in agitated accents. " Evgenii Vasilitch, I beg of you to tell me what has happened."

" Nothing has happened," replied Paul Petrovitch in

Bazarov's stead. " You are disturbing yourself to no

purpose. I had a small quarrel ^vith Monsieur Bazarov,

and have paid a penalty as small."

^ Ann Radcliffe, nee Ward (17G4-1823), an English novelist who wrote The Mysteries of Udolpho and other tales, and travelled extensively.

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" But whence did it arise? For God's sake tell me! "

" What is there to say? It arose from the fact that Monsieur Bazarov spoke in disrespectful terms of Sir Robert Peel. I would hasten to add that, throughout, I alone was at fault, and that Monsieur Bazarov bore himself admirably — I being the challenger."

" But look at the blood! "

" Pshaw! Did you suppose my veins to n:n with water? As a matter of fact, the blood-letting will do me good. Is not that so. doctor? Help me to mount the drozhki, and away with melancholy! By to-morrow I shall be recovered. Splendid ! That is the wa\- to do it. Riglit away, coachman! "

When on the point of starting homewards in the wake of the drozhki, Nikolai Petrovitch perceived Bazarov to be for remaining behind.

" Evgenii Vasilitch," he said, " I would beg of you to attend my brother until a doctor can be procured from the town."

Bazarov nodded in silence.

An hour later Paul Petrovitch was reposing in bed with his leg neatly and artistically bandaged. The whole house was in a turmoil, Thenichka greatly upset, and Nikolai able to do nothing but wring his hands. The sick man, on the contrary, laughed and jested, especiall}' with Bazarov, and, to meet the occasion, had donned a fine linen shirt, an elegant morning jacket, and a Turkish fez. Lastly, he forbade any one to close the shutters, and kept venting humorous protests against the necessity of abstaining from food.

Towards nightfall, however, fever supervened, and his head began to ache ; with the result that when the doctor arrived from the town (Nikolai Petrovitch had disobeyed his brother in this respect, and Bazarov also had consented to his doing so, in that, after paying the patient a single visit, and that a ver}' brief one, and being put

to the mortification of having to avoid Thenichka on two occasions when he met her, he had felt that he preferred to spend the rest of the day in loneHness, bitterness, and rancour)- — when the doctor arrived from the town he advised a coohng draught, but at the same time confirmed Bazarov's opinion that no danger was to be apprehended. In passing, it may also be mentioned that, on being informed by Nikolai Petrovitch that Paul Petrovitch's wound had been self-inflicted through an accident, the said doctor replied " H'm! "; to which, on receiving into his hand a fee of twenty-five roubles, he added that of course things of the kind often occurred.

No one in the house, that night, retired to bed, or even undressed, but at intervals Nikolai Petrovitch would tiptoe into his brother's room, and as silently withdraw. At intervals, too, Paul Petro\atch would awake from a doze, sigh faintly, and say to Nikolai either " Couchez-vous " or " Please give me a drink." But once it happened that Nikolai sent the invalid a glass of lemonade by the hand of Thenichka; and this time Paul Petrovitch scanned her long and searchingly before draining the tumbler to the dregs. Towards morning the fever increased a little, and a trace of lightheadedness made its appearance which for a while caused the patient only to utter disconnected words. But suddenly he opened his eyes, and, on seeing his brother bending solicitously over the bed, murmured:

" Nikolai, do not you think that Thenichka slightly resembles Nelly? "

" What Nelly, Paul ? Who is Nelly ? "

" How can you ask? The Princess R., of course. In the upper portion of the face especially Thenichka resembles her. C'est de la meme Jamille."

Nikolai Petrovitch made no reply. He could only remain lost in Vv^onder that bj-gone fancies could so survive in the human consciousness.

"That this should have cropped up again!" he reflected.

On another occasion Paul Petrovitch muttered as he clasped his hands behind his head: " How I love this idle existence! " And again, a few minutes later, he whispered: " I will not allow a single rascal to touch me! "

Nikolai Petrovdtch sighed. To whom the words referred he had not a notion.

At eight o'clock next morning Bazarov entered Nikolai's room. His stock of insects, birds, and frogs had either been packed up or liberated.

Rising to meet him, Nikolai said:

" So you have come to say good-bj'e? "

" I have."

" I understand your feehngs, and I commend them. I know that my poor brother alone was to blame, and is now paying the penalty. Also, I gather from what he says that your position was such that you could not possibly have acted otherwise than as you did — that for vou to have avoided this duel would have been impossible. That being so, we must attribute the mischance to the — er — standing antagonism of your views " (here Nikolai Petrovitch tripped over his words a little). " My brother is one of the old school, a man of hot temper and great persistency. Consequently we have God to thank that things have turned out no worse. Finally I may say that every possible precaution against publicit}'' has been taken."

" Quite so," said Bazarov carelessly. " But I will leave my address with you, in case of an}i:hing occurring."

" I hope that nothing will occur. Indeed, my one regret is that your stay in my house should have — should have terminated in such a fashion. And I am the more grieved in that Arkady "

" I expect to be seeing him very soon," interrupted Bazarov, whom " explanations " or " speeches " of any kind always roused to fever pitch. " On the other hand, should I not do so, pray convey to him my greetings and my regrets."

" I v^dll," said Nikolai Petrovitch with a bow; but even before he had finished Bazarov had left the room.

Paul Petrovitch, too, as soon as he heard that Bazarov was on the point of departing, expressed a desire to see him, and to shake hands with him. Yet Bazarov remained as cold as ice, for well he knew that Paul Petrovitch's only aim was to make a show of "magnanimity," while to Thenichka he did not say good-bye at all— he merely exchanged with her a glance as she peeped from one of the windows. Her face looked to him careworn.

" Before long she will either trip or elope," he reflected.

On the other hand, Peter was so moved at the prospect of parting with his patron that he wept on the latter's shoulder until his transports were cooled with the question : " Surely your e3'es are not made of water? " while Duniasha's emotion w-as such that she had to take refuge in a thicket. Meanwhile the cause of all this grief mounted the travelling-cart, and lit a cigar; and even when he had travelled four versts, and reached a spot where a turn in the road brought the Kirsanov farm into line with the new manor-house, he merely expectorated some tobacco juice, and muttered, as he wrapped himself closer in his cloak: " The cursed tomnoddies! "

Thenceforth Paul Petrovitch began to mend, but still was ordered to keep his bed for another week. What he called his " imprisonment " he bore with very fair patience, although he remained fussy in the matter of his toilet, and constantly had himself sprinkled with eau-de-Cologne. Meanwhile Nikolai Petrovitch read aloud to him the newspapers, and Thenichka served him with soup, lemonade, scrambled eggs, and tea. Yet she never entered the room without feeling a mysterious nervousness come over her. Paul Petrovitch's unexpected behaviour had frightened every one in the house, but her it had frightened most of all. Only old Prokofitch seemed undismayed at the occurrence, and kept asserting that, in his day, " the gentr}^ used to bore holes in one another right enough, but only the gentry. Jackanapes like that Bazarov would have been ducked in the gutter for their pains."

Thcnichka felt little pricking of conscience, but there were times when the thought of the true cause of the quarrel rendered her at least uneas}^ and the more so because Paul Petrovitch's wa}' of looking at her was now so strange that, even when she turned her back to him, she could still feel his eyes upon her. In combination, therefore, her worries led to her growing thinner, and also (as often happens in such circumstances) to her adding to her beauty.

At length, one morning, Paul Petrovitch felt so much better that he left his bed, and removed to the sofa; while Nikolai Petrovitch, after seeing that he had all he wanted, betook himself to the farm. Also, it fell to Thenichka's lot to take the invalid a cup of tea; and when she had placed it on the table, she was about to withdraw, when Paul Petrovitch requested her to remain.

" Why should you hurry away? " he said. " Is it that you have other things to do ? "

" No — yes. That is to say, I have to go and pour out tea for the servants."

" Duniasha can do that. Surel}' you will stay awhile u'ith a sick man who has something of great importance to say to you? "

Silently she seated herself on the edge of a chair.

" Listen," he continued, as he tugged at his moustache.

" For some time past I have been wanting to ask you why you are so afraid of me ? "

" Afraid of you? "

" Yes; for you never look at me. In fact, one would think that your conscience was uneasy."

Her face reddened, but she looked Paul Petrovitch straight in the eyes. Somehow his aspect struck her as pecuhar, and her heart began to throb.

" Is your conscience clear? " he asked.

" Yes, Why should it not be? " she responded in a whisper.

" I do not know. Certainl}- 1 can recall no one against whom you can have committed a fault. Against me? It is scarcely probable. Against others in this house? That is as improbable. Against my brother? But him you love, do you not ? "

" I do."

" With your whole heart and soul ? "

" With my whole heart and soul."

" Really and truly, Thenichka? " (never before had he addressed her thus). " Look me in the eyes. To lie is a terrible sin. You know that, of course? "

" But I am not lying, Paul Petrovitch. Did I not love Nikolai Petrovitch, I should not want to live."

" And you would exchange him for no one else? "

" Whom should I exchange him for ? "

" I do not know. Surely not for the gentlemen who has just left us? "

Thenichka rose to her feet.

"Why should you torment me in this way?" she cried. " What have I done that you should speak to me so? "

" Thenichka," came the mournful reply, " I speak to you in this manner for the reason that I saw "

" You saw what ? "

" I saw voti — in the hlac arbour."

She blushed to her ears, to the very roots of her hair.

" But how was I to blame? " at length she contrived to say.

Paul Petrovitch raised himself on the sofa.

" You swear, do you, that you were not to blame? " he said. " That you were not in the slightest degree to blame ? Not at all ? "

" I love Nikolai Petrovitch," came the reply, delivered with sudden energy and a rising sob, " and never shall I love any other man. As for what you saw, before the Throne of Judgment I swear that I am innocent, that I have always been so, and that I would rather die than be suspected of having deceived Nikolai Petrovitch, m}^ benefactor."

Her voice failed her. Then, behold! she felt Paul seize and press her hand ! Turning her head, she looked down at him — and stood almost petrified. For his face was even paler than usual, his eyes were glistening, and — most surprising thing of all ! — a great tear was trickhng down his cheek !

" Thenichka," he whispered in a voice which hardly seemed his own, " T beg of you always to love, and never to cease loving, my brother. He is such a good, kind fellow as has not his equal in the world. Never desert him for another; never listen to any tales which you may hear of him, but reflect how terrible it would be for him to love and not to be loved ! Yes, think well, Thenichka, before ever you forsake him."

Thenichka's amazement caused her eyes almost to start from her head, and her nervousness completely to vanish. Judge, also, of her surprise when, though he did not draw her to himself, nor kiss her, Paul Petrovitch raised her hand to his hps, and then burst into a convulsive fit of sobbing !

" God in Heaven! " she thought to herself. " What if this should make him have another fainting lit ? "

Meanwhile, in that one moment Paul Petrovitch was living over again a past phase of his ruined hfe.

Presently hurried footsteps were heard causing the staircase to creak; and just as Paul pushed Thenichka away from him and replaced his head upon the pillow, the door opened, and Nikolai Petrovitch — fresh, ruddy, and smihng — entered with little Mitia. The latter, equally fresh and ruddy, was leaping in Nikolai's arms, and pressing his tiny, naked feet against the buttons of his father's rural smock.

Running to father and child, Thenichka threw her arms around both alike, and sank her head upon the former's shoulder. This caused him to halt in amazement, for never before had the bashful, reserved Thenichka shown him any endearment in the presence of a third person.

"What is the matter?" he exclaimed. Then he glanced at Paul, handed Mitia to Thenichka, and, approaching the bedside, inquired if his brother were v.'orse.

Paul's face was buried in his handkerchief, but he replied :

" Oh dear no. Not at all. If anything, I am better — yes, very much better."

" Nevertheless you have been over-hasty in removing to the sofa," said Nikolai Petrovitch: after which he turned to ask Thenichka why she was leaving the room, but she departed abruptly, and closed the door behind her.

" I had come to show you my httle rascal," Nikolai continued. " He had been pining for a sight of his uncle. But she has carried him away for some reason. WTiat is the matter ? Has something occurred ? "

" My brother," rephed Paul Petrovitch — and as he uttered the words Nikolai Petrovitch gave a start, and felt ill at ease, he knew not why. " My brother, pray give mc your word of honour that you will fulfil the request which I am going to make."

" WTiat request, Paul? I beg of you to continue."

" A request of the first importance. Upon it, I beheve, your entire happiness depends. Also, what I am going to say represents the fruit of much thought. My brother, the request is that you will do your duty, the duty of a good and honourable man. In other words, I beseech you to put an end to this scandal and bad example, which is imworthy of you, unworthy of a man who is the best of souls."

" To what do you refer, Paul? "

" To this. You ought to marry Thenichka. She loves you, and is the mother of your child."

Stepping back, Nikolai Petrovitch clasped his hands together.

" Do you say this? " he exclaimed. " Do yoii say this — voH whom I have always understood to be opposed to such unions ? Do yoit say this ? Surely you know that solely out of respect for yourself have I hitherto refrained from doing what rightfully you call my duty ? "

" Wrongfull}'', then, have you respected me," said Paul Petrovitch with a sad smile. " In fact, almost I am beginning to think that Bazarov was right when he accused me of only feigning the aristocratic instinct. For ii is not enough for you and me to trouble ourselves about worldly matters alone. We are old men past our prime, who ought to lay aside all pettinesses, and to fulfil strictly our obligations. Nor forget that, should we thus act, we shall receive an added measure of happiness as our reward."

Nikolai Petrovitch flung himself upon his brother, and embraced him again and again.

" You have opened my eyes," he cried. " When I described you as the best man in the world I was not wrong: and now I perceive your wisdom to be equal to your magnanimity."

" Quieter, quieter! " advised Paul. " Do not further inflame the leg of an old fool who, at fifty, has fought a duel like a young ensign. Then the matter is settled, and Thenichka is to become my belle-sceur ? "

" Yes, my dearest Paul. But what will Arkady say ? "

"Arkady? He will be delighted. True, marriage does not come within his purview or principles, but at least his sense of social equaHty will be tickled. And, in the nineteenth century, what does caste matter? "

" Paul, Paul, let me embrace you once more. You need not be afraid, I will do it very carefully." And the two brothers flung their arms around one another.

" Well? " continued Paul Petrovitch. " What think you ? Shall we tell her at once ? "

" No, w^e need not be in too much of a hurry," replied Nikolai Petrovitch. " As a matter of fact, j^ou have been ha\ing a talk with her, have you not ? "

" I have been having a talk with her ? Quelle idee ! "

"However, your first business is to recover. Thenichka will not run away, and in the meanwhile the affair must be carefully considered."

" Then you have decided upon it ? "

" Certainly I have ! And I thank you with all my heart. But I must leave you for a while now, for you ought to have some rest, and any excitement is bad for you. Matters can be discussed later. Go to sleep, dearest of brothers, and may God restore you to health! "

" WTiy did he thank me? " thought Paul Petrovitch to himself after Nikolai had gone. " Does not the affair depend upon him alone, seeing that, after the marriage, I myself shall have to depart elsewhere — to Dresden or to Florence, and to abide there until I die? "

He bathed his forehead with eau-de-Cologne, and then closed his eyes. As he lay with his handsome, refined head resting on the pillow, he looked, in the clear light of the sun, hke a corpse.

XXV

In the shade of a tall ash tree in the garden at Nikolskoe Katia and Arkady were seated on a bench. Beside them, on the ground, lay Fifi — his lengthy body twisted into the curve known to sporting folk as " the hare's crouch." Neither from Arkady nor from Katia was a word proceeding. Arkady was holding in his hands a half-opened book, and she was picking a few crumbs from a basket, and throwing them to a small famil}^ of sparrows which, with the timid temerity of their tribe, were chirping and hopping at her very feet. A faint breeze was stirring the leaves of the ash tree, and dappling Fifi's tawny back and the dark line of the pathway with a number of wavering circles of pale golden light ; but Arkady and Katia were wholly in shade, save that an occasional streak glanced upon, and gleamed in, her hair. Just for the reason that the pair were silent and side b}' side was there present to their consciousness a camaraderie which, while causing neither to have the other definitely in mind, pleased each with the sense of the other's propinquity. The expression of both is changed since last we saw them. Arkady's face wears a staider air, and Katia looks more animated and less retiring.

At length, however, Arkady spoke.

" Do 3'ou not think," he said, " that our Russian term yasen is particularly suitable to the ash tree? For no other tree cleaves the air with such airy brightness." ^

Katia looked up.

" I agree," she replied, while Arkady proudly reflected : " At all events she does not reprove me for talking in ' beautiful language.' "

^ Yascn is derived from the adjective yasni, meaning clear or bri"ht.

" By the way," Katia continued with a glance at the book in his hands, " I cannot say that I always approve of Heine. I hke him neither when he is laughing nor when he is in tears — I like him only when he is meditative and languid."

" Well, I like him when he is laughing," Arkady remarked.

" Then still there survives in you a trace of your old satirical tendency. Still your reformation needs to be completed."

"Indeed?" thought Arkady. "My satirical tendency? Oh, that Bazarov could have heard that! "

WTiile aloud he said :

" Who is ' we ' ? Yourself ? "

" Oh dear no! M\'' sister, and Porfiii Platonitch, with whom you no longer quarrel, and my aunt, whom, three days ago, you escorted to church."

" I did so only because I could not refuse. And as regards Anna Sergievna, kindly remember that, in many things, she agrees with Bazarov."

" Yes, she used to be greatly under his influence, and so did 3^ou."

" And so did I ? Then am I now emancipated from that influence? "

Katia returned no reply.

" I know that you never liked him," Arkady continued.

" Did I not ? It was not for me to judge him."

" Never do I hear that reply without declining to believe it. There is not a person living whom all of us have not the right to judge. A disclaimer of that kind always represents an excuse."

" To tell the truth, I dishked him less than I felt him to be a stranger to me — as complete a one as I to him — or you either, for that matter."

" What do you mean? "

" I mean that — well, how can I express it ? That,

whereas he was a wild bird, 3'ou and I are tame ones."

" / am a tame one? "

Katia nodded assent. Arkady scratched his ear.

" Look here," he said. " I may tell you that that constitutes, in essence, an insult."

" Why so ? Do you want to be a wild bird ? "

" Not necessarily a wild one, but at least one strong and energetic."

" You need wish no such thing. Your friend was both, yet he would rather have been otherwise.

" H'm! You believe that he used to exercise a considerable influence over Anna Sergievna? "

" Yes. But no one can hold a rein over her for long." Katia added this last sotto voce.

" What makes you think that ? "

" The fact that she is very proud— rather, that she values her independence."

" Who does not ? " queried Arkady, while there flashed through his mind the thought: " Why this mention of her?" Curiously enough, the same thought occurred to Katia too. But this was not so curious as might have been supposed, seeing that when young people meet in frequent and amicable converse, identical thoughts are apt to enter their brains.

Arkady smiled, edged nearer to Katia, and said in a whisper: " Confess that you are a little afraid of her."

" Of whom? "

" Of her," repeated Arkady meaningly.

" Are you afraid of her? " countered Katia.

" I am. Please note that I beheve you to be the same."

Katia raised a menacing finger.

" I am surprised at you! " she exclaimed. " Never at any time has my sister been better disposed towards you than she is now. She hkes you considerably more than when you first came."

" ReaUy?"

" Yes. And have yon not noticed it ? You ought to be pleased at the notion."

Arkady reflected.

" How I have contrived to win Anna Sergievna's good graces I do not know," at length he said. " Surely it cannot be because I brought her those letters which were written by your mother? "

" It is, though, and because of other reasons as well

— reasons which I will forbear to mention."

" Why Nvill you ? "

" Because I will."

" Oh, I know your faculty for obstinacy."

" It is one which I possess."

" Also, your faculty for observing things."

Katia glanced at him. Then she inquired :

" Why lose your temper ? What are you thinking of ? "

" This: that I cannot understand how you come to possess those powers of observation which undoubtedly are yours. I understand it the less because you are so nervous and distrustful and shy of everybody and "

" It is because I have lived such a lonely life. A life of that kind leads one to reflect in spite of oneself. Am I shy of every one, though? "

Arkady bestowed upon her an appreciative glance.

" Never mind," he said. " At all events it is not often that people in your position — I mean, people of your wealth — possess such a gift. To them, as to the Tsars, truth penetrates hardly."

" But I am nol wealthy."

Arkady failed at first to follow her meaning, but reflected: " Certainly the property belongs to her sister, not to her." Nor was the thought wholly unpleasing — so little so that presently he added :

" You said that very prettily."

" r. said what ? "

" That you are not wealthy. You said it so simply, so without any false shame, so without the least arriere pensee. Apropos, the consciousness of the ordinary person who both knows and confesses that he or she is poor always seems to me to contain more than the mere words imply — it harbours also a touch of vanity."

" I have, thanks to my sister, had no experience of poverty. And as for my possessions, I mentioned them only because the words came of themselves to my lips."

" Quite so. Yet confess that you too harbour a grain of the vanity to which I have alluded."

" Give me an example of my doing so."

" An example? Well, may I ask why you have not married a rich man? "

" Were I to love such a one very much, I But

no man of that sort has come my way: wherefore I have made no such marriage."

" There, now! " cried x\rkady. " But why should you not do so in the future ? "

." Because even the poets deprecate mesalliances."

" You mean that you wish either to rule or ? "

" Oh no! What good would that be? On the contrary, I am prepared to be ruled, even though I believe that inequality in any form works badly. A union of self-respect with submission — that is what I best imderstand, that is what spells true happiness. A mere subordinate existence is- -well, something which I do not fancy."

" ' Something which I do not fancy,' " commented Arkady. " Yes, you are of the same blood as Anna SergievTia: you are as independent as she, and you are even more secretive. In fact, however deep-rooted and sacred a stock of sentiments \ou might hold, you would never, of your own accord, give them utterance."

" Of course! How could you suppose anything else ? "

" Also, you are clever, and have a measure of character equal to, if not greater than, hers."

" I dislike being compared with my sister. You seem to have forgotten that she is both ' beautiful ' and ' intellectual ' and Moreover, you, above all people, ought not to say an3'thing to her disparagement, and still less to say it seriously."

" Why 'you, above all people '? Do you think that I am jesting? "

" I am certain of it."

" Indeed ? But what if I were to say that I really mean my words? WT:iat if I were to say that, if anything, I have under-expressed what is in my mind ? "
" I fail to follow you."

"Do you? Your quickness of perception has been overrated."

" ^^^ly has it ? "

Averting his head, Arkady returned no reply, while Katia fell to searching for the last crumbs in her basket, and throwing thein to the sparrows. Unfortunately, the throw of her arm proved too strong, and the birds flew awa}^ without even touching the food offered them.

" Katia," said Arkady, " it ma}' be that you look upon these things as matters of no moment. Kindl}' note, therefore, that neither for your sister nor for any other person would I exchange Mademoiselle Katerina Sergievna."

Rising, he walked away as though in sudden alarm at having allowed the words to escape his hps. Meanwhile Katia, with her hands resting upon the basket and hei head bent, gazed aftei him. Gradually there crept into her cheeks a rosy tint; and though her lips were not smihng, and her dark eyes contained a hint of perplexity, there lurked also in her expression another unexpressed feeling.

" Are you alone? " said Anna Sergievna's voice from behind her. " I thought that Arkady came with you into the garden? "

Katia slowly raised her eyes to h-r^r sister i^tastetully, and even showily, dressed, the latter was standing on the path, and engaged in stirring Fiti's ears with the point of an open parasol), and as slowly replied:

" Yes — I am alone."

" So I see," commented Madame with a smile. " He has gone indoors, I suppose? "

" Probably."

" And you have been reading with him ? "

" I have."

Anna Sergievua took Katia under the chin, and raised her face towards her own.

" You have not quarrelled, I hope? " she said.

" Oh no," said Katia, and quietly put away her sister's hand.

" \Miat solemn replies! Well, I came here to propose a walk, since he is alwaj's asking me to go one. But, to pass to another subject, some shoes have arrived for 5'ou from the town, so you had better go and try them on. Only yesterday I was noticing how shabby your old ones are. In general, you do not take sufficient pains in such matters, for you have charming feet, and also not ugly hands, even though a trifle too large. You ought to take care of your feet. When you are here you do not do so sufficienth-."

Madame passed onwards with a light rustle of her handsome gown, while Katia rose from the bench, and, taking the volume of Heine, departed in another direction — though not to try on the boots.

You have charming feet,' " she repeated to herself as she tripped up the sun-baked steps of the terrace. " ' You have charming feet.' Well, before long some one shall be at them."

Confusion then overcame her, and she took the remaining steps at a bound.

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Meanwhile Arkady made for his room. As he was passing through the hall he was overtaken by the butler, and informed that Monsieur Bazarov was awaiting him above.

" Evgenii Vasilitch?" exclaimed Arkady in a tone very much as of alarm. " Ha^ he been here long? "

" A few minutes only. He instructed me not to announce him to Madame but to take him straight to your room."

" I hope that nothing unfortunate has occurred at home," reflected Arkady as he ran up the stairs and opened the door of the bedroom. But the first sight of Bazarov's face reassured him, even though a more experienced eye might have detected in the features of the unlooked-for guest certain signs that inward turmoil underla}' their usual rigidity. Clad in a dust cloak and a travelling cap, he was seated on the window-sill, and did not rise even when, rushing towards him with exclamations of astonishment, and fussing to and fro like a man who beheves himself to be overjoyed, as well as desires other people to believe it, Arkady cried:

"What a surprise! What has brought you here? Surely everything at home is well, and all are in good health ? "

" Ever\d;hing at your home is well," said Bazarov;

" but all are not in good health. However, if your brains are not hopelessly wandering, first tell them to bring me some kvass, and then sit down and listen to my few but, I hope, well-chosen words."

This quieted Arkady, and upon that Bazarov told him of the duel with Paul Petrovitch. The recital finished, Arkady stood amazed, as well as distressed. But this he did not think it necessary to state — he merely inquired whether his imcle's wound were really a harmless one, and, on receiving the reply that it was of a nature uninteresting from every but the medical point of view, forced a smile. Yet all the while he felt secretly hurt, and also secretly ashamed. This Bazarov seemed to divine.

" See," he said, " what comes of consorting with feudal folk! Should one's lot be cast among them, inevitably one gets drawn into their knightly tourneys. Being on my way to my parents' place, I have turned aside to But no ; I will not be guilty of a foolish and useless lie. The real reason w^hy I have turned aside is that — oh, the devil only knows why! Times there are when a man ought to take himself by the scruff of the neck, and uproot himself like a radish from a garden border. That is what / did when I was last here. But, since, a longing has come upon me to take just another peep at all that I then forsook — to view once more the border where I used to grow."

" By the words ' all that I then forsook ' I hope that you do not mean myself as well?" cried Arkady anxiously. " Do not say that you intend to sever me also from your friendship? "

Bazarov looked at him. He did so fixedly, almost sharply.

" Would the eventuality distress you? " he inquired. " Rather, it is you who have forsaken me, O verdant and transparent soul. Inter alia, T hope that your affair with Anna Sergievna is progi'essing ? "

" My ' affair with Anna Sergievna'? "

" For her sake, was it not, you came hither from the town? Ah, tender young chicken of mine, what about those Sunday Schools? Come, come! Do not tell me that you are not in love with her. Or have you at last learnt to be secretive? "

" Always I have been frank with you, as you know; wherefore pray beheve me when I say — I call God to witness that it is true — that your surmises are mistaken."

"Truly a new song! " remarked Bazarov sotto voce.

" But do not disturb yourself: it is all one to me. Certainly, a Romanticist would liave said: ' Our roads are beginning to diverge '; but I say no more than that clearly we have no further use for one another."

" Oh, Evgenii! "

" Dear lad, it is no misfortune. At all times is something in the world finding out that it has no use for something else. So we must say good-bye. Ever since I arrived in this place I have been feeling as uncomfortable as a Governor's lady when she hears a work of Gogol's read aloud. In fact, I did not order m}- horses to be unharnessed."

" But you cannot act like this! "

"Why not?"

" Because, apart from my own feelings, such a speedy departure would be the height of rudeness to Anna Sergievna. I know that she would like to see you."

" No, she would not."

" I am positive that she would. Why pretend like this? Are you going to say that it is not for her sake alone that j^ou are here? "

" You have grounds for that surmise, yet I say that you are wrong."

But Arkady proved to be right, for Anna Sergievna really desired to see Bazarov, and, through the butler, sent him word to that effect. After tidying his costume, therefore, and tucking his new great-coat under his arm (in readiness to depart as soon as the interview should be concluded), he went downstairs, and was received, not in the room where he had unexpectedly disclosed his passion, but in the drawing-room. Anna Sergievna's manner, as she offered him the tips of her fingers, was pleasant enough, yet her face betrayed involuntary tension.

" To begin with," Bazarov hastened to say, " allow me to reassure you. You see before you a corpse which

has long returned to its senses, and is also not destitute of hope that others have forgotten its folly. I am unlikely to see you again for an extended period, but, though (as you know) I am not given to sentiment, I feel that I should hke to bear away with me the thought that my image still fills your mind with aversion."

She caught at her breath like a person who has just arrived at the summit of a lofty mountain. Then her face lightened into a smile, and, offering Bazarov her hand a second time, she allowed it to respond to the pressure of his.

" When sorrow is asleep, do not wake it," she said. " And the less so since my conscience convicts me, if not of coquetry on that occasion, at all events of something else. One word more. Let us be friends again. For it was all a dream, was it not ? And who remembers dreams? "

" WTio indeed.^ And love — well, love is a mere empirical sentiment."

" T am glad to hear you say so."

Thus Anna Sergievna, and thus Bazarov. And both conceived themselves to be speaking the truth. But was it the truth ? — at all events, the whole truth ? The speakers themselves did not know, and therefore the author does not. Nevertheless both the man and the woman framed their words to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence.

Ne.xt Anna Sergievna asked Bazarov how he had spent his time at the Kirsanovs' ; and though he came within an ace of telling her of the duel with Paul Petrovitch, he checked himself in time, and replied that he had been engaged in work.

" And I," she said, " have been, for some unknown reason, out of humour, and meditating going abroad; but the fit is passing now (thanks to the arrival of your friend Arkad\' Nikolaievitch), and already I find myself relapsing into my old rut, and resuming my true r61e."

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" And what is your true role ? "

" The role of acting as aunt or preceptress or mother — call it what you like — to my sister. In passing, I wonder if you are aware that once upon a time I did not altogether understand j'our close friendship wth Arkady Nikolaievitch ? Somehow he seemed too insignificant for j'ou. But now, I know him better, and have convinced myself that in his head there is a brain. Above all things, he is young, young — not like you and myself, Evgenii Vasilitch."

" But he is still shy in your presence? " queried Bazarov.

" He " began Anna Sergievna; then, checking

herself, continued: "No; he is gaining confidence, and has taken to talking to me quite freely; whereas once upon a time, though I did not seek his company, he used to fiee whenever I came near him. By the way, he is great friends with Katia."

Somehow this irritated Bazarov.

" Never can a woman forbear dissembling," was his reflection. Aloud he said with a frigid smile: " Then you say that he used to flee from you? But surely it cannot be a secret that formerly he cherished for you une grande passion? "

"What? He too? "

" Yes, he too," affirmed Bazarov with a nod. " But I think that you knew that ? It was not a piece of news that I have just told you? "

Her e^^es became fixed upon the fioor.

" I behave you to be wrong," she observed.

" So do not I. But perhaps I ought not to have mentioned it ? " To himself he added: " And perhaps you will not, in future, play the hypocrite with me."

"Why should you not have mentioned it?" she queried. " As a matter of fact, I believe you to be attaching importance to a mere passing impression

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and shall soon think that you have a tendency to exaggerate."

" Suppose we talk of something else? " he suggested.

" For what reason? "

However, of her own accord she diverted the conversation into another channel. True, she had assured him, and she herself believed, that everything was buried in the past ; yet she felt ill at ease, and conscious that, even while jesting or exchanging the merest of bagatelles, she had weighing upon her a nervous oppression. In fact, it was akin to the case of passengers afloat. Though such folk will laugh and talk with the same apparent indifference as on land, let but the machinery stop, or the least sign of anything unusual appear, and at once every face will display that peculiar expression of anxiety which comes only of constant knowledge of ever-present danger.

Of similar sort was Anna Sergievna's interview with Bazarov; nor was it prolonged, in that soon she began to feel so absent-minded, and to answer with such vagueness, that she proposed a move to the hall, where there were found Katia and tJie Princess.

" And where is Arkady Nikolaievitch ? " inquired the hostess; and, on being told that he had not been seen for over an hour, she sent messengers to summon him. But this proved a lengthy task, seeing that he had withdrawn to the remotest corner of the garden, and, sitting with chin upon hands, was plunged in thought. Those thoughts were important and profound, but not sad; and though he knew that Anna Sergievna was alone with Bazarov, he felt none of his old jealousy, but, rather, gazed before him with quiet cheerfulness — with an air as though something had pleased and surprised him, and led him to arrive at a certain decision.

XXVI

Although the late Monsieur Odintsov had disUked " innovations," he had not been opposed to the indulgence of " a certain play of refined taste," and had erected, in a space between the hothouses and the lake, a building modelled in the style of a Greek temple, but consisting of undeniable Russian bricks. Also, he had caused to be inserted in the massive rear wall of this temple or gallery six niches for six statues which were designed to represent Solitude, Silence, Thought, Melancholy, Modesty, and Sensibility, and which he had purposed to import from abroad; but only one of these, the statue of the Goddess of Silence, mth a fmger to her lips, had actually been delivered and erected; and even of that the household underlings had knocked off the nose on the very day of the statue's arrival. True, a neighbouring sculptor had offered to furnish the goddess with a nose " twice as good as the last one," but Odintsov had none the less ordered her removal to a comer of the millhouse, where for several years past she had acted as a source of superstitious awe to the peasant women of the district. Likewise, the front wall of the temple had become so overgrown with bushes that only the capitals of the supporting columns remained visible above the mass of verdure, and even at middaj^ the interior of the building was cool and pleasant; and though Anna Sergievna had never really liked the place since the day when she had discovered an adder there, Katia paid it frequent visits, and, seating herself on a great stone bench which was fixed under one of the niches, would read or work, or surrender herself to the influence of that perfect rcstfulness which, known, probably, to every one, comes of a silent, half-unconscions contemplation of the great waves of life as they break for ever around and against ns.

On the morning after Bazarov's arrival Katia was in her usual position on the bench, and beside her was Arkady — he having specially asked her to accompany him thither.

Though an hour was still wanting to luncheon time, the dew and the freshness of the morning had already given place to the sultriness and the aridity of noontide. Arkady's face yet bore the expression of yesterday, but Katia's features were stamped with one, rather, of depression. This was because after breakfast her sister had called her into the boudoir, and to some of those blandishments which always alarmed the girl had added a word of advice that Katia should observe more caution m her converse with Arkady, and, above all things, avoid such solitary tete-d-tetes with him as appeared to have aroused the attention of the household in general, and of the Princess in particular. Since the previous evening Anna Sergievna had been out of humour ; and inasmuch as Katia's conscience was not wholly clear of responsibility in the matter, she had intimated, when jnelding to Arkady's request, that it must be for the last time.

" Katia," he began with a sort of easy uneasiness, " since the day when I had the good fortune to reside imder the same roof as yourself I have talked to you on many different subjects. But one particular question has for me a paramount importance: nor upon that question have I yet touched. Yesterday you said that during my stay here I have undergone a process of reformation " — he neither sought nor avoided Katia's eye — " and, to be frank, such a reformation has, in part at least, come about. Better than any one else do you know that this is so — you to whom, above all others, that remaking is due."

" To me? " she re-echoed.

" Yes, to you," Arkady repeated. " No longer am I the presumptuous lad who came here a short while ago: not for nothing have I attained my twenty-third year. And though I still wish to be of use in hfe, though I still wish to consecrate the whole of my faculties to the service of Truth, I no longer seek mj^ ideals where I was wont to do — they appear to me to stand much nearer home. Hitherto I have been in ignorance of myself, hitherto I have set myself tasks beyond my powers; but now, through a certain feeling which is within me, my eyes have become opened. By the way, the manner in which I express myself may be lacking in clarity, yet I venture to hope that I have made myself understood ? "

Katia said nothing; but she ceased to look at the speaker.

" In my opinion," he went on in a tone of rising emotion, while in a birch tree overhead a chaffinch started pouring forth a flood of unstudied song, "in my opinion, it is the duty of an honourable man to be frank with those who, with those who — in short, with those who stand nearest to him in life. Consequently I, I am minded to — to "

Here Arkady's eloquence failed him. He stumbled and stuttered and had to pause for a moment. Meanwhile Katia's eyes remained lowered. One would have thought that she did not in the least understand this preamble, but was expecting to hear something quite of a different nature.

" That I shall surprise you I know in advance," continued Arkady, once more spurring his faculties. " And that surprise will be the greater when I tell you that the feeling to which I have alluded concerns, to a certain extent — yes, to a certain extent, yourself. For yesterday, you will remember, you imputed to me a lack of gravity " — he was speaking much hke a man who, having blundered into a bog, feels that at each step he sinks deeper and deeper, yet struggles on in the hope of eventually extricating himself — " and such a reproach is all too often levelled against, all too often falls upon, young people who have ceased to deserve it. Were I but possessed of more self-confidence " ("God help me! God help me! " he thought despairingly, but Katia did not even turn her head) — " had I but the right to hope that "

" Did I but feel sure that you really mean what you say," broke in, at this moment, the clear accents of Anna Sergievna.

Arkady became dumb, and Katia turned pale; for along a httle path which skirted the bushes screening the temple there were advancing Bazarov and Madame ! Katia and Arkady could not actually see the pair, yet they could hear every word uttered, and even catch the sound of their breathing, and the rustle of Anna Sergievna's dress. Advancing a few more steps, the couple halted, and remained standing in front of the building.

" It is like this," Anna Sergievna continued. " You and I have blundered into an error. That is to say, while neither of us is in the heyday of youth — I so least of the two — and both of us have hved our lives and are weary, we arc also (for I need not stand on ceremony) individuals of intellect. Consequently, though, at first, we interested one another, and felt our mutual curiosity aroused, it happened that subsequently "

" That subsequently I grew stale in your eyes," hazarded Bazarov.

" Oh no! That that was not the cause of the situation you are well aware. But, whatever the cause, you and I have not a compelling need of one another. Therein lies the point. In other words, both of us have in us — how shall I express it ? — both of us are too mutually akin. We were slow to grasp that fact. Now, Arkady — ■ — "

" Have you a ' compelling need ' of him ? " put in Bazarov.

" For shame, Evgenii Vasilitch! You yourself have averred that he is not wholly indifferent to me ; and I too have long suspected that he cherishes for me at least a measure of admiration. As we are on the subject, I will not attempt to conceal from you that of late the fact that I am old enough to be his aunt has not prevented me from devoting to him more of my thoughts than I used to do. In his fresh young sentimentality there is a certain charm."

" The term ' fascination ' comes handier in such cases," said Bazarov in the deep, quiet tone which, with him, always signified sarcasm. " As a matter of fact, I found Arkady secretive yesterday — he made but the scantiest of references either to you or your sister. That constitutes an important symptom."

" Katia and he are brother and sister to one another," said Madame. " Indeed I am pleased to see it — though perhaps I ought not to connive at so much familiarity."

" I presume that the element speaking in you is the sister? " drawled Bazarov.

" Of course! But need we stand here.? Let us move on. We hold curious conversations, do we not ? Indeed, to think of all the things v/hich I now say to you! Yet I still fear you a httle, even though I trust you as being, at heart, a good man."

" I am far from good; and you only call me so because I have lost all significance in your eyes. Ill boots it to weave chaplets for the head of a corpse."

" Evgenii Vasilitch, we cannot always command ourselves," came the sound of Anna Sergievna's next words; but the next moment the wind soughed, the leaves rustled, and the rest of what she was saying was carried away into the distance. Nothing beyond it save (after a pause) " You are free, are you not? " on

the part of Bazarov could be distinguished. Then the sound of their footsteps died away, and once more complete silence reigned.

Turning to Katia, Arkady saw that she was sitting as before, but with her head more bent.

" Katerina Sergievna," he said tremulously, and with his hands clasped, " I shall love you always, and beyond recall; nor shall I ever love another woman. This is what I have been trying to say to you this morning, in the hope that I might ascertain your views, and then beg for your hand. I am not a rich man, but I would make any sacrifice for your sake. Come, then ! Will you answer me ? Will you trust me ? Surely 3^ou do not think that I am speaking out of frivolity? Recall the past few days : may you not rest assured now that my remaining self (you know what I mean) is gone for ever ? Come, look at me— look at me and speak but a word, a single word. I love you, I love you! Do not refuse to believe that I mean what I say."

Gravely, yet with a radiant look in her eyes, Katia raised her head, and, after a moment's thought, said with the trace of a smile: " Yes."

Arkady leapt up.

" ' Yes ' ? You have said ' Yes,' Katia! But what do mean by that word? Do you mean that you believe

in my love, or do you mean that ? No, no ; I dare

not finish the sentence."

Katia repeated only the word " Yes," but this time she left no room for misunderstanding. Arkady seized her large, but not unshapely, hands in his, and, panting with rapture, strained her to his breast. He could scarcely stand upon his feet — he could only keep repeating again and again: " Katia! Katia! " Meanwhile she shed a few innocent tears at which she smiled as they fell. The man who has not seen such tears in the eyes of his beloved does not know the height of

happiness to which, with mingled joy and gratitude and modesty, a woman can attain.

Next morning Anna Sergievna sent for Bazarov to her boudoir; and when he arrived she, with a forced smile, handed him a folded sheet of notepaper. That sheet represented a letter from Arkady, a letter in which he begged for her sister's hand.

Bazarov skimmed the epistle — then scarcely could forbear venting the rancour which blazed for a moment in his breast.

" It is as I said, you see," he commented. " Only yesterday you were telling me that his feeling for Katerina Sergievna was that of a brother for a sister! And what are you going to do ? "

" What would you advise me to do? " she said, still smiling.

" I presume " — he also was smiling, although he was feeling as wholly out of spirits, as little inclined towards gaiety, as she was — " I presume that we have no choice but to bestow our blessing upon the young couple. In every respect it would be a good match, for his father has a nice little property, Arkady is the only son, and the father is too easy-going to be likely to raise any difficulty "

Madame Odintsov rose and paced the room for a moment or two — her face alternately flushing and turning pale.

" So that is what you think? " she said. " Well, I too see no impediment. Indeed, the affair rejoices me both for Katia's sake and for — yes, for his. Bat first I must await his father's consent; and for that purpose I will send Arkady himself to interview Nikolai Petrovitch. ... So I was right yesterday, was I not ? I was right when I said that you and I are become elderly? How did I fail to foresee this? I am indeed surprised at it ! "

Again she smiled, but, in the very act of smiling, turned away.

" Our young folk are indeed cunning," remarked Bazarov. After a pause he added :

" Good-bye now. I hope that the affair may develop well. From a distance I, too, shall rejoice."

She turned and faced him.

" Need you really go ? " she asked. " Why not stay a little longer? Pray stay, for I find talking to you a stimulant — it is like walking on the edge of a precipice: at first one is afraid, then one gathers courage. Do not go."

" I thank you for the proposal, as also for your flattering estimate of my conversational powers," said Bazarov. " Nevertheless, I have tarried overlong in a sphere which is alien to my personality. Only for a while can flying fish support themselves in the air. Then they relapse into their natural element. Allow me to flop back into mine."

Yet a bitter laugh was twisting his pale features. She saw it, and felt sorry for him.

" The man still loves me," was her thought, and she extended a sympathetic hand.

He understood her, however.

'' No, no! " he exclaimed as he withdrew a step or two. " Though poor, I have never yet accepted alms. Good-bye, and may your lot always be happy."

" Yet we shall meet again," she replied with an involuntary gesture. " Of that I am certain."

" Anything may occur in this world," he remarked — then bowed and was gone.

That afternoon he said to Arkady as he knelt down to pack his trunk :

" I hear that you are going to make a nest for yourself? And why should you not? It is an excellent course to take. But for you to dissemble is useless, and I had scarcely expected that you would do so. Has the preoccupation of it all deprived you of your tongue ? "

" WTien I left you at Marino I had no thought of this," said Arkady. " You are the dissembler, though, are you not ? For when you say ' It is an excellent course to take,' you dissemble, as well as waste your time, seeing that I am well aware of your views on marriage."

" Merely my way of expressing myself. You see what I am doing at this moment. In my trunk is a vacant space. I am packing it with straw. And the same with hfe's trunk. To avoid leaving empty spaces therein we pad the interstices. You need not be offended. You cannot fail to remember what I really think of Katerina Sergievna. WTiile some maidens earn cheap reputations by merely smiling at right moments, your inamorata can show more — indeed, so much more that soon you will be (and very properly) under her thumb."

Slapping down the hd of the trunk, Bazarov rose from the floor.

" Now, farewell," he said. " No, I will not deceive you: we are parting for ever, and you know it. In my opinion you have acted wisely, for you were not meant to live the hard, bitter, reckless Ufe of Nihilism — you lack at once the necessary coolness and the necessary venom. But this is not to say that in you there is not a due measure of youthful spirit. What I mean is that that asset alone is not sufficient for the work. The dvorianin is powerless to progress beyond either well-bred effervescence or well-bred humility: and both sentiments are futile. For example, you have not yet been blooded, yet already you think yourself a man: whereas the two chief conditions of our existence are battle and bloodshed. Yes, the dust from our heels hurts your eyes, and the grime on our bodies makes you

feel dirty. In other words, although you derive a certain gratification from indulging in self-criticism, and think no small beer of yourself, you have failed to grow to our stature. To us such things are vanities. Tools of an altogether different kind are what we need for the task. Consequently I repeat that, though a fine young fellow enough, you are also just a little-minded, so-called ' liberal-minded ' haritch i— what my father calls a ' product of evolution.' "

" Evgenii," was Arkady's sad reply, " we are parting for ever, yet this is all that you have to say to me! "

Bazarov scratched his head.

" Something else I could say, Arkady," he replied. " But I will not say that something— it would savour too much of Romanticism. Get married as soon as you can, line your nest, and beget plenty of offspring. Nor will those offspring be altogether fools, seeing that they will be born in due season, and not when you and I were. . . . My horses are ready and I must depart. Of the rest of the household I have taken leave already. Shall we embrace once more, eh? "

The tears gushed in torrents from Arkady's eyes as he flung himself upon his old friend and mentor.

"Ah, youth, youth!" commented Bazarov. "See what comes of being young! But before long, I know, Katerina Sergievna will have set things right. Yes, she will console you."

With a last good-bye he mounted the travelling cart, and, in the act of doing so, pointed to a pair of jackdaws which were sitting perched upon the stable roof.

" See! " he cried. " There's an instructive lesson for you! "

" What do you mean? " queried Arkady.

" ^\^lat ? " was Bazarov's ejaculation. " Are you so ignorant of, or so forgetful of, natural history as not to

1 A small squire.

know that the jackdaw is the most respected of family birds? Mark the good example before you. Farewell, seiior! "

And with a clatter the cart started on its way.

Nor was Bazarov mistaken, for, even before nightfall, Arkady, deep in conversation with Katia, had completely forgotten his vanished instructor. Moreover, already the j^oung fellow was beginning to play second fiddle to his fiancee : which circimistance the girl, on realising, in no way felt surprised at. So it was arranged that on the following day he should depart for Marino to interview his father; and in the meanwhile, Anna Sergievna, having no desire to hamper the young couple, merely observed such a show of propriety as involved her not leaving them together for long, but at the same time keeping at a distance the Princess, who, since the tidings of the impending union, had been in a state of lachrymose rancour. For herself, Anna Sergievna had at first feared that the spectacle of the young people's happiness would prove too much for her; but now the contrary proved to be the case, and she not only failed to feel hurt at the spectacle, but even found that it interested her and eventually softened her — a consummation which brought both relief and regret.

" Bazarov was right," she reflected. " It was mere curiosity, mere love of ease, mere egoism, mere "

" Children, is love an empirical sentiment ? " once she asked of Arkady and Katia: but neither of the pair understood her meaning. Moreover, they were fighting a little shy of her, since they could not altogether forget the conversation which they had involuntarily overheard; but in time Anna Sergievna succeeded in overcoming also this timidity, and found the task the more easy to perform in that she had succeeded also in overcoming her disappointment.

XXVII

The old Bazarovs' delight at their son's return was the greater in that the event was so unexpected. To such an extent did Anna Vlasievna fuss and flounce about the house that VasiU Ivanitch hkencd her to a hen partridge (no doubt the short tail of her blouse did impart to her rather a bird-hke aspect) ; while, as regards Vasili himself, he grunted, and sucked the amber mouthpiece of his pipe, and, grasping the shank, inverted the bowl as though to make sure that it was secure, and, finally, parted his capacious lips, and gave vent to a noiseless chuckle.

" I am going to spend with you six whole weeks," said Bazarov. " But I desire to work, and therefore must not be disturbed."

" Before we will disturb you, you shall forget what my face looks like," replied Vasili Ivanitch.

And he kept his word ; for, after allotting his son the study, he not only remained completely out of sight, but even prevented his wife from manifesting the least sign of tenderness.

" WTien Evgenii last visited us," he said to her, " you and I proved a little wearisome; so this time we must be more discreet."

Anna Vlasievna agreed, much as she lost by the arrangement, seeing that now she beheld her son only at meal times, and feared, even then, to speak to him.

" Eniushenka," she would begin — then, before he had had time to raise his eyes, pluck nervously at the strings of her cap, and whisper: " Oh no; it was nothing," and address herself, instead, to Vasili Ivanitch; saying, for instance (with cheek on hand as usual): "My dear,

which would our dading Eniusha prefer for dinner — cabbage soup or beef with horse-radish? " And when Vasili Ivanitch would reply: "Why should you not ask him yourself? " she would exclaim: " Oh no, for that might vex him."

But eventually Bazarov ceased to closet himself, in that there came an abatement of the work fever, and to it succeeded fits of depression, ennui, and an inordinate restlessness. In his every movement there began to loom a strange discontent, from his gait there disappeared its old firm, active self-confidence, and, ceasing to indulge in solitary rambles, he took to cultivating society, to attending tea in the drawing-room, to pacing the kitchen garden, and to joining Vasili Ivanitch in a silent smoking of pipes. Naj^, on one occasion he even paid Father Alexis a visit !

At first the new order of things rejoiced Vasili Ivanitch's heart : but that joy proved short-lived.

" Though I could not say why, Eniusha makes me anxious," he confided to his spouse. " Not that he is discontented or ill-tempered — such things would not have mattered : rather, it is that he is sad and brooding, and never opens his Hps. Would that he would curse you and me, for instance ! Also, he is thinner ; nor do I like the colour of his face."

" O God! " whispered the old woman. " Yet I may not even put my arms around his neck! "

From that time onwards Vasili Ivanitch began to make cautious attempts to question Bazarov concerning his work, his health, and his friend Arkady; but always Bazarov returned reluctant, indifferent replies, and once, when his father was for introducing the foregoing topics, said irritably:

" Why are you for ever tiptoeing around me? Your present manner is even worse than your former one."

" There, there — I did not mean anything," was poor VasiU Ivanitch's reply.

Political allusions proved equally fruitless. For instance, when Vasili Ivanitch was seeking to engage his son's interest on the score of the impending emancipation of the serfs and progress in general, the other muttered carelessly:

" Yesterday, when passing through the courtyard, I heard some peasant lads singing, not one of the good old songs, but ' The age of truth is coming in, when hearts shall glow with love.' There's progress for you! "

Occasionally Bazarov would repair to the village, and, in his usual bantering fashion, enter into conversation with some peasant.

" Well," he said to a muzhik, " pray expound to mc your views on life. For they tell me that in you he the whole strength and the whole future of Russia — that you are going to begin a new epoch in our history, and to give us both a real language and new laws."

The peasant made no reply at the moment. Then he said:

" We might do all that if first we had a new chapel here."

" Tell me something, though, about the world in general," Bazarov interrupted. " The world stands on three fishes, does it not? "

" It does that, baiiushka," the peasant replied with the quiet, good-humoured sweetness of the patriarchal age. " But above it stands the will of the masters. The bare are our fathers, and the harder the barin drives, the better for the muzhik."

Shrugging his shoulders contemptuously at this statement, Bazarov turned away, while the peasant slunk off homewards.

" What did he say? " asked a sullen-looking, middle-aged peasant who had been standing at the door of his hut during the course of the foregoing colloquy. " Was he talking of arrears of taxes? "

" Of arrears of taxes! " retorted the first peasant, his tone now containing not a trace of its late patriarchal sweetness, but, rather, a note of purely dry contempt. " He was chattering just for chattering's sake — ^he likes to hear his own tongue wag. Do not all of us know what a barin and the likes of him are good for ? "

" Aye," agreed the second peasant; whereafter, with much nodding of caps and gesticulating of fists, they fell to discussing their own affairs and requirements. So alas for Bazarov's scornful shrug of the shoulders! And alas for that knowledge of the way in which the peasant should be talked to whereof the young Nihihst had made such boast when disputing with Paul Petrovitch! In fact, never had it dawned upon the mind of the self-confident Bazarov that, in the eyes of the muzhik, he was no better than a pease-pudding.

However, he succeeded in discovering for himself an occupation. This was when, in bandaging a peasant's leg, VasiU Ivanitch's hands shook a little through senihty, and his son hastened to his assistance: and from that time forth Bazarov acted as Vasili Ivanitch's partner, even though he maintained unabated his ridicule both of the remedies which he himself advised and of the father who hastened to put them into practice. Yet in no way did his son's raillery annoy Vasili Ivanitch : rather, it heartened the old man. Smoking his pipe, and drawing his dirty overall in to his waist with both thumbs, he would listen deUghtedly to the scoffer, and chuckle, and show his blackened teeth the more in proportion as the sallies contained a greater measure of venom. Nay, stupid or simply senseless as many of these witticisms were, he would frequently catch them up, and repeat them. To take one instance, he, for several days in succession, kept assuring every one in

the village and in the town that " we call this the nine o'clock office " — the sole basis being the fact that once, on learning of his (Vasili Ivanitch's) habit of attending Matins, Bazarov had made use of the phrase in question.

" Thank God, Evgenii has ceased to mope," he confided in a whisper to his wife. " In fact, you should have heard him rating me to-day! "

Also, the thought that he had such an assistant in his labours filled the old man with pride.

" Yes, yes," he would say as he handed some peasant woman in a man's jacket a phial of medicinal water or a pot of cold cream, " you ought daily to thank God that my son happens to be staying with me, since otherwise you could not possibly have been treated according to the latest and most scientific methods. Do you understand? I say that even Napoleon, the Emperor of the French, has not at his disposal a better physician than my son."

And the peasant woman (who had come, it may be, to complain of " a lifting with the gripes "—an expression which probably she herself could not have explained) would bow, then proffer the three or four eggs which would be tied up in a corner of her neckcloth.

Also, when Bazarov extracted a tooth from the jaw of a travelling pedlar, Vasili Ivanitch could not allow even the very ordinary character of the tooth to prevent him from preserving it as a rarity, and showing it to Father Alexis.

" See what a fang! " he said. " And to think of the strength which Evgenii must possess! He lifted the pedlar clean from the ground! It was like uprooting an oak tree! "

" Splendid! " was Father Alexis' comment — he knew not what else to say, nor, for that matter, how else to get rid of the enthusiastic .veteran.

Lastly, there was an occasion when a peasant from a neighbouring village brought his brother to be treated. Suffering from typhus, the patient was lying face downwards on the straw in the cart, and had reached the last stage, since already his body was covered with spots of a hectic nature, and he had long lost consciousness. To an expression of regret that resort had not sooner been had to medical aid, Vasili Ivanitch could add no more than an intimation that no hope was left : nor was he wrong, seeing that even before the peasant succeeded in conveying his brother back to the village, the sick man had breathed his last.

Three days later Bazarov entered his father's room with an inquiry for some hell-stone.

" I have some," said Vasili Ivanitch; " but what do you want it for? "

" For the cauterisation of a wound."

" A wound on whom? "

" A wound on myself."

" On yourself? Let me see the place. Where is it ? "

" There — on that finger. To-day I went to the village whence they brought the typhus patient the other day; and though they tried to conceal the body, I succeeded in discovering it. Not for a long time had I had a chance of doing that sort of work."

"Yes?"

" And the sequel was that I cut myself, and, on repairing to the district physician, found that he did not possess what I wanted."

Vasih Ivanitch went white to the lips. Hurrying, without a word, into his study, he returned thence with some hell-stone. Bazarov was for carrying it away forthwith.

" No, no! " cried Vasili Ivanitch. " For God's sake allow me to see to this in person."

Bazarov smiled.

" You are indeed a keen practitioner," he commented.

" Do not jest, I beg of you. Show me the finger. No, it is not a large wound. Am I hurting it at all ? "

" Not in the least. Have no fear. You can press it harder still if you like."

Vasili Ivanitch paused.

" Do you not think," he said, " that it would be better to cauterise the finger with an iron? "

" No, I do not. Moreover, that ought, in any case, to have been done sooner; whereas by now even the hell-stone is unlikely to prove effectual, seeing that, as you know, once absorbed into the system, the germ renders all remedies too late."

" How ' too late ' ? " gasped Vasili Ivanitch.

" What I say. Four hours have elapsed since the injury."

Vasili Ivanitch gave the wound a further cauterisation.

" So the district physician had no hell-stone? " he queried.

" None."

" God in heaven! To think of that man calling himself a doctor, yet being without such an indispensable remedy! "

" You should have seen his lancets! " remarked Bazarov. Then he left the room.

Throughout that evening and the next few days Vasih Ivanitch kept making every possible excuse to enter his son's room; and though he never actually referred to the wound — he even strove to confine his conversation to purely extraneous subjects — his observation of his son remained so persistent, his solicitude so marked, that at length Bazarov, losing patience, bade him begone. Of course Vasili Ivanitch promised not to repeat the intrusion; and as a matter of fact he kept this promise the more religiously in that Arina Vlasievna (who had had the matter carefully concealed from her) was beginning to scent something in the wind, and to press for reasons why, during the previous night, her husband had never once closed his eyes. Accordingly, for the next two days Vasih Ivanitch faithfully observed the undertaking he had given; and that although the covert observation of his son's looks which he maintained showed them to be growing by no means to his hking: but on the third day, during dinner, Vasih Ivanitch could bear it no more, for Bazarov was sitting with his eyes lowered and his plate empty.

"You are eating nothing, Evgenii?" he said with his face composed to express absolute indifference. " In my opinion, the dinner is well cooked."

" The only reason why I am eating nothing," replied Bazarov, " is that I am not hungry."

"You have no appetite?" the old man queried timidly. " Also, is — is your head aching at all? "

" Yes. Why should it not ache? "

Arina Vlasievna began to prick up her ears.

" Do not be angry, Evgenii," Vasih Ivanitch continued, " b-but might I feel your pulse and examine you ? "

Bazarov looked at him.

" You need not feel my pulse," he said. " Without that, I can tell that I have a touch of fever."

" You feel shivery, eh ? "

" Yes. I think I will go and lie down. Pray make me a Uttle hme-juice tea, for I seem to have caught a chill."

" Yes," Arina Vlasievna put in, " I heard you coughing last night."

" But it is only a chill," added Bazarov, and left the room.

So Arina Vlasievna set to work to make the lime-juice tea, and Vasili Ivanitch went into an adjoining room and tore his hair.

Bazarov did not get up again that day. but passed the

night in a state of heavy coma. At one o'clock he opened his eyes with an effort, and, on seeing his father's pale face in the lamp-hght, bade him depart. At once the other excused himself for the intrusion, but nevertheless returned on tiptoe, and, conceahng himself behind the open doors of a cupboard, remained there to watch his son. Nor did Arina Vlasievna go to bed, but at intervals set the study door ajar, in order that she might " see how our Eniusha was sleeping " and look at Vasili Ivanitch: for though nothing of the latter was to be discerned except a bowed, motionless back, even that much afforded her a Uttle comfort.

In the morning Bazarov attempted to rise, but his head swam, and blood gushed from his nose, so he desisted from the attempt. In silence Vasili Ivanitch tended him, and Arina Vlasievna came to ask him how he felt. He replied " Better," then turned his face to the wall. Instantly Vasili Ivanitch fell to gesticulating violently at his wdfe with both hands: which proceeding proved so far successful that, by dint of biting her lips, Arina Vlasievna contrived to force back the tears, and leave the room. Of a sudden everything in the house had seemed to turn dark. Everywhere faces looked drawn, and everywhere there was to be observed a curious stillness of which one cause, among others, was the fact that there had hastily been removed from the courtyard of the village a vociferous cock which no reasoning had been able to convince of the necessity of silence.

So Bazarov continued lying with his face to the wall. Once or twice Vasih Ivanitch essayed a tentative question or two, but the attempt only wearied Bazarov, and the old man at length subsided into an armchair, and sat nervousl}' twitching his fingers. Next, Vasili repaired to ihe garden for a few minutes, and looked, as he stood there, like a statue which has been struck with immeasurable astonishment (never at any time was the

expression of surprise absent from his features) ; whereafter he returned to his son's room, in the hope of evading questions on the part of his wife, but she took him by the hand, and grimly, almost threateningly asked: " What is the matter with our Eniusha ? " and when Vasili strove to pull himself together, and to force a smile, there issued, to his horror, not a smile at all, but a sort of irresponsible laugh.

Earlier in the morning he had sent for a doctor to assist him ; wherefore he now considered that it would be well to advise his son of the fact, lest Bazarov should lose his temper on discovering the fact in question for himself.

Vasili Ivanitch explained the situation, and then Bazarov turned himself about on the sofa, gazed at his father for a moment or two, and asked to be given something to drink. Vasili Ivanitch handed him some water, and seized the opportunity also to feel his son's forehead. It seemed to be on fire.

" My father," said Bazarov in a hoarse, dragging voice, " I fear that my course is run. The infection has caught me, and in a few days you will be laying me in my grave."

Some one might have thrust Vasili Ivanitch violently backwards, so sharply did he stagger.

" Evgenii," he gasped, " why say that ? God have you in his keeping! It is merely that you have caught a chill."

" Come, come! " interrupted Bazarov, but in the same dragging tone as before. " It is useless to talk like that to a doctor. All the signs of infection are present. That you know for yourself."

" But — but where are the signs of — of infection ? "

" Look at these. What do they mean? "

And Bazarov pulled up the sleeve of his shirt. What he showed his father was a number of red, angry-looking patches that were coming into view.

Vasili Ivanitch started and turned cold with fear. At length he contrived to stammer out :

" Yet — even supposing that, that there should be anything in the nature of infection "

" Of pyaemia, you mean," the son prompted.

" Anything in the nature of epidemic infec "

" Of pyaemia, I repeat," grimly, insistently corrected Bazarov. " Have you forgotten your textbooks? "

" Yes — well, have it your own way. But we will cure you, all the same."

" Fiddlesticks! But, apart from that question, I had scarcely looked to die so soon. To be frank, I think it hard upon me. And now you and my mother must fall back upon the fund of religious strength which lies within you. The hour to put it to the test has arrived." He drank some more water. " One particular request I desire to make while my brain is yet clear, for, by to-morrow, or the day after, it will, as you know, have failed, and even now I am not sure whether I am expressing myself sensibly, seeing that, as I was lying here just now, I seemed to see a pack of red dogs leaping around me, and yourself making a point at me as a dog does at a partridge. Yes, it was like being drunk. Can you understand what I say? "

" Yes, yes, Evgenii; you are talking quite sensibly."

" Very well. Now, I believe that you have sent for a doctor; and if the fact will give you any comfort, I too shall be pleased. But also I beg that you will send word to, to "

" To Arkady Nikolaievitch ? " the old man suggested.

" To whom? To Arkady Nikolaievitch? " re-echoed Bazarov bewilderedly. " Oh, you mean that young cockerel of ours? No, no — do not disturb him, for he has just joined the company of the jackdaws. You need not be surprised at these words — they do not mean that dehrium is setting in; they are merely a metaphor.

Well, it is to Madame Odintsov, the lady landowner c this neighbourhood, that I desire a messenger to be sent. I suppose you have heard of her?" (Vasili Ivanitch nodded assent.) " All that the messenger need say is that Evgenii Vasihtch sends his comphments, and is djing. Will you do this? "

" Of course I will, Evgenii! But why think that you are going to die ? Come, come ! Were such a thing to happen, where would be the justice of the world? "

" I could not say. I only know that I desire the messenger to be sent."

" He shall start at once, and I mvself will write the letter."

" No, no : that will not be necessary. Merely let the' messenger deUver m}^ greeting. That, and nothing more. Now I will return to m}- red dogs. How curious it is that, though I strive to concentrate my thoughts upon death, there results from them nothing — I see before me only a great blur! "

And he turned his face wearily to the wall, while Vasili Ivanitch left the room, ascended to the bedroom above, and fell upon his knees before the sacred ikons.

" Pray, Arina, pray! " he moaned. " Our son is dying! "

On the doctor arriving, the latter proved to be the district physician who had failed to produce hell-stone when required. After an examination of the patient he prescribed a watching course, and also added a few words as to a possible recovery.

"Have you ever known people in my condition not set out for the Elysian Fields? " asked Bazarov sharply as he caught hold of the leg of a table which stood beside his sofa, and shook it until the table actually altered its position. " See my strength! " he continued. " All of it is still there, yet I must go hence ! To think that, whereas an old man has lost touch with life, I should ! Ah,

ovvever much you may deny death, it never will deny you. . . . I hear some one weeping. Who is it?" There was a pause. " Is it my mother? Poor soul! No one will be left for her to stuff with her marvellous horstchi} And you, Vasili Ivanitch — are you too whimpering? Come, come! If Christianity cannot help you, try to become a Stoic philosopher. You have often enough boasted of being one."

" Aye, a fine philosopher I, to be sure! " sobbed poor old Vasih with the tears hopping down his cheeks.

Thereafter Bazarov grew hourly worse, for the disease was taking the rapid course inevitable under the circumsl ances. Yet his powers of memory were unimpaired, z nd he understood everything that was said to him, for as yet he was making a brave fight to retain his faculties,

" No, I must not let my senses fail," he kept whispering to himself as he clenched his fists. " But oh, the folly of it all! " And then he would repeat to himself, over and over again, some such formula as " Eight and ten — what do they make ? "

Meanwhile Vasih Ivanitch wandered about in a state bordering upon distraction — proposing first one remedy, and then another, and constantly covering up his son's feet.

" Suppose we wrap him in an ice-sheet ? " he suggested once in a tone of agony. " How, too, about an emetic, or a mustard plaster on his stomach, or a httle blood-letting? "

But to each and all of these remedies the doctor (whom Vasih Ivanitch had begged to remain in the house) demurred. Likewise the doctor drank the patient's lemonade, and then requested to be given a pipe and " something warm and strengthening " — to wit, a glassful of vodka. Meanwhile Arina Vlasievna sat on a chair by the door, and only at intervals retired to pray. It seemed

^ Roast beef with horse radish,

S ~^-

that a few days earlier she had let fall, and broken, a toilet mirror, and that all her life long she had looked upon such an occurrence as an evil omen. With her, in silence, sat Anfisushka ; while, as for Timotheitch, he had departed with the message to Madame Odintsov.

That night Bazarov did not improve, for he was racked with high fever; but as morning approached, the fever grew a little easier, and after he had asked Arina Vlasievna to perform his toilet, and had kissed her hand, he managed to swallow a httle tea: which circumstance caused Vasili Ivanitch to pluck up courage, and to exclaim :

"Thank God, the crisis has both come and gone! "

" Do not be too sure of that," rejoined Bazarov. " For what does the term ' crisis ' signify ? Some one once invented it, shouted 'Crisis!' and congratulated himself ever after. Extraordinary how the human race continues to attach credence to mere words! For example, tell a man that he is a fool, yet refrain from assaulting him, and he will be downcast; but tell him that he is a man of wisdom, yet give him no money, and he will be overjoyed."

So reminiscent of Bazarov's former sallies was this little speech that Vasili Ivanitch 's heart fairly overflowed.

" Bravo ! " he cried, clapping his hands in dumb show. "Well said!"

Bazarov smiled a sad smile.

" Then you think," said he, " that the ' crisis ' is either approaching or retiring? "

" I know that you are better. That I can see for myself. And the fact rejoices me."

" Well, it is not always a bad thing to rejoice. But have you sentVord to, to — to her? You know whom I mean? "

" Of course T have, Evgenii."

The improvement did not long continue, for to it there succeeded attacks of pain. Vasih Ivanitch sat by the bed : and as he did so it seemed as though something in particular were worrying the old man. Several times he tried to speak, and each time he failed. But at length he contrived to gasp out :

' ' E vgenii ! Son ! My dearest son ! My own beloved son ! ' '

Even Bazarov could not remain wholly indifferent to such an unwonted appeal. Turning his head a little, and making an evident effort to shake off the unconsciousness that was weighing him down, he murmured ;

"What is it, my father? "

" This, Evgenii." And all of a sudden the old man fell upon his knees beside the bed. " Evgenii, you are better now, and with God's help will recover; but do, in any case, seize this hour to comfort me and your mother by fulfilling all the duties of a Christian. Yes, though to say this is painful for me, how much more terribly would it hurt me if — if this chance were to pass for ever, Evgenii! Think, oh think of what •"

The old man could say no more, while over the son's face and closed eyes there passed a curious expression. A pause followed. Then Bazarov said :

" To comfort you, I will not altogether refuse your request; but, since you yourself have said that I am better, surely there can be no need for hurry ? "

" Yes, you are better, Evgenii — you are better; but who can say what may lie in the dispensation of God ? Whereas, once this duty shall have been fulfilled "

" Yet I will wait a little," interrupted Bazarov. " This much, however, I will concede: that, should you prove to be wrong in your surmise as to my recovery, I will allow the Last Sacrament to be administered."

" And, Evgenii, I beg of you to "

" I will wait a little, I repeat. And now let me go to sleep. Do not disturb me."

And he replaced his head in its former position, while the old man rose from his knees, reseated himself in the chair, rested his chin upon his hands, and fell to biting his fingers.

Presently Vasih's ear caught the rumble of a light carriage — the sound which is always so distinguishable in a quiet country spot. Nearer and nearer came the sound of the wheels ; nearer and nearer came the hard breathing of horses. Springing from his chair, he rushed to the window. Into the courtyard of the mansion there was turning a two-seated, four-horsed buggy! Without stopping to think what this could mean, he darted forward to the front door, where, transported with joy, he was just in time to see a liveried footman open the door of the vehicle, and assist thence a lady in a black cloak, with a veil of the same hue.

"I am Madame Odintsov," she said. " Is Evgenii Vasihtch still alive? I presume you are his father? I have brought with me a doctor."

Even as she spoke the doctor in question — a German-looking little individual in spectacles — descended in a slow and dignified manner from the buggy.

" O angel of mercy! " cried VasiU Ivanitch as, seizing her hand, he pressed it convulsively to his lips. " Yes, our Evgenii is still alive! And now he will be saved! Wife! Wife! There is an angel come to us from Heaven! "

" What? " responded the old woman with a gasp as she came running out of the hall. So lost in bewilderment was she that, falling at Anna Sergievna's feet, she actually began madly to kiss the hem of the visitor's cloak.

" Come, come! " Madame exclaimed. " Wliat does all this mean? "

But Arina Vlasievna was deaf to everything, and Vasili Ivanitch too could only continue repeating:

" There is an angel come to us from Heaven ! Tlicre is an angel come to us from Heaven! There is an angel come to us from Heaven! "

" Wo ist der Kranke? (Where is the patient) ? " asked the doctor with a touch of impatience.

This restored Vasili Ivanitch to his senses.

" Come this way, come this way," he said. " Yes, pray follow me, Werihester Hcrr Kollcga" (titles based upon the strength of bygone memories).

For answer the German exclaimed " Eh ? ", and pulled a not very gracious smirk.

Vasili Ivanitch led the way to the study.

" Here is the doctor brought by Madame Anna Sergievna Odintsov," he said as he bent over his son. " She herself too is here."

Bazarov opened his eyes with a start.

" What do you say? " he asked.

" I say that Madame Anna Sergievna Odintsov is here, and that she has brought with her this good doctor."

Bazarov peered around.

" Where is Anna Sergievna? " he murmured. " Do you say that she is here ? Then I wish to see her."

" You shall see her, Evgenii; but first of all I must have a chat with this gentleman, and tell him the story of your illness: for Sidor Sidorovitch " (that was the name of the district pliysician) " has gone home, and a short consultation must be held."

Bazarov eyed the German.

" All right," he said. " Hold your consultation as soon as you like. Only, do not speak in Latin, for I know the meaning of the words Jam moritnr."

" Der Herr scheint des Dentschen miichtig zu sein," the newly-arrived disciple of /Esculapius remarked to Vasili Ivanitch.

" IcJi hahe " the old man began ; then added : " But

perhaps we had better speak in Russian, my dear sir? "

And the consultation followed.

Half an hour later Vasili Ivanitch conducted Anna Sergievna into the study. As the doctor passed out he whispered to her that recovery was hopeless.

She glanced at Bazarov,and halted as though petrified, so striking was the bloodshot, deathlike face, with the dim eyes turned so yearningly in her direction. Nevertheless her feeUng was one merely of chill, oppressive terror, while at the same moment there flashed through her brain the thought that, if she had loved him, no such feeling could now have been present.

" I thank you," he said with an effort. " I had not expected this, and you have done a kind act in coming. So we meet once more, even as you foretold! "

" Has not Madame Anna Sergievna indeed been kind ? " put in Vasili Ivanitch.

" Father, pray leave us," said Bazarov. " I know, Anna Sergievna, that you will excuse him. For at such

a time as this " And he nodded towards his weak,

prostrate form.

Vasili Ivanitch left the room.

" A second time I thank you," continued Bazarov. " To have acted so is worthy of the Tsars. For they say that even the Sovereign visits a deathbed when requested."

" Evgenii Vasilitch, I hope that "

" Let us speak plainly. My course is run. I am under the wheel, and we need not think of the future. Yet how curious it is that to each individual human being death, old though it is as an institution, comes as a novelty ! . . . Nevertheless, it shall not make me quail: and then llK^re will fall the curtain, and then — well, then they will write FmV." There followed a feeble gesture. "But what did I want to say to you ? That I have loved you ? There was a time when the phrase ' I love ' had for me no meaning ; and now it will have less than ever, seeing that love is a form, and that my particular embodiment of it is fast lapsing towards dissolution. It-

Ah, how perfect you are ! You stand there as beautiful as "

There passed over Anna Sergievna an involuntary shudder.

" Nay," he said. " You need not be afraid. But will you not sit down? Seat yourself near me, but not too near, for my malady is infectious."

She crossed the room with a rapid step, and seated herself beside the sofa on which he was lying.

" O woman of kind heart! " he whispered. " And to think that you are beside me once more ! To think that you, so pure and fresh and young, are in this sorry room! Well, good-bye, and may you live long, and enjoy your time while you may. Of all things in this world long Ufe is the most desirable: yet you can see for yourself what an ugly spectacle I, a half-crushed, but still wriggUng, worm, am now become. There was a time when I used to say: ' I will do many things in life, and refuse to die before I have completed those tasks, for I am a giant ': but now I have indeed a giant's task in hand — the task of dying as though death were nothing to me. . . . No matter. I am not going to put my tail between my legs."

He broke off, and groped for his tumbler. She handed it him without drawing off her glove. Her breath was coming in jerks.

" It will not be long before you will have forgotten me," he went on. " For a dead mortal is no companion for a living one. I daresay that my father will tell you what a man is bring lost to Russia; but that is all rubbish. Nevertheless, do not undeceive him, for he is old, old. Rather, comfort him as you would comfort a child, and also be kind to my mother. Two such mortals as them you will not lind in all yout great world —

no, not though you search for them with a candle by daylight. . . . Russia needs me, indeed! Evidently she does not need me. Whom, then, does she need ? She needs shoemakers, tailors, butchers. . . . What does a butcher sell ? He sells meat, does he not ? . . . I think that I am wandering — I seem to see before me a forest. . . ."

He pressed his hand to his forehead, and Anna Sergievna bent over him.

" Evgenii Vasilitch," she said, " I am here."

With a combined movement he took her hand and raised himself a little.

" Good-bye," he said with a sudden spasm of energy and a last flash of his eyes. " Good-bye. ... I kissed you that time, did I not, when, when — — ? . . . Ah, breathe now upon the expiring lamp, that it may go out in peace."

She pressed her lips gently to his forehead.

" Enough," he murmured as he sank back upon the pillow. " Now let there come — darkness."

She left the room quietly.

" Well? " whispered Vasili Ivanitch.

" He has gone to sleep," she replied in a voice that was scarcely audible.

But Bazarov was not fated to go to sleep. Rather, as night approached he sank into a state of coma, and, on the following day, expired. Father Alexis performed over him the last rites of religion, and at the moment when Extreme Unction was being administered, and the holy oil touched his breast, one of the dying man's eyelids raised itself, and over the face there seemed to flit something like an expression of distaste at the sight of the priest in his vestments, the smoking censer, and the candles before the ikon.

Finally, when Bazarov's last breath had been drawn, and there had arisen in the house the sound of " the

general lamentation," something akin to frenzy came upon Vasili Ivanitch.

" I declare that I protest ! " he cried with his face blazing and quivering with fury, and his fist beating the air as in menace of some one. " I declare that I protest, that I protest, that I protest! "

Upon that old Arina Vlasievna, suffused in tears, laid her arms around his neck, and the two sank forward upon the floor. Said Anfisushka later, when relating the story in the servants' quarters: " There they knelt together — side by side, their heads drooping like those of two sheep at midday."

Ah, but in time the heat of noontide passes, and to it there succeed nightfall and dusk, with a return to the quiet fold where for the weary and the heavy-laden there waits sleep, sweet sleep.

XXVIII

Since that time six months have passed, and there has fallen upon the country a " white " winter — a winter of clear, keen, motionless frosts, of deep, crackling snow, of pink-rimed trees, of pale-emerald heavens, of smoke-capped chimneys, of puffs of vapour from momentarily opened doors, of faces fresh and hard-bitten, of horses galloping headlong to thaw their frozen limbs. It is now the close of a January day, and the increasing chill of evening is nipping the still air in an ever-tightening vice as the sun sinks downward into a sea of red.

But in the windows of Marino there are lights burning, and Prokofitch, vested in a black tail-coat, a pair of white gloves, and a peculiar atmosphere of solemnity, is laying the table with seven covers. This is because a week ago there were solemnised in the tiny church of the parish — solemnised quietly, almost without a witness — two sets of nuptials: the nuptials of Arkady and Katia and those of Nikolai Petrovitch and Thenichka. And to-day Nikolai Petrovitch is offering his brother a farewell dinner, for the reason that Paul is on the point of departing for Moscow, whither Anna Sergievna has already removed after bestowing upon the younger of the two couples a handsome dowry.

At three o'clock precisely the company gathers around the board. Mitia too is present with his niania (in nurse's cap), while Paul Petrovitch is seated between Katia and Thenichka, and the bridegrooms are ranged one on either side of their newly-wedded spouses. A change has taken place in our old acquaintances since last we saw them — they have improved, as regards the younger ones, both in appearance and in sedateness of demeanour. Only Paul Petrovitch looks thinner ; though the circumstance imparts, if anything, an added touch of refinement and " grand - seignorishness " to his always expressive features. Thenichka, in particular, is a different person from what she was. Clad in a brand-new silken gown, and wearing a broad velvet band over her hair and a necklace around her throat, she holds herself with an immovable dignity, yet also with an immovable deference towards her surroundings. And meanwhile she smiles, as much as to say: " Pardon me, but / am not responsible for this " ; while the others respond with similar smiles, as though they too would be glad to excuse themselves for their share in the proceedings. Yet the fact that on every one present sits a touch of gravity and embarrassment becomes the company no less than do their other characteristics. Everywhere, too, there is to be seen such an anxious solicitude for mutual wants that the company could seem unanimously to be playing some simple-minded comedy; and though, of the guests, the quietest is Katia, it is plain, from her confidence of bearing, that, as a daughter-in-law, she has found favour in the eyes of Nikaiai Petrovitch.

At length the meal comes to an end, and Nikolai, rising and grasping a wine-glass, addresses Paul Petrovitch :

" Dearest brother, you are about to leave us. Yes, you are about to leave us. But not for long must you be absent, since I, for one, could never express to you how much I, how much I — that is to say, how much we But, to tell you the trutli, I am not good at making a speech. Arkady, to you I depute the task."

" But I euTi not ready. Papa."

" Neither am I. However, Paul, I embrace you, and wish you every joy, and beg of you to return to us soon."

WTiereupon Paul Petrovitch exchanges greetings all

round (not excluding little Mitia), and, in particular, kisses Thenichka's hand (which she has not learnt to offer in the right way), drinks a twice-filled glass to the company at large, and says with a profound sigh : " May you all be happy, my friends ! Farewell ! ^ " And though the Enghsh terminal flourish passes unnoticed, every one is touched with the benediction which has preceded it.

" Yes, and I drink to the memory of Bazarov," whispers Katia to her husband as she clinks glasses with him: but though, in response, he squeezes her hand, he decides not to propose the toast in public.

And here, apparently, there ought to follow the word Finis; but since some of my readers may care to know how each of the characters in the book is faring at the present day, I will satisfy that curiosity.

To take Anna Sergievna first, she has married — not for love, nor yet out of a sense of duty — a rising young statesman who is an intelligent legislator, a severely practical thinker, a man of strong will and eloquence, and a lover with a temperament as cold as ice. Nevertheless the pair reside on amicable terms, and may, in time, attain to happiness — nay, even to love.

As for the Princess, she is dead, and her memory perished with her.

The Kirsanovs, father and son, are settled at Marino, and appear to be righting their industrial affairs, in that Arkady has developed into a capable manager, and the estate now brings in a fair income. Nikolai Petrovitch, too, is constant in his endeavours to make peace on the property, and, riding systematically round it, delivers long speeches in the behef that only need the peasantry be " reasoned with " — that is to say, plied with the same words over and over again — for the muzhik gradually

^ In the text this word is given in English.

to become a tractable animal. Yet Nikolai earns the approval neither of the educated gentry, who speak with affected jauntiness of the coming "'mancipation"' (they invariably give the syllable "an" a nasal inflection), nor of those uneducated landowners who roundly curse

what they term " that 'mwMcipation." In other

words, for both classes Nikolai Petrovitch is too " mild."

Katerina Sergievna has had a son born to her, and named him Kolia; Mitia is now a big, active, volubly lisping boy; and Thenichka (rather, Theodosia Nikolaievna) adores her daughter-in-law only less than her husband and Mitia. In fact, that adoration reaches the point that, should Katia sit down to the piano, Thenichka cannot leave her though the playing continue all day.

Then a word concerning Peter the valet. As much a lump of mingled stupidity and conceit as ever, he still pronounces his e's as u's, but has taken unto himself a wife, and, with her, a respectable dowry. The daughter of a market gardener of the neighbouring town, she had already refused two ehgible partis solely on the ground that they did not possess watches! But Peter possesses not only a watch, but also a pair of patent leather pumps.

Again, any day on the Briihl Terrace, in Dresden, you may meet, between two and four o'clock in the afternoon (the fashionable hour for a promenade), a man of about fifty. Grey-headed, and afflicted with gout, yet still handsome, he is elegantly dressed, and stamped with that air of good breeding which comes only of long association with elevated strata of society. That man is Paul Petrovitch. Having left Moscow for foreign parts for his health's sake, he has settled in Dresden for the reason that there he possesses the largest number of English and nomad-Russian acquaintances. Towards the former he

"^i.e. the emancipation of the serfs, which was carried out in 1 861.

bears himself with simphcity, and almost with modesty, but with a touch of hauteur; and, in return, the EngUsh look upon him as a trifle tedious, but respect him on the score of his being " quite a gentleman." In the presence of the Russian element, however, Paul Petrovitch is more free and easy — he gives rein unstintedly to his sarcasm, and rallies both his compatriots and himself. Yet from him such things come pleasantly, and with a gay insouciance, and in a becoming manner; while, in addition, he holds Slavophil views — views which (as we all know) invariably induce the great world to rate their holder a person trh distingue. True, never by any chance does Paul read a Russian book; yet by way of compensation,

there stands on his writing-table a silver ash-tray shaped like a muzhik's clog. Moreover, from some of our Russian tourists he receives considerable attention when they happen to be passing through the town; and even our old friend Matvei Ilyitch Koliazin, on finding himself " in temporary opposition," has paid him a visit while en route to Bohemia for a course of the waters. In fact, the only persons who show Paul no deference at all are the native Germans, whose society he does not greatly cultivate. Yet even they agree that, in the matter of obtaining tickets for the Court Chapel or the theatre and so forth, none is so clever, so dexterous, as " der Herr Baron von Kirsanov." In fact, always does he do " the right thing " so far as he is able; and even yet he can create some stir, owing to the fact that he has once, and to good purpose, been a social lion. Yet life presses upon him not a little heavily — more heavily than he himself is aware. Merely need one look at him as, huddled against the aisle wall of the Russian church, he sits plunged in thought, with hishps bitterly compressed, and continues sitting there until, remembering his surroundings, he makes, almost imperceptibly, the sign of the cross.
In similar fashion, Madame Kukshin has gone abroad

— in her case, to Heidelberg, where she is engaged in studying, not natural science, but architecture — a branch wherein she has, according to herself, " discovered several new laws." Also, still she is hail-fellow-well-met with students, more especially with some of those Russian physicists and chemists who swarm in Heidelberg, and who, though at first flabbergasting the simple-minded German professors with the moderation of their views, subsequently proceed to flabbergast those professors with the wholeheartedness of their sloth. In fact, it is of two or three of those chemistry students who, though unable to distinguish even oxygen from azote, are yet charged to the brim with conceit and the spirit of " denial," that Madame Kukshin's circle is chiefly composed.

Similarly, friend Sitnikov is preparing to become a great man. For which purpose he is flaunting it in St. Petersburg, and (to quote his own expression) " carrying on the work of the late Bazarov." True, rumour declares that some one has recently given him a second thrashing; as also that he (Sitnikov) has dechned to face the music — rather, that he has preferred to hint in an obscure article in an equally obscure newspaper that his assailant is the coward ; but to this report Sitnikov merely attaches the epithet " ironical." For the rest, his father continues to send him remittances, while his wife accounts him equally a liiteratetir and a fool.

Lastly, in a remote corner of Russia there hes a little country cemetery. Like most cemeteries of the kind, it is depressing of aspect. Over its fences dense masses of weed have grown, its drab wooden crosses are rickety and turning mouldy under their bUstered, painted canopies, its stone paths have lost their alignment, and look as though some one has displaced them from below, its two or three ragged trees diffuse only the scantiest of shade, and sheep wander imhindered over its tombs. But among

those tombs there hes a grave which no man molests and no animal tramples upon: onl}' the birds perch upon it and sing as evening falls. For around that grave stands an iron railing, and at its head and foot are planted two young fir trees. It is the grave of Evgenii Vasilitch Bazarov. Occasionally from the neighbouring manor-house there come two aged and decrepit folk, a man and his wife. Supporting one another with a step which ever glows heavier, they approach the railing, sink upon their knees, and weep long, bitter tears as they gaze at the dumb headstone where their son lies sleeping. Then they exchange a word or two, dust the stone with assiduous care, lay upon it a sprig of fir, and offer a last petition. Yet even then they can scarce bear to tear themselves from the spot where they can draw nearest to their son, and to their memories of him.

But are those tears, those prayers, all fruitless? Is that love, that hallowed, selfless love, of theirs to be wholly unavaiHng.? No, no, and a thousand times no! For, though the heart which lies within that tomb may have been passionate and wild and erring, the flowers which bloom in that spot contemplate us with eyes of naught but peace and innocence, and speak to us of naught but the eternal, mighty calm of " unheeding " nature, as an image of the Eternal Reconciliation, and of the Life which shall have no End.

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BY

GEORGE GALDERON

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LONDON

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ST MARTIN'S STREET

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIK BY

THE RIVERSIDE PRESS LIMITED

EDINBURGH

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REVOLT

A Play in Four Acts

TO

MISS SYBIL THORNDIKE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

* DR HODDER, aged 70

* JEFF, an engineer
HARRY, an artist

GREGORY, a poet j '**

* VERNON, an inventor <
BAGSHAW \ d 7
BARNABY /

* SIR JOHN POOLE, an iron master
BLANDFORD, one of his fellow-directors
CANON WOOLMER, a country parson

* HUBERT NORTON, about 30, a socialist friend of Jeff

* POWNALL I WQrkmen at prig's W0r k 8
MAYO /

HUNTER, a young doctor

* RENIE DALRYMPLE, about 25

MISS PARTRIDGE, her aunt
CONSTANCE WOOLMER, a friend

Two landladies of lodgings and other minor characters
* The chief characters are marked with a star.

REVOLT
ACT I

In the garden of DR HODDER'S villa., two or three miles from a manufacturing town. In the background L. an orchard; R. a house. French windows. Yews, box-trees and garden seats. A sunny afternoon in May ; fruit trees and flowers in bloom. Men in green aprons come and go between L. and house.

POOLE, LADY POOLE, WOOLMER, a DREARY LADY by the window ; RENTE, in white, and CONSTANCE walking together.

Enter BLANDFORD L.

BLANDFORD. Ah, Miss Dalrymple ! So you're here

to help.

RENIE. (Shaking hands) Yes, I'm doing the honours.
BLANDFORD. Ah, Connie ! (To RENIE) And how is

the poor Doctor bearing it ?
RENIE. Oh, he's all right.
BLANDFORD. Still, I'm very sorry for him, very

sorry indeed !
(The group by the window breaks up. WOOLMER

and the DREARY LADY wander round looking at

the plants)

WOOLMER. A perpetually recurring miracle, the

arrival of spring.

POOLE. Hullo, Blandford, only just arrived ?
BLANDFORD. (Greeting) Ah, Lady Poole ! You're

better ? (She is stout and rosy) I'm not too late ?
LADY POOLE. No, the auctioneer's having his tea,

and everybody's getting very impatient.
POOLE. Confound him, we want ours too.
DREARY LADY. (Bringing WOOLMER to flower bed up

C.) Doronicums seem to do very well down here,
ii

12 REVOLT ACT I

(WOOLMER yawns. He and the DREARY LADY

go up C.)

BLANDFORD. Lots of people here, I suppose ?

LADY POOLE. Oh dear, yes ; all the county's inside. Let me introduce you to Lady Eaglesham. (Introducing the DREARY LADY)

BLANDFORD. Delighted ! Have you been round the garden ? (They go round together)

WOOLMER. Have you been buying anything, Lady Poole ?

LADY POOLE. No, I never do at sales.

WOOLMER. Sorry to see so many beautiful things going so cheap.

LADY POOLE. (To RENIE, who passes with CONSTANCE) Why, Renie my dear, how smart you look!

RENIE. (Passing on) Do I ?

POOLE. H'm.

LADY POOLE. Highty-tighty ! She wasn't slapped enough in the nursery, I think.

DREARY LADY. (To BLANDFORD at flower bed C.) Doronicums seem to do very well down here.

(BLANDFORD yawns. They go up. A bell rings in

the house)

LADY POOLE. There's the bell.

POOLE. Thank Heaven !

BLANDFORD. What is it now ?

WOOLMER. The dining-room furniture comes next.

(They all go into house by window. The DREARY LADY is heard to murmur something to RENIE about " doronicums." BLANDFORD and CONSTANCE go last)

BLANDFORD. And are those the catalogues of the sale ?

CONSTANCE. No, these are my parish magazines.

BLANDFORD. Ah, then, I won't take one.

[Exeunt laughing

Enter HODDER up R. with BAGSHAW and BARNABY up R. BAGSHAW and BARNABY sit on a garden seat C. resting their hands on the tops of their sticks, degenerate and fat. HODDER, well preserved, athletic and sunburnt, stands before them. The murmur of the auction comes from the house, with the voice of the auctioneer upraised from time to time.

HODDER. That's what I think of you and your prudence ! Oh, I'm sick of the very name of prudence. Here's Vernon, my boy Vernon, one of the finest mathematicians of his generation. But you're not listening to me.

BAGSHAW. No, I'm not listenin' to you. You're mad, Hodder, as mad as a hatter. What's the use of listenin' to you ? An old man like you, turnin' out of house and home, sellin' his furniture in order to support a son who ought to be supportin' himself !

BARNABY. And his father too.

HODDER. Don't I tell you he's going to revolutionise science and philosophy ? And do you want him to be checked and hindered in his work ? To have to go out and earn his miserable bread and butter ?

BAGSHAW. How you've grown to be so old and learnt so little is a mystery to me. You come out from your books into the world and flap about like an owl in the sunshine. If you must have this sale, at any rate, you needn't have sprung it on us like this at three days' notice.

HODDER. What ? Here I was picturing Vernon rich and happy, fellow of a college, and suddenly I discover he's starving in a Glasgow slum. Do you think I could wait ? I had no funds in hand ; I was overdrawn at the bank.

BAGSHAW. There !

AUCTIONEER. (In the house) Any advance ? Noo then, sir, don't be afeeard o' the wife. (Laughter]

BAGSHAW. Hark at 'em ! Ain't you ashamed of yourself ? You, that might hold your head high in the world, being sold up like a fraudulent bankrupt ! Where are you going to live ? What are you going to live on ? What'll your wretched little sticks fetch, do you think ?

HODDER. I'll not touch a penny of it. It's all for my poor boy.

BAGSHAW. And you'll go to the Union, I suppose ?

HODDER. And why not ? Better men than me go there.

AUCTIONEER. Noomber forty ; old-fashioned mahogany cellarette ; very haandy to keep yer haat in. (Laughter)

Enter ALF and MAGGIE, a newly married couple.

Greetings.

MAGGIE. We've come to spend Aunt RachaeFs five-pound note.

ALF. As soon as we got the notice, Maggie said, " What a chance for us ! " I only wish we weren't so late.

HODDER. Oh, you'll find something to pick up.

[Exeunt ALF and MAGGIE to the house

BAGSHAW. Why don't your other boys help this Vernon? They're earnin' their own livin', I suppose ; or do you support them too ?

HODDER. Of course not. They're very well able to support themselves.

BARNABY. So's Vernon.

Enter LORD WONERSH from the orchard.

ACT I REVOLT 15

WONERSH. How are you ? Hope I haven't been trespassing? I came by the short cut over the fields.

HODDER. Come to buy something ?

WONERSH. Well, I rather thought I might meet some friends here.

AUCTIONEER. (In the house) Noomber forty-woon !

HODDER. You'd better hurry up ; it's nearly over.

[Exit WONERSH to the house

BARNABY. Was that Lord Wonersh ?

HODDER. Yes, the maker of the famous Wonersh Stingo.

BARNABY. I used to attend his father at one time.

BAGSHAW. He's after Miss Dalrymple.

HODDER. What makes you think so ?

BAGSHAW. She's been settin' her cap at him a long time.

HODDER. What a detestable way you have of talking ! Renie Dalrymple doesn't set her cap at anyone.

BAGSHAW. Why, what a peppery feller you are, Hodder. Why shouldn't Miss Dalrymple set her cap at a Lord ? Girls do set their caps at Lords.

Enter RENIE from the house.

BAGSHAW. Talk of the devil.

BARNABY. (Shaking hands) Ah, Miss Dalrymple. Why, how cold your hands are !

BAGSHAW. Warm heart, eh ?

HODDER. Had enough of the auction ?

RENIE. It's so hot in there. I shall go and throw stones in the pond.

BAGSHAW. May I come too ?

RENIE. Thank you very much ; I'd rather go alone.

[Exit RENIE up R.

BAGSHAW. (To BARNABY) She didn't leap at my offer, did she, James ?

BARNABY. I suppose she had her reasons.

BAGSHAW. Here they come.

HODDER. Who come ?

BAGSHAW. The reasons.

Enter LORD WONERSH from the house R. He looks about him for RENTE.

BAGSHAW. Excuse me, Lord Wonersh ; may I introduce my friend, Dr Barnaby ? (WONERSH looks annoyed at being delayed)

BARNABY. I used to have the honour of attendin' your father at one time when he was suffer in' from rheumatoid arthritis. He used to say . . .

WONERSH. (To HODDER) Did Miss Dairy mple come this way ?

BAGSHAW. She's down the garden, throwin' stones at the ducks.

WONERSH. Ah, thank you.

[Exit R.

BARNABY. (Slyly) He seems in a great hurry.

BAGSHAW. Not much interested in us.

HODDER. Naturally.

BAGSHAW. She's hooked him right enough this time.

HODDER. There you are again ! Miss Dalrymple doesn't want to " hook " anyone !

BAGSHAW. I only wish I had the drawing up of the settlements. Well, James and I will have to be toddlin'.

Enter CONSTANCE from the house R.

CONSTANCE. Are you busy, Dr Hodder ?

BAGSHAW. Busy ? No, he never is. Well, good-bye. We're sorry for you, Hodder.

BARNABY. Very sorry indeed.

BAGSHAW. Let's hope things aren't as bad as they seem.

BARNABY. The darkest hour comes before the dawn.

BAGSHAW. But you've brought it on yourself.

BARNABY. As you make your bed, so you must lie on it.

HODDER. Good-bye. Thanks for coming round to cheer me up.

[Exeunt BAGSHAW and BARNABY L.U.

CONSTANCE. Lady Poole is looking for you. She's going to buy some of the china, and wants you to tell her which are the original pieces and which are the copies.

HODDER. If she can't tell the difference, what the devil does she want to buy them for ?

[Exit HODDER R. CONSTANCE moves down L.C.

Enter RENIE up R. and comes R.C. before seat.

CONSTANCE. Well ?

RENTE. Well?

CONSTANCE. (Eagerly) Any news ?

RENIE. None.

CONSTANCE. (Disappointed) I thought you and Lord Wonersh were together down the garden.

RENIE. So we were.

Enter LORD WONERSH R.U.

WONERSH. I hope you don't mean what you said ?

RENIE. I'm afraid so. But please let us still be friends.

WONERSH. I don't want to be friends.

[Exit WONERSH by the orchard. He chops off the head of a flower as he goes, and knocks apple blossom down in a shower

CONSTANCE. You refused him ? Oh, Renie, how could you !

RENIE. He might have known it was no good asking me.

CONSTANCE. There's Mrs Tatham watching us out of the window.

RENIE. Oh, how I hate all these respectable neighbours of ours ! To see them all prowling about here, bobbing and grinning and cackling, as if it were a garden-party, while dear old Dodder is selling up his little home, all the little treasures he has scraped together . . . Oh, if only there were no ladies !

CONSTANCE. I wonder what's the matter with you, Renie ; you're getting so bitter. You seem to have everything that a girl can want. Are you tired of life already ?

RENIE. Tired of life ? No, I should think not ! If only one lived ! But I'm tired of the life these people talk about births, deaths, marriages, frocks and food.

CONSTANCE. That's what life consists of.

RENIE. Does it ? It used to consist of so much more once. Why wasn't I born in the Middle Ages?

CONSTANCE. Wouldn't it have been lovely ?

RENIE. They weren't so sensible then ; they did silly, unpractical things. They sacrificed themselves for ideas. Think how silly the Crusades were ! Do you think anybody would do that sort of thing nowadays ? That's when some people first began to be called " noble men " ; but now

. . . Why was Lord Wonersh's father made a peer ? For selling bottled stout ! If only it had been beef or mutton ; but bottled stout !

CONSTANCE. Yes, the romance has gone out of life.

ACT i REVOLT 19

That's why we enjoy reading about the old days so much.

(A pause)

RENIE. How sweet it smells !

CONSTANCE. There's a kind of mystery, a sort of twilight, in spring sunshine that you never get in summer. And the blackbirds . . . How nicely Dr Hodder keeps his garden. Does he do it all himself ?

RENIE. He has a man in to mow the grass, that's all.

CONSTANCE. Why don't you marry Lord Wonersh ?

RENIE. What, and become an ornament of Society again, in a big Georgian house with twelve round pillars in a park ? Wasn't it to get away from all that sort of thing that I left home and came to Saltings ? To escape from young-ladydom and squire's-daughterdom and having to patronise the villagers ? And then you want me to marry Lord Wonersh ?

CONSTANCE. Oh, you look down on being a brewer's wife, I suppose.

RENIE. Not I ! I look up to it. It's too high for me. Too . . . frothy, too " up," so to speak.

CONSTANCE. Oh, Renie, how can you ! But Lord Wonersh is so nice, so kind-hearted. You could hardly wish for a better husband as men go.

RENIE. That's it : as men go ! He's so like other people's husbands that, if I married him, I should be afraid of going home from parties with the wrong one by mistake. Look at our friends' marriages ; look at Mary Thurston's husband ; Harriet's ; Ethel's ; all so nice ; so kind-hearted and so ordinary ! Who makes them ordinary ? We do ; women dp.

CONSTANCE. We do ?

20 REVOLT ACT I

RENIE. Yes, by our choice, by our flabby standard. We get so tired of our ideal man never coming that at last we give in to whoever wants us and say, " He'll do." He'll do ! How awful ! Women ought all to strike for a time and say they will only marry extraordinary men ; then we should change the type. The demand would create a supply.

CONSTANCE. But supposing one never got married at all ?

RENIE. Fearful, isn't it ? But one has to pay for being heroic. The brave man risks death, the brave woman must risk solitude. Oh, sometimes I think I'll marry an old man, one of the fine old generation that's passing away, just for a protest, a flag, something to wave, to spite the young ones for being what they are.

CONSTANCE. Oh, don't, Renie ! I couldn't bear it.

RENIE. We have such power in our hands, if only we used it properly. Men are all slaves ; they've got to be this or that. We're free ; we can rove and choose.

CONSTANCE. I know what I should choose.

RENIE. Someone handsome, rich and clever. . . .

CONSTANCE. No, I don't care about that. But someone who would sacrifice all the world for me, live only for me, and then for the children, counting all else as dross.

RENIE. I wouldn't give twopence for your ideal husband, then. No, give me a man whose eyes are fixed on something beyond ; a man with a cause at heart, for which he would sacrifice wife, child, everything he has.

CONSTANCE. Sacrifice you ?

RENIE. Yes, me first.

CONSTANCE. Oh, Renie, how awful !

RENIE. Anything but an ordinary husband who will " do." I would rather have one who got drunk and beat me. So long as he will do something out of the common, he's the man for me.

CONSTANCE. I believe you're going mad, Renie.

RENIE. No, I'm going sane, my dear. That's what's the matter. I've been mad all my life, like you ; but now . . . Who's this ?

Enter JEFF, HARRY and GREGORY L.

CONSTANCE. Why, it's the Hodders, the Doctor's sons. You know them, don't you ?

RENIE. They won't remember me. I'll go and tell him they've come.

[Exit RENIE to the house R. Familiar greetings. GREGORY makes a mock reverence

GREGORY. Wasn't that Miss Dalrymple ?

CONSTANCE. Yes. Why, of course, she's an old flame of Jeff's.

JEFF. Nonsense.

GREGORY. Jeff doesn't share these human weaknesses.

CONSTANCE. Oh, how silly you are !

JEFF. Where is he ?

CONSTANCE. She's gone to fetch him. Why didn't you all come sooner ?

GREGORY. We none of us knew anything about it until we got the printed notices this morning.

HARRY. We met by accident at St Pancras.

GREGORY. We were anxious about the Dad.

Enter HODDER from the house R.

CONSTANCE. Here he is.

[Exit CONSTANCE

HODDER. So you've come ! Well ? Aren't you ashamed to look me in the face ? You knew about Vernon and you never told me ! You leave me to learn it by chance from Beadle. You knew about it, Harry ?

HARRY. Yes.

HODDER. Gregory ?

GREGORY. Yes, Dad.

HODDER. And Jeff ?

GREGORY. No, Jeff didn't know.

HODDER. Ha !

GREGORY. Vernon told us not to tell him.

HARRY. Not him or you.

HODDER. Oh, Vernon told you not to tell, did he ? And you were fools enough to listen to him. However did he get like this ? What's become of his fellowship at Trinity ?

HARRY. It was only for three years.

HODDER. I never thought of that ! But, if you didn't tell me and Jeff, why didn't you help him yourselves ?

GREGORY. We have been sending him money.

HARRY. A little now and then.

HODDER. A little now and then ! How much ?

HARRY. Five shillings some weeks, half-a- crown others.

HODDER. Five shillings some weeks, half- a- crown others ! What do you do with all your money, you young profligates ? What do you spend it on ? Not on your clothes, apparently. (To HARRY) What's become of all you got for your pictures from those German museums ?

HARRY. I didn't get much for 'em, Dad. The Blessed Damosel they bought at Munich was a dead loss of ten pounds, and The Wild Duck cost me near fifteen.

HODDER. And Melisande they wanted for the Tate?

HARRY. I've still got it rolled up under my bed.

HODDER. What do you live on ?

HARRY. I've got some work drawing maps. Of course, if I painted what the public wants I might have managed ; but somehow I couldn't bring myself to do it. I'd rather do the maps. I have Sundays for my painting.

HODDER. And how much do you make with your maps ?

HARRY. About twenty-five to thirty shillings a week.

HODDER. Twenty-five to thirty ! (Sits on seat L.) Well, I'm glad you haven't painted what the public wants. . . . But come now, Gregory, what about you ?

GREGORY. I'm like Harry, I'm afraid, Dad. I do shorthand for The Daily Circular.

HODDER. What's that ?

GREGORY. I report Company meetings.

HODDER. What ! You, the poet ! And Harry draws maps ! Am I mad, Jeff ? Do I look mad?

JEFF. You're about the same as usual, Dad.

HODDER. You'll be telling me you're not an engineer next.

JEFF. Well, since it's a day of confessions . . .

HODDER. Good heavens ! What's coming now ?

JEFF. When I came back from Stuttgart and went into Poole's works, I soon found out what working in a big firm meant. My head was stuffed full of new mechanical notions ; I simply had to work them out. I couldn't stick it ; so I left . . .

HODDER. I know ; for another firm.

JEFF. But not an engineering firm. I wanted an easy trade that wouldn't interfere. I got a place in a ... well, in a bicycle shop.

HODDER. A bicycle shop !

JEFF. As a journeyman. But I luckily invented a new tow-clip, and bought my employer out. And now I'm doing well on my own. You haven't seen my card : " Geoffrey Hodder, Cycle Stores, 262 High Street, Ball's Pond."

HODDER. (Reading) " Repairs neatly executed." No, no ! It's too much. All three of you ! Oh, we're a ridiculous, unpractical family ; we'll never succeed in life ; but we'll be happy, boys, and we'll stick to our guns against the world, eh ? And now Vernon.

JEFF. He shall never have to earn a penny of his living any more. There's my hand on it.

GREGORY. And mine.

HARRY. And mine.

HODDER. Good boys ! That's right ! I'm pleased with you.

JEFF. And now, what about you, Dad ?

HODDER. Oh, / don't matter. There's no more good to be got out of me.

JEFF. If you're not too proud to live over a shop . . .

HODDER. Oh, gammon !

JEFF. I'm evidently the millionaire of the family.
Will you come and live with me ?

HODDER. Well, I suppose I may as well save the
rate-payers my keep. I'm going for a day or two
to Miss Partridge's, but after that . . .

Enter LADY POOLE and the DREARY LADY from the
house, followed by POOLE, BLANDFORD, WOOLMER,
CONNIE and Miss PARTRIDGE. They are talking.
Miss PARTRIDGE is heard to say something about
" tea-time,"

ACT i REVOLT 25

JEFF. Hullo, here they come !

HODDER. (Rises) The Philistines be upon thee,

Samson.

JEFF. I'm off. [Exit R.U. behind seat

LADY POOLE. Now for some tea !
DREARY LADY. How nice !
(Motor horns, carriage wheels and exclamations of

departure are heard behind. The impression of a

large crowd going away in the other direction)
GREGORY. Aha, sounds of departure !
HARRY. Let's go and look at 'em over the hedge.
GREGORY. I love to see the rich in the country.
HARRY. They look so sleepy and good-natured.
GREGORY. Like tigers between two meals.
HARRY. You could almost go up and stroke them.
GREGORY. Come on ! [Exeunt R.U.

LADY POOLE. What charming things you have, Dr

Hodder !

HODDER. (Correcting her) Had ! (They laugh)
BLANDFORD. Good-bye. I must be getting back

to tea. [Exit L.

WOOLMER. Tea ? Tea ? Where's Connie ?
POOLE. They say Renie Dalrymple has refused Lord

Wonersh.
LADY POOLE. Refused a Lord ? Not she ! She's a

snob, my dear, to the tips of her toes.

(RENIE appears at the window)
POOLE. Look out !
RENIE. Come on, Con !

WOOLMER. We must be getting home, my dear.
CONSTANCE. Wait a bit, Papa. We're going to get

you some " suitable refreshment."
WOOLMER. Ha, a little tea !

[Exeunt RENIE and CONSTANCE by the window R.
POOLE. A few minutes more. I ordered the car for

five.

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LADY POOLE. But what about tea ?

WOOLMER. So everything is sold ?

HODDER. Everything.

WOOLMER. Books too ?

HODDER. Books too.

WOOLMER. You will feel quite lost without them.

HODDER. Not I ; it's good riddance. Here have I been wasting my time over them all these years ; and what was the use ? What's the good of it when I'm dead ?

WOOLMER. You mustn't say that. No good thing is wasted that we acquire on earth.

HODDER. Do you think we shall talk science in Heaven ?

Miss PARTRIDGE. Fancy the angels walking up and down among the clouds discussing Haeckel and Huxley.

HODDER. I doubt if they care about " The Riddle of the Universe " up there.

Enter RENIE and CONSTANCE with a big white jug, crockery and mugs on a tray.

RENIE. Mrs Brown has made us some tea.

HODDER. Oh, good Mrs Brown !

CONSTANCE. It's one of the school treat jugs.

RENIE. Will you have a mug, Lady Poole ?

(They hand round the tea with the necessary words)

Miss PARTRIDGE. (To POOLE) Heaven knows why women do marry nowadays. I think it's only because they have no pockets.

Enter the AUCTIONEER from the house, a dingy man, with tall hat and black bag.

AUCTIONEER. Well, I'm off, sir.

HODDER. Ah . . . thank you very much for selling my things.

AUCTIONEER. It went pretty well, I think.

HODDER. First rate.

AUCTIONEER. I was in goodish form to-day ; I got a laff several times. (To RENIE and CONSTANCE gallantly) No tea for me, thank you ; I've had mine. (To HODDER) There's a cheque on account. The foreman wants to know what he's to do with the bewks.

HODDER. Books ? What books ?

AUCTIONEER. They were all bought in, you know.

HODDER. Oh no ; they were all sold to a dirty little fellow with a hook-nose.

AUCTIONEER. That's our Mr Moss. He had orders to bah them in.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Oh, that's all right, Mr Auctioneer. They're to be sent to my house. I'll speak to the foreman about it.

AUCTIONEER. (Shaking hands) Well then, good-day, sir. [Exit up R.

HODDER. Phew ! It's like shaking hands with the dentist. But what's this about the books ?

Miss PARTRIDGE. Oh, you must ask Renie about that. It's her doing.

RENIE. Don't be angry, Dodder ; they're for your birthday.

HODDER. But I tell you I don't want them. How dare you try and force me ? . . . Well, well, I should have been sorry not to see the old friends again. Thank you, my dear, it was very kind of you.

(JEFF, GREGORY and HARRY meet by the house and come down together)

HARRY. We've both got to get back to-night.

GREGORY. I've got a meeting in the morning.

JEFF. Something literary ?

GREGORY. Yes, india-rubber.

JEFF. (To POOLE) How do you do, Sir John ?

POOLE. What, Hodder ?

JEFF. You've not forgotten me, sir ?

POOLE. Of course not. I hope you're getting on in town.

JEFF. Oh, first rate.

POOLE. May we go round the kitchen garden, Doctor ? I want to show Lady Eaglesham the view.

HODDER. Of course.

LADY POOLE. (To LADY EAGLESHAM) You can see the works from there.

POOLE. Jane thinks everybody wants to see the works. I'm sure I don't.

[Exeunt POOLE, LADY POOLE and LADY EAGLESHAM L.U.

HODDER. Let's see; you know everybody here, then, boys ?

(Greetings and handshakings; the boys are C.)

JEFF. I and the Canon met indoors.

(RENIE and the sons look uncertainly at each other)

HODDER. What, Renie, don't you know my sons ?

RENIE. (Shaking hands) When I stayed here as a little girl we used to see each other sometimes.

GREGORY. At a distance.

RENIE. How I used to wish I could take part in your games !

GREGORY. You did.

RENIE. Did I ?

GREGORY. Jeff was very medieval in his tastes. We used to be wicked knights, and he was the good one. As the eldest he insisted on that, and on winning.

RENIE. And what was I ?

GREGORY. You were the distressed Princess whom he rescued.

RENIE. (To JEFF) Thank you very much ; it was very kind of you to rescue me.

JEFF. (Embarrassed) Are you staying down here now ?

HODDER. Oh, she's always here now.

WOOLMER. Miss Partridge has adopted her.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Nothing of the sort, I can assure you. She's simply dumped herself on me ; I have to put up with it as best I can.

RENIE. Oh, you wicked woman !

HODDER. Well, well, we shall have to give up knowing princesses like you in future. Our social position won't admit of it. (To Miss PARTRIDGE) An hour ago I thought I was the father of an engineer, an artist and a poet ; but it seems I'm only the father of a map-maker, a company-meeting reporter and a bicycle-shop keeper.

Miss PARTRIDGE. What nonsense is this ?

HODDER. It's a long story ; I'll tell you this evening. There's evidently no place in this world for clever men ; and I'm told that's just how it ought to be. That's what the obscurantists say.

WOOLMER. You needn't look at me like that. I'm no more obscurantist than yourself. I look forward to the day when every man in England will have leisure for the higher life ; when, freed from the cares of daily bread, they will turn their thoughts to patriotism, to charity, kindness, and love of work for its own sake.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Bravo !

GREGORY. Hear, hear !

HODDER. Thought must be free.

WOOLMER. Yes, thought must be free.

HODDER. It isn't worth calling thought unless it's free.

WOOLMER. Exactly !

30 REVOLT ACT i

GREGORY. How strange that the word free-thinker should ever have been used as a term of reproach.

WOOLMER. Ah, that's a different matter.

HODDER. Is it ?

Enter ALF and MAGGIE from the house with a parcel.

ALF. (Grinning) Well, Doctor, we've been packing up our purchases.

MAGGIE. (Grinning) We're so delighted about the sideboard.

HODDER. Ah, you've got the sideboard, have you ?

ALF. It'll be the making of our dining-room.

HODDER. Yes, it's a nice old sideboard.

MAGGIE. And twelve pillow-slips and the blankets with the purple line.

RENIE. (Interrupting) What was the subject of the book you were going to write once, Dodder ?

HODDER. Ah, that's an old story. Infandum regina ... I pondered over it for years while I was practising as a doctor, and had not time. (MAGGIE yawns) But I always promised myself that when I had saved up three thousand pounds I would retire from practice and devote my life to it. (ALF yawns)

HODDER. At last the happy day arrived. I bought all the books I could lay hands on.

RENIE. But what was the subject ?

HODDER. About atoms and the constitution of matter.

ALF. (Stealing across) Don't move ; we must be off.

[Exeunt MAGGIE and ALF L.U.

RENIE. Well?

HODDER. Well, I found I was an old fool, that's all. The world had been moving on behind my back.

ACT i REVOLT 31

My epoch-making discovery was founded on an atomic theory that had been exploded years before.

(WOOLMER yawns)

RENIE. Poor Dodder ! How disappointed you must have been.

HODDER. It's the common lot. For one idea that lives and grows, a multitude are doomed to perish. It's like the pollen grains that float in clouds from the trees ; the whole air is full of them ; sailors sweep them from the decks in passing ships. One in how many million ever comes to maturity ? We must be content to imitate the bounty of nature.

WOOLMER. (Rising) We must be off. I've got my sermon to write.

[WOOLMER and CONSTANCE shake hands and exit L.U.

RENIE. Didn't you try to catch up ?

(Motor horn R.)

HODDER. It was too late. I passed on the torch to the younger generation. Vernon is at work on the same subject.

Enter POOLE, LADY POOLE and LADY EAGLESHAM L.U.

POOLE. There's the car. We must be saying good-bye.

HODDER. I was just telling them my boy Vernon's theory. It's something in your line.

POOLE. That's interesting. What is it ?

[LADY POOLE and LADY EAGLESHAM say good-bye and are escorted out L.U. by GREGORY and HARRY

HODDER. It's a mechanical theory of matter.

POOLE. Oh, a theory of matter !

32 REVOLT ACT i

HODDEE. What he needs to verify it is some benevolent engineer who will help him to experiment. Now, here's a chance for you. If we lived in an ideal state . . .

POOLE. But we don't. The whole question is, is it useful ? Will it clothe us ? Will it feed us ? Will it give us a mechanical advantage ?

HODDER. You can never tell till you've tried.

POOLE. This is not serious, I suppose.

HODDER. Serious ? I should think so !

(Motor horn L.)

POOLE. Well, I'm afraid we have to think of our shareholders.

LADY POOLE. (Without) Come along, John !

POOLE. We can't spend their money on researches in the airy realm of theory.

HODDER. It's always money.

POOLE. Always.

[Exit POOLE L.U. HARRY and GREGORY have already returned

JEFF. (R. on buttress) What's the good of talking to Poole about it, Dad ?

HODDER. Why, if he took it up ...

JEFF. We don't want his help. We can manage for ourselves.

HARRY. We shall have to be off ; our tram's in half-an-hour.

GREGORY. Are you coming too, Jeff ?

JEFF. No, I'm stopping the night at the Chough.

(Rises and shakes hands with GREGORY)

HODDER. He's going to Glasgow with the money to-morrow.

HARRY. Well, good-bye, Dad. (Shakes hands with HODDER)

[HARRY and GREGORY say good-bye and exeunt L.

Miss PARTRIDGE. (To HODDER) Will you be ready soon ? The boy has taken your bag down. I thought we might walk.

HODDER. Good.

Enter BUILDER'S WORKMAN L. above tree.

WORKMAN. Can we be gettin' in now, sor ?

HODDER. I'll come and see.

WORKMAN. T'peeaperers are comin' fost thing t' mooan. We'd lahk to ha't all riddy for 'em.

HODDER. (To Miss PARTRIDGE) I shan't be long.

Miss PARTRIDGE. I'm coming too to see about the books. (To JEFF) You must come and dine with us.

RENIE. Yes, do. (Sits on seat C.)

(JEFF thanks them)

Miss PARTRIDGE. Take care of him, Renie. See that he doesn't run away.

[Exeunt HODDER, Miss PARTRIDGE and WORKMAN to the house

RENIE. Poor Dr Hodder ! I'm half in love with him, you know. Your brother must be a wonderful person to deserve so much from him.

JEFF. Vernon ? Ah, if you only knew him ! He's a hero in the true sense of the word. There's a man born with a passion for everything beautiful ; food, wine, pictures, women, china, music, everything ! And he's thrown it all to the winds for the sake of his work ; he lives in poverty, dirt too, probably. Can't you imagine his Glasgow lodging ? In the old days a knight swore allegiance to a prince or a lady.

RENIE. That was in the days of Romance.

JEFF. Aren't these days of Romance ?

RENIE. Romance perished with the Middle Ages.

JEFF. Not it. It only changed its form. The easy chances of romance in the old-fashioned sense may have perished ; battles, duels, rescues of distressed damsels. There are not bulls in every field, and even runaway horses are getting scarce. But the hero is still with us ; the man who thinks life not worth living unless he risks it for greater things. Only the alternative now is not the easy one of death ; but life without the things that give life its charm. In the old days the Hero jumped on a horse and rode out into the plains and forests ; his Quest was in the material world. The modern Hero's Quest is in the world of Thought. He sallies forth in pursuit of an idea. Chivalry was once the privilege of the class from which you spring. Oh, I know all about your noble ancestry. (RENIE smiles it aside) Its heroism is all in the past. Romance has gone over to my class now. While your ancestors were caracoling about on gaily caparisoned barbs mine were probably plodding in the towns at unromantic crafts ; but behold in the whirligig of time, while your brothers and cousins, carrying on the degenerate traditions of an effete aristocracy . . . You'll forgive me ?

RENIE. Don't mention it.

JEFF. Are quite unromantically hooking inoffensive fish or shooting unretaliating rabbits, mine are having the wildest adventures in the world of thought tilting at things that can hit them back. Think of all the enemies that surround a man like Vernon ; all the tempting hopes of Wealth, Comfort, Indolence, Love, Friendship and Worldly Greatness ; all the oppositions and indifferences that beset his path. One after another he must roll them in the mud, until at last he reaches the magic castle, to hack his way through

the thickets and awake some long-hidden secret of nature from its enchanted sleep.

RENIE. You mean that your brother has renounced the lower side, the sensuous side of life ?

JEFF. Lower ? Why the lower ? Upon my word I can't say which is higher and which is lower ; or why one should try to belittle the mundane life.

RENIE. The mundane life ?

JEFF. Yes, it's so much more than the merely sensuous that such a man gives up ; everything instinctive and warm and natural, even love for his father and family.

RENIE. Has he any right to give that up ?

JEFF. There's no question of right. If he has the heroic devotion to a purpose, all these things fall away from him without his thinking about it. Only don't let us use contemptuous language about what he gives up. It's about the mundane that Nature spreads all her glamour and loveliness. That is the life of which the poets sing.

RENIE. Poets sing of the sublime.

JEFF. Not the good poets. Good poets sing of the mundane ; of love and life and death, of birds and children, flowers, and sweet smells, just as the skylark sings of grubs and flies and the little warm nest on the ground. If Vernon gives us up, it's because he has nothing else left to give up.

RENIE. And would you do the same as he has done ?

JEFF. I hope so ; I think so. Yes, if ever I find an object for my devotion, if ever I am called upon a Quest, I will give up everything ; father, brothers and the hope of wife and child ; though I dare say I could relish those things as well as other men.

RENIE. Yes, I am sure you could.

JEFF. I will do as Vernon has done

Enter a very small TELEGRAPH BOY L., whistling very

loudly.

BOY. Hodder?

JEFF. It's for my father, I expect. He's indoors.

[Exit BOY to house R.
RENIE. (Rises) I do hope it's not bad news.
JEFF. Why should it be ?
RENIE. I'm countrified enough to feel anxious when

I see a telegram. Dr Hodder is going to live with

you in London, isn't he ?
JEFF. Yes, when he leaves you.
RENIE. I hope I may come and see him there.
JEFF. Of course. Are you going to be in town ?
RENIE. Yes. Aunt Hetty and I are coming up for

the sales.
JEFF. I'm delighted to hear it. Yes, please, come,

don't forget, I shall look forward to it.

[The TELEGRAPH BOY crosses from the house

and exits L. whistling

Enter Miss PARTRIDGE

RENIE. What was the telegram ?
Miss PARTRIDGE. I don't know. We must be
getting home. The builders want to get to work.

Enter HODDER with telegram R.

HODDER. I was none too soon with my sale.

JEFF. What is it ?

HODDER. It's a telegram from Beadle. He's been

to see Vernon and wires that he's ill.
JEFF. Ill ! I'll go to-night.
HODDER. (Nodding) Here's the cheque. You can

cash it in Glasgow.

JEFF. (Looking to see that it is endorsed) I'll catch the
six- thirty and pick up the night mail at York.

HODDER. You can just manage it.

(JEFF says good-bye to Miss PARTRIDGE)

HODDER. Come on, Jeff, no time to lose.

RENIE. Then we shall meet again in London.

Good-bye.

[JEFF says good-bye to HODDER and exits L.

HODDER. Send me a wire.

JEFF. (Without) All right.

Miss PARTRIDGE. (To RENIE) What do you mean, you'll meet again in London ?

RENIE. You and I are going up for the sales.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Oh, I'm going up, am I ? Do you mean to marry him ?

RENIE. No.

Miss PARTRIDGE. (To HODDER who returns from up L.) Come along, Hodder, we must be off too. (HODDER takes his walking-stick and a satchel full of odds and ends) Good-bye, old house !

HODDER. Good-bye ! Good-bye ! . . . Why should one mind going so much ? What is a home after all ? It's only matter, inorganic matter, an arrangement of Mole . . . Molecules. Come on, let's be off, or I shall make an old fool of myself.

[Exeunt L.

(A PAINTER has closed the French windows and paints round patches on the panes)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE 1

In a garret. VERNON lies on a low bed up L.C. with his eyes closed. HUNTER, a young doctor, writing at a table covered with American cloth. MRS MACKINTOSH stands by him, watching an etna boil. Books are scattered on the floor. In a corner stands the model of a scientific apparatus, covered with a torn tablecloth. In another corner, a tall linen cupboard. A girl is playing Rakhmaninoffs Prelude in C sharp minor on the piano in a neighbouring lodging.

HUNTER. (Crumpling up the paper on which he has been writing and throwing it on the floor) No, I shan't give him any more drugs at present. What he wants is feeding up. It's simply a case of starvation and overwork.

MRS MACKINTOSH. Will I go on with the Benger ?

HUNTER. Yes. Benger every two hours ; and the Sanatogen three times a day in hot milk. Try him with a little meat juice about one, and let me know how he takes it.

MRS MACKINTOSH. Yes, sir. (They are watching VERNON furtively while they talk, and turn towards him as he moves his head)

VERNON. Wasn't that the bell ?

HUNTER. Bell ? No. You go to sleep !

MRS MACKINTOSH. He keeps listening for the bell

ever since he knows that his brother's coming.
HUNTER. When's he due ?
MRS MACKINTOSH. He might be here any meenit

now.

HUNTER. (Looking at his watch) I must see about

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SCENE 1 REVOLT 89

getting the district nurse. There's that brat of

Murdoch's practising her piece again.
MRS MACKINTOSH. He says it doesna disturb him.

(To VERNON) Would you wish to have the music

stopped now ?
VERNON. No, I like it. It's so like life. It's all

effort, effort ; never getting there. It's like what's

his name rolling his stone up that hill in Hell.
HUNTER. You're getting too sharp. I must give

you another sleeping draught.
VERNON. No, no ! I mustn't be sleepy when my

brother comes. I've got something to tell him.
HUNTER. Wait till you're well.
VERNON. Can't wait. I say, Doc, be a good chap ;

give me some of that pick-me-up of yours again.

I must have my mind clear. When I've seen Jeff

you can souse me with sleeping draughts as much

as you like. Bring a barrel round at twelve.

There ! Surely that was the bell.
MRS MACKINTOSH. I'm thinking it's a bell in your

head you've got.
HUNTER. Give me your wrist again. (Feeling his

pulse) Is it anything very important ?
VERNON. It's more than life or death to me.
HUNTER. Bible oath ?
VERNON. Bible oath.

HUNTER. The pulse is better than I expected.
VERNON. You will ?
HUNTER. (Taking a small bottle from table) You can

have a couple of table-spoons after you've got the

Benger down.
VERNON. You're a brick.

HUNTER. I'll leave it here. (Puts it on table by bed)
VERNON. Hurry up with that Benger, Mac.
HUNTER. I must be off. (Goes to door R.)
VERNON. Tata. Don't forget the boxing match.

40 REVOLT ACT n

HUNTER. Boxing match ? What boxing match ?

VERNON. You and me on Friday.

HUNTER. Rubbish ! [Exit HUNTER R.

VERNON. Hurry up, Mac, I'm starving. I'm not half as bad as you two try to make out, you know.

MRS MACKINTOSH. (Bringing him the Benger) There !

VERNON. (Eating) Al ! Slap up ! (He hands back the bowl)

MRS MACKINTOSH. Why, you've hardly touched it.

VERNON. Nonsense ; you don't expect me to eat the bowl as well, do you? It's lovely of you to take so much trouble, Mac. I'll marry you when I'm well. (A bell rings) That's him. I know his ring. Be quick ! (MRS MACKINTOSH goes to door R.) Stop ! Just smarten me up a bit. E)ip the brush in the jug. There's a good chap. (She does his hair) There, now I feel more like a Christian.

[Exit MRS MACKINTOSH. VERNON takes a dose of the tonic and lies back

Enter JEFF R.

Thank God you've come.
JEFF. How are you getting on ?
VERNON. How's the Dad and everybody ?
JEFF. They're all right.
VERNON. Don't look at my room like that. We

haven't had time to tidy up.
JEFF. So you've had a doctor in ?
VERNON. Have you had breakfast yet ?
JEFF. Yes.
VERNON. Good. There's no time to waste on meals.

Mrs Mac gone ?
JEFF. There's no one here but you and me.

SCENE 1 REVOLT 41

VERNON. She's a brick. Look here, old chap, this is a bad affair.

JEFF. What do you mean ?

VERNON. It's all up with me, Jeff. I'm what the French call flambe.

JEFF. What do you mean? You don't mean . . . Oh, nonsense ! Don't be an ass.

VERNON. The machine's worn out.

JEFF. We'll pull you round. We'll get a better doctor, we'll . . .

VERNON. It's too late. Isn't it sickening ? Hooked by the leg just as I was climbing in at the window. For I'd got it, Jeff. I'd just found the link I wanted.

JEFF. What does the doctor say ?

VERNON. Never mind that ; I've got it, I tell you. Matter is energy, and I've discovered the way to prove it. The worst thing these days has been the fear I might ... I mightn't have time to hand on the secret. But thank God you've come. Gosh ! If my head would only clear for a minute.

JEFF. You've written it down ?

VERNON. That's where I've been such a fool. I'm so unmethodical. Things dashed down here and there and everywhere, on the backs of letters, on the floor, the wall ; no one could make head or tail of it without an explanation. The key's in here (tapping his forehead) and I must give it you before . . . before . . .

JEFF. Rest a bit.

VERNON. As for formulae, that cupboard's full of 'em. Hunter locked 'em up, and Mrs Mac has got the key. It all depends on understanding them. Then there's to be a machine, an experimental apparatus. That's the model of it. The machine '11 prove it ; if it works all right, that is.

JEFF. We thought I might be useful.

VERNON. You're the very man I wanted. (Struggles up) Now if only I could pull myself together. Just lug that thing over here ; it isn't heavy. (JEFF drags up the model) You know what an atom is ; a hollow space with a handful of electrons buzzing round in it for all they're worth. Gosh ! I think I've got an atom up top instead of a head. I'll try another pull at that tipple. (Drinks and listens to music) Rum, turn, turn, turn. Listen to her, struggling on, struggling on, and never getting there. Where was I ? I know. The machine. It all depends on giving the right series of movements to the machine. If I could only show you the way about the formulae you'd soon fossick out the rest for yourself. Now for one great glorious moment of clearness. Rum, turn, turn. (He sits up and puts out his hand for the medicine bottle)

JEFF. You mustn't go drinking your medicine up like that. It says every four hours.

VERNON. Don't be a fool, Jeff. What does it matter, so long as it helps me to tell you what I have to ? We're nothing, you know it. Now I've got it clear. There are two sorts of electrons with different oscillations. The formula for the oscillation of the first. Have you got a bit of paper ? The formula for the oscillation of the first . . . Damnation. I'm dying! (He falls back and dies. JEFF closes his eyes and rings the bell)

Enter MRS MACKINTOSH

JEFF. Have you got the key of that cupboard ?

MRS MACKINTOSH. It's here in my pocket. (JEFF

holds out his hand) Will you promise not to let him look at them ?

JEFF. Yes, yes. (He unlocks the cupboard, from which masses of paper tumble out)

MRS MACKINTOSH. (At the bedside) Oh, sir ! D'ye know he's deid ?

JEFF. (Examining papers) I know, I know.

(THE GIRL goes on practising Rakhmaninoff)

CURTAIN

SCENE 2

In JEFF'S bicycle shop. Door L. to HODDER'S room ;
door C. to yard with a spring bell. The store full of
bicycles runs back into darkness R. ; at the far end
of it a gas jet and a man hammering iron on iron.
Writing-table and chairs down R. A glass house
aloft in gallery.

HUBERT NORTON, in shirt- sleeves, with hands and
face smudged with black oil, at work on a bicycle
in the foreground. IST GIRL BICYCLIST at door C.
with bicycle; 2ND waiting while workman gets her
bicycle from the store

IST GIRL. Hurry up, Nell. (Laughs and rings her

bell)
2ND GIRL. How impatient you are. (To WORKMAN

who is R.C.) I don't want anything very grand ;

it's only for a spin.

IST GIRL. She'll tumble off. (Laughs and rings)
2ND GIRL. Mind you don't wear your bell out.

(JEFF comes out from gallery house and looks down)
JEFF. Is that you, Hubert ?
HUBERT. Hullo ! Come up to blow ?

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JEFF. Have they got that piston fitted yet ?
HUBERT. I'll go and see. Will you see Hazeman if

he comes ?
JEFF. No, I'm too busy. Miss Partridge hasn't

been to see my father, has she ?
HUBERT. The lady with the niece ? Not yet.
JEFF. Let me know if she does.
HUBERT. Oho ! Not too busy for that ! All right,

I'll let you know.

[Exit JEFF. HUBERT goes up R.
HUBERT. (To 2ND GIRL) Excuse me, madam.
2ND GIRL. Oh, lor' !

(1ST GIRL laughs and rings. WORKMAN gives
2ND GIRL a bicycle)

Five shillings, isn't it ?

WORKMAN. We don't take no deposit from girls.
IST GIRL. She'll steal it.
WORKMAN. Ring the bell if the shop's shut.
2ND GIRL. Right-o !

(Exeunt GIRLS L.C. WORKMAN works. Clang of
iron. IST GIRL laughs and rings in distance)

Enter RENIE and Miss PARTRIDGE C. with parcels.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Is Dr Hodder at home ?

WORKMAN. Yes, mum ; I'll go and tell him.

[Exit L.

RENIE. He's at work up there, no doubt.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Who is ? Dr Hodder ?

RENIE. No, Jeff.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Pff ! isn't it hot !

(Clang of metal)

RENIE. How I love this bicycle shop with its atmosphere of work and practicalness. There's nothing unmeaning, nothing superfluous here.

Miss PARTRIDGE. It's curious the passion you've

developed for bicycle shops of late. We've been here every day for nearly a month now.

WORKMAN. (Entering L.) Just comin', mum.

RENIE. (Up C.) Oh, do look at these dear little oil-cans.

CYCLIST. (To WORKMAN) I want Bert to look at this chain. [Exeunt up R.

Enter HODDER L. in an apron. Greetings.

HODDER. (Taking off his apron) I'm afraid I'm rather untidy. I was busy making a pudding.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Making a pudding ?

HODDER. Yes, a bread-pudding.

Miss PARTRIDGE. But can't your cook make a bread-pudding ?

HODDER. We haven't a cook now. We've given her the sack.

Miss PARTRIDGE. And do you mean to do the cooking, pray ?

HODDER. One must do something. I had hoped to be some use in working out the notes poor Vernie left behind him ; but there ! my mathematics don't even touch the fringe of it. I'll have to leave it all to Jeff. He's up there day and night ever since he brought the model home. (To RENIE) I only hope he won't injure his health, my dear.

RENIE. I'm sure I hope not.

Miss PARTRIDGE. And so do I.

HODDER. I didn't want to be a useless burden. So I've turned cook.

RENIE. But can you cook, Dodder ?

HODDER. Well, I've bought a book about it, my dear ; and if things are very bad, we can always go out to the chop-house round the corner.

Anyhow we're better off than poor Vernie was. (A pause) People are beginning to find out what they've lost. Jeff's article on him in The Clarion has roused the democracy to a sense of the stupid injustice of it all. There are letters every week.

2ND WORKMAN. (Entering) I'll just run the spanner over it.

BICYCLIST. (Entering R.C. with HUBERT and IST WORKMAN) I'll look in again on Tuesday.

[Exit C.

HUBERT. Seven o'clock. You can shut upland go home.

(Two WORKMEN shut up the shop and EXEUNT saying " Good-night " during the ensuing scene)

HODDER. You don't know Hubert, do you ? Mr Norton, Jeff's partner, Miss Partridge, Miss Dalrymple. He only got back from his holiday last night.

HUBERT. I'm afraid I'm too dirty to shake hands. I'm only a working man, you know.

HODDER. That's his boastfulness. He's a University man. He was up with Vernie at John's.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Ah, you're a Socialist, I suppose.

HUBERT. I am.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Oh, you needn't hope you're going to shock us. Renie's a Socialist too, though she doesn't look it. She comes from one of the stately homes of England. Her father's an economic parasite.

HUBERT. Oh, mine is only a solicitor.

Miss PARTRIDGE. It comes to the same thing. Why didn't he make you a solicitor too ?

HUBERT. He wanted to.

Miss PARTRIDGE. And wouldn't you let him ?

HUBERT. My Public School career had unfitted me for an intellectual profession. Besides, I prefer working with my hands. I should have made a poor sort of solicitor ; whereas I'm not half bad as a working man. You should see me hammering rivets. I'm a nailer at rivets. Then not to have to go to a club ; you can't think what a pleasure it is not to have to go to a club ; not to carry an umbrella ; not to pretend you don't know people when you've seen them daily for the last ten years ; but just to be slapped on the back and called " mate " at once. " Mate," it's a grand word, isn't it? I'll call Jeff. It's all affectation his not showing up. I bet he knows you're here. (Calling) Jeff ! Jeff !

HODDER. Have you been shopping ?

Miss PARTRIDGE. Yes, at Marshall's sale ; scrimmaging in a crowd of excited females for remnants of the last extinct fashion.

Enter JEFF. Greetings. The scene grows darker.

How nice and cool you look ! Still hard at work ?

JEFF. Yes.

HODDER. How have you been getting on to-day ?

JEFF. Same as usual ; like an omnibus in a fog.

Miss PARTRIDGE. What's the machine to do ?

JEFF. You don't really want me to explain ?

HUBERT. It was all in The Clarion.

Miss PARTRIDGE. But I don't take in The Clarion.

HODDER. It's to convert matter into force.

JEFF. Energy, father. It's to liberate energy from its disguise as matter. Matter is energy employed in keeping still. That's Vernon's discovery. Energy opposes itself like that. (Pressing one finger against another) We're going to let it loose ; (releasing them) like that.

Miss PARTRIDGE. How are you going to do it ?

JEFF. Ah ! That's the difficulty. Perhaps we can't. But if we can, think what it means ! We shall have proved that matter, for all its variety, is only one ; we shall have shown that its indestructibility is a myth ; perhaps we shall even learn how to create it.

HODDER. And this is what Vernie was on the eve of doing when they starved him to death.

HUBERT. It's an awfully damning thing, you know, against the present economic system, that a man that's doing work like that gets practically frozen out.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Are you a philosopher too ?

HUBERT. Oh, me ? Well . . .

JEFF. Hubert's a Philistine.

HUBERT. Yes, I'm a Philistine. Social progress is my lay ; nothing else seems to matter much compared to that.

HODDER. Yes, yes. How the rich hate thought ! They want wealth to be the only means to glory ; they naturally hate a rival which can confer a distinction from which they're excluded themselves.

Miss PARTRIDGE. But surely they aren't as bad as all that ? When I used to go out to dinner-parties in London I often met artists and writers and clever people.

HODDER. But did you ever meet any unsuccessful ones ?

Miss PARTRIDGE. I don't know, I'm sure ; they all wore evening-dress.

HUBERT. Well, well, there's a good time coming. Once Socialism triumphs, and it's bound to come, the hand- workers and the brain- workers will have their innings.

Miss PARTRIDGE. (To JEFF) You're a Socialist too, I suppose ?

JEFF. Oh, I've no politics. All I ask is to be left alone to my work. If that's Socialism, I'm a Socialist ; if it's not, I'm not.

HUBERT. It is.

Miss PARTRIDGE. But you wrote in The Clarion ?

JEFF. Oh, that's Hubert's doing.

HODDER. (Looking at his watch) Hullo, I must go

and put that pudding in.
RENIE. I'll come and help you.
Miss PARTRIDGE. And so will I.
HODDER. The penalty for interfering will be that

you'll have to stop and eat it.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Well, I hardly

RENIE. We'll risk it.
HODDER. Come along.

[Exeunt HODDER, RENIE and Miss PARTRIDGE L.

(The bell rings)

HUBERT. Perhaps that's Haze man.
JEFF. Turn on the light, will you ? (JEFF looks out

of the window. HUBERT turns on garish top-lights)

It's two chaps in top-hats.
HUBERT. I wish I'd had a wash.
JEFF. Aristocrat ! (He opens the door C.)

Enter POOLE and BLANDFORD

What, Sir John ? This is a great surprise.
POOLE. Let me introduce my fellow-director, Mr

Blandford.
JEFF. Let me introduce my fellow-director, Mr

Norton : Sir John Poole, Mr

BLANDFORD. Blandford.

(HUBERT washes at a tap and basin up R.)
POOLE. (To BLANDFORD) Mr Hodder was in the

works for a short time ; but I dare say you never

came across each other.

JEFF. You've come to see my father, of course ; I'll

go and tell him.

POOLE. No, it's you we've come to see.
JEFF. Me ?

POOLE. We've come on business.
JEFF. Oh !
POOLE. Aren't you going to give us something to

sit down on ? (JEFF gets stool for POOLE from up

R.C. and chair for BLANDFORD from L. They sit.

JEFF goes to R. and sits on arm of chair) I was

sorry to hear of your brother's death, very sorry.

It must have been a great blow for your father.
BLANDFORD. So young and so brilliant. I have

read your article in The Clarion.
JEFF. Oh?

POOLE. One of our foremen showed it us.
JEFF. Aha !
BLANDFORD. If only we had known sooner ! But,

to tell you the truth, I knew nothing about him

till I read his obituary notice.
JEFF. No, that's often the case with geniuses, isn't

it?
BLANDFORD. When one thinks what it might have

meant if we had been able to help him.
JEFF. There are plenty of geniuses left for you to

help.
BLANDFORD. We can't help everybody. Your

brother was different. It's a sad loss, a very sad

loss.
JEFF. You surely didn't come all the way to Ball's

Pond to tell me my brother's death was a sad loss ?

Surely there must have been something else. I

see what it is, Sir John, you want to buy a bicycle.

We keep all the best brands. (Naming them)

Now which shall it be ?
POOLE. We came to make you an offer.

JEFF. Oh ? (Sits again)

POOLE. Yes. It appears from your article in The Clarion that a lot of experimenting remains to be done.

JEFF. Yes.

POOLE. Well, we can help you.

JEFF. How ?

POOLE. The managership of our experimental department happens to be vacant, and we came to offer it to you.

JEFF. To me ?

POOLE. Yes, in order to go on with the experiments. We are authorised to offer you the place at five hundred pounds a year. We'll give you all the plant you want.

JEFF. That's a very liberal offer, sir. What's the motive ?

POOLE. Of course it's a business proposition. We don't give things away. If you succeed we want to share in any patents arising out of the invention, ten per cent, for the inventor, the rest to the works.

JEFF. You think there's money in it ?

POOLE. I think so. It looks like it.

BLANDFORD. I think so too.

JEFF. H'm !

POOLE. If it works.

BLANDFORD. Yes, if it works. It's time we began looking about for some new source of energy for succeeding generations. Coals running short ; petroleum may give out ; and where shall we be then ? If your brother's discovery turns out to be sound, think what it means ! An inexhaustible supply of motive power for our engines, cheap electric light, cheap heating for the poor in winter.

POOLE. It may supply us with an explosive of a more destructive kind than anything hitherto discovered.

JEFF. How delighted my brother would be to feel that he had bequeathed such a blessing to posterity !

POOLE. Oh, there's nothing to laugh at. It would be a, great thing for the nation. Well, that's our proposal.

BLANDFORD. Think it over ; we don't want an answer immediately.

POOLE. Sit on it ; there's no hurry.

JEFF. (Rises) No, I can answer you at once. I am much obliged to you for the offer, but I am afraid I must decline it.

POOLE. Why?

BLANDFORD. No, don't decline it.

JEFF. (Walks up and down) We couldn't work together. We're after different things. I'm trying to make a contribution to knowledge ; you want to make a profit.

POOLE. Naturally ; our shareholders elected us to get them dividends, not to improve their minds.

BLANDFORD. I quite see your point. As directors we certainly hope to make money for our shareholders, and for ourselves too. But, if we make a profit, isn't it because we supply something that the public needs ? In fact, the more profit we make, the more it shows that we are doing good to the public. Come, collaborate with us to benefit mankind.

JEFF. No, I've refused your offer and there's an end of it. You would know that what you say is all rubbish if you were a scientist.

BLANDFORD. But I am !

POOLE. Why is it rubbish ?

JEFF. Nobody ever discovered anything by setting out to benefit mankind.

BLANDFORD. Think of the steam-engine, think of the telegraph.

JEFF. They were discovered out of pure curiosity. That's the true scientist's only motive. The good's a by-product. Do you suppose it was in order to benefit mankind that James Watt watched the kettle, or Franklin flew his kites, or what's his name discovered the coherer ? They'd never have found out anything if it had been.

BLANDFORD. Then look at it from your brother's point of view.

JEFF. We'd better leave my brother out of this discussion, sir. Who helped my brother when he was struggling to work out his ideas ? Why, you refused yourself, Sir John ; do you remember ? Who helped him when he was starving? When he died, who cared ? No one. It's only when you've scented the hope of gain that you come at last to try to get a share in his discovery. No ; I want none of your help. He wants none of your help. We will shift for ourselves, and you must find some other means to benefit mankind. (Puts his chair behind table)

POOLE. (Rising) Well, it's as you please. We can't make you accept.

BLANDFORD. It's a great pity. (Rises)

POOLE. You may change your mind.

JEFF. I shall not change my mind.

POOLE. Nobody ever knows if they won't change their mind. (JEFF takes them to the door C. HUBERT opens the door L. RENIE joins him and they stand in the doorway conversing) If you do, we're staying at the Ritz. Send us a wire.

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" Yes " will be plenty. We shall understand. (Salutations)

[Exeunt POOLE and BLANDFORD C.

RENIE. (To HUBERT) It's just what I should have expected of him. Oh, by the by, we couldn't find the carving-knife.

HUBERT. It's probably in the boot-hole.

RENIE. Will you go and give it to Aunt Hettie ?

[Exit HUBERT L.
(To JEFF) I congratulate you.

JEFF. (Morose) What on ?

RENIE. On your refusal.

JEFF. Ah, you heard.

RENIE. Mr Norton just told me. It was splendid of you.

JEFF. What else could I do but refuse ? It makes me angry to see them, these sleek employers, these parasites of science, with their frock-coats and tall hats ; and then to think of Vernon starving in his garret. It's like the contrast between their big, perfect, well-oiled machinery and Vernon's model up there. You shall see it to-morrow ; an unsightly object, put together of string and sealing wax, wire, cigar-boxes, slips of firewood ; a thing of shreds and patches, but all inspired by the divine idea. Think of him there, wearing out his brains in the search for Truth ; and then of them with their shares and directorships. What brought them here ? The smell of money ; their carrion noses smelt profit in his death. I wish you could have heard them ! " It will be so useful ; it will provide heat and motive power and explosives ! " Explosives ! No, Vernon's secret shall never be handled by their money-getting sacrilegious hands. When we tell them that Vernon has divined the most wonderful secret in the world, the secret of Energy, the rich say, " Show it us ; show us this marvel sent down from heaven. We will make it useful." Useful I " We'll use it for boiling kettles and making toast, for killing foreigners and motoring down to our country houses." Killing foreigners; that's the summit of their ambition, the thing for which the chief honours are reserved in this dirty world of theirs. Fighting foreigners for the food supplies ; that's the meaning of all this pomp, patriotism, gold lace, plumes and solemn services in St Paul's. Ideas are nothing to them. The Athenians, a nation not half so numerous or a hundredth part as rich as the people of Upper Tooting, left behind them imperishable works of art, of poetry, of statuary and of architecture. But we ? What will England leave behind her when she perishes ? Oyster-shells and mutton-bones, empty bottles and battered mugs ; fragments of things we could not eat, the rusty remnants of the ships we built to carry our food to us, and the guns we made to prevent the foreigners from eating it before it reached its destination. (RENIE rises and draws close to him., pale and eager, fascinated by the vigour of his feelings) You must forgive me, I'm getting angry. I must get back to my work ; that's my only refuge.

RENIE. (Agitated) No, don't go. I want to talk to you. I've I've always . . . You can't imagine how you interest me.

JEFF. (C.) I'm afraid we don't hold the same views.

RENIE. Yes, yes ; we do.

JEFF. You've no grievance against the world.

RENIE. Yes : none of my own : but I agree. You say it so well, what I feel myself, without being able .

JEFF. You feel like I do ?

RENTE. Yes, you rouse me ; it's like a general waving his men on to the attack. We're brothers in arms.

JEFF. Brothers in arms ? You and me ?

RENIE. Rebels together, rebels against the order, disorder . . . Well, go back and work if you must.

JEFF. No, your voice is music to me. Go on talking.

RENIE. What were we saying ?

JEFF. Anything : say anything.

RENIE. I talk so easily to you. Your energy seems to go into me ; the thoughts come so easily, and the words.

JEFF. Thoughts which wouldn't come to either of us, perhaps, if we were alone.

RENIE. I feel you're a free man ; there are so few ; I don't think I ever met a free man before.

JEFF. I feel as if there were no barrier between us ; suddenly as if I could say anything that came

into my head. May I ?
RENIE. Yes.

JEFF. After all these years, looking on you as something unapproachable, something mysterious and remote . . .
RENIE. On me ?

JEFF. And now suddenly I can say what I like.
RENIE. Yes.
JEFF. (Kneeling) Oh, Renie, I love you ; I've said it now ; I love you, you beautiful woman, you exquisite, dear woman.
RENIE. Do you really mean it ?
JEFF. Every inch ; your heavenly face, your slender hands, your clothes, your hair.
RENIE. Oh, Jeff, Jeff, Jeff.
JEFF. Then the barrier is down ?

RENIE. It wasn't there.

JEFF. You beautiful, wonderful live woman ! To find you so close, suddenly so close, off your pedestal. I long to be humble, to grovel ; to thank you for being slender and fine and alive ; and suddenly my dearest, closest friend ; you are?

RENIE. If you want me to.
JEFF. (Rising) What do I care what the world does now ? What do I care what they think ? But it'll be a hard fight.
RENIE. I know.

JEFF. I've got to fight myself too.
RENIE. I know.

JEFF. You remember our talk in the garden ?
RENIE. Yes.

JEFF. About the two lives.
RENIE. I've thought of it often since.
JEFF. The beautiful mundane life, the life of love and poetry. Well, I've been called on my Quest.
RENIE. I know.

JEFF. There can't be any mundane life for us.
RENIE. No.

JEFF. There'll be no warm little nest on the ground.
RENIE. No, we must stay side by side up there in the sky, singing.

JEFF. Even the distant hope . . .
RENIE. No, no ; don't let's spoil it ; it would be worse still ; to be waiting and watching ; to see us both growing older and older . . .
JEFF. If I succeed in restoring Vernon's secret, that is only the beginning. There's a whole world of

consequences to be worked out.

RENIE. I know. It's just this spirit of sacrifice

which first made me care for you.
(JEFF kisses her hands)

JEFF. Oh, Renie, Renie, tell me in plain words . . .

RENIE. (Draws back and stands apart) Stay where you are.

JEFF. I won't move. Do you love me as I love you?

RENIE. Yes, I love you.

JEFF. More than any other living thing ?

RENIE. Yes, more than any other living thing. You make me a real living woman at last. Till now my life has been only a sort of ground-plan, a design for a life. Do you know what I've really been doing all these years ? I've been searching for self-expression, trying to find a symbol in the outward and visible world . . . it's like looking for a word in a dictionary. Well, I've found it ; it's you. So now you see what you're in for. You've got to live up to that. I've got to keep you up to the mark. Together we shall be irresistible.

JEFF. Then what are we ? Friends ?

RENIE. More.

JEFF. Lovers ?

RENIE. (Giving him her hand) Husband and wife.

JEFF. A Scotch marriage, begad ! But what about the witnesses ?

RENIE. (Pointing to the advertisements on the walls) There they are !

JEFF. (Catting them by name) I call you to witness, this is my wife. Is a ring the thing ?

RENIE. No, no ring. What fun ! Jeff, I'm a different woman.

JEFF. Come on, you rich people ! I'll stand no nonsense now.

RENIE. Here comes Sir Geoffrey, and his gallant squire. . . . No, that's wrong. I'm not your squire, I'm your horse, your fairy horse that

knows where you've got to go to ; and if you pull the wrong rein . . .

JEFF. You'll throw me over your head.

RENIE. Yes, I'll roll on you ! No, I won't ; I'll take the bit between my teeth and carry you the right way whether you like it or no ! (Holds out her hands to him)

JEFF. (Taking her hands) Are we to tell them ?

RENIE. There's nothing to tell.

JEFF. A secret between us ?

(She nods)

RENIE. Yes. And now if I'm your wife you must do as I tell you.

JEFF. Come on ! What have I got to begin with ?

RENIE. Accept Poole's offer.

JEFF. What!

RENIE. I love your having refused ; it was stalwart, quixotic, splendid ; but you must withdraw it.

JEFF. You're trying to turn me into a respectable man.

RENIE. No. That's beyond me.

JEFF. You mean to marry me after all.

RENIE. Never ! But why did you refuse ? Was it pure devotion to the Quest ? Was there no pride in it ?

JEFF. A little, perhaps, but . . .

RENIE. Have you any right to risk the idea for pride ? Isn't that part of the mundane ? Think of a crusader risking the Holy Sepulchre for some private pique. Think if you should betray your trust. You have to experiment, don't you, with this model ?

JEFF. Yes.

RENIE. Surely it would be better to have good machinery and clever workmen.

JEFF. Yes; but I don't want to be any man's

servant.
RENTE. You wouldn't ; you'd be their master.

Their greed enslaves them.
JEFF. Why should I have any truck with greedy

people ?
RENIE. Because it's only greedy people who are

rich. Well, exploit their greed. Trade on it.

Accept ! Accept !

JEFF. I will. You're right. It was pride.
RENIE. Where are the telegraph forms ?
JEFF. A post card's good enough for them.
RENIE. Oh, oh !
JEFF. Am I to have no vices ? (Takes telegraph

form, writing) " Yes."
RENIE. Now go and send it at once in case you

change your mind.
JEFF. Shall I ?
RENIE. Don't say " Shall I ? " but do as you're

told.
JEFF. How ripping!

[Exit JEFF C., leaving door open

Enter HUBERT L. at the sound of the spring bell.

JEFF. (Without) I beg your pardon.

2ND GIRL. Oh, lor' !

(1ST GIRL laughs and rings her bell. HUBERT goes

to the door C. and the two GIRL BICYCLISTS appear

in it)

CURTAIN

ACT III

In JEFF'S lodgings near POOLE'S engineering works. Open French window in the back with view of the works and shop No. 7 on a hill. It is noon on a sunny day in August. A sooty tree looks in at the window from a black unfertile garden. Steam and smoke blow from the chimneys of the works across the background. Door L. Door to HODDER'S room R. A white tablecloth is laid for a large party. MRS BEVERLEY, the keeper of the lodgings, a good-natured, dirty, stupid, inefficient old Yorkshire woman, and NELLY, her niece, aged fourteen, come and go throughout the earlier part of the act, getting lunch ready and exchanging such remarks in Yorkshire dialect as are appropriate to that occupation. BAGSHAW and BARNABY have just been ushered in L. by NELLY. MRS BEVERLEY, with her hands full of knives and forks, looks out of the window and calls DR HODDER.

MRS BEVERLEY. Et's tweeah gen'leman, sor.

HODDER. (Without) All right, Mrs Beverley, I'm coming.

BAGSHAW. You'd better sit down, Barnaby, after your walk.

BARNABY. (Counting the places laid on the lunch-table) Six, seven, eight places ! Why, it's quite a party. I wonder at Hodder after such a recent bereavement ; it's hardly decent.

MRS BEVERLEY. 'E's joost a-coomin', sors.

Enter HODDER C. in his shirt-sleeves, restored to health and spirits again.

HODDER. Where are they ? Ah, how are you ?

(They greet)

BAGSHAW. We're rather early ?

HODDER. Not a bit.

BAGSHAW. Many happy returns of the day, old man.

BARNABY. (Sadly) Ah, many happy returns.

HODDER. Thank you, thank you.

BARNABY. I'm surprised to see so many places laid. We thought it would be just us three.

HODDER. Oh, it's only some old friends : Miss

Partridge and Renie Dalrymple . . .

BARNABY. Well, I'm glad you have the spirits.

BAGSHAW. And what are you doing in your shirt-sleeves ?

HODDER. I was busy gardening.

BAGSHAW. You shouldn't do it, Hodder. It's dangerous at your age.

HODDER. My age, confound you ! I'm only seventy. But the worst of it is, nothing will grow in this confounded place ; the smoke stops up all their pores.

BAGSHAW. And where 's Jeff ?

HODDER. Hard at work, bless him. That's his shop, No. 7, over there, with the red roof. And there he is day after day experimenting and experimenting.

BAGSHAW. And never succeedin', eh ?

HODDER. Oh, he'll succeed soon enough.

BAGSHAW. Humph !

HODDER. And then think of the glory of it.

(A hooter sounds ; five or six bells ring, and a caged canary sings in the garden)

HODDER. There's the dinner-hour. Jeff'll be here in a moment.

MRS BEVERLEY enters L.

BARNABY. Listen ; what bird's that ?
HODDER. That's Mrs Beverley's canary.

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BARNABY. Oh, a canary . . .

HODDER. Did you think it was a nightingale ? The

hooter always sets it off.

(A sound of men cheering in the distance)

Why, bless my soul, what's that noise ?
BAGSHAW. I don't hear any noise.
BARNABY. There isn't any noise.
HODDER. It sounds like cheering. What can that

be about, Mrs Beverley ?
MRS BEVERLEY. Beg pardon, sor ?
HODDER. What can that cheering be about ?
MRS BEVERLEY. Ah'm seer ah deean't knaw, sor.

Ah niver trooble my heead aboot onnything

ootsahd t'hoose.

Enter GREGORY, ushered in by NELLY L.

NELLY. Pleease, maaster, it's a gen'leman.
HODDER. What, Gregory ? Well, I never !

(Greetings)
GREGORY. I've run down to wish you many happy

returns.
HODDER. Thank you, thank you, old chap ; I'm

glad ! Did you hear any sound of cheering as you came in ?

GREGORY. Yes, there were some men cheering . . .
HODDER. What about ? What about ?
GREGORY. Something about some shop.
HODDER. That's it ! Jeff's shop ! I told you so !

Where the devil is Jeff ? He's succeeded ; bet

you a thousand pounds he's done it at last.
BAGSHAW. Don't make too sure.
BARNABY. It may be something quite different.
BAGSHAW. It may have been an accident.
BARNABY. It may have burst and killed him.
HODDER. Here, take these old things away, Greg.

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I must go and put my spade away. Why on earth

is Jeff so late ?

[Exeunt GREGORY
(BAGSHAW and BARNABY R. HODDER goes towards

window C.)
MRS BEVERLEY. (Holding up two wine bottles]

What am ah to deeah wi' t'wahn, sor ?
HODDER. Open it, Mrs Beverley, open it.
MRS BEVERLEY. Big pardon, sor ?
HODDER. Open it and hand it round.
MRS BEVERLEY. Varry good, sor.
HODDER. We'll have the Graves and the Beaune at

lunch, and the port afterwards.
MRS BEVERLEY. Varry good, sor.

Enter BLANDFORD L. HODDER goes to him ; both

talk.

BLANDFORD. /Well ?

HODDER. [Well ?

HODDER. What is it ? What is it ?

BLANDFORD. (Is what I hear true ?

HODDER. \What has happened ?

BLANDFORD. f Don't you know ?

HODDER. \I thought you would know . . .

BLANDFORD. f The men were all cheering . . .

HODDER. \We wondered what the cheering was

about . . *;<

BLANDFORD. 1 1 was told your son had had a ...
HODDER. (Is there any news from No. 7 ?

Enter JEFF at the window C.

HODDER. (Ah, there he is ! Jeff, you rascal, is it

] true ?

BLANDFORD. [Are we to believe our ears ?
JEFF. (Grinning) Well, I don't know what you've
heard.

HODDER. Go on ! Have you done it ?

JEFF. Yes. We've had a successful experiment ; we've done it at last.

(They all speak at once. MRS BEVERLEY continues to lay lunch unmoved)

HODDER. There ! What did I say ? I knew it was only a matter of time. Jeff, my boy . . .

BLANDFORD. I needn't say how delighted I am; not only as a director . . .

JEFF. Thank you, thank you. Thank you, Dad. . . . But remember that this is only the beginning. We have no proper record of what was done.

BLANDFORD. Oh, that's a detail !

JEFF. Yes. We know that we can succeed now. That's all that we've got to so far.

HODDER. That's all that matters.

JEFF. We must work harder than ever.

BLANDFORD. We'll help you.

HODDER. Pile on the steam.

JEFF. We must have more men, more money.

BLANDFORD. Whatever you ask for. I promise you that. The Board will do anything for you. Oh, it's delightful. But I mustn't stop ; I'm due at the Chief's. There's some deputation of workmen ; I just had a 'phone. I congratulate you again and again. (Shaking hands)

JEFF. Thank you, thank you. (Reading a note he has picked up) Go by the window. It's shorter.

HODDER. (Turning down his shirt- sleeves) I'll show you the way.

JEFF. (To HODDER) The Rector's coming.

HODDER. Good.

[Exeunt HODDER and BLANDFORD C.

JEFF. Will you please lay ten places, Mrs Beverley ?

MRS BEVERLEY. Beg pardon, sor ?

JEFF. Lay places for ten.

MRS BEVERLEY. Varry good, sor.

JEFF. Have you opened the sardines ?

MRS BEVERLEY. Yes, sor; when s'all ah han' 'em roon' ?

JEFF. We'll begin with them.

MRS BEVERLEY. Varry good, sor.

Enter RENIE L., carrying dog-whip. She turns at the door and stops her dog from following her.

RENIE. Stay there, Judy !

JEFF. Ah, Renie !

RENIE. Jeff !

JEFF. Have you heard ?

RENIE. Not a word ! But I know. Will you tie Judith up, Mrs Beverley ?

MRS BEVERLEY. Beg pardon ?

JEFF. Take the dog and tie it up. (Hustling her out)

RENIE. Oh, Jeff, you've done it !

JEFF. I've done it ! But how did you know ?

RENIE. Wireless telepathy : like yesterday. I was painting Judy, forgetting all about the time, when suddenly 1 knew ! Judy pricked up her ears and we heard men cheering in the distance. I had no time to change. I threw on the nearest hat and simply flew. Oh, what did it feel like ? Tell me, Jeff.

JEFF. Glorious, Renie, glorious !

RENIE. Did you laugh and dance among the engines in your exultation ?

JEFF. No. It was too much of a thing for that. A cold thrill went up my back. I felt as if I had seen a ghost, peeping round a corner at me. It was Nature's first response. We've been twisting her arm for months, until at last this morning she yelled, " Pax, I'll tell."

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RENIE. Tell me what happened.

JEFF. We had been at it for hours : the usual routine ; applying different currents and all that. Well, we were just preparing for a new series, oiling the machine, and what not, when suddenly the wheel flew round, and for one brief intoxicating moment I saw the electric balance fly up, showing that the . . .

RENIE. Yes, yes, go on !

JEFF. Showing that the . . . Why, you're crying !

RENIE. No, I'm not : I'm laughing.

JEFF. You're not.

RENIE. Yes, I am. Did you get a good record ?

JEFF. That's the devil of it. The electrician was too busy watching the action of the brushes on the commutator to take the reading on any of the instruments. Do you feel like that about it ? Oh, my darling girl ! Oh, Renie, don't let's fight against real things, on a day like this, when I'm blazing like a flame in oxygen. Don't let's miss the grandest moment we shall ever have . . .

RENIE. No, no !

JEFF. One kiss ! One great, gorgeous kiss before we die!

RENIE. No, no ! Remember our vows !

JEFF. We may have been wrong to make them.

RENIE. This isn't the moment . . . We can't unmake them now.

JEFF. You ineffable thing ! You thing that I was born to long for !

RENIE. No, no !

JEFF. It's beyond me. We can't invent a new way of loving.

RENIE. Let me go ! Let me go !

Enter HODDER, putting on his coat.

RENIE. Thank God !

HODDER. Hullo, hullo, what's this ?

RENIE. Don't look so shocked, Dodder.

HODDER. What is it ?

RENIE. I love him.

HODDER. You what ?

JEFF. It doesn't seem possible, does it, Dad ? She

says she loves me.

HODDER. And I came stumbling in, of course, like a

damned old fool, just when I'm not wanted. I'm

sorry.

RENIE. No, you came in just at the right moment.

JEFF. Yes, by gad ! You must forgive me, Renie.

I'm a villain.

HODDER. Why on earth ?

JEFF. A coward and a villain.

HODDER. What's wrong about it ? Why shouldn't

you if she's agreeable ?

RENIE. We said we wouldn't.

JEFF. We're not going to marry.

HODDER. You're not ? Why not ? Won't she

have you ?

RENIE. He won't have me.

HODDER. What do you mean ?

JEFF. It's agreed between us.

HODDER. Why ?

JEFF. Vernon didn't. Vernon wouldn't have. He

gave himself up to his idea. That's my inheritance.

HODDER. I see . . . But . . .

JEFF. We've thought it over. We've thrashed it

out between us.

RENIE. It's all settled.

HODDER. Yes, but a sacrifice like that . . .

RENIE. We like it ! Come, Dodder, you can't make

us marry.

JEFF. We won't !

RENIE. We won't ! We won't !

HODDER. What am I to say ? How can I thank you ?

If only . . . Oh, I was going to say a stupid thing.
RENIE. Say it, Dodder.
HODDER. If only Vernon could look down through

a chink anywhere and see . . .
RENIE. Perhaps he can.

(HODDER kisses RENIE)
HODDER. There's no harm in my doing it any way.

Enter MRS BEVERLEY L., ushering in CONSTANCE,
WOOLMER and Miss PARTRIDGE. CONSTANCE
wears a white summer frock and a straw hat with
a wreath of flowers on it ; she carries a cardboard
box ; Miss PARTRIDGE carries a nosegay. They
all greet gaily.

HODDER. (Going about excitedly) How do you do ?

How do you do ?
WOOLMER. (Looking at the lunch-table a little shocked)

What ? A party ? I thought it would be just

ourselves.
HODDER. Lunch, Mrs Beverley. (MRS BEVERLEY

goes off L.) You're ready, Jeff. You've heard the

news ?

Miss PARTRIDGE. Not a word.
CONSTANCE. What news ?
WOOLMER. I've heard no news.
HODDER. Jeff' 11 tell you. I'll call the others.

[Exit HODDER R. Hubbub of voices R.
WOOLMER. What has happened ?
CONSTANCE. What is it, Jeff ?
Miss PARTRIDGE. Your father seems quite crazy

to-day.
RENIE. Jeff has had a successful experiment.

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Enter HODDEB R. with BAGSHAW, BARNABY and
GREGORY. More greetings. Enter MRS BEVERLEY
and NELLY L. with lunch.

ALL. You haven't ? Really ? You've succeeded ?
How splendid ! . . . etc.

GREGORY. Why, Connie, what a swell you are !

RENIE. Isn't she ! I can't be seen beside her in
this horrid old hat !

[Exit RENIE R. to take off hat

(During all this scene before lunch and at lunch the
actors are to say and do whatever is natural to be
said and done by them under the circumstances., but
so as not to interfere with the things set down for
them to say. The sentences are to be said in the
order most convenient for the scene.

MRS BEVERLEY and NELLY during lunch move
eagerly and inefficiently about, MRS BEVERLEY
whispering loud to NELLY what she is to do.

NELLY, rather scared, puts dirty plates on the floor, on
the chairs, on the tables)

HODDER, (To BAGSHAW) Come along, you old
croakers.

.JEFF. (To GREGORY) What, you here ? Whatever brought you down ?

GREGORY. My dear chap, it's simply ripping. I've some news of my own, but it'll keep, it'll keep.

BAGSHAW. You can't be too careful, Miss Partridge. It's a very dangerous time of the year.

BARNABY. Just the moment for an attack of lumbago.

Miss PARTRIDGE. (Presenting her nosegay to HODDER) There's a birthday present for you, Doctor.

(HODDER thanks her. She arranges flowers about the

room)

CONSTANCE. (Opening her cardboard box) And here's

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another little present, Dr Hodder. (Crosses to HODDER)

WOOLMER. Why, what's this ? What's this ?

CONSTANCE. It's some crackers.

WOOLMER. Crackers ?

CONSTANCE. I saw them cheap at Batterby's.

WOOLMER. My dear girl, I'm surprised at you !

HODDER. Not at all : I'm delighted.

CONSTANCE, They do make a lovely noise.

HODDER. Thank you, my dear. We'll pull them after lunch. I'm very much obliged.

WOOLMER. She's still a child, I'm afraid.

HODDER. Let's hope she may remain so. (The crackers are strown on the table. HODDER claps his hands) Now, now; sit down, all of you. We've not much time. Jeff's got to be back at two. (All sit down in some confusion. HODDER arranges them) You sit there ; you sit there. (When they have all taken their places and begun to talk, he interrupts them) No ; that won't do : Connie mustn't sit next her father. (He rearranges them)

GREGORY. Connie's place is here.

(She sits by him. They flirt. A babel of talk ensues)

CONSTANCE. Oh, how silly you are !

Enter RENIE R.

HODDER. Come and sit by me here.

JEFF. Why, where 's old Hubert ?

HODDER. Hubert Norton? Oh, I forgot to tell

you ; he looked in this morning and said he was

sorry he wouldn't be able to come.
JEFF. Why not ?
HODDER. Oh, some nonsense. He said that now

he was a workman and you were an employer, it

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wasn't decent. He said it was like the masters asking the boys out to meals at Winchester ; it robbed them of their freedom in the struggle with their natural enemies.

JEFF. Oh !

(All laugh)

Miss PARTRIDGE. But there's no struggle in these works, is there ?

HODDER. That's what I said.

JEFF. I should think not.

HODDER. There's nowhere where the workmen get on better with their employers than at Poole's. The works are famous for it.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Is that the Mr Norton we met at the bicycle shop ?

HODDER. That's the man.

Miss PARTRIDGE. The socialist ?

HODDER. Yes. He's a full-blown workman now. Jeff got him the job.

(General conversation ensues. HODDER explains inaudibly to BAGSHAW what the invention will do for the British industries)

BAGSHAW. (To HODDER) Well, and what's the good of it all ?

WOOLMER. (To Miss PARTRIDGE) This is wonderful news indeed of our friend's experiments. (To JEFF) Let us hope that this is only the beginning.

JEFF. I hope so, sir.

WOOLMER. You have your feet on the ladder of success ; but there are many rungs of it to be climbed yet.

JEFF. Hundreds.

BARNABY. I didn't get to bed till nearly eleven last night.

HODDER. (Elated ; finishing his explanation) Now do you see ?

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BAGSHAW. I see.

HODDER. It's an industrial revolution.

BAGSHAW. Well, I can't pretend to be so pleased about it as you seem to be.

HODDER. What's wrong about it ?

BAGSHAW. Why, if it's going to supersede coal and electricity, what's to become of everyone that's put their money in coalmines and electric light ?

HODDER. Oh, bless his heart ! If we found a pill that abolished illness, Bagshaw'd go round complaining that we'd ruined the undertakers ; if we abolished crime, he'd say, " Pity the poor police-man."

GREGORY. You're out of date, Mr Bagshaw ; you're a thing of the past, old dear. Jeff has the great democratic future on his side.

BAGSHAW. Oh, you're a socialist.

GREGORY. Sir, you have divined me.

BAGSHAW. Ugh !

GREGORY. What is the past ? Heaven's rough draft for the future. (HODDER calls MRS BEVERLEY and tells her to get wine) Let us hail the finished poem and fling the dirty copy in the fire.

BARNABY. (To RENIE) Would you pass the salt?

BAGSHAW. (To Miss PARTRIDGE) If all the wealth in England were divided equally, it wouldn't come to more than half-a-crown apiece.

BARNABY. Would you pass the salt, please ?

RENIE. Oh, I'm so sorry. I was thinking of something else. (She becomes attentive and gay)

HODDER. This sort of opposition has always been raised to all great ideas.

GREGORY. Usually by the Church.

WOOLMER. That time is past. The Church of to-day is on the side of all Progress.

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HODDER. Hear, hear !

WOOLMER. All legitimate Progress. We don't want random truth, we want truth that helps us or helps you. If this idea of yours brings grist to the Hodder mill, that is enough for me.

GREGORY. A noble sentiment i' faith.

WOOLMER. (Raising his glass) I drink to the health of the Invention !

CONSTANCE. Your glass is empty !

Miss PARTRIDGE. You've got no wine.

(Laughter)

WOOLMER. (Genially) Let us by no means drink such a toast with empty glasses. Where is the wine ?

HODDER. Here, Mrs Beverley ! Give him some wine !

MRS BEVERLEY. Bone or Graves, sir ? (L. of table gives him wine then crosses round table to up R.)

WOOLMER. A very funereal choice !

(All laugh)

CONSTANCE. Oh, isn't papa dreadful !

(Laughter)

ALL. (Rising drinking) To the Invention !

WOOLMER. And long life and health to our dear friend Hodder !

ALL. Dr Hodder !

BARNABY. Hodder, old man !

RENIE. Your health, Dodder !

JEFF. Prosit !

RENIE. Chin-chin !

Miss PARTRIDGE. And Jeff !

(They drink to JEFF)

WOOLMER. Who knows but we shall see you President of the Royal Society yet, Jeff ? It isn't only riches that matter.

BAGSBCAW. If it leads to that sort of thing, well and good.

CONSTANCE. Here's to the Royal Society !

WOOLMER. She's in great spirits to-day.

[MRS BEVERLEY and NELLY go off.

JEFF. Miss Constance Woolmer !

(Everybody drinks her health. GREGORY and CONSTANCE pull crackers)

BARNABY. (Warmed by the wine) Here's to all pretty young ladies, God bless 'em ! Where should we be without 'em ? Miss Connie ! Miss Dalrymple ! Here's plenty o' lovers and a good, sensible, steady-goin' husband in the end.

RENIE. Thank you.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Just the thing for Renie. Somebody with regular habits and a well-ordered mind.

GREGORY. One can't keep it in for ever. I've good news too. Friends, Romans, Countrymen, here's to Belisarius !

ALL. (Inquiringly) Belisarius ?

BAGSHAW. (Sulkily) Who the devil is Belisarius ?

GREGORY. A Tragedy in Five Acts and in verse by Gregory Galvani Hodder.

HODDER. What ! Has Belisarius been accepted ?

GREGORY. Tree has accepted it.

ALL except BAGSHAW. You don't say so ! Really ? Hooray ! You're a made man. Bravo, Belisarius \ (Toasting) Belisarius!

GREGORY. (Toasting) Tree !

(Two or three crackers are pulled with loud reports)

ALL. Hooray !

HODDER. What a day ! What a day !

(CONSTANCE puts a paper crown from one of the crackers on GREGORY'S head)

CONSTANCE. Keep still, I can't reach.

W T OOLMER. Constance, my dear.

(GREGORY strikes a burlesque attitude, with his hand on CONSTANCE'S shoulder. Talk and laughter)

CONSTANCE. Oh, how silly you are !

JEFF. That's right. Crown the poet. Gird his brow with laurel.

BARNABY. Kiss her, poet !
GREGORY. And why not, Mr Barnaby ? She and I

were boys together.

HODDER. Here's to all them that we love.
GREGORY. And here's to all them that love us.
ALL. And here's to all them that love those that love

them that love them that love those that love us.
(More crackers are pulled and caps put on, with a

hubbub and cries of " Hooray / ")
GREGORY. What famous statue do I remind you of ?

(He and CONSTANCE imitate statues and pictures)
WOOLMER. Connie, my dear, you mustn't be so

noisy.

CONSTANCE. I can't help it. I think it's the wine.
HODDER. Something must have gone wrong, I think.

There are two of the Hodders having something

like a success the same day.

BARNABY. Hear, hear ! (And Chorus of approbation)
RENIE. (Standing on her chair with one foot on the

table with a phrygian cap (paper) on her head and a

glass in her hand) What statue does this remind

you of ?

(HODDER fills her glass)
GREGORY and ALL. Victory, victory !
Miss PARTRIDGE. The chariot of Victory drawn by

Dr Hodder and his three sons.
RENIE. Gee up, gee up !

BARNABY. And are you going to drive 'em, my dear ?
RENIE. Yes, and I'll give them each a lump of sugar

when they get there.
JEFF. (To GREGORY, who is looking in a drawer) What

are you looking for ?
GREGORY. Nut-crackers.
JEFF. There aren't any.

GREGORY. (To CONSTANCE, holding up a pistol)
Will this do ?

HODDER. That's Jeff's cat-gun.

GREGORY. (Posing) " His last cartridge ! "

(All laugh. GREGORY breaks nuts on the table with
the butt of the pistol)

HODDER. (Pouring wine for BAGSHAW, who has fallen
into a despondent mood). Drink away, you old fossil ;
keep up your spirits. Here's to progress ! (Goes
round table, gives wine to the men ; ladies refuse)

BAGSHAW. Hang progress. What good has progress
ever done us, I should like to know ? Who was
it gave us railways and brick-fields and factory
chimneys ? Who was it gave us newspapers
and universal education ? Who was it invented

barbed wire and corrugated iron roofs ?

GREGORY. (In a sepulchral voice) My mother !

BAGSHAW. (With bitter enmity) Ah, you !

BARNABY. What's old Bagshaw grumblin' about ?
A glass or two of wine always makes him like that.

HODDER. While you . . .

BARNABY. My dear fellow, I expand like a flower.
(All laugh) I beam on my fellow-man ; I subscribe
to charities ; I begin to think of marriage.

ALL. Oh !

HODDER. (Going behind BARNABY with a decanter)
Have some more wine ?

BARNABY. Why, my dear chap, I'm half seas over
already.

HODDER. Never mind, you're getting into port now.
(Goes to his chair, sits)

(Laughter and the bang of crackers)

Enter MRS BEVERLEY
GREGORY. Good for you, Dad.

CONSTANCE. Oh, isn't that silly !

(They are all wearing paper caps by now and all

talking and laughing)
JEFF. (Pushes his chair back. To MRS BEVERLEY,

who has been murmuring in his ear) Someone to

see me ? Who is it ?

MRS BEVERLEY. Et's some warkin' men, sor.
JEFF. Working men ? Someone from the works ?
MRS BEVERLEY. Aye, men fro' t'warks.
HODDER. A deputation come to congratulate you.
WOOLMER. A very graceful notion.
JEFF. (To MRS BEVERLEY) Ask them to wait; I'll

come out.

HODDER. No, no ; we've all finished, haven't we ?
ALL. Yes, yes ; we've finished.
HODDER. I'll make coffee in my room. I've got all

the things in there.
JEFF. (Rises, goes L.C.) All right ; I'll see them in

here, Mrs Beverley.

[MRS BEVERLEY goes out L.
HODDER. Cheese ? Cheese ? Anybody say cheese ?

No ? Come along then.

(All rise)
ALL. (Going R. GREGORY opens door) This way.

After you. Isn't this your handkerchief, et

cetera.
BAGSHAW. (To BARNABY) Those infernal crackers

have made me quite deaf.
GREGORY. (To CONSTANCE) Be good, sweet maid,

and let who will be clever !
CONSTANCE. How can you be so silly !

[Goes off R. WOOLMER follows her.
BARNABY. (To Miss PARTRIDGE) You're not lookin'

a day older than when you were Polly's bridesmaid. (Going with Miss PARTRIDGE. They stop

at door)

HODDER. Bring that port, Gregory. Every one take his own glass. [Exit R.

(WOOLMER comes back for another glass)
BARNABY. Hullo, the Rector's got two.
(Laughter as they go)

(JEFF lights a cigarette and walks up and down, happy and excited, in a paper cap. The furniture is in disorder ; the room is strown with plates, napkins and torn crackers. MRS BEVERLEY introduces HUBERT, POWNALL and MAYO L.

During the ensuing scene there are bursts of laughter from the adjoining room at convenient moments)

JEFF. Hullo! Come in. Sorry you couldn't come

to lunch.
HUBERT. (Shaking hands) You got my message ?

I'm awfully glad about the experiments, old chap.

Best congratters. You know my mates ?
JEFF. Of course I do. We've been working together

for a month. How are you, Pownall, how are you,

Mayo ?
POWNALL. (Yorkshire accent) I congratulate you, sir.

It's a great achievement.

MAYO. (Yorkshire accent) I congratulate you, sir.
JEFF. Take a chair, won't you ?

(All sit except JEFF)
POWNALL. Thank you, sir.

(A pause. HUBERT looks at POWNALL)
MAYO. It's a wonnerful thing, this new machine o'

yours, sor.
JEFF. Have a glass of something ? Port ? Where

the devil's the port ?
POWNALL. Not for me, thank you, sir.
MAYO. No, thank you, sir ; I never touch port till

night-time.
JEFF. Have a smoke ?

POWNALL. Not for me, thank you, sir.

MAYO. Thank you, sir ; ah deean't smewk.

(A pause)

HUBERT. We've come on business.

JEFF. Oh, business ? (Sits R. of tabk, No. 4 chair)

HUBERT. You'd better weigh in first, mate.

POWNALL. You begin, Mr Norton ; he's your friend.

MAYO. Aye, he's yoor freend.

HUBERT. Well, it's like this, old chap. We're here as representatives of the men, all the men in the works ; they sent us. We wanted to make sure of you at once, because we're in for a bit of a rumpus with the firm.

JEFF. Rumpus ? What about ?

HUBERT. Well, wages, naturally.

POWNALL. Share of the profits.

MAYO. That's reet.

JEFF. Well?

HUBERT. Of course you've heard about the men's association here.

JEFF. Oh, vaguely ; something socialistic.

HUBERT. No, we are not socialists.

JEFF. Well, syndicalists then.

HUBERT. Not that either.

POWNALL. It doesn't matter what you call it, sir ; we are not theorists, we are working men. If we have any principles, they're just to stand up for our own interests and those of our fellow working men as best we know how.

JEFF. Well, what's your method ?

POWNALL. Profit-sharing.

JEFF. I see. Well ?

POWNALL. We've been waiting for an opportunity, and it's come.

JEFF. But what's all this got to do with me ? Is there going to be a strike or something?

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POWNALL. Not if we can avoid it, sir. But it has a good deal to do with you, because it's you that has provided us with the opportunity that we wanted.

JEFF. I have ?

POWNALL. Well, you see, sir, what we've been waiting for all this time was a clear issue where we could put down our foot and stand firm. While the works were running along in the ordinary way, paying a moderate percentage on a heavily watered capital, we didn't see much chance. We were waiting for some turn of the market that looked like a big advance in profits ; and we think we've got it in your machine.

JEFF. My machine ?

POWNALL. Yes, sir, we've been following your experiments with the greatest interest, waiting for the first sign of success.

JEFF. And then went straight off to demand a share of the profits ?

POWNALL. Aye.

MAYO. Aye.

POWNALL. We called on Sir John an hour ago.

JEFF. Well, and what did he say ?

POWNALL. He said " No."

MAYO. He said a deal more than that, mate.

JEFF. He refused ?

HUBERT. He showed us a clause in our contracts that we'd clean forgotten.

POWNALL. I hadn't forgotten it.

HUBERT. By which we stand to lose a fortnight's wages if we go out on strike without notice.

JEFF. (Rises) Good God ! (Crumpling his cap and throwing it on the ground)

MAYO. Aye, sir, it's a mean clause.

JEFF. Damn the clause ! I wasn't thinking of that. And what the hell do you come to me for ?

HUBERT. We want you to help us.

JEFF. Me ?

HUBERT. There's only one way to avoid the forfeit clause, and that's for you to refuse to go on with the work yourself unless they agree to our demands. Then it won't be a strike but a lock-out.

JEFF. Me refuse to go on with my work ?

HUBERT. That's it, old chap.

JEFF. Do you know what you are saying ? Do you come to me, that's been struggling all this time to be allowed to work, and ask me to refuse to go on ? Do you think I'm going to stop the job over which we've been sweating blood, yes, blood, my brother and I, all these months, in order to settle some damned little question between you and your employers, which of you is to get most beef and bread, most chairs and carpets, out of it ? What do I care ? I wouldn't stop work five minutes for such a piffling affair.

MAYO. It's no such piffling affair.

HUBERT. It's the whole question of social justice.

JEFF. Why, here am I, encouraged at last by a gleam of success, eager to work ten times harder than before . . .

HUBERT. But, don't you see, it's a case of knocking off anyhow ?

JEFF. How's that ?

HUBERT. We shall Jump the forfeit. Your work will be stopped just the same if you refuse.

JEFF. Well, if it's got to be stopped, Pm not going to stop it ; you can take that from me. I'm not going to turn against the only men that have ever helped me.

HUBERT. Only out of greed.

JEFF. I prefer the greed that helps me to the greed that stops me. (Goes to fireplace R.)

HUBERT. Do you refuse ?

JEFF. Of course I refuse. And if you stop me I'll fight you tooth and hoof for all I'm worth.

POWNALL. You can't do much without us in the shop, sir.

JEFF. Can't I ? What share do you think you've had in the making of the machine ? As much as the boy at the bellows has in organ music. If you all died to-night I could fill your places ten times over in the morning.

POWNALL. Do you mean blacklegs, sir ?

JEFF. I don't care what colour their legs are so long as they'll do my work.

POWNALL. Then we've no more to say to each other, I think, sir. (All rise)

HUBERT. Look here, old chap, perhaps I haven't made things plain.

POWNALL. That's enough, Mr Norton. (HUBERT goes behind POWNALL to left of him) You quite understand, sir ? The men are only waiting for the signal ; I have only to raise my hand when I get into the street.

JEFF. Raise it, then.

POWNALL. Very good, sir ; come along, mates ; good-morning, sir. (Crosses to door)

MAYO and HUBERT. Good-morning, sir.

JEFF. Good-morning.

MAYO (As they go) Well, that's a straight answer anyway.

[Exeunt POWNALL, MAYO and HUBERT L.
(JEFF walks up and down)

Enter MRS BEVERLEY

MRS BEVERLEY. Did ye ring, sor ?

JEFF. No.

MRS BEVERLEY. Beg pardon, sor ?

JEFF. No. Go away.

MRS BEVERLEY. Varry good, sor. (She goes to the table and clatters loudly with the plates)

JEFF. Go away, I say, Mrs Beverley.

MRS BEVERLEY. Ah thowt ye said clear aweeah, sor. [Exit MRS BEVERLEY L.

(HODDER looks in R. A burst of laughter comes from

the adjoining room as he opens the door)
HODDER. Have they gone ?

RENIE enters R.

Come and have some coffee.

JEFF. There's no hurry, Dad ; we've got the whole afternoon before us.

HODDER. (Comes in alarmed. RENIE follows him and shuts the door) What do you mean ?

JEFF. We are stopped from work again.

HODDER. Eh ?

JEFF. First it's the Capitalists ; now it's the workmen. God seems to have given Englishmen brains only for devising ways of hindering thought.

HODDER. What's happened ?

JEFF. The men have gone out on strike.

HODDER. On strike ?

JEFF. Whatever made me bring the thing to this damned place ? It's just a cockpit where these animals fight each other for food.

RENIE. (Comes toward R.) It was my fault.

JEFF. No, no. It seemed best at the time. But, oh, if only we had kept it in the clean air of poverty and unsuccess where all the world's great work is done.

HODDER. I don't believe it. There is no strike ! (Looking at his watch) The hooter goes in a minute, and then the foremen ring the bells.

JEFF. There will be no bells rung to-day.

(The hooter sounds)
HODDER. Now for the bells. Eh !

(A pause. The canary sings. Sound of cheering)
JEFF. Well?
RENIE. Jeff?

JEFF. (Looking round for his hat and taking no notice of her) I must go and see the Chief.

[Exit JEFF C.

CURTAIN

ACT IV

The same scene. October ; twilight ; a grey, stormy sky ; wind and rain ; a bright fire ; a kettle boiling on a tripod. RENIE and BLANDFORD are taking tea. JEFF sprawls dishevelled, with a book. Many books lie by him on a table.

BLANDFORD. You must come and help.

RENIE. I can't. It's against my conscience.

BLANDFORD. Against your conscience to help people who are starving ?

RENIE. It's their own fault.

BLANDFORD. What difference does that make ?

RENIE. It's cruelty to help them. It only prolongs the struggle.

BLANDFORD. I never expected to find you so hard and logical.

RENIE. Cake.

BLANDFORD. Thank you. What a senseless thing it all is ! Supposing some stranger from another planet visited this earth, I suppose there is nothing in the whole of our social arrangements which would so much convince him that we were all crazy as a strike. First he sees us exercising the wonderful magic of modern industry, converting dull lumps of iron into wonderful and useful things, into ships, engines, locomotives, quartz-crushers and what not, all of us busy and contented, spreading wealth and happiness all over the world. Then suddenly, for no apparent reason, it is as if some powerful magician had come and cast an evil spell on the place ; the engines stop working, the chimneys stop smoking, weeds spring up in the deserted yards, and the men all go about with hatred

and malice on their faces, hungry and unhappy.

JEFF. (Starting) What's that ?

RENIE. Nothing ; a door shutting.

BLANDFORD. Your nerves seem all to pieces.

JEFF. They are. (Goes on reading)

RENIE. Two lumps ?

BLANDFORD. Yes, please.

Enter Miss PARTRIDGE R. with two cups and plates on tray.

RENIE. Some more tea ?

Miss PARTRIDGE. No, thank you. (Places cups, etc. 9 on table) I've just come in to get a book I left here. I'm going to read it to your father.

JEFF. How is he getting on ?

Miss PARTRIDGE. Oh, he's all right. (Picking up a recent dull novel and naming it) It may help him to go to sleep.

[Exit Miss PARTRIDGE R.

BLANDFORD. If it's like this after six weeks, what will it be like when the cold weather comes on ? We must all join together and compel Sir John to give way to the workmen's demands.

JEFF. Oh, by the by ...
BLANDFORD. Yes, what is it ?
JEFF. Nothing. (He goes on reading)
RENIE. Why shouldn't the workmen give way ?
BLANDFORD. Oh, I know you blame them.
RENIE. Yes, I think they're in the wrong.
BLANDFORD. It makes no difference after all. It isn't the men I think about so much, it's the women and children. They had nothing to do with the quarrel at any rate. Why should they suffer ?

RENIE. Then get the workmen to give in.

BLANDFORD. It can never be right to hurt the children, poor little mites.

JEFF. (Listening) There's that beastly cat again !

BLANDFORD. The men may be in the wrong or they may be in the right ; that's all a matter of speculation ; whereas the suffering of the children is a solid fact.

RENIE. According to you, the masters ought always to give in, whatever the men demand.

BLANDFORD. Suppose one of the children died of starvation, how would you feel about it then ?

RENIE. I should feel very sorry, but it wouldn't put them in the right.

JEFF. Ah ! (Clapping his book to) It's splendid to hear you talk, Mr Blandford. I only wish your brother-directors shared your lamb-like disposition ; then this strike would soon be over, and I should be a happy man again. But I'm afraid the facts of life hardly tally with your amiable philosophy. Life as I see it is a struggle.

BLANDFORD. It shouldn't be.

JEFF. But it is. It always will be. Employers and workmen have different interests ; they struggle. I'm opposed to both of them ; I struggle. You disapprove of blacklegs ; you struggle. I struggle, you struggle, we struggle, they struggle ; that's life. Ah, if only you had had the making of the world ! You'd have stuffed it full of feathers, so that we shouldn't hurt ourselves if we tumbled down. . . . However, I'm afraid that I've got an appointment here at six ; some people are coming to see me.

BLANDFORD. Well, I suppose that's a pretty broad hint to me to be off.

JEFF. Oh, not at all.

BLANDFORD. (Putting on his overcoat which is on chair L. of window) I must go my rounds and see that everything's in order up at the works. Good-bye.

RENIE. (Rises) It's still raining, I'm afraid.

[Exit BLANDFORD C.

Is it right to read when you have visitors ?

(RENIE closes window, comes to behind table, places plates, etc. t on tray)

JEFF. Would it be more polite to scream ?

RENIE. Is that the only alternative ?

JEFF. Yes.

RENIE. Mr Blandford's a good man.

JEFF. He's an angel. But I can't stand angels, not just now. I'm sick of all this sentimentality about the bread-and-butter war.

RENIE. You've been doing too much work to-day.

JEFF. Sh ! My first day ! When I stole down to the shop at five this morning with two portmanteaux full of papers in my hands, I felt like a boy going home for the holidays. All these weeks I've been simply rotting away for want of work ; I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat. (Lighting a pipe) Thank God I could always smoke.

RENIE. What's your appointment ?

JEFF. I was nearly telling Blandford, but I thought better of it. I had a bright idea at lunch. I've invited Poole and Pownall to a conference.

RENIE. To make peace? What terms are you proposing ?

JEFF. Oh, terms ! That's their affair. They can make what terms they like.

RENIE. And Mr Norton, is he coming too ?

JEFF. Not this time. Poor old Hubert, I fancy he's a bit fed up with his new walk of life. He's fallen in love with Jessie Poole. . . .

RENIE. Sir John's girl ?

JEFF. Yes ; he met her at Mayo's doing good works. And now he's wondering if he can work his way up again out of the working class to marry her or whether that's immoral.

Enter MRS BEVERLEY L.

MRS BEVERLEY. Theear's a warkin' man coom to see ye, sor.

JEFF. (Rises) Mr Pownall ?
MRS BEVERLEY. Aye, that's t' neeam.
JEFF. Show him in.

[MRS BEVERLEY goes out.
RENIE. Well, I'd better go.
JEFF. Go and sit with Dad. I'll call you when they've gone.
RENIE. Oh, I shall know. [Exit RENIE R.

Enter POWNALL L., shown in by MRS BEVERLEY.

JEFF. Good-evening, Pownall. Come in, come in.
POWNALL. Good-evening, sir.
MRS BEVERLEY. S'all ah cleear aweeah, sor ?
JEFF. Yes, you can take the things. (Takes up

tray) Oh, have a bit of something to eat before it goes, Pownall ? You must be pretty hungry.

POWNALL. No, thank you, sir ; I've had my dinner.

JEFF. Gammon, come on ! You're as thin as a lath.

POWNALL. Thank you, sir, I won't take anything.

JEFF. Well, well, take it away.

[Exit MRS BEVERLEY

It's a damnable thing, a strike, Pownall. I hope I'll never see one again.

POWNALL. Yes, sir, it's not a pleasant thing ; it could easily be ended with a little good-will.

JEFF. That's all that's wanted. (A knock at the window) Come, trot out your good-will, for here's Sir John come to talk it over with you. (He opens the window)

Enter POOLE, shutting a wet umbrella.

POOLE. Beastly weather. Excuse my coming this way. I thought as our conference was to be a private and unofficial affair . . .

JEFF. Here's Pownall.

POOLE. (C. above table) Ah, Pownall ! Sit down, sit down. (POWNALL sits L. of table. JEFF on sofa R. POOLE above table) Well, so Mr Hodder has determined to make peace between us ?

JEFF. You've got to make peace yourselves.

POOLE. Good. If only Pownall will be reasonable, I'm just in the mood to come to terms.

POWNALL. Well, sir, I don't think there's much doubt about our terms.

POOLE. Come, come.

POWNALL. What we put forward from the beginning was a minimum demand.

POOLE. Now, let's start quite fresh. If you can show me any legitimate grievances I'll undertake to remove them.

POWNALL. It's not a case of grievances, sir. We want a percentage on the profits.

POOLE. Yes, that's what you asked for ; but as I told you before . . .

POWNALL. It's a question of principle with us.

POOLE. Oh, come, if we are both so firm about it we shan't get much forrader. It's only by mutual concessions that we can achieve peace. You come half-way and I'll come half-way. Do you see?

POWNALL. I see, sir.

POOLE. You don't say that we haven't been paying you a fair rate of wages, do you ?

POWNALL. No, sir.

POOLE. The rate agreed on in our contracts ?

POWNALL. Yes, sir.

POOLE. Very well, then ; you brought us your labour ; we paid you a full price for it. What more can anyone demand ?

POWNALL. We want a share in the thing produced.

POOLE. Now, come, if a man brings me goods and I pay him his price for them, I'm under no further obligation to him. The thing I turn out with those goods is my property unless I choose to give it away. Well, I don't choose. We took the risks, we supplied the materials, we supplied the design, it was made in our shops.

POWNALL. Yes, sir, but it was made there by our hands. There's not a bolt or screw in the whole of that machine but was made by our men.

POOLE. Well, and what sort of a job do you think your men would have made of it if we hadn't shown them what to do with those blessed hands of theirs ?

POWNALL. Well, sir, I don't want to be personal, but you can't claim that you had much to do with it yourself, for as far as I know you've never once put foot inside No. 7 since the work began.

POOLE. My work for it is done outside ; I have to be organising, or the work you do in there wouldn't be worth a halfpenny.

POWNALL. Yes, sir, you're an organiser ; that's your work (JEFF rises, walks up to window, then goes to chair below fire. Sits) ; same as I'm an electrician and my brother's a greaser. But, right or wrong, the men say the organisers are paid out of all proportion to the others who share in the work. If the organisers are to be paid according to the profits, they say, why not the rest ?

POOLE. Well, and supposing there aren't any profits ? Supposing the thing don't work ? (Leans back in his chair) Do you really want a share in the profits of No. 7 ?

POWNALL. That's what we've struck for, sir.

POOLE. Very well, your share in the profits so far will be just about . . . Let's see, two and three's five and three's . . . It's cost us something like eight thousand pounds up to date ; divide that among four hundred workmen, it makes minus twenty pounds apiece ; so instead of getting wages this month each of you will kindly hand us over twenty pounds.

POWNALL. People with no economic margin can't be called on to share losses, sir.

POOLE. That's what I thought. So that after all what it amounts to is simply this : you're like everyone else, you want more money than you've got, and as we are the nearest capitalists you propose to get it out of us. Well, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'm just as eager to get this beastly strike over as you are ; if you'll come back to work to-morrow we'll raise your wages five per cent, all round. That's better than a share in hypothetical profits.

POWNALL. Is that the best you've got to offer us, sir ?

POOLE. Yes.

POWNALL. Then I can't accept it. The money is nothing to us unless we get the principle.

POOLE. And that's just the one thing that we're not going to give you.

POWNALL. (Rising) Then I'm afraid we can't come to terms, sir.

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POOLE. (Rises) What a pity we bothered to come out in the rain ! (Takes his overcoat)

POWNALL. I'm sorry, sir ; it wasn't my suggestion. (To JEFF) Good-night, sir. (Going L.)

JEFF. (Rises) Whoa ! Stop there ! I'm not going to let you go like that. (Goes to table)

POWNALL. I can see no hope of agreement, sir.

JEFF. One of you two has got to give in.

POWNALL. It won't be me, sir.

POOLE. Nor me.

JEFF. Now, listen to me ; you two have done all the talking so far, but I'm going to have my word now. It didn't seem to strike either of you, so far as I noticed, that there were some other little matters concerned besides the interests of the two bodies that you two represent.

POWNALL. We are not fighting only for ourselves ; we are fighting the battle of all the poor and needy in the country.

JEFF. Oh, nonsense ! You're fighting the battle of the well-to-do working man. Only a few cranks in London bother their heads about the poor and needy.

(PooLE puts on his overcoat)

POWNALL. (To POOLE) And there's another matter, sir. There was somebody working in No. 7 to-day . . .

JEFF. What the devil's that got to do with you ?

POWNALL. Our picket heard some hammering. I can't answer for the men if that goes on.

POOLE. The usual vague threat of labour leaders. (Moves up C.)

POWNALL. Then let's be clear about it, sir. That's got to be stopped, or I shall take measures to

stop it.
POOLE. (Turning) Am I master here or are you ?

POWNALL. I'm master of the men, sir.

POOLE. And I'm master of the works, do you understand ?

POWNALL. Well, sir, you've had your warning. Good-night.

(POWNALL goes L., POOLE C.)

JEFF. Stop. You've both forgotten the most important factor in the question.

POWNALL. It's no use, sir.

POOLE. Waste of breath, Hodder. (About to take umbrella)

JEFF. (Goes up to R.C.) Put down that umbrella and hear what I have to say. I'm a patient man ; I was ready to put up with your damned arrogance . . .

POWNALL. Arrogance ?

JEFF. Yes, of both of you. If only you managed to come to terms ; that's all I wanted. I've given you your heads. I've sat here, letting you discuss my machine, my invention, my brother's and mine, as if the only important thing about it was how much each of you was to get out of it, as if capital and labour were the only two elements in the production . . .

POOLE. What, do you want a rise too ?

JEFF. Nonsense ; I've thrown you the profits as a sop, a sop to buy my liberty, my liberty to work. . . . Good God ! wherever I look I find the same thing. The Thinker, the Man of Ideas, is regarded as a creature with no civil rights ; a thing to be tolerated only ; to live on crumbs, on charity, to be spoken of indulgently when you're in a good mood ; to be patted on the back and allowed sometimes to come down to dessert.

POOLE. Come, come !

JEFF. Look at my brothers. Harry the artist

reduced to drawing maps ; Gregory the poet writing shorthand reports, dependent for his daily bread on the leavings of commerce. Nothing matters in this world, one would think, but the division of money between the employers and working men. I've got principles at stake too. We claim the right to go on inventing and creating, the right to live without crawling under your table for crumbs. If you won't grant us our right, we'll take it by force. (Slight movement from POWNALL) Yes, by force ! Why didn't you leave me in peace in my bicycle shop ? You lured me here to serve your ends, and now I can't go on because you two choose to get at loggerheads. Make peace, I say !

POWNALL. We can't, sir.

(PooLE shakes his head)

JEFF. Then, by Lord ! I'll leave you nothing to quarrel about. I'll take my work away from both of you ; I'll go back to London and take the invention with me. (Goes down to fireplace R.)

POWNALL. Are you going to let him do that, sir ?

POOLE. He can't. The machine belongs to the Company.

JEFF. You're welcome to it ! What use will the machine be without me ? Without my brother's formulae ? Work it if you can ! To-morrow I go, and take my papers with me. Now will you be reconciled ?

POWNALL. Is it to be peace, sir ?

POOLE. On my terms, nothing else.

POWNALL. I refuse them.

JEFF. Then there's no use talking. I'll work no more for either of you. (Sits in chair below fire)

POWNALL. Ye'd best think twahce of what ye're say in', sor.

JEFF. I've said my last word. (Rings bell below fire)

[POWNALL pauses as if ruminating ; begins

to speak and stops, then goes out L.

POOLE. (Comes to R. of table) Don't do anything rash, Hodder. This strike will soon be over. I'll take a cigarette if you don't mind. It's only a question of days now. They're not supported by their trade unions ; they depend entirely on the subscriptions of a few enthusiasts in Manchester.

JEFF. It's no good, sir. I've made up my mind. (Rings bell again. Rises) I find it a humiliating position to have to sit by twiddling my thumbs while you and your workmen wrangle over the interests of your respective classes.

Enter MRS BEVERLEY L.

MRS BEVERLEY. Did ye ring, sor ?

JEFF. Yes. Bring my lamp, will you ?

MRS BEVERLEY. Beg pardon, sor ?

JEFF. I want my lamp.

[Exit MRS BEVERLEY L.

POOLE. In deciding material questions one is obliged to take a material point of view, but of course

JEFF. I see that we shall never agree, sir. I'm much obliged to you for all you've done for me ; I'm sorry it has come to nothing ; but I've quite made up my mind. I'm off to-morrow.

POOLE. Well, I'm sorry, very sorry. But I can't prevent you ; and I can't give way. (Moves up to window C.) Perhaps you'll change your mind.

JEFF. No, I shan't change my mind.

POOLE. You did before, you know. I'm very sorry.

Look in and say good-bye before you go. (Looking at the sky) It's stopped, apparently.

[Exit POOLE window C.

(JEFF goes moodily and sits down on the sofa in the red glow of the fire. It is dark by now, the weather is clearing ; lights begin to show here and there in the houses on the opposite hill)

Enter RENIE

RENIE. Have they gone ?

JEFF. Renie, I'm going to leave you. The conference has been a failure. Do you understand ?

RENIE. (Comes to sofa L. of JEFF. Sits) Yes.

JEFF. I am going back to be an unsuccessful man in a bicycle shop again.

RENIE. When ?

JEFF. To-morrow.

RENIE. To-morrow ?

JEFF. I can't take my machine away because the metal belongs to Poole ; but I'm going to take away the idea. I'm going back to London again.

RENIE. To Ball's Pond ?

JEFF. Yes, it isn't let. I shan't have the workmen ; I shan't have the tools or the space I have here. I shall have to spend months, years very likely, in getting back to the point I had reached six weeks ago ; but I shan't be at the mercy of masters' and men's caprices any longer ; I shall be a free man. On the whole it's a good thing ; I'm glad they refused. But I'm frightened. I'm always frightened of big things, whether they're good or bad. This is a good thing, but I'm frightened. ... It means we're going to be separated.

RENIE. Yes.

JEFF. No more long silences in the glow of the fire,

no more dreaming and hoping side by side, no hand to put out a hand to.

RENIE. Those are only little things compared with

JEFF. The certainty. . . . Good God! how had I the courage to live before I knew ! That one day, that one moment, changed everything ; and now . . . Why, even if we never met again, we should still be close close.

RENIE. You couldn't stay here in Saltings?

JEFF. I couldn't earn a living. Oh, it'll be good to be back there among the bare boards again, with all my papers about me ; living with them, eating with them, sleeping with them. That reminds me I've got to go down to the shop to fetch the papers back. (Goes up R.C.)

RENIE. Won't to-morrow do ?

JEFF. I'm never easy away from them. If anything happened to them . . . it's unthinkable.

RENIE. But you could work it out again ?

JEFF. Not possibly. Without the formulae those papers contain, one might work at it for years in vain. And I haven't yet quite discovered the secret of how they were arrived at.

Enter MRS BEVERLEY, who coughs. An ELDERLY WOMAN follows her close, and walks forward into the room.

JEFF. Hullo, what is it ?
MRS BEVERLEY. Et's a woman to see ye, sor.
JEFF. Who is it ? What's her name ?
WOMAN. Et's me, sor.

[MRS BEVERLEY goes out.

JEFF. Let's have a look. (Lighting a match. Goes to her L.C.) I don't think I know you.

WOMAN. No, sor. (Blowing out the match) Ah'm afeard o' t' leet. Ah'm Jem t' neet watchman's wahf. Ye remember, sor ?
JEFF. No.

WOMAN. Jemmy 'at was to 'a' had t' sack.
JEFF. I remember, for being drunk.
WOMAN. Yes, sor, ye gat him off.
JEFF. Well, and what do you want with me ?
WOMAN. Ye weean't say 'at ah teeald ye, sor ? Ah deean't knaw what they'd deeah to me ef they knawed.

JEFF. Well, what is it ?
WOMAN. T' men's oop to some mischief, sor. Ah heeard 'em talkin'. They're geean to do some mischief to yer shop.

(RENIE rises)
JEFF. No. 7 ?
WOMAN. Yes, sor.
JEFF. Good God ! Where are my boots ? (RENIE gets boots from up R.) Why don't they bring my lamp ? (Ringing and catting) Mrs Beverley !
RENIE. (Searching) Here they are.

Enter MRS BEVERLEY. JEFF sits below fire putting on boots.

MRS BEVERLEY. Did ye call, sor ?

JEFF. Where's my lamp, confound you !

MRS BEVERLEY. Ah was joost i' t' act o' laghtin' it, sor.

[Exit MRS BEVERLEY

RENIE. But what are the men going to do to the shop ?

WOMAN. Ah couldn't say, miss ; but everyone's coomin' out o' their houses, expectin' something. They're all over t' hill.

JEFF. (Breaking a bootlace) Damn !

RENIE. Where are you going to, Jeff ?

JEFF. To get the papers from No. 7. (A rocket goes up) Good God ! (Dashes to the window)

WOMAN. That's t' signal.

HUBERT. (Without) Whoa there !

JEFF. Let me pass ! Let me pass !

HUBERT. You can't pass here.

(JEFF and HUBERT struggle in the window)

WOMAN. They're all about us !

(She goes out L., meeting MRS BEVERLEY, who enters with a lamp and sets it on table C. While this is said and done JEFF and HUBERT speak through it)

JEFF. I must go to No. 7 !

HUBERT. And I'm here to prevent you.

JEFF. My papers are down there.

HUBERT. Hold back, you fool ! It's for your own good I'm telling you.

(No. 7 blows up with a bang and burns. Cheers and murmurs without C.)

Enter HUBERT C. still gripping JEFF.

HUBERT. There ! Now do you understand ? I've been waiting there in case you got wind of it. I knew what you'd do.

Enter HODDER, in dressing-gown, and Miss PARTRIDGE R.

HODDER. What's happening ?

Enter MRS BEVERLEY with lamp.

What was that bang ?

(Sound of singing outside)

A VOICE. (Without) What prahce yer machine now?

RENIE. The hill's all black with people.

HODDER. What's happened ? Why does nobody answer me ?

HUBERT. No. 7's been blown up.

HODDER. Blown up ? The machine ? And where were the papers ?

JEFF. (With a gesture of the head) Down there.

HODDER. Lost too ! Ah ! (Sitting)

HUBERT. Whatever was in the shop, you'll never see it again, Dr Hodder. The men have taken good

care of that.

HODDER. (Rising) You damned scoundrel !
HUBERT. No, sir, I had no hand in it. I did my best

to prevent them.

HODDER. Why didn't you warn us ?
HUBERT. I couldn't go back on my mates. I did

what I could for Jeff.
HODDER. So there's an end of it all ! Half-a-dozen

rascals and a chunk of dynamite. . . . But what

the devil possessed you to leave the papers down

there ?
Miss PARTRIDGE. Leave him alone, Doctor.

(Alarm bell)

HUBERT. There's the alarm bell. Come on, Jeff.
JEFF. Leave me alone, everybody.

[Exit HUBERT C.

What do I care ? I want to be alone, I tell you.

(To RENIE, indicating HODDER) Take him away.
Miss PARTRIDGE. Come back to your fire, Doctor.

Take my arm. Come along, we can't do anything

to help.
HODDER. I'll not sit doing nothing ! Give me my

hat, give me my coat. I'll go and see for myself;

I'll go and look at the ruins of my boy's work

Ah, Vernon, Vernon, if you knew what they had

done to us ! (Staggering) Ah !
Miss PARTRIDGE. He's fainting !
RENIE. Catch him, Jeff !
(JEFF catches him and supports him out R. Alarm

bell stops)
Miss PARTRIDGE. He will die of this ! It was only

the hope of seeing the thing through that kept him

alive.

JEFF re-enters

JEFF. Go and look after him. He's as white as a
sheet.

Miss PARTRIDGE. Come and help me, Renie.

[Exeunt R.

(JEFF puts on coat and hat. Goes to drawer and takes
pistol and box of cartridges ; loads pistol and holds
it in his left hand behind his back, going C. as
RENIE enters R.)

RENIE. I couldn't stay away ; I was afraid ; you
looked so wild. (Games down to R.C.) What were
you doing when I came in ? Where were you going ?

JEFF. Down there.

RENIE. What for ? (Sees cartridges) What have you got in your hand ? What were you going to do with that ? You didn't mean to kill yourself ? (Takes pistol from him)

JEFF. My work's over.

RENIE. But you couldn't be so treacherous, so unfaithful ! Oh, put it away ! Is it loaded ? Quick ! How does it unload ? Unload it, unload it ! Oh, Jeff, did you think of what it meant to all of us ? How could you treat me so ? To cut yourself adrift without a word, to launch out into the open, right away where I might never find you again.

JEFF. One doesn't reason. They'd blown up everything I had ; let me go too.

RENIE. If there's any vestige of the invention left it's in your brain and nowhere else.

JEFF. That's ended !

RENIE. But the invention isn't everything. Life goes on, the world goes on. If this is a bad world where they care only for food, we must build up a new one where they care more for thought and ideals. If they destroyed what you brought them, we must teach them to preserve what others bring. That's our business now. You've not got to die, Jeff ! You've got to live and struggle harder than ever. If the world's bad it wants you all the more.

JEFF. Why should I trouble about the world ?

RENIE. Because it's the only thing that gives our personal life a meaning ; because without it life is mean and dull, and with it large and glorious, as ours has been this summer ; because it's our deepest and most imperious instinct to try and make the world better.

JEFF. My instinct is to creep into a hole and hide myself.

RENIE. Ah ! If only I could take all the pain out of you and have it all to myself ; I'd rejoice in it ; I'd know I was doing my job properly at last, leaving you free to be strong and to hope. I've been useless as yet, because we've been trying to be wiser than nature.

JEFF. Renie !

RENIE. We must never be separated again, Jeff. (JEFF rises) We're not strong enough to stand alone. (Their lips meet at last in a long kiss)

CURTAIN

CAST OF THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, llth November 1912

BLANDFOBD .
RENIE DALRYMPLE
CANON WOOLMER
SIR JOHN POOLE .

LADY POOLE
LADY EAGLESHAM
CONSTANCE WOOLMER
DR HODDER .

BAGSHAW, a lawyer .
BARNABY, a doctor

AUCTIONEER

MAGGIE

ALF

LORD WONERSH .
GREGORY HODDER
JEFF HODDER
HARRY HODDER .
MISS PARTRIDGE .
A BUILDER'S WORKMAN
TELEGRAPH MESSENGER
DR HUNTER .
MRS MACKINTOSH *;' ,
VERNON HODDER .
1ST CYCLIST . ;,*'

2ND CYCLIST . ,, ,
HUBERT NORTON .

WORKMEN .

3RD CYCLIST

MRS BEVERLEY .

NELLY, her niece .

POWNALL
MAYO . '.- ''
ELDERLY WOMAN

ERNEST BODKIN
SYBIL THORNDIKE
BREMBER WILLS
EDWARD LANDOR
MRS ALBERT BARKER
DORIS BATEMAN
CHRISTIE LAWS
JULES SHAW
LIONEL BRIGGS
H. A. YOUNG
EDWARD BROADLEY
MURIEL STEWART
ERNEST HAINES
HERBERT LOMAS
FRANK DARCH
MILTON ROSMER
REGINALD FRY
HILDA SIMS
ARTHUR MILTON
THOMAS BURNS
ERNEST HAINHS
MURIEL STEWART
LEWIS CASSON
DORIS BATEMAN
MARIE ROYTER
LEONARD MUDIE
REGINALD FRY
TOM KILFOY
LEONARD CHAPMAN
ANNIE MOLLER
MARIE ROYTER
HERBERT LOMAS
ARTHUR MILTON
DORIS BATEMAN

Produced by LEWIS CASSON

THE FOUNTAIN

A Comedy in Three Acts

NOTE : First produced for the Stage Society at the Aldwych Theatre, London, in March 1909.

A revised version, as performed by the Scottish Repertory Company at the Royalty Theatre, Glasgow, in October 1909, and other Repertory Companies, published in 1911 by Messrs Gowans & Gray, Glasgow. I must thank Messrs Gowans & Gray for kindly allowing me to include The Fountain in this volume. KATHARINE CALDERON.

PREFACE

THE only object of this Preface is to clear away some misconceptions raised by the Dramatic Critics. They said that my hero was an exponent of orthodox socialism, and that I myself was a disciple of Bernard Shaw. They were wrong about both of us.

Wren is a member of the Fabians, it is true ; he goes off to one of their meetings at the end of Act I. ; but, like many other members of that Society, he is not a socialist at all ; he only thinks he is a socialist.

As for myself, I am very grateful for some of the things implied when the word " Shavian " is applied to my comedy ; but distinguamus. Mr Shaw has no exclusive copyright in talkative heroes. " Beaucoup parler, voila Pimportant," was already Fantasio's motto. If what Mr Walkley was pleased to call Wren's " patter " deals with politics, so does the " patter " of all the family doctors in Lavedan and Dumas, and most of Aristophanes is pure political discussion. My inspiration was certainly not derived from Widowers' 1 Houses. The plot of The Fountain was developed by a severely logical process from a philosophical thesis. House-rents were the form of wealth most convenient for the illustration of my meaning. But I am not chiefly concerned with slums or houses or wealth of any sort. When you dive down to the very bottom of The Fountain (where Truth dwells) you will find yourself face to face with something as Anti-Shavian log as can be, with a tremendous discovery of mine which may revolutionise both Literature and Life. For the basic intention of my play is to show that all the Evil that matters is produced, not by evil intention, as is generally supposed, but by good intention working through the complicated channels of our social system.

" Personne n'est mechant, et que de mal on fait ! "

Bundle all the really wicked people in the world into a lethal chamber, and it will have no visible effect on human happiness. In The Fountain, accordingly, all the people who together cause the miseries of Boodle Court are good ; there is a tender-hearted lady, a philanthropic trustee, a conscientious lawyer, a benevolent house-agent, a noble rent-collector, and in the background a jolly old horse-breeder who wouldn't have hurt a fly.

How naive and old-fashioned after this seems Widowers' Houses, with its slum-landlord grinding the faces of the poor ! Bernard Shaw, like Lloyd George and all those nurtured in the socialism of the early eighties, still believes in the fantastic old Wicked Rich myth. Wren's jaunty epigram, " Villains are a literary invention which the Elizabethan drama inherited from the demonology of the Middle Ages "an epigram which one of the critics was misguided enough to say " might have come from the Shavian mint " expresses a truth which has certainly never entered the Shavian head. Mr Shaw's villainous landlord does not correspond to anything in real life, but is derived

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straight from the lagos and Don Johns of the Tudor stage, who, in their turn, were copied, not from men (there never were such men), but from the goblins of the medieval mysteries.

G. C., 1911.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Stage Society, 1909

KATE KERRISON
MRS CARTWRIGHT .
DINAH KIPPIN .
TOM OLIVER
CHENDA WREN .
JIM CROW .
JAMES WREN .
MRS JELLICOE .
JELLICOE .
JENNY JELLICOE
A FAT WOMAN .
A WIDOW . '". ,
AN IDLE MAN . <
A GLOOMY MAN \
A LITTLE MAN . t ^
PONTIFEX . .
DAVENIL .
NIX .

POSTMAN . *
A FOREMAN CARTER
PALMER

MISS EMILY MALYON
MISS ALICE MANSFIELD
MISS NANCY PRICE
HUBERT HARBEN
MISS MARY JERROLD
FRANK COLLINS
FREDERICK LLOYD
MISS MABEL ADAIR
P. PERCIVAL CLARK
MISS IRENE ROSS
MISS ETHEL INGRAM
MISS BEATRICE FILMER
FRED PENLEY
WILTON ROSS

A. E. FILMER
FRED GROVE
ALLAN WADE
ROBERT BOLDER
VAL CUTHBERT
ARTHUR BACHNER
ROSS SHORE

CROWD OF EA8T-ENDERS

Time : The Present. Place : East London

THE FOUNTAIN

ACT I

The scene of all three Acts is the kitchen of a first-floor flat in Boodle Court, a block of workmen's dwellings in the East End of London. Through the window in the back one sees a row of houses opposite ; one of them is tall and ugly, and built of red brick. There are two doors, one on each side. The door to the left hand of the spectator leads to the outer staircase ; the door to the right leads to the bedroom. The room is furnished partly with the necessaries of a kitchen, and partly with the remains of a cultured household. On an old-fashioned dresser of dark wood common crockery and pretty porcelain are mixed ; keys hang on one hook ; bills are filed on another. About the room are disposed kitchen chairs, Chippendale chairs, an arm-chair, a grandfather clock, a bookcase, a warming pan, a bureau, a little French clock, Arundel prints, reproductions of Burne- Jones, Watts' s " Hope," etc. Bulbs are sprouting in pots on the window-sill. A kitchen table, small ornamental tables, etc.

KATE KERRISON, aged about 35, in a cloth skirt and a cotton blouse with the sleeves tucked up, stands at the kitchen table, with her back to the audience, ironing a muslin curtain. KATE is well-meaning, orthodox, a prig ; she has no sense of humour ; her manner to the poor has the mechanical amiability of the professional philanthropist. In the staircase door stand a few poor children watching her. Having ironed the curtain and laid it aside, KATE goes to the door ; the children start back.

KATE. It's all right, darling, I'm only going to get my other curtain.

(The children follow her movements and resume their poses. As KATE returns from the staircase MRS CARTWRIGHT and two other poor women appear in the doorway, looking over the heads of the children. MRS CARTWRIGHT is an ingratiating person of about 60, dressed in a flowered bonnet, and a black velveteen mantle, from which her bare red arms protrude ; she carries a white beer jug)

MRS CARTWRIGHT. I 'ope you don't mind my lookin' in.

KATE. Not at all. Won't you step inside ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. (Entering and looking curiously about the room) I was just passin'. One can't help feelin' inquisitive, you know. I suppose it's one of our primeval hinstincks. (She has read of such things in her halfpenny paper) May I ask, if not a liberty, what possessed you to come 'ere ?

KATE. Oh, it's no liberty, Mrs I'm afraid I

haven't quite caught your name yet.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Mrs Cartwright ; you're welcome.

KATE. Thank you, Mrs Cartwright. Neighbours ought to know something of one another. I came up to London to be near a very dear friend of mine.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Oh, indeed. The Reverend Oliver ?

KATE. (Laughing) Oh no, not Mr Oliver ; a woman friend.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. A woman friend ? Isn't she a lydy?

KATE. Yes ; but we're all women, you know.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Is it the lydy who was here last Choosday ?

KATE. Yes.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Mrs Wren ?

KATE. Yes.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Such a kind lydy ! She give me

a beautiful book.

KATE. Did she ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. And might a person ask why you

don't live in the West End like other lydies ?

KATE. I'm too poor ; I couldn't afford it. I have

to live like other poor people.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Oh no, madam, not like pore

people, I assure you.

WOMEN. (At the door) Oh no, not like pore people.

KATE. Why, what is the difference ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. You don't 'ave to work for your

livin' like pore people.

(Women at the door murmur assent)

KATE. Well, but I'm working now.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Oh, you are indeed, but you're

not earnin' your livin'. You're only doin' for

yourself.

(Women at the door assent again)

Enter DINAH KIPPIN quickly, a dingy and defiant young woman, carrying a tablecloth. She is a nervous creature, driven half mad by the burden of her cares. Conceiving life, necessarily, as a path to be traversed at high speed, whenever she sees an obstacle in her way, whether in the physical or in the moral sphere, she rushes at it furiously to remove it or destroy it.

DINAH. (To the children) Get out of the way, you !

(To KATE) May this tablecloth be yours, madam ?

KATE. Yes, that's my tablecloth.
DINAH. Then I'll trouble you not to 'ang it on my

ryling.

KATE. I didn't know the railings belonged to anyone.

DINAH. New-comers can't be expected to know heverything.

KATE. I'm very sorry, I'm sure.

DINAH. Don't name it. But I thought it best to tell you, then you'd know another time.

MRS CARTW RIGHT. (To DINAH) Good-morning, my dear.

DINAH. (After looking at her and snorting) I congratulate you on yer company ! [Exit DINAH

MRS CARTWRIGHT. (Puzzled) 'Oo ? Me ?

KATE. And who is that ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. That's my daughter, Dinah, that keeps the sausage shop down below. She's bin soured, pore thing. She didn't make an 'appy marriage ; not for 'er 'usband, that is. There's a reward out for 'im ; but those who know, bless you, they 'aven't the 'eart.

KATE. And has she any children ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Five, and one at the breast, besides a lodger. . . . Well, I must ask you to excuse me. I 'ope you didn't mind my just lookin' in. (OLIVER appears in the door) Will you please give my kind regards to Mrs Wren ?

KATE. When I see her.

Enter OLIVER, a clergyman, aged 32, clean-shaved, dressed in wideawake hat and black Norfolk jacket, carrying a walking-stick and a book with papers in it. He nods to KATE, and shakes hands with MRS CARTWRIGHT.

OLIVER. Well, Mrs Cartwright, I was glad to see you

at our evening service yesterday.
MRS CARTWRIGHT. Oh, sir, you noticed ?

OLIVER. So you know Mrs Wren too ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Oh yes, sir, that I do, God bless 'er 'eart. She paid me a call at my flat last Choosday and gave me a beautiful book all about the Inner Life. But I must be gettin' on with my work now if you can kindly spare me.

OLIVER. (Pointing to the jug) What are you going to do with that ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. I was goin' to get a little milk for my 'usband, sir.

OLIVER. What, is he lying up again ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Yes, sir.

OLIVER. He's always got something wrong with him.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Yes, sir.

OLIVER. What is it this time ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. He's got a sore foot and can't do no work, pore feller. If you could look in and speak a few words to 'im, sir ; he always says there's nothing do 'im so much good like.

OLIVER. Very well ; I'll look in.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Oh, thank you kindly, sir. Good-morning, sir, good-morning, miss.

[Exit MRS CARTWRIGHT

OLIVER. Well, Kate ? (Shaking hands) Chenda seems to have made friends with everyone. (Going to the door and addressing a little boy) Ah, Johnny, how's your mother ? (A big girl who is there is understood to say that his mother is still very poorly) Well, tell her to get well at once or I shall make Dr Tucker send her round a bottle of physic that she won't like. (The boy stares at him, then bursts out crying) There, there, silly boy ; I was only joking. (He shuts the door. To KATE) There are the parish magazines you asked for. (Referring to his papers) Will you please tell the people in your district that the Infants' Tea is

at four on Monday ; games afterwards ; Miss Hubbard has undertaken to do some tricks.

(KATE 'listens seriously and humbly. Having no sense of humour, she does not miss it in OLIVER. She looks on him as the beau ideal of a manly man)

KATE. I was to ask if you could inspect the Band of Hope at five on Sunday.

OLIVER. They must wait. I've got a P.S.A. at the G.F.S.

KATE. Oh.

OLIVER. (Referring to his notes again) Then let me see. " Chenda." Oh yes, Chenda comes to-day, doesn't she ?

KATE. No, it's not her day ; she comes on Tuesdays and Fridays.

OLIVER. Are you sure ?

KATE. Quite sure.

OLIVER. I have her down for Mondays and Thursdays.

KATE. No ; Tuesdays and Fridays.

OLIVER. You must have told me wrong. (It is always somebody else's fault when OLIVER makes a mistake) I wanted her to run round and speak to me on business when she came.

KATE. About the Settlement ?

OLIVER. Well, indirectly.

KATE. It's so good of her husband to let her spend so much of her money on the parish.

OLIVER. Oh, splendid. But it's probably mere slackness on his part.

KATE. Oh, Tom ! You never allow any good in him.

OLIVER. I knew him too well at school. He's a gasbag. I'm sorry for Chenda.

KATE. You don't think she's unhappy ?

OLIVER. How can she be anything else ? (A knock at the door) Who's that ?

KATE. (Opening the door) Why, it's Chenda !
Enter CHENDA, a lively, elegant woman of 22.

CHENDA. Isn't this a surprise !

KATE. Darling Chenda ! (They embrace) I thought

you were lunching with the Nugents.
CHENDA. So I was. Darling old Kerry ! (Kissing

her again) I've chucked them. (Shaking hands

with OLIVER) Dear old Tom, I should like to kiss

you too.
OLIVER. Pray do. I thought Kate was wrong ; I

knew you were due to-day.
CHENDA. Oh, but I'm not. This is quite outside the

programme. (She goes and looks out at the door)
KATE. Shut the door and tell us what brought you.
CHENDA. Half a jiffy. (Speaking off) This way.

Enter JIM CROW, a native of the Society Islands, with a portmanteau and some hand baggage. He is a man of graceful and dignified manners, tall and thin, with a cropped moustache and white hair.

That's right. Put it down there. Thank you so

much. (Giving him a shilling)
JIM. (Looking at the shilling, and bowing with his

hands extended) Mauruuru ! E mea maitai.

(This is Raparoan for " Thank you. It is a good

thing." It must be pronounced like Italian)

[Exit JIM

CHENDA. What a dear old man !
KATE. What's all this ?
CHENDA. It looks like somebody's luggage.
KATE. This isn't a cloak-room.
CHENDA. Don't you see ? I've come to stay. (She

takes off her things and hangs them up)

KATE. Stay ? Stay where ?

CHENDA. Here.

KATE. Oh, nonsense. / can't put you up.

CHENDA. You must.

KATE. There's only one bed.

CHENDA. Then you'll have to sleep on the floor.

OLIVER. Has Wren gone away somewhere ?

CHENDA. No, he's at home all right.

OLIVER. Then why have you come here ?

CHENDA. We've had a row. I've run away.

(KATE goes on ironing)

OLIVER. Are you serious ? (CHENDA nods\ What has he done ?

CHENDA. Nothing.

OLIVER. Come, Chenda, that won't do. He must have done something very bad.

CHENDA. (Laughing) You always hope for the worst from Jimbo, don't you ?

OLIVER. I don't judge any man. Wren and I are too different. He doesn't understand me and I don't understand him.

CHENDA. You don't try much, do you, Tom ?

OLIVER. Well, if you won't tell me . . . (Taking his stick) I dare say you two have lots to say to each other.

(They have. KATE looks round, then goes on ironing)

CHENDA. Oh, not a bit. Nothing that can't wait.

(She and KATE exchange glances)

OLIVER. Well, if that's so, (Putting down his stick again) I wanted to speak to you.

CHENDA. As a parson, or as a cousin ?

OLIVER. Neither ; as a trustee.

CHENDA. Fire away then.

OLIVER. We were talking the other day about your money affairs.

CHENDA. Yes, and if I couldn't get more.

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OLIVER. You wanted me to commit a breach of trust.

CHENDA. Oh, Tom, what a story I After all, it's for charity. I know that there are some splendid investments where you get about fifteen pounds or twenty pounds a year for every hundred you put in. All I wanted to know was, why can't my money be put in one of them ?

OLIVER. Well, it can't. I thought very carefully over what was to be done, and at last I came to the conclusion that, as usual, the straightforward method was the best. I called on the lawyers when I was in town yesterday and simply demanded that they should let you have fifty pounds a year more out of the estate.

CHENDA. When shall I have the money ?

OLIVER. We had a great argument about it.

CHENDA. When shall I have the money ?

OLIVER. They wanted to explain the nature of the things the money was invested in, but I refused to listen to them.

CHENDA. When shall I have the money ?

OLIVER. Don't be so impatient. I didn't succeed in getting any.

CHENDA. Oh, Tom, you wretch !

OLIVER. But when I got home in the evening I suddenly remembered Jimmie Nix, who was at school with me and Wren.

CHENDA. Some cleverer lawyer who can make more out of it. ... Oh, Tom, you duck ! When shall I have the money ?

OLIVER. I wrote an ultimatum to Burgess & Burgess . . .

CHENDA. Well ?

OLIVER. I'm expecting their answer any time this morning. 1 asked them to send it by express messenger.

CHENDA. You're a perfect angel ! Isn't he, Kate ? And what do you think ! I've been doing business too. I've found a place for the Settlement.

KATE. (Coming down) Where ?

CHENDA. You'll never guess. (Leading them to the window and pointing to the red-brick house) There ! isn't it splendid ?

OLIVER. The girls' school ?

CHENDA. Yes, Glengarry House. The Settlement will be on the ground floor, and the Old Age Pension House and Sanatorium up above.

OLIVER. Something like we had at Leeds.

CHENDA. It's practically settled.

OLIVER. It'll cost a lot of money.

CHENDA. Oh, that doesn't matter now. (Sitting on the table) Oh, and I've had another idea. I often have bright ideas in the tram ; I suppose it's the electricity.

OLIVER. Not an expensive one, I hope ?

CHENDA. It'll cost us nothing at all, and yet be worth a perfect fortune to the poor people it's for.

OLIVER. Oh !

CHENDA. You see, when I was going round the district with Kerry the other day I found that for five days of every week everybody down here had to do without half the necessaries of life because they were at the pawnshop ; and then had to pay money as well for the privilege of being without them. Now there is nothing I hate so much as usury.

OLIVER. Quite right.

CHENDA. It's forbidden in the Bible, isn't it, Tom ?

KATE. " The good man is merciful and lendeth . . . "

OLIVER. Never quote without the context. (ToM always snubs KATE. Her admiration for his virility invites the constant display of it) Come, come, that's your idea? I'm beginning to be afraid of it.

CHENDA. Oh, there's nothing to be afraid of. You will let me do it, won't you ?

OLIVER. That depends.

CHENDA. I want to make the poor people little advances myself. You see ? I'm going to be a pawnbroker. " Chenda Wren, Pawnbroker " ; isn't it a lovely idea ? I'll lend the money myself, only I won't take the poor creatures' things away from them. I'll simply inquire into each case very carefully and say, " Very well, there's five shillings, and mind you give it me back on Saturday."

OLIVER. No, Chenda. I absolutely forbid it. It would be the end of all thrift.

CHENDA. Why, where's the harm in it ?

OLIVER. They would simply regard it as a gift.

CHENDA. Oh, but I should be very strict !

OLIVER. Unless they had given security, they would never think of repaying you.

KATE. But why shouldn't you take pledges ?

CHENDA. As if I would !

KATE. The main thing is to do away with the usury on the loans, not with the security for them. Don't you agree, Tom. There would be no risk then.

OLIVER. (Hesitating) Well . . .

CHENDA. You're both so damping.

OLIVER. If she took pledges, that's different. I don't say it's a good plan ; we never had anything like it at Leeds.

KATE. One might try it as an experiment.

CHENDA. Why don't you try to help me instead of discouraging me ?

OLIVER. Well, if Kate doesn't see any harm in it. As you say, it's only an experiment. I'm going to see one or two people, (Referring to his notes) Mrs Hanson, Mrs Jellicoe, Mrs Pike.

KATE. Don't forget Mrs Cartwright.

OLIVER. She's not on my list.

KATE. But you just promised.

OLIVER. (Impatiently) Yes, yes. (Entering her name) If I happen to come on some really deserving case, some really thrifty person in want of a little temporary loan through no fault of their own . . .

CHENDA. You'll send them round ?

OLIVER. Yes, I'll send them round.

CHENDA. You duck ! Send me crowds and crowds of them.

OLIVER. No, we'll confine ourselves to one, thank you.

CHENDA. Only one ?

OLIVER. Only one. And mind, you must take a good solid pledge from him.

CHENDA. It isn't a bit what I meant, but if you . . .

OLIVER. I can't help you on any other condition.

CHENDA. Very well then.

OLIVER. You promise ?

CHENDA. Of course I do. (CHENDA is too good-natured to refuse to give promises, even when she knows that it would be injudicious to keep them)

OLIVER. All right. Well, good-bye then for the present.

[Exit OLIVER, to the relief of everybody

CHENDA. At last he's gone ! Dearest Kerry, I have been longing to get at you and cry my heart out on your dear old chest.

KATE. My poor darling ! What is it has happened ?

CHENDA. Oh, it's awful !

KATE. Has James not been good to you ?

CHENDA. Oh, don't speak of him ! It's all over between us. (Crying on KATE'S bosom) Lend me a hanky.

KATE. (Giving her a handkerchief, putting her in the arm-chair and kneeling by her) There, there, don't try and talk for a little while. ... I hope you didn't get your feet wet coming down ?

CHENDA. (Wiping her eyes) No, I've got on good thick shoes. But please don't be tactful, Kerry, it makes it seem so much worse than it is.

KATE. What is it James has done ?

CHENDA. Nothing !

KATE. He must have done something.

CHENDA. You're as bad as Tom. He hasn't done anything.

KATE. Nothing at all ?

CHENDA. Nothing at all.

KATE. But you've quarrelled ?

CHENDA. Yes, we've quarrelled. It came to a head last night.

KATE. But if he's done nothing ?

CHENDA. That's just it.

KATE. How do you mean ?

CHENDA. I've been waiting and waiting for him to do something, but he never did, and I simply

couldn't stand it any longer.
KATE. What was it he was to do ?
CHENDA. Oh, anything.
KATE. Anything ?
CHENDA. Yes, anything.

KATE. Let me see, how long have you been married ?
CHENDA. Three months next Tuesday. I meant to

give him three months.
KATE. And I thought you were so happy all the

time.
CHENDA. So I was ; it's been like Paradise.

KATE. I don't understand a bit.

CHENDA. Well, I'll explain. It's a long story. Don't move.

KATE. I'll get my work.

CHENDA. You shan't.

(KATE is always at work throughout the play, coming and going from time to time. She listens awhile to CHENDA now, then quietly reaches for her work-box or knitting)

CHENDA. (After a pause) I dare say you often wondered why I fell in love with Jimbo ?

KATE. Oh, but he's quite handsome.

CHENDA. Jimbo handsome ! Do you really think so ? Well, anyway, that wasn't why. It was his mind, his intelligence that fascinated me.

KATE. Is James clever ?

CHENDA. Don't be an ass, Kerry ! Is Jimbo clever !

KATE. I know him so little.

CHENDA. You see, living at home at Potter Catton there was really no conversation. Now was there ?

KATE. Oh, Chenda !

(There was quite enough for a dull creature like KATE when she was governess there. It is not the necessity of stifling any remembrance of boredom that prompts her exclamation, but horror at the impropriety of criticising Potter Catton at all)

CHENDA. No, don't be tactful. There wasn't, and you know it. There never was a dearer family than mine, I really believe, but it's no good trying to make out that they were intellectual. Well, anyway, when I met Jimbo that was at a dance at the Nugents' I was absolutely bowled over. He simply poured reason over me. Not an occasional splash or a drop like most clever people, but a steady stream like a garden hose. It simply took my breath away. That hour I spent with

him in the conservatory was unlike anything I'd ever experienced all my life.

KATE. What did he talk about ?

CHENDA. Oh, everything ! You know the way people do. Riches and poverty and religion and life and all that sort of thing. Of course it sounds very dull like that, but you know what I mean. I was simply fascinated. The astonishing thing was that I seemed to understand it all. I sat at his feet and wallowed. I'd never seen a socialist before.

KATE. Is he a socialist ? (CHENDA nods) Fancy !

CHENDA. We were all Tories at home, of course. I had always heard of socialists as some awful sort of wild beast, don't you know. The Dad couldn't stand 'em. And here was one sitting almost in my lap in a greenhouse, like an angel dropped from heaven. I believe that's the first moment in my life that I ever began to think ; a sort of Soul's Awakening like that beautiful picture of Sant's. (Rising and pacing the room)

KATE. Why is it that men are always something odd like that nowadays ? Socialists, or something ?

CHENDA. Poor Kerry ! Captain Burney was an Agnostic, wasn't he ?

KATE. That was why I had to break it off.

CHENDA. Did he preach his doctrines ?

KATE. No.

CHENDA. Jimbo would have.

KATE. He didn't care whether people agreed with him or not.

CHENDA. Oh, nor does Jimbo. How you must have suffered !

KATE. It was a great wrench. But go on, darling. About the dance.

CHENDA. Well, after that it was all one delicious

whirl for weeks. I don't know what happened and what didn't. I believe I was most immodest. I met him everywhere : I went out fishing with him ; I sat in the woods with him.

KATE. You had made up your mind to marry him ?

CHENDA. No. Honestly, I don't believe I ever thought of it ; but I simply couldn't keep away. Mary says my behaviour was perfectly atrocious. Oh, how jealous I was of anybody else ! When I was up in town with her she had to go to the dentist's. It was quite close to Jimbo's flat. I called on him while it was being stopped. I could hear his voice at the front door ; I said " Sh ! " and walked in. He was sitting over the fire roasting chestnuts with that little girl Nelly.

KATE. Who was Nelly ?

CHENDA. Oh, the porter's little girl. He was very pally with the porter's kids. There he sat telling her the most lovely stories. Just imagine ! Jimbo pouring out his pearls before that little swine.

KATE. Chenda !

CHENDA. I could have shaken her.

KATE. But surely it was very nice of him to take so much trouble with the child ?

CHENDA. Don't be ridiculous. Jimbo who might have been anything if he had tried ! Everybody said he was splendid while he stayed at the Bar. He and one of the judges used to be quite brilliant together ; people used to come in from other courts. When he was up at Oxford Professor Jowett of Balliol said to Dean Some thing- or-other : " Mark my words, that man will outshine us all." Not quite like that, but you know what I mean. He said there were only three men in the University who would be really great ; I forget who the other two were, but Jimbo was

the third. And there was Jimbo roasting chestnuts and pouring out fireworks for a rotten little kid with bad teeth who would have been just as happy with the butcher boy. I made a dreadful scene when she had gone ; she didn't stay long ; and that's when it was all settled. We were married a month later.

KATE. And when did the great change in him begin ?
CHENDA. How stupid you are, Kerry ! Don't I keep telling you he never did change ? He's always been exactly the same.
KATE. Then I don't see ...

CHENDA. We went over to Paris. Oh, I shall never forget that fortnight. We went to all the sights.
KATE. But do tell me about the quarrel.
CHENDA. I'm telling you. We came home and settled down to ordinary life. We had people to dinner ; we went out. You can't imagine ! Oh, such heavenly dinner-parties ; not a bit like real dinner-parties you know ; with artists and unsuccessful literary people in St John's Wood ; and we dined at Roche's and he talked, and, oh ! it was heavenly.

KATE. But the quarrel ! The quarrel !
CHENDA. Well, don't you see ? With all this talking I was expecting him to begin to do something. I thought he was going to revolutionise the world. But he argued round and round. . . . Well, two or three weeks ago I began to lose patience. He was wandering off after breakfast one day to the window-seat with one of his old books and I asked him, "Jimbo, when are you going to begin ? " " Begin what ? " says Jimbo. " Doing something." " 7 hat sort of thing ? ' I tried to explain. I couldn't even make him understand what I was driving at. He looked

quite blank, as if there were something the matter with me. So at last I thought, Well, if he does nothing / will. So I began coming down here. (Parenthetically) The Dad was always interested in this parish, you know ; I don't know why. It was he got Tom the living. Jimbo never asked any questions about what I did. I kept hinting, but he wouldn't. W r hen I said I was helping Tom, he only said " Dear old Squog," and changed the subject. Yesterday afternoon at tea I began again. I wanted advice and criticism. Instead of which he began arguing again, oh, so beautifully ! But I was afraid, Kerry, I was afraid of his beautiful arguments. They seem to sap my energies. I feel as if there were no reason left for doing anything. I said, " Stop, stop, Jimbo !

You're taking all the vim out of me."

KATE. What did he say ?

CHENDA. He said, " Vis, darling, vis ; there's no such word as vim." So I said, " No, Jimbo ! vis or vim, it's all a matter of words ; I'm sick of words ; I don't want you to talk any longer." Well, he was angry ; I was angry. We quarrelled. I knew it was the end. He left the flat ; I heard him slam the door. I waited and waited. I expected him to come back all haggard and worn with pacing the streets. At last he came . . .

KATE. Well?

CHENDA. Very cheerful. He had met a man he knew. They dined together at some Italian restaurant. I was silent ; I concealed my surprise. He picked up a book and began to read to me, oh, something quite idiotic ; I forget what it was, but it made us laugh a great deal.

KATE. You laughed ?

CHENDA. Oh, one couldn't help it. But I had made

up my mind. After breakfast this morning, when he was out, I packed up a few things, wrote him a letter explaining, and here I am.

KATE. And is that all ?

CHENDA. Why, what more do you want ?

KATE. You've quarrelled, all about a little thing like that ?

CHENDA. A little thing ? It's as big as agnosticism.

KATE. But what will he do now ?

CHENDA. Jimbo ?

KATE. Won't he come after you ?

CHENDA. Not he. When he reads my letter he will be furious for a moment ; then he will go down to the Club and it will all pass away in words. (A fearful knocking is heard at the door ; CHENDA starts up and crosses the room ; the knocking is renewed ; KATE opens the door) Goodness, it's him !

Enter WREN ; aged thirty-two, half artist and half undergraduate.

WREN. Is Chenda here ? In Heaven's name, what is the meaning of this ?

CHENDA. We've quarrelled.

WREN. What, last night ?

CHENDA. Yes, last night.

WREN. Pooh, a little tiff like that !

CHENDA. Have you read my letter ?

WREN. Good Lord, yes ; the style is something awful. It's the sort of billet women write in shilling shockers when they run away at last to the hated rival.

CHENDA. I've run away to Kerry !

WREN. And have I got to call Kerry out and pink her with a rapier at Chalk Farm in the morning ?

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KATE. Oh, James, what an idea !

CHENDA. I wonder you can take it so lightly.

WREN. Why, what has happened after all ? I was feeling elated after two cups of tea as usual. I began fco march up and down the room and talk. You said I was talking bunkum.

CHENDA. I didn't !

WREN. You said you wouldn't listen any longer.

CHENDA. That's different.

WREN. I was naturally riled. What do you think I married you for ?

CHENDA. I didn't want to hear you.

KATE. Chenda doesn't take you seriously.

WREN. Bah, la belle affaire > f Who does ?
(KATE down L.)

CHENDA. Oh, Jimbo, you're as blind as a bat.

WREN. Me ?

CHENDA. I take you frightfully seriously.

WREN. That's your look-out.

CHENDA. It's you who don't.

WREN. Why should I ?

CHENDA. I set you on a pedestal, and I find that you are not divine.

WREN. But why should I suffer for your blunders ? Women are so selfish. If I'm going down the road and I mistake a shoeblack for a bandsman in the Guards, do you think I have a right to punch his head because I find he can't play the cornet-a-piston ? Here was I living a happy tranquil life, a respectable retired barrister. . . .

CHENDA. At the age of thirty !

WREN. Thirty-two. With my music and my books, harming no one, frequenting the company of upright men, spreading wise and virtuous ideals, going away now and again for a little fishing when I felt the need of rest. When all of a sudden a

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wild hunting woman comes careering across my path, knocks me off my feet and drags me howling to the altar.
(KATE takes luggage and goes out quietly L.)

CHENDA. You asked me to marry you.

WREN. My character was compromised. Miss Nugent was beginning to draw in her skirts when I went by.

CHENDA. You positively grovelled.

WREN. There was no doubt a moment. I was frightened. Between the time when the mouse is first struck by the venomed fang and the time when he is ultimately swallowed, there is always a moment when he creeps a little nearer. That is what women call a proposal of marriage ; a pretty fiction which we allow for modesty's sake.

CHENDA. What harm have I done you ? Go back to your old life.

WREN. Go back, little half-digested mouse, and sport among the corn ! You know it's impossible.

CHENDA. Well, why don't you work then ?

WREN. Work ? I'm sick of work ; I've done nothing else all my life. What about my metrical version of Smith's Leading Cases ?

" There were six jolly Carpenters
That went into an Inn " ;

why, it's still used by the crammers. What about my golfing poems in the Field ? " Linklater's Lament," very appropriate under the circumstances. (Burlesquing a pathetic reciter)

" And I must play a one-some

Round the links of life, I ween,
Till I am putted in the hole
That's on the churchyard green."

What about my prize translations in the Saturday Westminster*! Why, only last week I and Professor Robinson divided their prize of half-a-crown for turning Eno's Fruit Salt advertisement into Greek iambics : o TOV (3iov rivSwo?.

CHENDA. One and threepence in three months.

WREN. Oh, if you judge work by the takings !

CHENDA. You judge it by its usefulness, I suppose ?

WREN. Of course. Why, think of all the bilious Greeks who go murdering Macedonians under the cloak of religion out of sheer ill temper for want of a little Eno ; it's the first serious attempt to deal with the Eastern question.

(Little by little CHENDA is drawn back to WREN by that same force which drew her when first they met at the Nugents 1 dance)

CHENDA. What were you doing at the Nugents' ball at all if you didn't dance ?

WREN. I was doing good to my country. While you were in the ballroom wasting your time in selfish pleasure, I was at work in the conservatory enlarging the mental horizon of the future mothers of England.

CHENDA. And when I found you fishing next morning you couldn't catch anything.

WREN. I couldn't catch anything ?

CHENDA. Your basket was empty.

WREN. I am a sportsman, not a fishmonger. I was trying a fly which Izaak Walton recommends. But what a morning we had ! I saw the rarest gift in you, the intelligence of the heart. Other girls, when I let off a good thing, would regard me with an astonished and uneasy stare. You drew me out. I had never been so eloquent before. I was quite surprised. It wasn't my usual time either. Before lunch. Who ever heard of such a thing ? I really was splendid, wasn't I ?

CHENDA. You were amazing. I'd never heard anything like it. I could have kissed you.

WREN. You did.

CHENDA. You liar !

WREN. You picked me up and kissed me.

(CHENDA laughs. She is close beside him now. He puts out his hand to take hold of her ; she starts away alarmed and released from the spell)

CHENDA. Jimbo, you snake, you're trying to bewitch me !

WREN. Are you still determined to leave me ?

CHENDA. Yes . . . No. I'll give you one more chance. Remember that it's your last.

WREN. Well ?

CHENDA. You must join me in my work down here.

WREN. Never !

CHENDA. Then we must part.

WREN. Never !

CHENDA. Yes !

WREN. Never !

CHENDA. Yes ! You and I can't work in double harness. I'm all for action, you're all for inaction. While I am striving to go forwards you stand still and prevent me. You are an immoral influence ruining my life.

WREN. No, this is too bad ! I have been chivalrous too long ; but even the Wren will turn. I've allowed you to misrepresent me in order to glorify yourself so far, but now you force me to be candid I will tell you what I think of your conduct. Yes, madam, when you first started coming down here I felt uneasy ; as time went on my suspicions grew deeper and deeper. I went to Slater's !

KATE. (Who has returned) To the detectives ?

WREN. No, to the bunshop, to think it over. Now I'm convinced ; you're guilty.

KATE. Oh, James !

WHEN. You've been . . . committing . . . charity !

CHENDA. How idiotic !

KATE. (Shocked) Really, James !

CHENDA. As if charity were a crime !

WREN. Ha ! I thought as much ; you don't understand the enormity of the offence you're guilty of. Listen and I will tell you. At bottom you're not a bad woman. You are shocked by the same evils in the world as I myself. It's in the remedy that you go wrong. We find society on a false basis ; the rich are battening on the poor. We both hope to get the wrong righted. But Nature is hard at work. Her panacea of discontent is in full operation ; the poor are discontented ; the rich are discontented. It's like the gout coming out ; there are shooting pains in the joints ; the disease is evaporating. I rejoice, I say, " Stand back, everybody, the crisis is approaching." You haven't the courage to bear the patient's groans ; you rush forward and souse the poor devil with anaesthetics. You drive the disease in again. If there were no charity and no beer in London the social question would be solved in a week ; neither the rich nor the poor could endure things any longer. Instead of throwing your ill-gotten wealth bodily from you as your religion commands you fasten on to the capital with all your claws and give away the interest in homoeopathic doses to prevent the full iniquity of your position from being seen.

CHENDA. What a cram !

KATE. It isn't true, James.

CHENDA. We never give money.

KATE. At least . . .

WREN. You give food and clothing, which comes to the same thing. The cart is rolling down the hill, to use your rustic metaphor, rolling down of its own momentum towards the millennium. I stand with the traces loose and give the cart a chance ; you push back with all your might and call me a lazy devil. Progress is Nature's affair, not ours ; action is her prerogative, not man's. For man there are only two things possible, inaction and reaction. You react and effect nothing ; by doing nothing / achieve wonders.

CHENDA. Then what's a man of action ?

WREN. A contradiction in terms, a myth, a silly fiction invented to tickle the man in the street.

CHENDA. (Scornfully) Who's the man in the street ?

WREN. Women.

CHENDA. Isn't he awful, Kerry ?

WREN. The world is a body of liquid that wants to solidify. You reformers pretend to help it by stirring it up with a teaspoon. The sage, that's me, is like a modest little crystal forming unobtrusively in a corner, setting the pattern of good citizenship which is to transmute the muddy mixture into a gem-like mass. Down with the teaspoons ! A has les cuillers ! Because I do nothing I make no mistakes. Chi non fa non falla. I am perfect. You wade through blood from blunder to blunder. Ruin marks your track. (He subsides on the sofa)

CHENDA. Blunder ? Of course I blunder. It's better to blunder than to sit in a corner twiddling your thumbs. What is the use of wise ideas if nobody acts on 'em ? I'm like that jolly sailor-cousin of the Nugents who turns up sometimes with the Cattons. He can't clear the jumps, and he don't know where the gates are ; he goes blunderin' through the hedges and flounderin' in the ponds and rivers, and comes up smilin' in the end, covered with mud, with his face scratched and his hat banged in, as full of beans as when he started.

WREN. Jack Smiley, I remember.

CHENDA. It's better than meandering down the lanes in the wrong direction with the grooms and second horses.

WREN. Ah, that's me, I suppose.

CHENDA. Besides, it isn't true that you sit and think. I wouldn't say a word. You're always talking.

WREN. (Bounding up again) Talking ? Why there are only two things that great men ever do in this world ; one's killing and the other's talking. What did Napoleon do ? What did Caesar do ? They killed, and in the intervals they talked. They did no one any good by the killing ; by their talking they founded empires. What does Parliament do ? It talks, and out comes a law. And what is a law ? It's only talk, talk on paper. What does a clergyman do when he's not busy giving anaesthetics ? He talks. What is the Catechism ? What are the Ten Commandments ? What is the Sermon on the Mount ? Only talk.

CHENDA. (Stopping her ears) Stop ! Stop ! He's doing it again. He's sapping all my vim.

WREN. Vis, woman, vis !

KATE. If I may be allowed to criticise, James, I should say that you have too many theories. If you have a theory about everything, you are not likely to do much good. Tom doesn't talk ; he does things ; he has no theories.

CHENDA. Hear, hear !

WREN. And may I ask what you and " Tom " propose to do with Chenda down here ?

KATE. She's going to work !

WREN. Well, as her husband. I wish you could have chosen a more sanitary and respectable neighbourhood for her to work in. I never saw such a seedy-looking crew as you've got for neighbours in this rabbit-warren of a model dwelling-house.

CHENDA. This is one of the plague-spots of East London.

WREN. Is it ?

CHENDA. That's why we chose it.

KATE. It is a field worth tilling.

CHENDA. It is marked jet-black in Booth's map of London.

KATE. It has a higher percentage of poverty . . .

CHENDA. And crime . . .

KATE. Than any other equal area in the United Kingdom.

WREN. So that's the kind of place you lure my wife into !

KATE. Yes.

WREN. Well, you're a nice sort of governess, I don't think. (A knock at the door. KATE opens it)

KATE. Oh, it's you, Tom.

Enter OLIVER, carrying a teapot, and followed by JELLICOE, MRS JELLICOE and JENNY. JELLICOE is dressed in a ragged frock coat ; MRS JELLICOE, a pretty tired young woman, in a green silk bodice; JENNY, aged thirteen, has her hair tied with a pale blue ribbon over one ear ; she has bad teeth, a dirty face, dirty hands, a dirty frock with a frilled collar, and an elegant but battered hat.

OLIVER. (Coldly) Hullo, Wren, you here ?

WREN. (With mock enthusiasm) Yes, I've come down

to lend a hand. (They shake hands coldly) What's this about ?

OLIVER. (Taking no notice of him) Here's a case for you, Chenda. This woman's run short of money ; the man's out of work and they want medicine for the baby. You might advance something on this teapot ; I should say it's worth eighteen-pence.

WREN. Give it here ; I'll value it for you.

OLIVER. Do you know anything about teapots ?

WREN. Teapots ? It's been the study of my life.

MRS JELLICOE. It's hall marked, sir ; it was a wedding present.

WREN. (Having examined the teapot) Two-and-six.

OLIVER. There, there, don't cry. There's nothing humiliating in accepting charity.

MRS JELLICOE. It isn't charity, sir, it's a loan.

OLIVER. If I was in want I shouldn't be ashamed to ask.

JELLICOE. We didn't ask, sir ; it was you suggested it.

MRS JELLICOE. But I don't know however we're going to pay it back. Augustus hasn't had a job for weeks.

CHENDA. (Searching) Where's my purse ?

OLIVER. Look here, I tell you what. I'm in want of a parlourmaid. My housekeeper's very old, and we want somebody to run errands. Would you like to be my little parlourmaid, Jenny, and wear a cap ?

JENNY. Not 'ahf !

OLIVER. Not what ?
JELLICOE. She means very much, sir. It's an

expression she's picked up at school.
CHENDA. There's the money.
OLIVER. (Angrily) Don't cry, Mrs Jellicoe ! You'll

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get your teapot back on Saturday when Jenny

gets her wages.
MRS JELLICOE. Yes, sir, but whatever will people

think of me ?

OLIVER. You needn't tell them.
MRS JELLICOE. It's very 'ard to 'ave no sympathy.
JELLICOE. She wasn't brought up to this, sir.

Enter DINAH swiftly, holding JIM CROW by the arm.
MRS CARTWRIGHT follows.

WREN. Hullo!

CHENDA. Why, it's that nice black man who brought up my luggage.

[Exeunt the JELLICOES

OLIVER. Well, Mrs Kippin, what do you want ?

DINAH. I want a plain answer to a plain question. (To CHENDA) Did you give this man a shillin' this mornin', or didn't you ?

CHENDA. I did.

DINAH. I thought as much ; Polly see'd 'im spittin' on it. (Struggling with him) Now you give that up.

JIM. Ai'ta vau e hinaaro ! (the Raparoan for " I don't want to ") My tilling; given me all for Dim Trow.

OLIVER. What right have you to his money ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. 'E's 'er payin' guest.

DINAH. (Getting the shilling) A lot o' payin' !

JIM. Aue ! (ah-oo-eh, the Raparoan for " Alas ! ") Everyt'ing very different in England from my tunty. In Raparoa my wife see man go by, she say : " Haere mai tama," come here eat. I sit at door of my house ; de sun he settin ; I say : " Haere mai taoto," come here sleep. Ole Dim Trow wish he was back in Raparoa wid de ole wife and little chillun.

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(The Raparoans go on adopting children all their lives, and when they are old their houses are still running over with little boys and girls)

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Don't be 'ard on 'im, my dear.

DINAH. I've got my children to think of. Let 'im pay me 'is two weeks' board and lodgin'.

CHENDA. How much is it ? I will pay.

DINAH. Thank you for nothing. I don't want no charity.

OLIVER. What are this man's means of subsistence ? What's his work ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. He 'asn't got any work since his dog died.

OLIVER. Dog ? What dog ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. It was a Battersea.

OLIVER. But what did he do with a dog ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Pore little thing. It used to 'ave to sit up on its 'ind-legs all day with a cap on its 'ead and 'oldin' up a gun at the corner of Bellingham Park. And if ever it dropped its gun 'e used to beat it with a stick. (To CHENDA) Crool, I call it.

OLIVER. Why don't you work like other people ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. (Shifting her sympathies quickly from the dog to the man, as soon as he is attacked) 'E's too old. They've got no stamina these haliens. Pore old man. 'Ow can 'e work when 'e can 'ardly stand up ?

WREN. It's the way of the world. Mrs Kippin squeezed Jim Crow, and Jim Crow took it out of the dog.

DINAH. What do you come down 'ere for, all you toffs, hinterferin' and bullyin' us ? Can't you find amusement enough in Belgrave Square but you must come badgerin 5 us ? Smooth people ought to live in smooth places, not come smearin' about down 'ere with their sympathy and their charity and their ain't they crool ? 'Oo made us crool ? I squeezed Jim Crow, did I ? An' 'oo squeezed me ? You're all of a pack, you are, you smooth people ; you rob the pore and then come down 'ere to make out we're robbin' one another.

CHENDA. You're angry or you wouldn't talk like that, Mrs Kippin. I know quite well there are rich people who delight in making the poor suffer in order that they may grow still richer, but I myself would sooner die than be guilty of such a crime. Thank heaven, I am not a money-grubber or a usurer. I am here on purpose to save you from usury. If you want to borrow any money, you have only to ...

OLIVER. I'll allow no such thing ! You have hardships to bear no doubt, Mrs Kippin ; but we all have our sorrows, and it is our duty to bear them without murmuring. Our Lord said that we should have the poor always with us, and I thank him daily for it. (MRS CARTWRIGHT succumbs to the luxurious mood which sermons always induce in her) Were there no poverty or suffering in the world, there would be no compassion or benevolence. It would be an unhappy world indeed. And when a lady, who might be enjoying the wealth which God has given her in a life of selfish ease, devotes her days to doing good works among you, it is the height of presum'ption and ingratitude to denounce her as your oppressor.

WREN. Oh, this is too sickening to hear you all patting yourselves on the back in this infernal way ! Mrs Kippin is perfectly right. Chenda flatters herself that she's not a usurer. Why, she lives by usury and nothing else.

CHENDA. I do ?

WREN. You live on the interest of your capital ; and what is interest but usury ?

OLIVER. Nonsense, Wren ; Chenda is simply living on her property.

WREN. Her property ! What does it mean, living on her property ? If a caterpillar lives on a leaf he eats it gradually away till there is nothing left. But property ! Oh, property is a magical thing ; you put it on a shelf and never touch it, but something emanates from it called interest and nourishes us. It was typified in the widow's cruse, which was evidently some joint stock limited concern. Capital is simply a means of slavery ; of itself it produces nothing ; we lend it to someone else, to miners or the like, and say, Work and sweat in the darkness that I may live in the light. Chenda, with her thousand or so a year, lives on what can be screwed out of fifty labourers working eight hours a day, and then complains that they have votes and she has none.

OLIVER. You talk as if she were spending it all in selfish pleasure.

WREN. If she spends it in charity, what difference does that make ? What right has she to make fifty poor devils work for her protegees ? What guarantee is there that the people she squeezes the money out of are any better off than the people she's trying to help ?

OLIVER. Oh, Wren was always like this. He could always argue the hind leg off a donkey at school debates.

WREN. While you sat eating biscuits in a corner. How can you have the face to pray God every morning to give you your daily bread, if you've secured it from men beforehand on a share-

certificate ? Do you think it means, Give us this half year our half-yearly dividends ?

OLIVER. Nonsense, nonsense.

WREN. Nobody borrows unless they are poor. When you invest your money in shares it's the poor workman that you lend it to, not the manager or the manufacturer. He's only your slave driver. You throw open the doors of the ergastulum and say, Go in and work for me. You hand the money over to him simply because you have not the skill to apportion the slaves their tasks or the energy to ply the lash on their backs yourself.

CHENDA. (Crying) It's a monstrous accusation. How can you be such a brute, Jimbo? Here's my heart bursting with pity for these poor people, and you accuse me of driving slaves with a whip !

DINAH. (To WREN) Ah, you're a nice brute of an 'usband, like the rest of 'em. Ho, I know what I'd like to do with you !

MRS CARTWRIGHT. Ah, she knows, poor thing ! She's 'ad a bad 'usband 'erself.

DINAH. They expect everything comfortable at 'ome and their wives the pink, as if there was no work to do about the 'ouse. And not a hand's turn will they do themselves or even mind a baby ; when they've laid their four hundred bricks a day and talked to fill the gasworks, they think they've done enough.

VOICE AT THE DOOR. Shop, Mrs Kippin !

DINAH. Ho, never a moment's peace from morning to night. I'm a comin', I'm a comin' . . .

[Exeunt DINAH and MRS CARTWRIGHT

WREN. My darling Chenda, I wasn't accusing you of anything. But unless people know where their money comes from . . .

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CHENDA. As if anybody knew ! It is simply paid into the bank.

WREN. I bet you that Oliver knows no more than you do.

OLIVER. I have nothing to do with business. My life is dedicated to other things.

(A knock is heard at the door)

WREN. This general ignorance is the oddest feature of modern life. I knew a case of a temperance mission entirely supported by brewery shares.

Enter a DISTRICT MESSENGER BOY

MESSENGER. Is Mr Oliver here ?

OLIVER. (Taking letter from him) Ah, it's from the

lawyers, sent on from my rooms. (He reads the

letter to himself) Burgess & Burgess resign the

management of your Trust.
CHENDA. Hooray ! Then we can go to your clever

friend.

OLIVER. Yes.

CHENDA. We shall get more money.
OLIVER. I hope so.
WREN. (Looking at his watch) Hullo ! one o'clock.

Goodness, how time flies.
CHENDA. Are you going anywhere ?
WREN. Nothing that matters. I can't bear to

leave you . . .
CHENDA. Oh, I'm all right.
WREN. Well . . .
CHENDA. Honest Injun !
WREN. Then good-bye, my love. (Kissing her) I'll

come and see how you're getting on to-morrow.
CHENDA. Where are you going ?
WREN. I've got a meeting at the Fabians.

[Exit

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CHENDA. Now, let's get to work. I want Jimbo to see what / can do !

(CHENDA, OLIVER and KATE settle down with pen and paper to devise schemes for the salvation of the parish)

CURTAIN

ACT II

The following Saturday. The same scene. CHENDA'S and KATE'S hats hang on pegs on the wall. KATE is washing up the breakfast things. The staircase door is open ; by it stand JELLICOE, holding a silver sugar basin, and MRS JELLICOE, rocking a baby in her arms.

MRS JELLICOE. We'd never have come again, but the baby was ill. We were between the door and the wall as you might say.

(A pause, during which CHENDA is heard sweeping in the bedroom)

JELLICOE. It's only till the afternoon, when Jenny'll have her wages.

(Another pause, sweeping)

MRS JELLICOE. Five shillings isn't much, but it's very kind of Mr Oliver.

KATE. Well, I'll ask Mrs Wren. Chenda !

(A bumping noise is heard on the stairs)

PONTIFEX. (Without) Ha ! ha ! Mrs Potter, good mornin' to you.

MRS JELLICOE. (Shrieking faintly) Ah !

KATE. What is it ?

JELLICOE. It's Mr Pontifex, the rent collector from Palmer's, with the wooden leg. It's always a shock to Mrs Jellicoe to hear him.

MRS JELLICOE. They might get a rent collector with the usual number of legs.

KATE. Chenda !

Enter CHENDA from the bedroom, simply dressed, with her sleeves tucked up, holding a broom.

CHENDA. Good morning. (To JELLICOE) Is this your baby ?

JELLICOE. Whose did you think, mum ?

CHENDA. Oh, isn't Me a twubs !

MRS JELLICOE. We all think he's so like Shakespeare.

KATE. Has he any teeth ?

JELLICOE. None, I am thankful to say, miss. Mrs

Jellicoe is a delicate woman, and I think I may truly say it would have been the last straw for her to have had a child that age with teeth.

KATE. Mrs Jellicoe wants to pawn this sugar basin to get some medicine for baby.

CHENDA. Oh, bother the pawnshop !

JELLICOE. It's hall marked, mum.

CHENDA. Here, quick ! Take the money and go to Boots. No, no, put the sugar basin in your pocket.

KATE. Oh, Chenda, it's such bad political economy. Tom says that . . .

CHENDA. Oh, bother Tom. At least, you know what I mean. I can't have the child suffering because his elders have theories about political economy.

JELLICOE and MRS JELLICOE. Thank you, mum. It's only a loan, mum. (They peer out and go, leaving the door ajar)

KATE. My dear Chenda, you'll soon be ruined at this rate.

CHENDA. What do I care ? Besides, I shall have more money now.

KATE. Did Tom manage to get it after all ?

CHENDA. Yes, he transferred the Trust to Mr Nix's hands, and he has promised to let me have fifty pounds more every year than Burgess & Burgess did.

KATE. But still . . .

(The JELLICOES run in again : the sound of the rent collector's wooden leg pursuing them is heard)

JELLICOE. It's Mr Pontifex again.

MRS JELLICOE. It's Palmer's man. Here, quick, let me take it. (JELLICOE gives her the money)

Enter PONTIFEX

PONTIFEX. (Saluting) Excuse me, miss. I'm after one of my customers. Well, Mrs Jellicoe, what about last week's rent ?

MRS JELLICOE. Oh, Mr Pontifex, I 'aven't nothing to give you.

PONTIFEX. What's that in your 'and ? You give it up or I'll distrain the baby.

MRS JELLICOE. 'Ow can you be so 'eartless, Mr Pontifex ?

PONTIFEX. (Signing receipt and sticking it into JELLICOE'S breast pocket) There ! (Crossing to

KATE) Excuse me, miss, can I have a word with

you ? (He talks with her)
MRS JELLICOE. (Rocking her baby) 'Ush ! 'ush ! I

can't give you no paregoric, little love ; they've

took my money from me.
(JELLICOE wistfully pulls out the sugar basin from

his pocket)
CHENDA. (Motioning to him to put it back, and

putting money impatiently into MRS JELLICOE'S

hand) There, there ! (She pushes them towards

the door)
JELLICOE and MRS JELLICOE. If it wasn't for you,

mum. It isn't myself I care about. Palmer's

are very 'ard on us.
CHENDA. (Hustling them out) Yes, yes.

[Exeunt JELLICOE and MRS JELLICOE still

murmuring complaint and gratitude.

CHENDA shuts the door behind them

PONTIFEX. (Ending his conversation with KATE) I

know it's only a trifle to you, miss, but I thought
you'd like to know first as a matter of courtesy.

CHENDA. What is it ?

KATE. All the rents in the block are being put up.

CHENDA. Put up ? These poor, poor people's
rents ?

KATE. Sixpence a week.

PONTIFEX. (To CHENDA) A small advance, miss.
(To KATE) I will ask you not to mention the
matter before collectin' time, as otherwise some of
the lodgers might be tempted to do a mike while
my back was turned. [Exit PONTIFEX

KATE. Fancy the rents being . . .

CHENDA. Don't tell Jimbo.

KATE. Why?

CHENDA. What can be the reason ?

KATE. I wonder !

CHENDA. Palmer's are at the bottom of this. (Taking
broom) Oh, how purposeless seem all the sufferings
of the poor !

KATE. There's a purpose in everything if we only
knew.

CHENDA. Wherever I turn I hear the name of
Palmer's, Palmer's, Palmer's (A modest knock is
heard at the door), like some terrible man-eating
tiger. (CHENDA opens the door)

Enter DAVENIL, aged twenty-two, in tall hat and frock
coat, very correct ; carrying a draft lease in his hand.
His manner varies between schoolboy chivalrousness

and business-like severity.

DAVENIL. Does Mrs Wren live here ?

CHENDA. Yes.

DAVENIL. Would you kindly tell her that Mr Davenil wishes to see her ? There's my card.

KATE. Who is it ?

CHENDA. Mr Davenil.

DAVENIL. (To KATE) I wished to see Mrs Wren. Have I the pleasure ?

KATE. No, this is Mrs Wren.

DAVENIL. Oh, I say, I am so awfully sorry.

CHENDA. You took me for the maid ?

DAVENIL. No, really. I assure you it wasn't anything in your ... I should have known you anywhere for . . .

KATE. Won't you sit down ?

CHENDA. You came on business ?

DAVENIL. I came about the transfer of the lease you were asking for, for Glengarry House opposite.

CHENDA. It's all settled, isn't it ?

DAVENIL. Oh, quite, as far as we are concerned. There are only some formalities. (He begins to open the lease) I was down on business with my uncle at the agent's.

CHENDA. What agent's ?

DAVENIL. The house-agent's. There wasn't much for me to do ; not for the moment, I mean, of course ; so they sent me round about the lease.

CHENDA. Have you come from Palmer's ?

DAVENIL. Yes, they're the agents that do our business down here.

CHENDA. Ah ! (She and KATE exchange glances)

DAVENIL. There are some covenants in the original lease . . .

CHENDA. We were talking of Palmer's just before your arrival.

KATE. We haven't a very high opinion of Palmer's here.

DAVENIL. I say, I'm awfully sorry. They've not done anything bad, I hope ?

CHENDA. They are extremely oppressive to the poor

people who live in these houses. Their rent collector was here only a minute ago, wringing the last farthing out of a poor woman. Do you know the man ? He's an old soldier called Pontifex.

DAVENIL. Is that the man with a game leg, a lame leg, I mean ? (CHENDA nods) I saw him this morning.

CHENDA. I wish you'd speak to him about it.

DAVENIL. Oh, certainly, I'll make a point of it. My uncle would be awfully vexed. But of course I'm not in Palmer's firm.

CHENDA. Aren't you ?

DAVENIL. I hope you didn't take me for a house-agent !

CHENDA. Well, you took me for a housemaid, you know.

DAVENIL. (Very friendly and confiding) I say, I am so awfully sorry ; it was all the broom. I'm a lawyer ; I'm in my uncle's office. We do a lot of business with Palmer's.

CHENDA. They're very sharp in business.

DAVENIL. Oh, you have to be sharp in business, you know ; you'd be astonished. (Suddenly remembering what he is therefor) About this transfer now. There are some formal covenants in the original lease that you must agree to. (Reading) The house is to be used only as a residential dwelling.

CHENDA. Yes, yes.

DAVENIL. Not for the purposes of any trade.

CHENDA. Did you think I was going to set up a shop ?

DAVENIL. It is rather amusing, isn't it ?

CHENDA. Are covenants always things like that ?

DAVENIL. It's only a form you know, but we're obliged to get your consent. (Reading) Nor as a

factory, laboratory, workshop, smithy, brewery

(Looking up and smiling), bakehouse, or other

place of manufacture.
CHENDA. Of course ; as if I would !
KATE. What an idea !
DAVENIL. Nor as a hospital, sickhouse, nursing

home, clinique or sanatorium.
CHENDA. (Indignantly) What ?
KATE. Oh dear, oh dear !
DAVENIL. Nor as a hospital, sickhouse . . .
CHENDA. Why, what right have you to dictate how

I'm going to use my house ?
DAVENIL. But these are the covenants.
CHENDA. You can call them what you like.
DAVENIL. I'm obliged . . .
CHENDA. It's a gross impertinence.
DAVENIL. I say, I'm awfully sorry.
CHENDA. It's most infernal cheek.
DAVENIL. But unless you consent, don't you see,

our clients won't agree to the transfer.
CHENDA. I never heard anything so inquisitorial.
DAVENIL. It's always done.
CHENDA. (Resolving on a breach of covenant) Oh, if

that's the case.
KATE. (Alarmed at CHENDA'S known want of honesty

and coming round to her side) Chenda !
CHENDA. Don't interrupt.
KATE. But . . .

CHENDA. Don't be silly, Kate.

DAVENIL. Then you consent ?

CHENDA. Yes, yes, I consent.

DAVENIL. I'm so glad ; I was sure there wouldn't be any difficulty. There's nothing else. Then I'll just get this thing finished off at Palmer's and send it round. Good-day, madam, good-day. (Bowing)

CHENDA. (Holding out her hand) Good-bye, Mr Davenil.

DAVENIL. (Shaking hands) You're very good. (Glancing at the broom) I do hope you'll forgive me. I'm so glad to have made your acquaintance. I've heard of you from my cousin, Miss Fortescue, who works down here too.

CHENDA. Oh yes, at the St Joseph's College Mission, of course.

DAVENIL. Yes, I was up at Joe's myself. I do think it's so awfully decent of you to do this sort of thing, don't you know. I only wish I could do something to help. Not that it's half as bad as people make out. I was surprised to see what jolly big streets there are, with shops and trees and things. It isn't really so very different from the West End.

CHENDA. Oh, it's not all misery.

DAVENIL. I like to see the little kiddies playing hopscotch or dancing to the organ.

CHENDA. But it's a sad life when they grow up, Mr Davenil.

DAVENIL. Why, if I might suggest, when you've really settled into Glengarry House, you might get up some acting for the parents. That's what they do at the Joe's Mission. There's a room over there (indicating Glengarry House) with folding doors that'd just do. I'm very fond of acting myself ; only small parts, of course.

CHENDA. I think it's a splendid idea, Mr Davenil.

DAVENIL. (Embarrassed) I don't know if you collect subscriptions and that sort of thing.

CHENDA. Oh dear, yes. Our Children's Clothing Club is glad of any contribution.

DAVENIL. Well, if you don't mind I should like to leave something. (Takes out a sovereign and

looks about uneasily. CHENDA holds out her hand discreetly as if for a tip. DAVENIL laughs and puts it on a corner of the table) Well, good-morning. I must be getting back to my work. (Renewed hand-shaking)

CHENDA. I hope you'll look in again some time, if ever your business brings you down this way.

DAVENIL. May I really ? Thank you so much.

I tell you what, I'll look in later for the lease when you've signed it ... if I have time, that is.

[Exit DAVENIL

CHENDA. What a nice boy ! (Taking the sovereign from the table and putting it in a cash-box in one of the upper drawers of the bureau)

KATE. Very nice. But, Chenda ! how could you agree to those wicked covenants ? (CHENDA washes at the sink and makes herself tidy)

CHENDA. There was nothing else to be done.

KATE. But the whole point of the Settlement's gone now.

CHENDA. He forced me.

KATE. It says, not as a hospital, sickhouse, or sanatorium.

CHENDA. Well, I'm not going to turn it into a hospital. But I suppose, if it's my house, I can choose my visitors without consulting the house-agents ; and if they don't happen to be quite well, who's going to turn them out I'd like to know?

KATE. But surely . . .

CHENDA. It's too late to give the house up now. Everything's ordered from the Semparatus Company for twelve o'clock. They've promised to have the place ready by three.

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KATE. Fancy ! Really ready to move in in three hours ?

CHENDA. Yes, that's their special line at the Semparatus. They're Emergency Hospital Furnishers. Semparatus is a Latin word meaning "always ready." The suction desiccator goes in first, and the carpets and furniture follow right on its heels all complete. The beds are simply ducks. The head lifts up, so that you don't have to shove a lot of stuffy and probably septic pillows behind their backs when they're going to eat anything. And you'll love the washstands. The basins turn right upside down when they're not in use. That's the latest thing. It's most dangerous to leave basins like we do ; they're simply hotbeds for hatching out young germs. (CHENDA settles herself in an armchair with a magazine. A knock at the door) We're far too careless about these things. . . .

(KATE opens the door)

KATE. Oh, here's Tom. (KATE goes to her breakfast things)

Enter OLIVER in a cassock and mortar-board; he nods and closes the door cautiously behind him.

OLIVER. Good-morning, good-morning. I say, I've found out an awful thing. I've just been to see Mrs Cartwright.

CHENDA. Well?

OLIVER. You know, that nice, respectable old woman who comes to the evening services. Well, I'm afraid she drinks. (This sensational announcement creates none of the expected stir)

KATE. Is that all ?

CHENDA. Of course she does.

KATE. Why, didn't you know that, Tom ?

CHENDA. Who wouldn't under the circumstances ?

OLIVER. Chenda !

CHENDA. I should.

OLIVER. You're getting to talk like Wren, Chenda. I hadn't the faintest suspicion. She was out last night on the spree. Her husband rose too, as if by magic, from his bed and joined her.

CHENDA. Christian Science !

OLIVER. It seems she won a bet about a horse-race.

CHENDA. What, the Grand National ?

OLIVER. Yes, that was the name of it.

CHENDA. Then she did back Caper Sauce !

OLIVER. You knew about it ?

CHENDA. Why, I gave her the tip.

OLIVER. You did?

CHENDA. Everybody was ramming Little Arthur down one's throat, but I knew he couldn't stay it out. You've only got to look at his legs.

OLIVER. You dare to encourage them? to encourage my parishioners . . .

CHENDA. Oh, Tom, I'm sick of this anti-betting and drinking business. It's all very well for us with our comfortable homes, but just think what life is for the mass of these people ! Why, unless they had their glass of beer of an evening, and backed a horse now and then, they'd simply go mad.

OLIVER. Flinging away money . . .

CHENDA. Oh, if they back the wrong horses.

OLIVER. Day after day.

CHENDA. Oh, that is rot too. But the Grand National ! No, hang it, Tom.

OLIVER. Once an evil, always an evil.

CHENDA. Well, I can't argue, but you should hear Jimbo ! He's Al on beer and betting as recreations for the poor. I'll turn him on to you.

OLIVER. I shall not listen to him. And, by the by, I'm glad you reminded me. It's nearly a week since you came down here, and he's been here every day, keeping you from your work.

CHENDA. Why, he's the greatest help !

OLIVER. Kate doesn't find him so.

KATE. I never complained.

OLIVER. Yes, you did.

KATE. Oh, Tom!

OLIVER. Well, I find him a nuisance. I shall have to forbid him the parish.

CHENDA. Oh, Tom !

OLIVER. If he comes down again he'll have to work.

(A knock at the door. KATE opens it. Enter JENNY dressed as a parlourmaid ; she bobs and goes to OLIVER)

JENNY. Please, sir, yere's a telegram.

CHENDA. Why, it's little Jenny Jellicoe !

JENNY. Ain't I a treat !

OLIVER. Behave yourself, Jenny. (Opening telegram) Aha ! here's good news this time.

CHENDA. What is it ?

OLIVER. (Reading) " Have taken steps provide further money required. Nix."

CHENDA. Then I shall have my money !

OLIVER. I wrote last night. This is what I call doing things in a business-like way. Very different from Burgess & Burgess.

CHENDA. Oh, hooray, Kate.

OLIVER. Well, Jenny, what do you want ?

JENNY. Oh, please, sir, may I run up and show myself to Byby ?

OLIVER. (Giving her money) You'd better take your mother your wages.

JENNY. Thank you, sir.

CHENDA. Would you like sixpence to buy sweeties with?

JENNY. (Taking the sixpence) Not 'ahf !

KATE. But are you having more money from your Trust ?

CHENDA. Yes, a second go ; another fifty.

KATE. Fancy !

CHENDA. We didn't ask for nearly enough at first. What with the children's clothing club, the reredos, the choir, the surplices . . . (OLIVER smiles) This second fifty will all go towards endowing the Settlement. Oh, you have no notion how business-like Tom and I are getting. I signed dozens of papers yesterday, and neither Tom nor I have a notion what they were all about. . . . Oh, by the by, Tom, have you heard ? It's a good thing we're here to help.

OLIVER. What's gone wrong ?

CHENDA. Palmer's are raising the rents of all the lodgings in the block.

OLIVER. Raising the rents ? What a monstrous thing !

KATE. We were wondering what the reason could be.

CHENDA. Do you think, perhaps, it has anything to do with the Insurance Act ?

OLIVER. Kate, let me see your district accounts before I go. (KATE gives them to OLIVER, who sits at the table and examines them)

KATE. You don't want me ?

OLIVER. No.

KATE. Then I'll finish the bedroom.

[Exit

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OLIVER. Raising the rents ? I shall certainly enter a vigorous protest.

Enter WREN, carrying daffodils.

WREN. Cuckoo !

CHENDA. Jimbo !

WREN. (Kissing CHENDA, then drawing back and

spreading out his arms) The Graeco-Roman style !

(CHENDA imitates him, and they come to grips in a

hearty embrace)
OLIVER. Well, Wren ?
CHENDA. What ducks of daffys ! You are a pet to

bring them.
WREN. (Drawing them away) Who said they were

for you ?
CHENDA. (Mischievously) They're not for Tom, are

they?
WREN. Yes, I'm going to strew them on the ground

before him as he walks about the parish.
OLIVER. What brings you down ?
WREN. One would think you weren't pleased to see

me.

CHENDA. I invited him, Tom ; I want to talk to him.
OLIVER. Talk away, you won't disturb me.
(OLIVER studies the district accounts)
WREN. The daffodils are for Kate.
CHENDA. Why not for me ?
WREN. Because you're coming home.
CHENDA. Oh, I can't, Jimbo, I can't. There's too

much to do. Every day I mean to come back,

and every day something new turns up that

must be done. And now I'm moving into the

Settlement.

WREN. But it isn't ready.
CHENDA. It will be in a jiffy.

OLIVER. (At the window) There's a van unloading things at Glengarry House.

CHENDA. It's the Semparatus (Going to the window. Delightedly) There's the suction desiccator. There are the beds. Oh, joy, hooray ! Isn't it splendid, Jimbo ?

WREN. What will Jane think of me ? Every morning I say, " Jane, to-day we will kill the fatted calf ; I'm expecting the Prodigal home at half- past seven." Every evening I return crestfallen to eat the fatted calf alone. " Where's the missis, sir ? " says Jane. " Eating husks among the swine, Jane," I reply.

OLIVER. Don't be profane.

WREN. Oh, I didn't mean you. (Going to the window) I'd be ashamed to have a Settlement in such a hideous building.

CHENDA. Glengarry House ? It's just the same style as this we're in.

WREN. Red brick picked out with black and yellow. I suppose it's the Glengarry tartan.

(A knock at the door. OLIVER opens it. An OFFICE BOY appears in the doorway : then a POSTMAN)

BOY. A note from Palmer's, sir.

OLIVER. Thank you.

POSTMAN. Parcel, sir. (Holding out a very big brown-paper parcel)

OLIVER. (Walking away) Put it on the chair. (He opens the envelope, reads the covering letter, and looks cursorily at the document enclosed)

CHENDA. (To WREN) All your gloomy forebodings of what a mess I should make of it down here have come to naught. My policy of doing things has borne fruit on every side. The pawnshop has been the greatest success.

WREN. Has it ?

CHENDA. Customers came pouring in. Our limited staff could hardly cope with the business.

WREN. And have they redeemed their pledges ?

CHENDA. Not yet. They're coming for them this morning. All this week affluence has reigned where poverty stalked before. The children have known what plenty is for the first time in their lives, and their parents have been entertaining one another with high teas and all sorts of jollifications.

WREN. (Laughing) Splendid !

OLIVER. Come, come, there's nothing to laugh about. Here's something you've got to sign, Chenda. (Showing her the document just received) It's from Jimmy Nix ; he's round at Palmer's.

I don't entirely understand it, but you may be sure it's all right.

WREN. Let me have a look.

OLIVER. (Ironically) What will the sage make of it ? (WREN takes it, grimaces, and hands it back) By the by, we were talking about you.

WREN. Something pleasant, I'll be bound.

OLIVER. If you come here, you must work.

WREN. Come on ! W T hat shall it be ? Give me the broom. (Takes broom)

OLIVER. Don't be funny about it ; I'm serious. Come and witness Chenda's signature to these papers.

WREN. What an unpractical chap you are, Squog. Don't you know that a husband can't witness his wife's signature ?

OLIVER. You always have some excuse.

CHENDA. He's quite right. We must call Kerry. Kerry !

OLIVER. And I wish you wouldn't call me Squog. We're not schoolboys any longer.

WREN. No, sah !

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(He careers about the room, playing soldiers with the broom and singing /)

Enter KATE

KATE. (Dryly) Oh, James, you here ?

WREN. Yes. (Presenting arms to her) Oliver asked

me down to give an address to the mothers. It's

all very well, you know, but you'd be sorry if you

missed my prattle.
OLIVER. (To CHENDA) Sit down here. (Giving her

a chair at the kitchen table)
CHENDA. (Puts broom away and sits down) Where do

I sign ?

OLIVER. You must read them through first.
CHENDA. What a bore. (Reading) Whereas, very

big, by an indenture, very small, made on the 17th

April 1866, between Robert Can* of the first part,

Wilhelmina Angela Brunch afterwards Boodle of

the second what a name !
OLIVER. Go on.
CHENDA. And Henry Seaton Brocklethwaite of the

third.
KATE. (Looking at the parcel left by the POSTMAN)

It's the children's clothes from Anderwicks'.
CHENDA. Hooray, they've come !
OLIVER. Sit down, Chenda, and go on with the

papers.
CHENDA. Blow the papers ! I'll sign anything.

Here goes !
OLIVER. Stop ! You must come and stand here

while she signs, Kate.

KATE. They've sent the wrong stuff for the petticoats. We said cottonette.
OLIVER. That will do afterwards. You must

witness Chenda's signature.

KATE. (Still the other side of the room) All right, I'm

witnessing.
OLIVER. No, you must see her sign. It says " in

the presence of."

(KATE crosses ; WREN examines the clothes)
CHENDA. (Signing and delivering) I deliver this as

my act and deed.

(KATE signs)

WREN. They look very expensive.
CHENDA. That shows all you know about it. They

cost next to nothing.
WREN. Then they were certainly made by sweated

labour.

(A knock)

OLIVER. Stop fooling, Wren, and see who that is.
(KATE and CHENDA take the clothes to the little table

and sit. WREN opens the door, peeps out, and

retreats. Enter a crowd of lodgers with bundles,

which they hide behind their backs. The crowd, in

their very old clothes, present a pervading tone of

yellow)

OLIVER. What do you want ?
CROWD. (Hesitating) We pledged some things 'ere

Monday last.
OLIVER. Of course, it's Saturday. Now then, girls,

these people want their pledges back.
CHENDA. Oh, bother !
KATE. We're busy.
CHENDA. Make Jimbo do it.
OLIVER. He'll make a mess of it.
CHENDA. Jimbo's very good at that sort of thing.
WREN. It's agin the law. I've not got a licence.
OLIVER. No more excuses.
WREN. Come along then. (To CROWD) You line up

there. Where are the things?
OLIVER. Here they are.

WREN. Put 'em on the table.

KATE. (Offering an exercise-book to WREN) Here's
the list we made of them.

OLIVER. (Taking it) All right, I'll explain it to him. You see, here are the names of the people who pledged the things. Here's the price they got for them. Three shillings, four shillings, five shillings, six. . . . There must be some mistake. They seem to go up in order.

WREN All right, old chap. I can read.

(CHENDA laughs at OLIVER'S discomfiture, and whispers to KATE)

KATE. (Tactfully helping TOM out of a difficulty) Oh, please come and help us, Tom. We're in such a muddle. (KATE rises and gives OLIVER her chair. CHENDA and KATE consult him. He looks round from time to time at WREN)

WREN. Now then, walk up ! Walk up ! Advances from half-a-crown to fifty thousand pounds on simple note of hand. Perfect secrecy guaranteed. Now then, what's your name ?

KATE and CHENDA. (Murmuring from time to time) Do you think these little pyjamas would be suitable for Sarah's boy ? These two little blouses would do for the Heavenly Twins. It would be rather warm for playing in the streets, etc.

WOMAN. Mrs Job, sir.

WREN. Ah, Mrs Job ? Let's see. No. 5. Eight and fourpence. Be patient, Mrs Job. Did you get eight and fourpence for this ragged old coat ?

WOMAN. Yes, sir.

WREN. Is your husband going to a party ?

WOMAN. It ain't his best, sir.

WREN. Not his best ? I'm glad to hear it. Well, where's your eight and fourpence ?

WOMAN. I've not got it, sir.

WREN. Not got it, eh ? Then what on earth have you come here for ? (Holding up a little pair of knickerbockers) Is this his too ?

FAT WOMAN. No, sir, that's mine.

WREN. Yours ?

(Laughter)

CHENDA. What nonsense is Jimbo talking ?

OLIVER. Remember, this may be very amusing for you, Wren, but it's no joke for the poor people whose things they are.

WREN. You hear that ? You're not to make me laugh. Now whose is it really?

FAT WOMAN. (Showing a boy of fifteen) It's my little boy's, sir.

WREN. His?

FAT WOMAN. Yes, sir ; he's growed out of 'em.

WREN. What, since Monday ?

FAT WOMAN. No, sir ; mostly before.

WREN. Well, where's your three and threepence ?

FAT WOMAN. I've not got it, sir.

WREN. What, you've not got it either ? Has anybody here got any money ? (Silence) It's all right, I'm not going to borrow it.

CROWD. I've not got none. W r ish I had ! We've none of us got no money.

WREN. Then what on earth have you all come here for?

CROWD. (Suddenly unwrapping and displaying broken utensils of every sort, such as a jug without a handle, a lamp without a top, a bicycle wheel without a tyre, an old rat-trap, an old dustpan, an old broom, a tall hat with the top out, a battered fireguard, a broken umbrella) I thought, sir, as I might get a little something on this. I didn't know but what . . .

WREN. (Stands on a chair) Do you think we're

stocking a Universal Providing Store ? I see how it is. Last Monday you brought everything that you'd worn out or grown out of and didn't happen to have thrown away ; and now, encouraged by success, you've been raking over the borough dust-heaps, thinking that any trash would do for us.

CHENDA. (Crossing) But, dear Jimbo, it isn't really a bit like that.

WREN. What I like is the exactness with which the prices have been worked out.

Enter JELLICOE, MRS JELLICOE, and MRS CARTWRIGHT, in a garish new hat.

CHENDA. We really did our very best, and some of them are quite genuine. We were regular Shylocks. Ah ! there's Mrs Jellicoe come to get her teapot back, I'm sure.

OLIVER. (To KATE) I knew how it would be if Wren had any hand in it. (Crossing angrily to MRS CARTWRIGHT, and pointing at her hat) What is the meaning of this ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. My 'at, sir ? I won it in a raffle, sir.

OLIVER. Do you know what happened to Sapphira ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. (Quite unaware that Sapphira is a Biblical personage) She didn't start, sir.
(OLIVER turns angrily away)

WREN. (Who has been inquiring into MRS JELLICOE'S case) Ho ! This is a genuine case. There's your teapot, Mrs Jellicoe.

MRS JELLICOE. What shall I do with the half-crown, sir ?

WREN. Leave it on the table as a nest-egg. It's a curiosity in its way.

OLIVER. Chenda, this pawning business of yours
must stop. Wren and these people between them
have made it a perfect farce.

Enter DINAH, carrying a red cap and toy gun.
JIM CROW follows her.

OLIVER. What do you want ?

DINAH. I want to pawn my lodger's things.

MRS CARTWRIGHT. It's 'is little dawg's cap and gun.

OLIVER. You can't.

DINAH. Why can't I ?

OLIVER. Mrs Wren isn't going to lend any more

money.

DINAH. Ho, not to the likes of me, I suppose ?
OLIVER. Not to anyone.
DINAH. Not even for a proper pledge ? (Holding

out the cap and gun)
OLIVER. No.
DINAH. Ho, and she lends to other folk without a

pledge at all.
OLIVER. She does not.
DINAH. She does.

OLIVER. Who's had money without a pledge ?
DINAH . Mrs Jellicoe did. Didn't she, mother ?
MRS CARTWRIGHT. I don't know, my dear. Did

she ?

OLIVER. (To CHENDA) Is that true ?
CHENDA. No, it's not true.
DINAH. It is true.
CHENDA. Mrs Jellicoe was lent the money for a

silver sugar-basin.

OLIVER. Where's the silver sugar-basin ?
CHENDA. She's taking care of the silver sugar-basin

herself.
DINAH. There !

CHENDA. (To WREN) I thought that, as it was her
own . . .
(DINAH disappears in the crowd and goes out

unobserved)

OLIVER. It's a monstrous thing. The moment my
back is turned everyone deceives me.
(The JELLICOES go out hastily)
CROWD. (To the JELLICOES) Look out. 'Urry up.

'E'll catch you.

OLIVER. Where is Mrs Jellicoe ?
CROWD. She just went out beyind yer back, sir.
OLIVER. Then I must go and get the sugar-basin
myself.
(A bumping noise is heard outside. There is panic

and murmuring in the crowd)
OLIVER. What's the matter ?
CROWD. It's Mr Pontifex, sir, after 'is rents.

PONTIFEX raps on the door with his stick and enters.

OLIVER. (To CHENDA) Mind, you're on your honour

while I'm gone.
PONTIFEX. (Saluting OLIVER) Good-mornin', sir.

Fine day, sir.

OLIVER. Nonsense ! It's raining. [Exit OLIVER

PONTIFEX. So this is where everyone's got to. Mrs

Wren, there's the lease from Palmer's ; you've

got to sign it.
CHENDA. Oh, thank you.
PONTIFEX. (To CROWD) What are you all doin'

here in the lady's room ?
CROWD. We've got as much right as you.
KATE. They're my guests. I'm very glad to see

them here.

PONTIFEX. But I wanted to collect their rents, miss.
KATE. Pray do !

PONTIFEX. Well, if you have no objection, miss.

(CHENDA joins KATE and WREN at the table. PONTIFEX stumps up and down amid a confused murmuring of voices. He takes money and gives receipts)

PONTIFEX. Morning, Mrs Job. You're never at 'ome on rent day I notice. Well, Mrs Cartwright, I'd like a spoonful of your Caper Sauce. (To a little man who is going out) Wo there, my beauty, you've forgotten something.

LITTLE MAN. What do you want with me ?

PONTIFEX. What did ye think ? That I was goin 5 to recruit ye for the Grenadiers ?

LITTLE MAN. I can't pay.

PONTIFEX. (Shaking him) You're jinglin' all over.

LITTLE MAN. You might let me off for a day or two.

PONTIFEX. You got the tip for the Grand Nash.

LITTLE MAN. I know of a job if only I can get a decent soot o' clothes.

PONTIFEX. They'll always give you tick at Poole's.

WREN. (At the window) There's another beastly cartload.

CHENDA. (At the window) How ripping ! (Coming down) I must sign the lease.

DINAH. (Entering) What have you done with my keys, mother ?

MRS CARTWRIGHT. I'm sure I don't know, my dear.

PONTIFEX. Ha, how's dividends, Mrs Kippin ? Is the Kaffir Circus goin' strong ?

(An excited group forms round PONTIFEX and DINAH)

CHENDA. (Reading) Whereas . . . Why, it's the same as the other one. (Signing) Why do I have to sign the same thing twice ?

DINAH. (Loud, answering PONTIFEX) It's a shyme, I say!

CHENDA. There's Mrs Kippin quarrelling again. I deliver this as my act and deed.

(KATE signs. The group about DINAH and PONTIFEX opens suddenly)

DINAH. Put my rent up ? Seven-and-six for a place I wouldn't keep a cat in ?

PONTIFEX. No, you'd put him in your sausages, I suppose, same as you did old Gollywog's dog.

(Indicating JIM CROW with his thumb)

DINAH. It oughtn't to be more than four by rights.

PONTIFEX. Oughtn't it ? Well, it's seven-and-six for the future. And if it's not paid, out you go. Yes ; that's the latest news, ladies and gentlemen. All the rents are put up sixpence a week.

DINAH. Strike me pink, that's not the truth ?

PONTIFEX. That's the straight griffin.

CROWD. Shyme ! I never 'card of such a thing ! Five bob for my little 'ole ? I can't do it. I can't afford it, Mr Pontifex, indeed I can't.

LITTLE MAN. I can't do it. I'd blow my brains out first.

PONTIFEX. They wouldn't make much mess.

DINAH. I can't pay more, and I won't.

PONTIFEX. Then out you go.

DINAH. 'Ow can I go ? I'd lose my customers.

PONTIFEX. An' a good thing for their 'ealth.

DINAH. (Pouncing on JIM CROW) You bring me that 'ahf-a-crown before the day's over or hout's the word ! Mark what I say !

JIM. Aue ! (Ah-oo-eh).

DINAH. D'ye think I'm going' to keep you till Doomsday eatin' yer ugly yead off on the nod ?

[Exit DINAH

CHENDA. Oh, what a triply-dyed villain the owner of this house must be. What ? he knows how these poor creatures live here in misery from hand to mouth .

WREN. Don't abuse him, my dear. He's a good man of business, that's all.

CHENDA. Jimbo, don't talk nonsense ; you know perfectly well that he's an unmitigated scoundrel.

WREN. Not a bit of it. He's doing what anybody else would do in his place. I do it, you do it, Oliver does it.

CHENDA. How can you, Jimbo ? It's a perfect lie.

KATE. Tom would scorn to do such a thing !

(Half the crowd form a group round CHENDA, the rest round WREN)

CHENDA. (Quickly) Oh, if the rich people who are responsible for this could but see the misery which they inflict !

CROWD. Ah ! I wish they could. It'd do 'em good to try it for a bit.

WREN. (Quickly) A landlord is a kind of safety-valve devised by providence to prevent misguided philanthropists from raising the working classes out of the poverty which befits them. (WREN continues his speech in dumb show)

CROWD. 'Ear, 'ear ! 'Ooray !

CHENDA. (Interrupting) The criminal classes do not live in Bethnal Green ; they live in Belgrave Square. (As before)

WREN. The landlord simply raises his rent and gets ten shillings where he got only five before.

CROWD. 'Ear, 'ear !

(JiM CROW takes the half-crown from the table and

goes out)

CHENDA. But at least we can keep our hands clean by refusing to be tools of the oppressors.

PONTIFEX. Look 'ere, I've 'ad enough of this. I'm not goin' to stand 'ere and be talked at any longer.

WREN. My good sir, nobody's talking at you.

PONTIFEX. 'Ow would you like to be talked at ?

WREN. I was quite impersonal.

PONTIFEX. Oh yes, I know your sort in the army ; always hargufyin' and never wash. Do you suppose it's for amusement I spend my day goin' round collectin' their sticky shillin's ? Do you think I pouch 'em for myself? Do I live in Belgrave Square ? Do I drink dry champagne ? What's a soldier to do once he's left the army, I should like to know ?

CROWD. Ah ! 'Oo ! 'Ark at 'im. You don't care whether we've got the money or not. It's all py, py> py with you. You think because you go to the war and blow yourself out all day with chocolate and tinned meat on the 'Eath in Africa and then you come 'ome and they call you a Nero, you think you can treat us as if we was a lot of bloomin' Bores.

LITTLE MAN. Eh ! I wish someone would take me to a war !

Enter DAVENIL. CHENDA expresses in pantomime her pleasure at seeing him. He indicates that he has come to fetch the lease away, and she hands it to him. He pockets it smiling, and converses delightedly with her.

CROWD. (To PONTIFEX) And when you're away everybody calls you a habsent-minded beggar and forks out 'andsome for your wives and children. More wives than children too, I reckon.

PONTIFEX. If you'd wash yer face a bit you'd be able to open yer mouth wider.

CROWD. And if we go and play the Habsent-Minded Beggar, does anyone call us a Nero ?

LITTLE MAN. (Ironically) Ho yuss !

CROWD. They don't 'ave us up on the carpet before the beak do they, and give us what for for desertion ?

LITTLE MAN. Ho no !

PONTIFEX. Ho, you're the man that wanted a noo soot of clothes, are you ?

LITTLE MAN. What's that to you ?

PONTIFEX. You un'ealthy beggar !

LITTLE MAN. Un'ealthy yourself.

PONTIFEX. The next soot you get 'ad better be a wooden one.

CROWD. (After a pause of horror) Shyme ! Shyme ! I never 'erd such a thing ! Pore little feller !

DAVENIL. (At last aware that something unusual is going on) What is all this about ?

CHENDA. It's Mr Pontifex again, bullying the people. 1 thought I told you to speak to him about it.

DAVENIL. (To PONTIFEX) Excuse me, Pontifex, you're forgetting yourself. (CHENDA eggs him on)

CROWD. Ah, give it 'im !

DAVENIL. Remember that this is not the barracks or the battle-field. You must be more respectful.

PONTIFEX. I've not said a word to the ladies.

DAVENIL. I'm not speaking of the ladies. You must show respect to those who are not so fortunate as yourself. One must not take advantage of people being poor and helpless.

PONTIFEX. You talk to me like that ?

DAVENIL. Yes, I do, Pontifex, and I mean what I say. You needn't threaten me ; I'm not afraid of you. I have already had complaints of your behaviour to our poorer tenants, and I'm determined to put a stop to it.

PONTIFEX. You put a stop ?

DAVENIL. It shall never be said that I allowed any

poor people for whose welfare I was responsible to be trodden underfoot by a brutal overseer. (Delight in the crowd)

PONTIFEX. Brutal overseer ! Me ?

DAVENIL. I withdraw the word if it's too strong. (Disappointment in the crowd) I don't want to hurt your feelings ; but you must be gentle and considerate with the tenants.

PONTIFEX. (Ironically) Gentle and considerate ! Oh yuss ! and not say, If you don't fork out you'll get the blimy chuck.

DAVENIL. No bad language, if you please.

PONTIFEX. Oh, ain't you a pretty child standin' there with yer angel face, not afraid of the bad rough man that's workin' 'imself into a passion at you ? Oh, you nearly Christian martyr ! An' will you please tell the kind ladies and the hinnercent oppressed pore people who it was that came out of the inner office at Palmer's at eleven o'clock this morning, while I was filin' my accounts in Mr Cheadle's room, and says, The firm would be obliged to you, Mr Cheadle, if you would send that bad wicked man Pontifex to screw twelve per cent, more out of the innercent pore in Boodle Court ?

DAVENIL. I ... I ... I ...

PONTIFEX. Do you deny it ?

DAVENIL. I ... I ... I did what I was told.

CHENDA. You, Mr Davenil ! Is it you who are responsible for the raising of the rents ?

PONTIFEX. Him and his uncle came drivin' down together like a pair of bloomin' staff -officers. . . .

DAVENIL. (Heroically) Not a word against my uncle, please ; he is not here to defend himself.

CHENDA. Do you admit the accusation, Mr Davenil ?

DAVENIL. I accept full responsibility for the action of the firm, Mrs Wren. It is quite true that I gave Mr Cheadle the order for raising the rents ; but this is a matter of business, not of sentiment. I act on the orders which I receive from the firm ; and if the rents are raised I have no doubt it is because we have received instructions ordering it to be done.

CHENDA. And knowing all this, you have the face to come here this morning and pretend to take an interest in the welfare of the poor creatures on whose misery you batten ? With an air of disinterested benevolence, forsooth, you offer to subscribe to alleviate the wretchedness of which you are the cause.

DAVENIL. I. ..I. ..I...

CHENDA. With one hand you offer us a miserable trifle to gratify your sentiment, while with the other you wring a thousand times as much from their helplessness in the way of business \ Oh, I envy you your capacity for separating business and sentiment. (She goes to her bureau and opens the drawer, then returns to listen to PONTIFEX)

PONTIFEX. I'm not goin' to put up with all this talkin' any more. I'd rather be sellin' matches in the gutter, I would, as I was a year ago, and see my wife and children starve. I'm goin' round at once to chuck my job at Palmer's. (Going)

CROWD. Well done 'im ! Mr Pontifex is what I call an 'igh-minded man.

PONTIFEX. Oh, don't you worry yer fat. They'll get somebody else to do my job.

CROWD. Let's 'ist 'im up and carry 'im round to Palmer's. 'E's an 'igh-minded man. Three cheers for Mr Pontifex !

[Exit crowd, cheering, with PONTIFEX

CHENDA. (Returning to her bureau, getting the sove-

M

reign out from the cash-box, and handing it to DAVENIL) There's your donation back again. We do not take money from impure sources. Your gold is tarnished with the tears of the poor.

DAVENIL. You're awfully hard on me, Mrs Wren. It isn't as if I was owner of the place. I'm only a servant.

CHENDA. It would be nobler to suffer poverty like Sergeant Pontifex than to take wages in the service of the devil.

WREN. (Suddenly, at the table] I say, somebody has taken that half-crown I left here !

DAVENIL. Why, that's a felony, you know !

CHENDA. Use the hardest names you can.

KATE. Oh, how awful, Chenda ! Have we had a felon among us ?

CHENDA. What does it matter, Kerry ? Some poor creature has been goaded at last beyond endurance. He is not to blame. Whatever the hand that took it, it is Mr Davenil, and Mr Davenil alone, that I look on as the thief.

DAVENIL. Me ? Oh, Mrs Wren, I really think if you understood business a little . . .

CHENDA. Thank you, I prefer my ignorance.

(DAVENIL brushes his hat, pauses for something to answer, then walks out rapidly without having found it.)

OLIVER. (Without) Mind where you're going !

DAVENIL. (Without) Not at all, it was my fault.

Enter OLIVER, carrying the silver sugar-basin.

OLIVER. I had to chase them all across the park. What's happened here ? That chap was crying. (To CHENDA) Lock that up. (He stands talking to CHENDA)

WREN. (To KATE) It's a most damnable thing about that half-crown. You can't leave a thing lying for half-a-minute but somebody goes and bags it.

KATE. (Ironically) I wonder you don't approve of the man who stole it.

WREN. So I do ! So I do ! My reason approves, but I've got nerves like anybody else, and my nerves would like to punch his head.

OLIVER. What's the matter with Wren ?

KATE. He's naturally upset about the money that's been stolen.

OLIVER. What money ? Who's been stealing ? .]

KATE. Somebody took half-a-crown which James had left on the table.

OLIVER. What was Wren doing when it was taken ?

KATE. He was talking about providence and safety valves.

OLIVER. So ! I knew how it would be. You can't be trusted with a little easy bit of work like that but you get talking and neglect it.

WREN. Me talking ? Why, I've hardly got a word in edgeways since I came. By gad, I never heard anything like Chenda when she's fairly roused. (Imitating) " So this is your disinterested benevolence, forsooth quotha." The way she gave it to poor Davenil . . .

OLIVER. It was your fault that the half-crown was stolen.

WREN. My fault?

OLIVER. You shouldn't have undertaken the job if you couldn't carry it through.

WREN. Me ? I was forced into it against my will. I've said all along that one ought not to do anything at all.

OLIVER. We have managed all right.

WREN. And a precious lot of good you've done ! It's you and Chenda that are responsible for the theft of the half-crown, not me.

CHENDA. We are ?

WREN. All you've done is to excite the greed of the landlord of these dwellings by pauperising his tenants. He's determined to catch the golden shower as it falls. So up go the rents ! And those who haven't been lucky in the scramble are driven to larceny in order to keep up with the rest.

(A growing sound of an angry crowd is heard outside. JELLICOE runs in, dressed in the same clothes as before, with an oily new second-hand top hat. He closes the door, which is kicked and struck from without)

JELLICOE. I'm sorry I ever took the job on.

OLIVER. What job ?

JELLICOE. Mr Pontifex's job.

OLIVER. Who's chasing you ?

JELLICOE. All the lodgers. The rents are raised again.

CHENDA. The rents . . .

JELLICOE. Yes, it's a shilling all round, instead of sixpence.

CURTAIN

ACT III

A quarter of an hour later. WREN is on his hands and knees searching the floor. OLIVER leans against the kitchen table eating a biscuit, and watching him. KATE looks out of the window behind. Milk and biscuits are on the table.

CHENDA. (Walking up and down) I shall make it my business to find out who it is that owns this house ; the evil spirit that pulls the strings in the background. According to Jimbo, nobody seems to blame.

KATE. You'd better drink your milk while it's hot, Chenda. There go the washstands.

CHENDA. (Going to the window) Oh, aren't they ducks ? Come and look, Jimbo.

WREN. (Crawling about, morosely) Oh, do shut up !

OLIVER. Wren's busy.

CHENDA. (Still looking out) Why, there's that horrid boy from Palmer's.

KATE. Where ?

CHENDA. With that old man.

KATE. So it is.

CHENDA. What business is it of his ?

WREN. I know it's a pure farce looking for that half-crown ! It isn't here.

OLIVER. We must leave no stone unturned to find it.

WREN. (Knocking his hands together) I don't know about stones . . .

OLIVER. I can't for the life of me understand how anyone in his senses could leave it lying there all the time, like a glass of whisky under the very nose of a lot of drunkards. (Looking at his watch and snapping it to) However, you've been searching

for a quarter of an hour now, and I'm afraid we must come to the conclusion that it's not here. (WREN rises) I shall not rest until I have discovered the culprit.

WREN. What a vindictive fellow you are, Squog. (Taking biscuits and milk)

OLIVER. (Angrily) Don't call me Squog !

WREN. All this fuss about two-and-six !

OLIVER. As if it was the money that mattered ! It's hopeless for me to try and explain anything to you.

WREN. Oh, absolutely.

CHENDA. If I could find out the landlord's name, I would publish it in all the newspapers and hold him up to infamy and execration.

WREN. That's the way we salve our consciences for the crimes of society in which we are all confederates. When we want to enjoy the luxury of virtuous indignation, we talk of Mr Bung the brewer and Mr Rackrent the landlord as if they were a separate sort of creature from ourselves, only fit to be used as Cockshies and Aunt Sallies. Who is Mr Bung ? Who is Mr Rackrent ? I am, you are. . . .

CHENDA. Oh, Jimbo, I'm tired of this nonsense. . . .

WREN. That's the melancholy thing about the evils of modern society, that they are all caused by well-meaning people. Villains are a literary invention which the Elizabethan drama borrowed from the demonology of the Middle Ages.

CHENDA. Bosh !

WREN. (Gloomily) That's what they always say to the prophets.

CHENDA. Are you sure you didn't put the half-crown in your pocket, Jimbo ?

WREN. (Laughing) What a fool I was not to think of

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that before ! (Taking out half-a-crown) Why, upon my word, Oliver . . .

Enter DINAH, holding JIM CROW ; two or three girls follow and stay in the doorway.

OLIVER. What's this, Mrs Kippin ? Don't be so rough with that man.

DINAH. I'm rough, am I ? Do you know what this man's done ? He's a thief ; that's what he's done.

(CHENDA signs to WREN, who puts his half-crown hastily back in his pocket)

DINAH. There ! (Throwing a half-crown on the table) He stole the 'ahf-crown that Mrs Jellicoe laid on that very table not 'ahf-an-hour ago to bail out her Britannia teapot.

OLIVER. So ! This is the unhappy victim of temptation.

JIM. Aue !

KATE. You're holding him rather tight, I think, Mrs Kippin.

DINAH. There was I, only just come in from 'ere. Hat it again ! Slavin' and slavin' away till I'm fit to drop. Peelin' potatoes and washin' up plates that'll only be dirty again in an hour ; and all the children in the way as usual. When in comes Mr Crow as sweet as sixpence, if you please, just as if there'd been no words between us. " Where's that money you owe me ? " says I.

" 'Ere," says he, 'oldin' out his 'ahf-a-crown. " 'Ow did you get it ? " says I, smellin' a rat ; and with that he starts patterin' his black man's flash. " Tell me that in plain English, you immigrant," says I, " or I'll bang yer ugly onion against the wall until you do " ; and bang it I did till I was

tired, as if it was my own child, until he owned up the whole story ; and what do you think of that ?

OLIVER. What have you to say to this, Crow ? (DINAH goes up and talks with KATE)

JIM. Pore ole Dim Trow very happy man in Raparoa. Me good to everybody, everybody good to me. One day old gentleman come along. He say, " Me Christian missionary come from England. English people very good people ; all love Jesu Chrise. Raparoa people very bad people ; not know nutting of Jesu Chrise."

OLIVER. One of those London Missionary Society people, no doubt. Well ?

JIM. I say, " Where he born, Jesu Chrise ? " Ole gentleman say, " He born in Galilee." I go down to de shore and see schoonah. I say, "Where you go ? " De Cappen he say, " We goin' to England." I say, "Me come too, see Galilee where Jesu Chrise was born." De Cappen he say, "Come along; I show you Galilee." We come along to England ; de Cappen he give me eighteenpence. I come ashore and look for Galilee. Big man he come along and knock me down, take away iny eighteenpence. Another big man come along, pick me up and say I drunk. Wish I was back in Raparoa wid de ole wife and little chillun.

OLIVER. All this is quite irrelevant.

WREN. It seems perfectly relevant to me. The man's been swindled.

OLIVER. That's no reason for swindling us.

WREN. They induced him to come over here by pretending people lived in England according to the Sermon on the Mount.

OLIVER. Well?

WREN. Just think of the irony of it.

OLIVER. I don't * know what you mean. Where does the irony come in ?

WREN. Think what the man gave up : the innocent life of the island with the cocoa- palms, where he was good to everybody and everybody was good to him. And think what we gave him in exchange !

OLIVER. We gave him the hope of eternal life.

WREN. Oh, nonsense !

OLIVER. Wasn't that worth eighteenpence ?

WREN. And now the poor devil, because he has infringed some miserable English rule of etiquette . . .

OLIVER. Etiquette ?

WREN. Which probably doesn't obtain at all in his native country, is set upon and threatened with all the terrors of our savage penal code.

KATE. If he has done wrong he deserves to be punished.

OLIVER. Don't argue, Kate.

WREN. The whole system . . .

OLIVER. I know exactly what you're going to say, but it's all nonsense, and very harmful nonsense at that. You can't mend the world by white-washing the devil. Besides, who said I was going to set the penal code on him ?

WREN. Well, what are you going to do then ?

OLIVER. Do you imagine that when a man's soul is sick I send him to gaol to be cured ?

WREN. Well, what are you going to do then ?

OLIVER. He must be removed from the atmosphere of harshness and misunderstanding in which he has lived too long. What he needs is sympathy and indulgence. Chenda, I think you understand me.

CHENDA. Oh, Tom, what a brick you are ! He shall be the first inmate of my Pension House.

KATE. Oh, Tom, and you forgive him ! (To WREN) People aren't necessarily cruel because they don't go in for your fantastic and immoral theories.

CHENDA. (To JIM) Oh, you dear, dear old man.

KATE. Dear Mr Crow !

CHENDA. It's all happened just at the right moment.

KATE. It's as if he were sent from heaven on purpose.

JIM. (Drawing back in alarm) What you want to do to me ?

KATE. Don't be afraid of us.

CHENDA. Dear, dear Jim Crow, I will make you so happy. You shall forget these miserable years.

DINAH. What are you goin' to do with 'im ?

CHENDA. I am going to take care of him.

DINAH. Isn't he to be sent to gaol ?

KATE. Why should he be sent to gaol ?

DINAH. What d'ye think I brought him here for ?

OLIVER. He has been fortunate enough to fall into hands more merciful than yours.

DINAH. Ho, it's the old story again, I see. Live honest and you may starve ; but crack a till, or take to drink, or throw yer baby in the water-works, and all the clergy will come 'oppin' round to give you a good character. Oh yes, and I must slave the flesh from off my fingers, and 'ave my rent put up, while he can loll on a bench in your back-room, and stuff 'imself with steak and onions because he burgled 'ahf-a-crown !

OLIVER. That's not why we wish to help him.

DINAH. Oh yes it is, and not the first time neither, Mr Oliver.

OLIVER. What do you mean ?

DINAH. Oh, you know what I mean.

KATE. Remember who you're speaking to.

DINAH. There was that brute Arthur that tried to cut his uncle's throat in the doss'ouse, an' you begged 'im off before the Beak, and now he's body-servant to a Lord that knows no more who shaves him of a mornin' than the babe unborn.

OLIVER. I am thankful to have been the means . . .

DINAH. And there was 'Appy 'Ancock who snaked the pewters, an' you gave 'im a good character at the Old Bailey, and he ... he copped an extra two years' penal servitood for kiddin' the clergy. No ! I won't stand it any longer ! I'll 'ave justice.

CHENDA. What can you do ?

DINAH. Do ? My duty, as some don't. I'm goin' to give 'im in charge.

CHENDA. Can she ?

OLIVER. It'll be no use.

DINAH. In charge for stealin'.

OLIVER. We shall refuse to prosecute.

DINAH. Then he'll be 'ad as a vagrant, for 'avin' no visible 'ome.

CHENDA. His home is with me.

DINAH. We'll soon see about that, miss. (Folding arms) I don't leave this room until . . .

BOY. (Without) Shop, muvver !

DINAH. 1 don't leave this room until . . .

BOY. (Running on) Shop, muvver !

DINAH. Ah, you wait till my work's over !

[Exit DINAH smacking the boy's head and scolding him.

DAVENIL. (Without) I beg your pardon.

DINAH. (Without) 'Oo spoke to you ?

PONTIFEX. (Without) You keep a civil tongue in yer 'ead.

OLIVER. Ha, it's Sergeant Pontifex.

Enter PONTIFEX with a flower in his buttonhole to
celebrate his release from the service of the devil ;
behind him, DAVENIL. JIM CROW disappears into
the background unnoticed, and finally disposes himself to sleep on a sofa which stands by the window.

PONTIFEX. Come on, Mr Davenil. Don't you be

afraid of 'em.

CHENDA. What does this person want here ?
DAVENIL. I am really very sorry to intrude again.
CHENDA. What does he want ?
DAVENIL. It's a most unpleasant task which brings

me ; but there was really no one else to do it.
CHENDA. Tell him to be as brief as possible.
DAVENIL. It is a note for you from Palmer's, Mrs

Wren.
CHENDA. Take it, Jimbo. Your hands are dirty

already.

(DAVENIL gives the note to WREN. WREN reads it)
OLIVER. So you've resigned, Sergeant?
PONTIFEX. Yes, sir, I've resigned, and glad of

another job. Something on the flat preferred.
OLIVER. (To WREN) The note seems to contain good

news.
WREN. I hope I don't betray any indecent glee.

It's addressed to Chenda.
CHENDA. It is not likely to be of any great interest

to me.

WREN. I'm rather afraid it is.
CHENDA. Well?

WREN. You can't move into the Settlement.
KATE. Oh dear, oh dear!
CHENDA. Why can't I move in ?
WREN. It seems you've overlooked certain covenants in the lease.
CHENDA. Covenants ? What covenants ?

ACT in THE FOUNTAIN 189

KATE. There ! I told you so.

CHENDA. What do you mean about covenants ?

WREN. (Reading) M'm, m'm, brought to our notice
that the nature of the articles of furniture now
unloading at the said door indicates the lessee's
intention of using the building as a sanatorium or
hospital.

CHENDA. What right has anyone to look at my
furniture ?

DAVENIL. It was all over the pavement.

CHENDA. Somebody has been spying.

DAVENIL. Mr Palmer tumbled over one of the beds.

CHENDA. They'll be searching my pockets next.

OLIVER. That's not the question now, Chenda. Go
on.

WREN. (Reading) M'm, m'm, instructed to warn
you that the lessors will re-enter according to the
terms of the agreement and exercise their lien on

all furniture, personality and appurtenances. . . .

CHENDA. Fiddlesticks !

WREN. Oh, but . . .

CHENDA. What does it matter ?

WREN. Matter, why . . .

CHENDA. Do you imagine it makes the least difference to me what Mr Davenil says ?

DAVENIL. That's what I said myself.

WREN. (To DAVENIL) Good Lord, man, don't give way like that !

DAVENIL. I knew Mrs Wren wouldn't listen to me.

WREN. Remember your clients' interests.

CHENDA. Mr Davenil can say what he likes.

WREN. I say, isn't there a stronger representative of the firm about ?

DAVENIL. My uncle's round at Palmer's ; but I didn't want to trouble him.

WREN. Oh, never mind the trouble. Here, Mr

Pontifex, you're a man of leisure ; you might just run round and fetch him.

PONTIFEX. All right, sir. (Levelling his stick at the girls in the doorway and charging) Get out of my way, you Bores !

GIRLS. 'Ooray for the British Harmy !

[Exit PONTIFEX followed by the girls

WREN. Where's the lease ?

DAVENIL. Oh, I forgot ; I've got Mrs Wren's copy of it in my pocket. There's the covenant.

(Handing it to WREN. WREN looks up the covenant and nods)

Enter the FOREMAN of the carters, an agreeable person, with " Semparatus " in gold letters on his cap.

SEMPARATUS. (To DAVENIL) I beg your pardon, is Mrs Wren here ?

CHENDA. Oh, it's the Semparatus man. Good-afternoon.

SEMPARATUS. Good-day, madam.

CHENDA. Is it all done ?

SEMPARATUS. Yes, madam. We've made a quicker job of it than we promised even. We undertook to do it in three hours, and we've been exactly two hours and fifty-three minutes.

WREN. Have you got all the stuff in ?

SEMPARATUS. Yes, sir, it's all in, down to the veiy last toothbrush.

WREN. Then you take my tip ; you get it all out

again as quick as you can.
SEMPARATUS. Sir !
CHENDA. You'll do no such thing. It's no business

of yours, Jimbo.
WREN. As you please, my dear. I thought you'd

both be glad to get it out again before Palmer's

had time to lay hands on it.

CHENDA. They can't really ?
WREN. Of course they can, and will.
KATE. He's quite right, Chenda. The only safe
thing is to get it out.

Enter PONTIFEX

PONTIFEX. Here he is.

DAVENIL. Thank heaven, here's my uncle.

Enter Nix, young, business-like and vulgar, and
PALMER, aged, benevolent and rather deaf.

WREN. (To SEMPARATUS, putting money in his hand)

Get it out as quick as you can.
SEMPARATUS. Very good, sir.

[Exit, shutting door behind him
OLIVER. (Shaking hands with Nix) Ah, Jimmy, I'm

glad you've come. Chenda, this is Mr Nix.
PALMER. (To OLIVER) Glad to know you, sir. You

remind me of Mr Addle shaw, the first clergyman

we ever had at our little church down here.
(Everybody is anxious to get the business in hand

cleared up, except this pleasant old gentleman, who

is full of amiable reminiscences)
OLIVER. We sent for Mr Nix to advise us about the

lease of Glengarry House.
PALMER. Glengarry House ? It isn't forty years

since there were cabbages growing where that

stands now. Then Mr Jamieson built Glengarry

House and this block ; but he failed and it went

to his mortgagee, a Mr Boodle.
OLIVER. Yes, yes . . .
PALMER. They've always gone together, these two

houses.
OLIVER. Yes, yes, but . . .

PALMER. It was half country then.

OLIVER. There are certain covenants . . .

PALMER. I can remember shooting snipe as a boy
along the Romford Road.

Nix. Here, let me have a look at the lease. (WREN
hands it to him) I see, it's a transfer. Well, if Mrs

Wren has agreed to the covenants, I don't see how I can help her out of them.

PALMER. Of course he can't.

Nix. There's no getting round a covenant.

PALMER. Turning it into a hospital would do great injury to the value of the building. I'm sure my son won't hear of such a thing.

OLIVER. Let me have a look at the lease. (Taking it from Nix. Reading) Whereas by an indenture . . .

CHENDA. Shut up, Tom. (To Nix) Do you mean to say that I can't have the house if the beds go in ? Who is this gentleman that comes here to dictate to me ?

Nix. This is Mr Palmer.

CHENDA. Mr Palmer ?

Nix. The house-agent.

CHENDA. Mr Palmer, the house-agent ! Ah, at last I have you then ! Oh, you wicked old man. You are at the bottom of all the villainies that are practised here. Whether you are the oppressor himself or only his servant I cannot tell. I do not greatly care. So I shall do an injury to the house property, forsooth. The house property ! Are you so lost to every sense . . .

OLIVER. (Giving up the inside of the lease as a bad job and looking at the inscription on the outside) I say, there's something queer about this. This lease for Glengarry House is from the Bellingham mortgage estate.

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Nix. (Horrified; bellowing) What ! (Snatching the deed from OLIVER) The Bellingham Mortgage Estate ?

OLIVER. Mrs Wren was a Miss Bellingham.

Nix. It's her own estate, of which Mr Oliver is trustee. She's letting the house to herself I (To DAVENIL) This is some of your work, Master Harry.

DAVENIL. I couldn't tell she was Miss Bellingham.

CHENDA. But what's the point of all these technicalities ? What I want to know is, has this person (Indicating PALMER) a right to prevent my furniture going into Glengarry House, or has he not ?

Nix. Of course he hasn't. Don't you see, my dear madam, it's your own house ; it's your own house.

CHENDA. My house ?

Nix. Yes, you can do what you like with it.

CHENDA. Then I needn't take my furniture out ?

Nix. No.

CHENDA. Really ?

Nix. Yes, really.

CHENDA. I can have my sanatorium after all ?

Nix. Yes, yes, yes.

CHENDA. Oh, joy, delight ! (Twirling WREN about) I can 1 I can 1 Oh, hooray ! I must stop them. (At the window) Hi ! Semparatus I Hoyoy 1 (Coming down) Then I shall go into the Settlement to-day after all. Oh, do go down and tell them, Mr Pontifex.

[Exit PONTIFEX

Oh, hooray ! Kate, isn't it splendid ? (To Nix) Oh, you are a clever lawyer. I wish we'd always gone to you.

KATE. But how clever of Tom !

CHENDA. Oh, and you too, Tom.

OLIVER. You'll have to take me into partnership, Jimmy.

Enter PONTIFEX and SEMPARATUS FOREMAN

SEMPARATUS. Excuse me, madam, I am told that I am to put all the furniture back into the house again.

CHENDA. It's quite right.

OLIVER. Quite right.

SEMPARATUS. But we've reloaded one van already.

OLIVER. You must unload it again.

SEMPARATUS. (To WREN) Is that right, sir ?

WREN. Oh, go to hell !

SEMPARATUS. Very good, sir. I get so many contradictory orders . . . [Exit SEMPARATUS

OLIVER. (Triumphant) There'll be no difficulty about the Settlement now, Wren. Your wife will have a place of refuge from the whirlwind of words at last. Oh, it will be no place for you, I assure you. The word silence will be written up in big letters over the door : " Abandon Theory all ye who enter here." We'll write up, " Favete linguis ; Odi profanum vulgus et arceo."

WREN. (To PALMER, very seriously, perceiving the drift of what has happened) But didn't you say that this block and Glengarry House are all the same estate ?

(He sits down and buries his face in his hands. Nix listens and perceives the drift of affairs)

PALMER. Yes, yes. They've never been divided. All Mr Boodle's interest passed to Mr Bellingham.

CHENDA. (To PALMER) When you and your rack-renting landlord have driven the dwellers in these miserable dens into sickness and disease, I shall still be able to offer them a refuge.

WREN. Oh, Chenda, Chenda ! Don't you see who the brutal landlord is that rackrents these miserable dens ?

CHENDA. (Startled) Who?

WREN. Don't you see who it is that has been raising the rents here ?

CHENDA. Who ?

WREN. You and Oliver.

OLIVER. I ?

CHENDA. Me ?

OLIVER. / have raised the rents ?

CHENDA. You, Tom ?

OLIVER. I, who have always protested . . . It's the most monstrous falsehood.

PALMER. They were raised twice, by sixpence and a shilling . . .

Nix. (Coming down) That's the two times you applied for an increase of income ; the fifty and the hundred .

OLIVER. But I had no notion . . .

Nix. You said you didn't want to hear . . .

OLIVER. But do you imagine if I had known . . .

CHENDA. Oh, Jimbo, Jimbo ! I see it all. You mean that / am the owner of this horrible place, that it is / who live at ease because these poor creatures live in misery. Oh, where can I hide myself ? Where can I hide myself ? (Hiding her face on WREN'S bosom)

PONTIFEX. (Grasping it at last) Well, dammy, if that isn't the finest thing that ever I heard ! After all the talking at I've had, and been obliged to resign my post as rent- collector and all, for oppressin' the innocent pore. And all the time it was Mr Oliver that's been raisin' the rents and creatin' all this hullabaloo. (Laughing) Ho, 1 must go and tell the boys. [Exit

CHENDA. Oh, Jimbo, Jimbo ! What a nightmare it all is ! Oh, why didn't I listen to you when you said it was no good doing anything ?

WREN. My poor, poor darling ! You've done your best.

CHENDA. I've done nothing but harm.

KATE. It was all done for the sake of charity.

WREN. Charity ! Now you see what charity means. All the money you were spending on Oliver's parishioners was being pumped up into your horn of plenty out of Oliver's parishioners' pockets all the time. There they were, the poor tenants, Pontifex, Mr Palmer, Davenil, Nix and Oliver ; and at the top of all, yourself, like a nymph on a fountain, pouring the water back into the basin. That's charity ! That's why we erect fountains at street corners to philanthropical gentlemen. It's an allegory, a satire. Why, every time I ...

KATE. I think we've had enough speechmaking, James.

WREN. So we have ! So we have ! (To CHENDA)

My darling pet! Chennie, my angel, you mustn't cry so.

CHENDA. I'm better now. How I detest myself ! I'll never be charitable again. There was a picture that I always loved all my childhood, of a tall lady in white giving money out of a purse to the poor ; you know, Jimbo, the one that hangs over my burry ; I always wanted to be like that. But now I know how the purse is filled. Oh, I'll smash that beastly picture when I get back. (She goes and gets her hat from its peg)

KATE. Where are you going ?

CHENDA. I'm going home with Jimbo.

(Jimbo wears a pensive, doubtful air)

OLIVER. You mustn't be selfish, Chenda ; you've undertaken certain obligations to my parish.

CHENDA. What obligations ?

ACT in THE FOUNTAIN 197

OLIVER. There's the Settlement to begin with, for which you've signed the lease, you know. (Holding out the lease)

CHENDA. (Taking it melodramatically, tearing it up, and throwing it on the floor) There's your lease then ! You and I are not fit stewards for such a trust.

(A pause, a thrill)

Nix. (Prosaic, disillusioning) What's the good of that ? . . . Tearing up the counterpart of an indenture don't make the indenture void. You're bound to pay rent to the Trust Estate.

CHENDA. My own ?

Nix. You're only a life tenant.

CHENDA. The Trust Estate is at an end.

Nix. Nonsense. You can't put an end to the Trust Estate.

PALMER. Come along, Mr Nix, we'd better be going.

[Nix and PALMER salute the company

and go, laughing.

Nix. (At the door, turning to DAVENIL) Come along, you young idiot ! [Exeunt

OLIVER. I may as well be going too. [Exit OLIVER (WREN gives OLIVER an ironic nod)

CHENDA. (To KATE) Good-bye.

KATE. What about your luggage ?

CHENDA. Send it on by Carter Pat.

KATE. Good-bye, darling. I'll go and put your things in. [Exit to bedroom

(JIM CROW remains asleep on the sofa at the back)

CHENDA. Come along, Jimbo.

WREN. Wait a bit.

CHENDA. You're not going to make difficulties now !

WREN. Come and sit here. (A pause) I'm a selfish beggar, Chen, and I've been longing to get you back home at any price, but you've opened my eyes.

CHENDA. Whatever do you mean ?

WREN. I think you ought to stay down here.

CHENDA. Me stay here ?

WREN. For a time, I mean.

CHENDA. No, I can't do without you now. I must have you by me.

WREN. I'll stay too.

CHENDA. You ? . . . Oh, Jimbo, I can't face this place after my ghastly failure.

WREN. I tell you what, Chen, you're wrong about the failure.

CHENDA. Wrong about the failure ?

WREN. If it's a failure it's succeeded in a way that nothing else could have succeeded. Things are in an awful mess, that's true ; you're grabbing with one hand and doling out with the other. But it isn't you that made the mess. It's society that made the mess, and you, you've been fumbling round to clear it up. Nobody would have discovered what a mess it was if you hadn't gone fumbling round ; and the discovery is the first step to the remedy.

CHENDA. Oh, Jimbo ! And what's the remedy ?

WREN. I don't know.

CHENDA. You don't know ?

WREN. Nobody does.

CHENDA. Then what can we do ?

WREN. (Impressively, as if it were a policy and a solution) Fumble on ! ... You remember what you said about Jack Smiley's method of hunting ? " Blundering through the hedges and floundering in the ponds." . . . Well, that's the way to tackle social questions.

CHENDA. (Seeing a humorous side to it) But I can't imagine you down here, my Jimbo.

WREN. Hm ! It certainly isn't much in my line.

CHENDA. Going about arm in arm with Tom, doing good works.

WREN. No, that isn't quite the idea. No. I've suddenly realised how valuable your slapdash methods are for theory, how illuminating. That's the object of action. Action does no good. In fact, it always does harm ; but theory, lovely theory, rises from the ruins. I've learnt more political economy this last week than I did in ten years before. I want to stay here and watch you all at it and penetrate the full irony of the situation. Then I think we might see if we can't give your tenants better value for their money, don't you think ? And if we can spare any time from mending our own ways, we'll spend it in harassing employers, landlords, insanitary people, brewers, publicans, everyone who battens on the poor.

CHENDA. All the other Chendas, in fact.

WREN. Yes, all the other Chendas. What fun it'll be !

CHENDA. You duck ! (A long kiss)

(JIM CROW stirs on the sofa, coughs and stretches)

WREN. (Rising) Hullo, are you still there, old friend ?

JIM. (Sitting up) Wish I was back in Raparoa wid de ole wife and little chillun.

WREN. And so you shall be, by Gad, as fast as ship can carry you, and curses on the infernal rascal that ever dislodged you from your happy island and brought you over here to see the squalid barbarism in which your pretended betters pass their days. We'll book his passage, and then we'll get home and have a good talk at last. You can't think how the solitude and silence have been weighing on me all these days.

THE CURTAIN DESCENDS AND LEAVES HIM TALKING

CKOMWELL: MALL O' MONKS

A Historical Play in Five Acts

TO

LAURENCE BINYON

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CROMWELL, THOMAS
HENRY VIII. . .
WOLSEY, CARDINAL
NORFOLK, DUKE OF
LINCOLN, DUKE OF .
MORE, SIR THOMAS
BOLEYN, SIR THOMAS
TALBOT, SIR JOHN .

CRANMER, a priest

NORRIS

BEAULIEU, the French ambassador
SMEATON, Court musician . ..

LAMBERT]

MORISON j- friends of Cromwell .

FOULKES J

CAVENDISH, usher to Wolsey .
SADLER, uncle to Cavendish .
RAT, cJiaplain to Sir T. Boleyn .
PATCH, Wolsey s fool ...
PETO, a Black Friar

ROGER

ANNE BOLEYN 25

JANE SEYMOUR 20

KATHARINE HOWARD . . . '.,_ 15 OT 20

ANNE OF CLEVE8 35

LADY ROCHFORD . . . .-.* . . 30

Courtiers, Ushers, Yeomen, Chaplains, Hereticks, Merchants, Peasants, Monks, Friars, Ladies-in-waiting, etc.

The scenery to be simple and quickly shifted. The stage might be arranged as in Mr Martin Harvey's Hamlet, the changes being effected by change of backcloth and by presenting different sides of the wheeled pillars which take the place of wings.

CROMWELL: MALL O> MONKS

PROLOGUE
Spoken by a BELLMAN

Oyez ! Oyez !

Good dames and gentles all, oyez !
I am the Prologue, not the Play.
Beseek your gracious ears to hear
What fell before three hundred year ;
A story told in the ancient fashion
Of Harry the Eight and the Reformation.
Pray you, believe it something more
Than musty antiquary lore :
Though in the ancient tongue indite,
That is but for your more delight ;
So strip this trimming right away
And seek a moral for to-day.

One virtue from antiquity
We'll take, and that's simplicity.
Here is no wealth of pictured scene
To please the taste of pampered een.
Let Fancy paint the barren walls
And follow where the story calls,
Unhindered in her wayward flight
With waiting on the eye's delight.

Imagine when the curtains rise
The Cardinal in a farm-house lies,
Wolsey, that three days since was great
And now is fall'n from's high estate. . . .

But an I blab all, there'll be nought left for the Players. I must vacate ; and so to't, and God save the King !

Oyez ! Oyez ! Oyez !

[Exit, ringing his bell
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ACT I

In a farmyard. Dawn.
Enter ROGER and DICCON, yeomen

ROGER. Who's that ?

DICCON. What, Roger ?

ROGER. Diccon ? Up betimes.

DICCON. Methought I heard a stirring in the loft.

ROGER. I care not who stirs ; I'll be stirring hence.

DICCON. There, there again !

ROGER. Cows moving in the byre.

If this be Wolsey's service I'm for none of it.

What, sleep in straw ? I, Roger Dutt ? Gog's wine !

The murrion rats have gnawn me to the bone.
DICCON. Ay, this it is to serve a fallen man ;

We are too faithful, fellow.
ROGER. Basta fidelity !

I'll take my wage and go. We're cozened. What ?

Lived like the King, and now . . .
DICCON. Most like the Queen.

ROGER. Ay, she's spilt too, the Spanish slut ; that's

balm.
DICCON. What noise was that ?

Enter CAVENDISH, a young gentleman, poorly

dressed.
CAVENDISH. What's toward ?

Enter PATCH * and RAT, fighting.

ROGER. Wolsey's fool.

PATCH. A spy ! A spy ! I'll teach thee, spy, thou
cullion ! (Beating Mm with his bauble)

* PATCH, a little, misshapen, degenerate man, with small eyes, splay mouth
and big red nose, round backed, dressed in tight yellow jerkin buttoned clumsily
down the back ; hit head-dress with two long stiff" ears all the one colour, like an
ass's head.

ROGER. About him, Patch.

Enter some YEOMEN

RAT. Let be ! I am a clerk.

ROGER. Cries benefit of clergy.

RAT. Loose me !

PATCH. Lutheran !

RAT. Hoddypeke !

PATCH. Javel !

RAT. Kipskin !

PATCH. Solifidian !

Enter CROMWELL, with sword drawn.

CROMWELL. How now ? The Philistines upon us ?
CAVENDISH. Master Cromwell.

CROMWELL. (To PATCH) Put up thy jawbone, Samson. What crow's this ?

PATCH. A carrion from the Court, bawd Boleyn's

priest.

I took peepholing in my nuncle's roof.
CROMWELL. Let him be bound to wait his Grace's will.
[Exit SPY in custody. Exit PATCH
(To YEOMEN) Go truss your stuff ; address you

for the road.

What would you have with me ?
ROGER. My wgae.

DICCON. And mine.

ROGER. This fare is not for me.
CAVENDISH. A dog lies better.

CROMWELL. Take it and go. (CROMWELL gives them
money) [Exeunt ROGER and DICCON

You too, Cavendish !

CAVENDISH. Faith, no ;

An you stand by his Grace . . .

(A knocking at the gate)

CROMWELL. Who's there ?

BRERETON. (Without) Open in the King's name.

Enter BRERETON, NORRIS and ESCORT, in mud-spattered silks and velvets.

BRERETON. Here's a Court for a Cardinal !

NORRIS. Straw for rushes.

BRERETON. And pig's mire for pomander. Pah !

What, sir, I say ? Tell his Disgrace the Cardinal

I bring a message from the King.
CROMWELL. From the King? Go, Cavendish, advise my Lord. I'll bring this sparrow anon. Will

you sit, sir ?
BRERETON. In the trough ? We have ridden up and

down all night in the mud seeking you. Why

not at Esher ?

CROMWELL. We were benighted on the road.
BRERETON. A farm-house was sorry lodging.
CROMWELL. Luxury, sir. His meanest chaplain
hath a stall

Here like a Bishop.

Enter WOLSEY

BRERETON. Here's him was Wolsey.

CROMWELL. (To WOLSEY) You lose your pride.
WOLSEY. A message from the King ?

Sweet Master Brereton, angel of good news,

What says his Majesty ?

BRERETON. He sends this brief.

WOLSEY. Sealed with his agate seal. We're in the
presence. (Kneels)

These naughty strings ; off, treasonable cloth !
(Breaking the strings of his cap)

Oh, gentle paper, say that the King is kind ;

He seemed to frown, to try mine enemies ;

The jest is done ; we shall make merry.

BRERETON. Read !

The comment after.
WOLSEY. (Reading) What, must all be taken ?

" A perfect docket of your good and stuff."
BRERETON. Your thanks were oversoon.
WOLSEY. Why, this is dross ;

Sith I have lost his favour, good-bye all.

I'll weep out my remainder in a cave,

With stones for pillows, trees for serving-men,

Turn heavenward the heart I turned to him

And win a place above ... to meet him there.
BRERETON. My task is done ; be yours obedience.
WOLSEY. Stay !

What quenched my hope had kindled hope to
quench ;

For this I thank his Grace. Take him this chain

In token of my thank.

BRERETON. 'Tis the King's already.

WOLSEY. What, have I nothing ?
BRERETON. All of your good is his.

WOLSEY. Then take my fool.

PATCH. Not your poor, faithful fool ?

WOLSEY. What boots it, Patch ? Can I make
merry now ?

My laughing days are done.
PATCH. I'll wear a hood,

Turn hermit too, and teach you how to weep.
WOLSEY. Away, away !
PATCH. Oh, tickle trust of princes !

What ! I have loved you, laboured to your
mood,

Laughed when you laughed, been sad when you
were sad ;

And now Go pack ! A hind had shown it more

That sent his calf to market. Oh, I'll be

A monkey fool, play them such elfish tricks,

Pinch the King's punk and tell the King he's fat, They'll rue the gift and curse the giver.

ESCORT. Come !

WOLSEY. Good gentleman, I pray you for your pains
Take the poor guerdon of these scanty angels
All that I have. (Giving purse to BRERETON)

BRERETON. (Tossing the purse to CROMWELL) Here,
fellow !

CROMWELL. (Tossing it to a YEOMAN) Fellow, here !
[Exeunt BRERETON, FOLLOWERS with PATCH

WOLSEY. Oh, Thomas !

CROMWELL. You must be riding, good my Lord.

WOLSEY. Oh, Thomas ! I have tossed the livelong
night.

CROMWELL. You must be riding.

WOLSEY. Fever in my bones.

CROMWELL. Esher mends all.

WOLSEY. The little that I ate . . .

CROMWELL. I pity you, my Lord.

WOLSEY. Oh, good my Thomas,

Mine only comfort ! Who is faithful ? None.

CROMWELL. My Lord, the fewer faithful, better fare ;
For you must prune your state to meet your

fortune.

Let all your family be summoned forth,
Ushers and chaplains, yeomen, all. Go, Cavendish,
I must to London. [Exit CAVENDISH

WOLSEY. You forsake me ?

CROMWELL. No.

The King has written ; why, there's hope in that ;
I'll go and pray for mercy at his feet,
Canvass the Bishops, sound the Councillors,
Stay the impeachment in the Parliament,
And though your cause be true in Heaven's eye,
Yet I'll go laden with such earthly things,
Such title-deeds, advowsons, gold and gear,

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Teach earthly wits to see with Heaven's eye.
Fallen is fallen, but we'll lay a bed
Of down to catch your fall.
WOLSEY. Mine only friend !

Enter CAVENDISH

CROMWELL. How now ?

CAVENDISH. These clerks sleep sound.

CROMWELL. True Churchmen 1

In the softest corners, ousting the honest lay.

Enter the HOUSEHOLD

Range you on this side and on that. My Lord

Bids you Godspeed or Welcome, as you will.

WOLSEY. Ay, welcome, thrice welcome, ye who dare

To friend your fortunes with a ruined man ;

Godspeed to those whose prudence or whose need

Teaches the other road. My day is done ;

Riches and office I have none to give ;

Who serves me yet serves only for my love.

Our holy business, dedicate to God,

Brooks not the carnal bonds of wife and child ;

Yet we have hearts, and you have been my sons ;

These tears we shed together prove our kin.
CHAPLAINS and USHERS. Father, I stay. And I.

And I. And I.
YEOMAN. And so would I, an I could live on air.

If he have nought, then what remains for us ?
CROMWELL. Dismiss the serving-men.
YEOMAN. Yet softly, sir ;

Home far and money out, what boots adieu ?

Our need would make us true against our will.
WOLSEY. Money ? Alack, I have no money.
CROMWELL. Why,

Who should maintain a father but his sons ?

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CHAPLAINS. What follows ?

CROMWELL. The first Apostles of the Church

Walked without scrip or wallet ; Peter hungered,
But Peter's afterlings grow fat. Your clerks
Have wallets stuffed with tithe and benefice.
CHAPLAINS. Ever a word ayenst the Holy Church !
WOLSEY. Had W T olsey Chancellor been rife in gifts
As Wolsey Cardinal, men would have cried
For shame !
CROMWELL. Lay goes by worth; cure souls who

will.

Lend me a cap. An alms, ye holy men !
Here's for a handsel. (Throwing money in) Draw

your strings !
A groat ? For shame. Come, let the angels

sing ! (Shaking the bag)
CHAPLAINS. There's mine. Beshrew him. Mine,

and mine, and mine.
YEOMEN. Long live the Cardinal and Mayster

Cromwell !

CROMWELL. Farewell a while, my Lord ; I'll bring
you balm.

[Exit WOLSEY, attended by the HOUSEHOLD
CROMWELL. (To CAVENDISH) Sir Squire, you'll ride

with me. Go, trap the nags,
And thrust a suit of Court gear in my pack.

[Exit CAVENDISH
(A knocking at the gate)

Anon, anon ! The sky rains visitors.

Enter LAMBERT

CROMWELL. God save you, sir.

LAMBERT. Give thee good- morrow, friend.

CROMWELL. You use me freely. What's your will
with me ?

LAMBERT. Hast thou forgot me ?

CROMWELL. That, or you yourself.

LAMBERT. And Anvers too ?

CROMWELL. Jack Lambert, as I live !

What, Jack, my dainty heretick, my Grecian?
Jack?

The accolade, Jack ! (Embracing him) Here's a
breeze of youth,

Of bounding youth, that hoped, and laughed, and
swore

To tear the world to tatters and make it new ;

And still the old world holds.
LAMBERT. We'll tear it yet.

CROMWELL. What do they say in Anvers ? What's

the news ?

LAMBERT. 'Tis two years gone since I left Anvers.
CROMWELL. What ?

Two years in England ?
LAMBERT. Ay.

CROMWELL. And never a word ?

LAMBERT. Never a word, Tom, waiting the time
were ripe.

I ply a perilous trade ; the port of London,

By secret friends and mates of Flemish hoys,

Yields cargazons of gallows- matter, books.
CROMWELL. Heretick books ?
LAMBERT. Wrought off abroad, and tHese

I bear by colour of merchandise in corn

To Oxford.

CROMWELL. Oxford ?

LAMBERT. I have seen thee there.

CROMWELL. And thou wast mum, Jack ? Feared

my danger ?
LAMBERT. No ;

Our dangers are a debt. I spied my time.
CROMWELL. Thou'st spied it ill.

LAMBERT. No.

CROMWELL. I'm a ruined man.

LAMBERT. A free man. Whiles you served the Cardinal,

What booted it to speak of such adventures ?

This worldly gear had trammelled all your thoughts.

Oh, I have seen thee, toising the new Hall,

Bidding the masons budge to build the fame

Of Wolsey in imperishable stone.
CROMWELL. Ay, the new college by St Aldate's. True !

The Cardinal's surveyor, sorry drudge,

Buried in ledgers, title-deeds and ink,

Too slave to nourish the big hopes of youth,

The dizzy Anvers hopes of Liberty,

My light quite quenched.

LAMBERT. Ay, Thomas, so I feared.

CROMWELL. Out on thee, knave, that harboured such a fear,

That numbered Thomas Cromwell with the hinds

Who toil and eat and sleep and toil again,

Content to live in smug obedience,

And hour by hour creep nearer to the grave

With nothing hoped or dared or lost or gained.

Why, Jack, my purpose is as firm as thine ;

Was heretick or you were cradled, boy,

Lollard or you were breeched.
LAMBERT. There's my old Tom !

CROMWELL. The gentle youths at school that called me kern,

Farrier-spawn and upstart, taught me rebellion ;

The stripe-rife pedant, Jacobin Dan Peto,

Rod- sealed the lesson. I hated Rome

And Heav'n and England, all places where

Obedience reigns and order. Hell for me,
Where ever the riotous voice climbs up the sky,
Scorched and defiant, of martyrs kissed the stake
For daring think. My deeds have shown my mind.
Did I not fight with Carbajal in Italy ?
Pizarro ? Almojen ?

LAMBERT. I know thy scars.

CROMWELL. We cannot choose our fate.
I took a wife ; she multiplied, and I
Must get more bread than on a whinyard's end,

Cupboard my hopes, like corn that shoots again ;
Home and a counting-house received me.

LAMBERT. How liked you Merry England ?

CROMWELL. Passing ill.

One day of tears my Jenny, tired of living,
Turned to the wall and died. The next came news
The Duke of Bourbon marched against the Pope.
My blood cried out for sport ; I armed and flew.
We carved a bloody way thro* the Campagna,
Trod on the skirt of the scarlet drab, Rome !
Breathed for a space, and on a moonless night
Went word for the assault, a camisado ;
Shirts on our habergeons, a throng of ghosts,
We scaled the battlements ; the ancient goose
Challenged the former Gaul, had yield her room
To men-at-arms ; the gallant Bourbon fell,
Through- shotten by a rascal silversmith,
Cellini Benvenuto, most Malvenuto then.
W T ith him fell my employment. Back to my task ;
A hungry brood sate homefast, beaks agape ;
My whinyard for an inkhorn once again.

LAMBERT. And Rome ?

CROMWELL. We sacked her.

LAMBERT. The booty ?

CROMWELL. Spent in a night.

One said I'd served him, served me then

And placed me by the Cardinal. I throve ;
Deemed myself powerful, Wolsey's friend,
This lamentable prelate, who but now
Kneeled in the mixen to his Grace's lackey.
Oh, I would conjure ! In my dreams I touched
The pinnacle, and lo, the temple fell.
Now to the Court to salve my Master's wounds ;
And then I'll school my heart to humbleness,
Plant herbs, and learn my babes their criss-cross
row*.

LAMBERT. And I'll stand hammering at thy gate

the while
To call thee forth.

CROMWELL. What would you ?

LAMBERT. Spread the light

By all the oaths that bind, man ! thou art ours !

CROMWELL. What boots it ?

LAMBERT. The hour is ripe.

CROMWELL. Go, hawk thy books,

And teach a wench or two blaspheme the mass,
Yell on the rack and feed unprofitable fires.

LAMBERT. The day of books is done ; we'll bawl the

truth
In every market-place.

CROMWELL. Smithfield the next.

LAMBERT. Another would have said, Cromwell's
afeard.

CROMWELL. Ay, marry,

Afeard to fail where he has spied success.
What boots it, lad, to scatter truth in drops,
Parched even in falling by the jealous sun,
When we might pour a mighty flood along
Would wash the whole world clean ? I almost

held
The sluice-pole in my hand when Wolsey fell.

LAMBERT. But Wolsey fell.

CROMWELL. Oh, thou wouldst make me out

The innest thoughts myself do blush to look on.

What if Madonna Fortune smile again ?

They say she dwells in Courts ; I'll seek her there ;

Make friends for Wolsey, I make them for myself ;

From small at first, I'll grow to such a head,

O'ertopping all resistance, break all dams,

And swim to freedom, maugre the King's own teeth.
LAMBERT. Dreamer !

CROMWELL. There's hereticks there, Sir 'Thomas
Boleyn,

My Lady's father . . .
LAMBERT. He's a Lutheran !

CROMWELL. Anon ?
LAMBERT. A worser tyranny than Rome

Fettering to the tangled script.
CROMWELL. Content ;

Yet where there's war, with these or those be
ranged,

Else perish.
LAMBERT. Resist not evil, said the Christ ;

Devil fight devil, truth is in the midst.
CROMWELL. And trampled in the fray.
LAMBERT. We must have faith !

CROMWELL. A fig for faith !

Enter CAVENDISH with a bag.

How now ?

CAVENDISH. The horses wait.

CROMWELL. (To LAMBERT) Ride thou with us ; we'll

more of this anon.
(To CAVENDISH) This budget?
CAVENDISH. Stuffed with gear to gild the palms

Of Councillors.
CROMWELL. 'Tis well.

LAMBERT. You buy opinions ?

CROMWELL. Not I ! In this fool world we judge by number ;

Opinion's free ; I buy but those have none,

Or none worth having.

Enter two YEOMEN with RAT.

YEOMAN. Master, and the spy ?

CROMWELL. Loose him ; he rides with me.
YEOMAN. What, go uncudgelled ?

CROMWELL. (To the SPY) By your favour. Faith,
Jack, I'm glad of thee.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE 1

At Court; in a hall with a throne set. TALBOT,
COURTIERS and LADIES.

TALBOT. That's by the way. Where was I ?
IST LADY. All astray.

2ND LADY. The prologue's overlong ; come to the
play.

Enter JANE SEYMOUR and a LADY

IST LADY. Here's Talbot fresh from Ampthill and
the Queen.

3RD LADY. Queen Katharine ?

JANE. Poor lady, she is sad ?

TALBOT. Why, marry, yes,

If laughing, dancing and good appetite
Be signs of grief. Spring comes to her in

Autumn ;

Wived to Prince Arthur, widowed, wived again
Ere she had learned what is't to be a child,
She bowed her head to wedlock as a flower
Too early budded bows to the snows of March.
Oh, she was meek and still ; but at the last,
When she was like to see her maid a Queen,
Herself beshent, her child abastardised,
The proud Castilian lion stirred in her,
Awoke and sprang to battle for its cub.
Her passing triumph works in her like wine ;
She bids the night be day, day holiday ;
She drives abroad against her former wont,
With smiles and bows and wafting of the hand,
That pink of princesses, that piece of starch,
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That crab-tree sapling, Mary, at her side ;
And all the people cry, God save the Queen,
And blow her greasy kisses. While the King
Sits glooming here, like fairy prince bewitched,
In magic fetters, ellinge and forlorn ;
And hotfoot heralds speed the farthest roads,
Trumpeting half his realm and all his love,
To whoso find the spell-relenting word
Shall loose the web cast round him by the witch.

The gentle Wolsey, pregnant of the phrase,
But licked his lips to speak, when black Campeggio
Revoked the cause to Rome. He fell. Who next ?
LADY. The rumour runs . . .

Enter BOLEYN

TALBOT. But mark where Boleyn walks.

Ho, ho ! he's proud, he's happy ;

His legs are eloquent and blab state secrets ;

His lips will still be smiling, wring them as he may.

He's Baron, Viscount, Earl, and God knows else,

For what desert, but the begetting Anne ?

What, Boleyn ! (Admiring his clothes)

Here's a dainty piece of tailor-craft ;

This tabby swims like water in the sun.
BOLEYN. You like it ? 'Tis from Paris.
TALBOT. Come, sirrah, what's the best news with

you ? Are you to be the grandfather of Kings ? Let

us walk in the upper gallery, ladies ; here come some

suitors against his Grace's coming forth.

At noon when audience ends we bait the bear

That Suffolk brought from Calais. Will you
walk ?

[Exeunt OMNES

Enter CRANMER with two pupils, YEOMEN

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CRANMER. (To a YEOMAN) I pray you, bring me
to my Lord Gardiner, the King's secretary. Tell
him that Master Cranmer, the poor clerk he wots
of, is here at his bidding. I would I were a
thousand miles away.

(Two YEOMEN look at him disdainfully, laugh together and saunter off)

Enter CROMWELL and CAVENDISH with a YEOMAN

CROMWELL. (To 3rd YEOMAN) Fly, sirrah, fly ! This
plume shall wing thy feet. (Giving him a coin)

CAVENDISH. Then all our hope is fixed in Gardiner.

CROMWELL. Why, who should speed our suit so well

as Gardiner ?

A man lives not more bounden to his like
Than Gardiner to Wolsey : he was naught,
A go-by-ground that Wolsey lifted up,
Cockered and cherished, fatted him with honours,
And set him by the King. Then who more apt
To serve the Cardinal than Gardiner ?

CAVENDISH. Why, this is truth, yet spoken mockingly.

CROMWELL. Cromwell a mocker ? Fie ! (Seeing
CRANMER) Whom have we here ?

CRANMER. I crave your pardon, sir, if we do wrong being in this place.

CROMWELL. No wrong to me, Domine. You have a suit to the King ?

CRANMER. Marry, not I, sir ; a thousand griefs would never have brought me willingly here ; but Master Fox and Master Gardiner, the King's secretary, with whom you are out of doubt acquaint ?

CROMWELL. A little, sir.

CRANMER. These two lay a night at Waltham where

I taught these children, and I being questioned by them at supper as touching the King's suit of divorce, showed them my poor mind in the matter, which, they being pleased to applaud, Master Gardiner thereafter rapt me to London, though sorely loath, bidding me wait on him here this morning to confer more largely in the same behalf. I muse he tarry so long in coming.
CROMWELL. Behold his Reverence.

Enter GARDINER, a lean, pale man with deep black eyes, dressed in a close-fitting black bishop's robe and cap.

CRANMER. My name is Cranmer.
GARDINER. Go wait in the antechamber.

[Exit CRANMER
(TALBOT and two LADIES appear in a balcony above.

looking down)
CROMWELL. (Ceremoniously) Master Gardiner,

The Cardinal commends him to your love.
GARDINER. As I to his.

CROMWELL. And bids me sue your favour.

GARDINER. Command what my scant power can

afford.
CROMWELL. Sithen no suitor dare, on pain of

durance,

Present his plaint unpatroned at the Throne,
I, whose poor breath must plead for Wolsey here,
Beseek your Reverence, be sponsor to my suit.
GARDINER. Sir, though the ancient love I bear your

master,

Still undiminished by his just disgrace,
Be strong to push me from my duty's rule,
Yet must my charge to minister the law
Forbid me urge exception from the law

For private love or favour. Gardiner weeps,
Gardiner would do all, but Master Secretary
Dare not be swayed. Command me in all else.

CROMWELL. Would that the King had others such to serve him !

GARDINER. How fares his Grace's health ?

CROMWELL. Why, bravely, bravely ;

He sings, he laughs, hugs ruin like a wench.

GARDINER. Sir ?

CROMWELL. Why, Stephen, friend, are we all mad ?
The house afire, and we stand chapping courtesies
Like mummers in a Christmas interlude ?
God save thy soul, if thou have soul to save !
I tell thee, fellow-serving-man, the Master
Who served us as we him these many years
Is like to die for want of Henry's grace ;
Away with ceremony, fellow, come !
We'll fling us side by side at Henry's feet,
Deafen his ears with such a storm of speech,
Drown him with floods of tears, till he be fain
To grant the thing we ask for very fear.

GARDINER. I answer once again, it is impossible.
You do not know the King ; his heart is fixed.
If Holy Thomas' self trudged up from Canterbury
His instance were in vain. To plead for Wolsey
Is to enrage him, lose the little power
I yet may have to benefit my friends.

CROMWELL. This is not Stephen speaks ; some felon

sprite
Loosed from a courtier's carcass hanged for

thieving
Hath stole his image to deface his honour.

GARDINER. I speak my very mind.

CROMWELL. You speak your fears

But not your mind. Come, I have asked too
much ;

I bate the better half : I'll plead alone ;
But say : " Here's one I knew in worser days,
A sort of rogue that hath a suit to urge,
I take no part in him."

GARDINER. You waste your breath ;

His treason is too rank, too palpable ;
To plead for him is partner to his crime.
I cannot nor I dare not lift a finger
To fish him from the abysm.

CROMWELL. Why, Stephen, man,

Have you no bowels ? Are you not made of flesh ?
Are clerks not men ? And did your chaste

renouncement

Banish your blood and fill your veins with whey ?
Have you no pity, stockfish ? Wolsey sues
That never wont to sue but to be sued ;
And sues to what ? To Gardiner !
This fallen, broken, pitiful old man
Humbles himself to what himself did make,
A bastard from the kennel, washed and wiped,
Set in a stall to be a bishop. Lo,
The thing takes state upon it, pleads his office,
Must not be turned aside by private favour,
Draws in his skirt for fear it be defiled,
And leaves his uplifter sprawling in the mire.
Why, this is the very snow-bound peak of falseness,

By which all other villainy's flat virtue,
Bawdry is honest, thieves and murderers saints.

GARDINER. O Cromwell, these be bitter words

indeed ;

And yet I bear no malice. All my thought
Is bent to serve the cause by gentler means
That you would mar with clumsy eloquence.
Tho' open pleading would but hasten harm,
My nearness to the King will lend occasion,

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Whenas we seem to talk of other gear,
To touch a word in season, by the way,
To mitigate his doom. Go back to Esher :
Let my poor wit, more homely to the Court,
Be the attorney of our common suit.

CROMWELL. Go to, thou subtle shaveling ; well I

know

The serpent-drift hid in thy flowered words.
Not love of safety moves thee, but ambition
To make a stepping-stone of Wolsey's fall,
And clamber to the place he tumbled from.
Begone ! lest these my hands forget their niceness
And stain their honour in a villain's blood.

GARDINER. So be it ; I have offered amity ;
If enmity, I am not all unarmed.
Farewell.

CROMWELL. Fare ill, thou piece of holy treachery.

[Exit GARDINER

CAVENDISH. Here's a fine gear. We come hither to seek friends and straight you raise us an enemy.

CROMWELL. Tilly vally, man. 'Tis the first furniture of a courtier. Such an enemy as Gardiner is seven friends.

Enter TALBOT

TALBOT. Why, this was well done, worshipful gentleman. I say this was gallantly done. To hear Master Secretary so beknaved, bevillained, beshavelinged. What ? " Washed and wiped " ? Oh, this was a rare gleek. Are you not that Master Cromwell that attended the Cardinal here at the Court ?

CROMWELL. Oh, my Lord, I stood once or twice among the servitors.

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TALBOT. No servitor, sir ! You sate in the Parliament House ; I mind it well.

CROMWELL. Are you not that Sir John Talbot that was kind to my master ?

TALBOT. Marry, sir, I recall no special service.

CROMWELL. The Cardinal's heart keeps better register. He bade me bring you a trifling recompense or he be quite beggared.

TALBOT. A recompense ?

CROMWELL. The Rectory of Camden Regis : here

be the muniments ; a gift all unworthy the
acceptance ; yet take it in gree, for tho' small in
itself, yet is it big with his blessing.

TALBOT. What, Rector of Camden Regis ?

CROMWELL. Your duty to receive the greater tithes,
no more.

TALBOT. No other duty ?

CROMWELL. None but that of receiving.

TALBOT. 'Tis pity. Lord ! I could preach them
such a sermon. 4 Washed and wiped ' ! In
thank for those two words I'll even present you
to the King myself for your suit as Gardiner
would not.

CROMWELL. I am most bounden to your gentleness.

TALBOT. Go to. Ka me ka thee. Give-gave is a

trusty dog.

The King will be here anon ; and we shall know
How standeth the matter of the divorce.
His Majesty looketh lickerishly at Mistress Anne
Boleyn, like a hungry tie-dog at a bone ; but 'tis
a proud bone and saith, Break me thy chain first.
I'se warrant you we see a pretty comedy played
here, Mas Crummle, and all deeply prepared
beforehand : the King threatening to pare his
crown and turn monk, and Lincoln beseeching
him to overcome his known love of chastity for

the sake of his people. I shall have all the pains
in the world to forbear laughing. But see, here
comes the Court.

Enter the KING and COURT, ushered in by SIR
THOMAS BOLEYN.

Yonder comes haughty Norfolk with the evil eye ;
there's Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, that married
the King's sister out of France. Yon ancient
all-bones is the Duke of Lincoln that's to play old
Vice in the comedy. And this (pointing to himself) is the Rector of Camden Regis. Stand by me
here and seem not to know me.

(HENRY ascends the throne)
HENRY. My lords and friends, the shepherds of my

folk,

Whose duty is make known our sovran will
And not the secret springs which gave it motion ;
Now, forasmuch as idle rumours run,
Touching the motives of our suit to Rome,
Of our good grace and favour unconstrained
We will declare our inward thought therein.
A child, and yet unversed in Holy Writ,
I entered yoke, a score of summers since,
In humble duty to my father's will,
With Princess Katharine of Aragon,
The youthful widow of my brother Arthur.
The curse of barrenness decreed of Heaven
On such a sinful bed was shown in us
Each after other our expected issue
Perished in birth ;

One only daughter, Mary, mocked our hopes.
Prickt in my tender conscience I have sought
A remedy, where remedy should be ;
For who should be so forward as the Pope,

The earthly minister of Law Divine,
To loose a sinner from the mesh of sin ?
Yet all in vain ; his wayward Holiness
Brands me my daughter bastard, but denies
To rid me from the bond that made her so.
If it be Heaven's will that I should pay
The penance of my all unwitting crime
By stern renouncement of the joys of love,
My June of manhood turned to barren winter,
My flower of life wilted in monkish gloom,

(The COURTIERS murmur)
Go to, you know my temper ; I am chaste ;
Not passion moveth me, nor light desire,
To wanton changefully from sweet to sweet.

(The COURTIERS murmur again)
Let it be so ; I bow to the decree.
But, by the blood which bought us, nevermore
Will I return, for all the Popes in Heaven,
To her that never was, but seemed, my wife.
Henceforth let no man speak of her as Queen ;
She is not Queen, nor never has been Queen.
So ; I have spoken ; let your tongues proclaim
My royal pleasure in the people's ear.
LINCOLN. Most dread our sovran, yours it is to

speak,

Ours but to hearken. Yet give me leave awhile
To thank your Grace for these your gracious

words,

And Heaven which sent the comfortable balm
Of loving friends and trusty counsellors
To heal your wounded spirit in its need.
HENRY. Our friends are thanked, and let our thanks

be known.

Sir Thomas Boleyn, use henceforth the style
Of Earl of Wiltshire, with all pertaining rights ;
Be Mistress Boleyn, Marchioness of Pembroke.

COURTIERS. Good joy, mv ladv ! God give you joy
of it!

TALBOT. Did I not say so ?

HENRY. You look but poorly, Marchioness ; seat
you here.

(ANNE sits on the steps of the throne)

PATCH. (To ANNE) Long live your Majesty !

HENRY. Take that sad fool away.

[Exit PATCH

LINCOLN. Sith I have spoken, let me speak my fill.

(Kneeling)

O Majesty, have pity on your people,
Whose dearest hope a prince of Henry's blood,
Whose chiefest fear to see the Tudor rose,
The flower of peace, blown on the battlefield
Of ever-warring York and Lancaster,
Wither and make the world a wilderness

When jealous Heaven reave you to itself.

HENRY. What would you, Lincoln ?

LINCOLN. Banish your chaste resolve.

Let England's universal prayer prevail
Where earthly appetite is impotent.
Queen us a queen in place of the unqueened,
And make us princes of the Tudor blood.

HENRY. My people's good hath ever been my law.
But even were I fain to yield in this,
To steal from Heaven the dedicated gift
And leave austerity for fruitfulness,
Yet were the doing all unpossible
Whiles I am fettered by the ancient bond,
Still, if my people will it, stir your brains
And make impossible be possible.
Farewell, my lords. (Rising)

GARDINER. Most gracious King.

TALBOT. Your Majesty.

HENRY. Speak, Talbot.

TALBOT. (Leading CROMWELL forward by the hand
CROMWELL kneels) Here's one that hath a suit to
urge.

HENRY. I hearken, sirrah.

CROMWELL. Your Highness' Grace, I plead for one

has erred

Most grievously against your Majesty.
He doth confess the justice of your wrath,
And prays for what the King alone can give,
For mercy, mercy for his foul offence.

HENRY. Who is the man ?

CROMWELL. The Cardinal.

HENRY. What Cardinal ?

CROMWELL. Wolsey, the fallen.

HENRY. And the justly fallen.

You plead in vain. The law, not I, condemned

him,
Let him entreat the Law.

CROMWELL. In vain, my liege ;

The Law can render him his goods again,
Lands, houses, gold and such despised pelf,
But not the breath of life, your Grace's favour.

HENRY. He hath offenoed our kingly privilege
And breached the bulwarks of the written law,
By suing licence at the Court of Rome
To wield the power of legate in our realm.

CROMWELL. Yet only on your Majesty's behalf,
To judge your Grace's cause against the Queen.

HENRY. And judged it ill.

CROMWELL. How could he grant a suit

Pleaded so ill ?

HENRY. Ill pled ?

CROMWELL. , By Gardiner.

GARDINER. Your Grace . . .

HENRY. Peace, sirrah. But for Wolsey's fault
My cause had had no further need of judgment.

He was ambitious, would be Pope himself,
And so provoked the Pope to cast my suit.

CROMWELL. Ambition is no sin. He would be Pope
Only to serve your Majesty. The fault
Was his whose undi scree tness published it
To all the world.

HENRY. Whose ?

CROMWELL. Who but Gardiner ?

HENRY. You are a sorry courtier. These good folk,
As much beholden to his Grace as you,
Men that have fatted on his benefits,
Yet not a one of them hath lift his voice ;
And you, his serving-man . . . Why, know you

not
'Tis wooing bale to plead for fallen men ?

CROMWELL. Fallen myself I needs must feel for him.

HENRY. This is a faithful fellow. What's your
name ?

CROMWELL. Cromwell ; yet would that it were
Gardiner.

HENRY. Still on that string ? Interpret.

CROMWELL. Side by side

We served the Cardinal, lived in his light,
Both equal bounden by the knot of love.
How all unmeet that I, the humble usher,
Disgrace your Highness' presence by my suit,
While he, grown great, stands silent and aloof !

HENRY. There's sooth in this. If he be false to

Wolsey,

'Tis like that he prove false to Henry too.
How fares the Cardinal ?

CROMWELL. Grown thin and wan.

HENRY. What, Wolsey wan?

CROMWELL. For lacking of your favour ;

Sans sleep, sans appetite, and like to die.

HENRY. What, he is ill ? You knew it, Gardiner ;

'Tis Wolsey's crime not Wolsey moves our wrath.

Ho, a physician straight to wait on Wolsey.

What, Wolsey ill ?

BOLEYN. 'Tis too much favour, Liege.

HENRY. Ha : none but asses spurn the fallen lion.

Ill, say you, sirrah ? Ill, and like to die ?

Send five physicians more.
CROMWELL. Physic is vain,

Without your Grace's favour.
HENRY. Why, we love him ;

Take him this ring in token of my love.

Send him a token, Anne.
ANNE. Sir ?

HENRY. I command it.

ANNE. I love him not, sir.

HENRY. Do as I bid you ; here, your girdle's owch ;

Quick, or I snatch it. (Taking it) These to Wolsey's hands.

CROMWELL. Had I the tongue of angels, gracious
Lord,

I should but mar my thanks in telling them.
HENRY. (Rising, to the LORDS) What else ?
GARDINER. A certain Master Cranmer, Liege.
HENRY. Ha ! the learned clerk that had counsel to

propound in the matter of the divorce. I'll hear

him by and by in my closet. (To CROMWELL, who

is bowing himself out) Stay, sirrah, you shall hear

him too, and show me your opinion thereon.

Come.

[Exeunt HENRY, GARDINER, CROMWELL,

MORE and TALBOT
COURTIERS. (To each other) Good morrow.

God give ye good day.
CRANMER. (Led across by an USHER) What, withouten

my velvet cloak ? Would I were safely back at

Waltham.

SCENE 2

(COURTIERS conversing)
Enter TALBOT

COURTIERS. Whence come you, gentle Sir John ?

TALBOT. From the King's closet, whither mine
office called me.

COURTIERS. Hast thou heard aught ?

TALBOT. Marry, have I. I have walked in the
inner chambers of the King's confidence as
touching the matter of the divorce.

COURTIERS. (A.) What said they ?
(B.) Let us hear all.

TALBOT. Marry, the most part of what they saiden was more than a bowshot beyond the reach of my poor entendiment, that had not clergy enough to unravel the long tangled skeins of their schoolman Latin ; yet can I deliver you the pith of the business in few words.

COURTIERS. (A.) We know thy few.
(B.) Speak on, Laconian.

TALBOT. First spake Master Parson, whose worthy name I put somewhat into oblivion.

COURTIERS. Cranmer.

TALBOT. Ay, Cranmer ; so it was.

COURTIERS. What said Master Parson ?

TALBOT. The voice of the Church, quod he, is the voice of all good churchmen ; nor is her wisdom all boxed in the Pope's sconce. Ergo, let his Grace appeal first in the matter of the divorce to the doctors of the Church in Christendom about. And having gathered their opinions in his favour, of which there is no doubt, he will thereby enforce

the Pope to favour his cause, seeing that his Holiness must needs say yea to what all Christendom voucheth to be Truth and Justice, or else seem untrue and unjust himself.

COURTIERS. What said the King ?

TALBOT. His Grace vouchsafed answer that the learned clerk had the right sow by the ear.

COURTIERS. (.4.) 'Twas well said.

(B.) Ay, a very handsome answer.
(A.) And then what ?

TALBOT. And then Master Cromwell being bidden to speak uttered good honest English breath ; saying that the Bishop of Rome was no more than another bishop, saving for his usurped right, and if the doctors of Christendom were all agreed the Pope might go wipe his nose ; with much more of the same kind, at which the King was mightily pleased. But here they come ; say nothing, but mum.

Enter HENRY, with his arm about MORE'S neck, followed by CROMWELL and others.

HENRY. I like the fellow's wit. " Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's." Am I not Caesar ?

CROMWELL. (Bowing himself out) Majesty, by your gracious leave.

HENRY. Nay, by this light, sirrah, thou shalt not part so. Let me have the knave about the Court. I have need of such as thee. Find him some charge, I prithee, good Sir Thomas ; clerk of the jewels, the hanaper, or God knows what.

CROMWELL. What of my message to his Grace the Cardinal ?

HENRY. Let honest Butts pack it up with his physic. I cannot lack thee.

CROMWELL. I am humbly beholden to your
Majesty.

HENRY. " Render unto Caesar ! " 'Tis too little yet ;
here, a sword, a sword !

CROMWELL. I am of humble birth, your Majesty.

HENRY. Tut, man, we are all made o' dirt. Ha !
A sword, I say ! Here, bail me thy bilbo,
Norfolk. What's the fellow's name ?

CROMWELL. Thomas, your Grace.

HENRY. (Dubbing him) Rise up, Sir Thomas. (The
COURTIERS gather about CROMWELL to congratulate
him) Come your ways, friends ; the bearpit cries
for us.

[Exeunt all but CROMWELL and LAMBERT

CROMWELL. What say you, doubter, now ? Whether

was best,

To crawl and creep by inches to the goal,
Or fly like a silver bolt shot heaven high
Full in the clout ? O gentle Lady Fortune,
Is Cromwell knight ? I'll wear thy favour, sweet,
And split the gorge of all who call thee jade,
Fickle or froward. Couch thy lance, Sir Enemy ;
Have at thee, Jack !

LAMBERT. Peace, peace.

CROMWELL. I'll garr the King

So knit me to his soul, thinken my thought,
Doen my deed, as wear the crown myself.
I am made, made, made !

LAMBERT. Marred, marred, marred !

Alas, poor bird, thy foot is in the net.

CROMWELL. Sir Thomas now, scant Goodman

Cromwell once ;

Bred in a stithy, Tom the farrier's son
That wed the walker's wench Jane Wellyfed.
Alack, poor Jenny ! Come, we'll not be
proud ;

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We'll not be dazzled by this metal's gleam,
But forge a sword to let the daylight in.

LAMBERT. Farewell, poor Tom ; there's no more

help in thee ;
I'll go my way alone.

CROMWELL. And I'll go mine.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE 1

At Court. ANNE BOLEYN, KATHARINE HOWARD,
JANE SEYMOUR, SIR JOHN TALBOT, NORRIS,

BRERETON, SMEATON at the virginals. LADY
ROCHFORD, dressed in black., sits apart telling her
beads and watching the rest. Laughter and music
as the curtain rises. NORRIS and BRERETON
kneel before ANNE BOLEYN, who holds a ribbon.

SMEATON. (Singing) "I mun be married o' Sunday,

I mun be married o' Sunday,
Whosoever shall come this way,
I mun be married o' Sunday."

(From ' ' Roister- Doister. ' ')
ANNE. Whose shall it be ?
BRERETON. 'Twas I that spied it.

NORRIS. I that picked it up.

ANNE. 'Twas I that dropped it, therefore c'est a moi.
NORRIS and BRERETON. No, no !
ANNE. Peace, all of you.
NORRIS and BRERETON. 'Tis mine.
ANNE. Have done !

Yours, Mark, for other such a song.
SMEATON. Anon !

(Making eyes at her, singing sentimentally)

" Noli me tangere, for I am Caesar's."
ANNE. Not that !

TALBOT. Give it to me.
NORRIS. You are too old.

BRERETON. Too fat !

TALBOT. Deem ye there be no gallants but yourselves ?

Et ego " militavi non sine gloria."
JANE. A forfeit !

TALBOT. Why?

JANE. For quoting scripture.

TALBOT. (Kissing her) Paid !

Enter GARDINER

BRERETON. But mark where Gardiner comes.
(NORRIS snatches the ribbon and runs with it ;
ANNE pursues him)

SMEATON. A chase ! A chase !

(He plays hunting-horns on the virginals)

ANNE. (Stopping at sight of GARDINER and curtseying) Good-morrow, Monseigneur.

GARDINER. Pax tecum, domina.

SMEATON. (Sings) " Elisha walked by Kishon's side,

And there a maiden fair espied."

ANNE. Tais-toi, Mark.

LADY ROCHFORD. (To GARDINER) Now see you with
your proper eyes that of which I made report to
you.

GARDINER. Is the King not yet come forth ?

LADY ROCHFORD. He cometh anon. My Lord of Norfolk is with him even now, entreating him to set you in Warham's place as Archbishop of Canterbury.

GARDINER. Ay, does he so ? The Lord knoweth that I desire this not from any movement of carnal pride, but only to His greater glory. In these perilous times better I than Latimer,- Shaxton; Bonner or any others of them that follow the new learning.

Enter SIR THOMAS BOLEYN^ with a long white wand.

BOLEYN. Make a lane there,- my lords and masters; make way for his Highness' Grace the King.

Enter HENRY with NORFOLK and MORE, both in black ; after them CRANMER and CROMWELL humbly.

HENRY. Good-morrow, friends. What, pretty

pigsnie^ Nance ?
And who be these two fairs that wait on you ?

ANNE. This is Jane Seymour, dame de mes atours ;
This saucy chit, my cousin, Katharine Howard.

(HENRY talks with JANE SEYMOUR)
(To MORE) You look unfriendly on me, good Sir Thomas.

MORE. Good madam, I look friendly on my friends.

ANNE. Oh, fie ! Do they use ladies so in Utopia ?

GARDINER. (To CRANMER) Master Cranmer,
No further need for you about the Court ;
Your work is done ; depart in peace to Waltham.

CRANMER. Glory to God ! Would that I had been there these three months that I have been travelling the Universities, gathering the opinions of the Doctors on the Divorce.

GARDINER. Your work has been well done ; the King and I are content with you.

HENRY. Come hither; Master Gardiner. Right

worthily

Hast served thy charge of secretary ; but now
Give me your ring ; I've other gear for you.

NORFOLK. (To LADY ROCHFORD) Said I not so ?

HENRY. Too long the room is void

That much behoves my realm and me to fill.
Subtle and cunning, deep in craft of state,
And skilled to wring thy face to courtesy,
Who fitter ?

GARDINER. If it be your Grace's will.

HENRY. Prepare to travel.

GARDINER. Travel, Sire ?

HENRY. To France,

In embassy to Francis' Court.
GARDINER. But, Sire,

What of my flock, my See of Winchester ?
HENRY. Wanting thy help, must save their souls

themselves.

GARDINER. Humble and hearty thanks, my Liege.
HENRY. (tfryly] Anon.

CRANMER. Your Highness' Grace, permit me to
depart.

At Waltham wait my scholars twain.
HENRY. But twain ?

What's twain to Gardiner's flock ? Tarry, sir
priest ;

There's work for thee. I've marked thee wise
and humble,

Simple and holy, innocent of guile,

Not quarrelsome, nor greedy of men's praise ;

A Christly pattern meet for a Christ ly room.

Fling horn-books hence, thy schoolroom for a
see,

Thy rod a crook, bishops not babes thy charge.
CRANMER. Good Master !

HENRY. Take the throne of Canterbury.

CRANMER. Spare me, my Lord, for I am far unfit ;

Nolo episcopari.
HENRY. Sed debetis.

CRANMER. Hear me at large.
HENRY. I'll hear but not be moved.

Come forth, the sun shall daysman our debate ;

Come, Nance, and ripe thy peaches in his ray ;

Come, Cromwell, by my side.

[Exeunt HENRY, CRANMER and CROMWELL
ANNE. You too, Sir Thomas ?

MORE. Black robes gay not the day.

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ANNE. Nor black looks neither.

[Exeunt ANNE, KATHARINE, JANE, TALBOT,
BOLEYN, SMEATON, BRERETON and NORRIS

Enter SUITOR and YEOMAN

YEOMAN. (To MORE) A suitor, my Lord Chancellor.
SUITOR. (Reading a paper) Gravissimo, doctissimo,

illustrissimo, jucundissimo, reverendissimo domino

Thomaso Moro, ordinis equestris omamento prae-

stantissimo, ego, Johannes Higgs, specierum

mercator . . .
MORE. Prithee, good friend, an thou've a suit to urge,

Waste not thine eloquence on me. Too late ;

My sun is set ; seek those that have supplant me.

[Exeunt MORE, the SUITOR, and the YEOMAN, leav-
ing GARDINER, NORFOLK, LADY ROCHFORD
NORFOLK. This then is the fruit of all our pains.
GARDINER. The old order still tottereth to his ruin ;

the true faith is made the mocking- stock of her

enemies.
NORFOLK. Little hath Wolsey's downfall profited

the good cause.
LADY ROCHFORD. Strange is it that this same

Howard blood which hath wrought so much good

for England should wreak at the same time so

much ill. It is your niece, Anne Boleyn, Norfolk,

that is the cause of all our present woes.
NORFOLK. A plague light on her !
LADY ROCHFORD. The fagots blaze in Smithfield

for here ticks not half so pestilent.
NORFOLK. The King's affections are too firmly set

on her for us to shake them.
GARDINER. Yet, if he should but doubt her ! The

greater his love, the greater the bitterness of any

untruth in her.

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LADY ROCHFORD. Marry, if he but knew in what
disports she passeth her time away ! What, did
we not see her with our own eyes even now,
Gardiner ? Smeaton, Brereton, Norris, do these
men not love her ?

NORFOLK. Their fault availeth nothing, if she be
innocent herself.

GARDINER. All were it she be spotless as a lamb,
yet, if his Grace believe her guilty, then were she
undone.

LADY ROCHFORD. He speaketh sooth.

NORFOLK. What can we do, Gardiner ?

GARDINER. I, nothing ; for under colour of embassy
I am banished from the realm. Yet can ye do
much, an ye will ; laying springs and snares for
these same dawcocks with the bait of their own
vanity, as making them believe that she favoureth
their amorous propensions, whereby they may be
lured on to such a pitch of foolishness as shall
cast the reflection of guilt upon her also.

NORFOLK. Why, this were a merry pastime !

LADY ROCHFORD. A merry pastime indeed, Norfolk ;
and I look to enjoy it without tract of time.

GARDINER. And so, fare ye well ; for I must be
about preparing my journey into France.

[Exit GARDINER

SCENE 2
CROMWELL, with a book alone.

CROMWELL. " Chi vuole per il principe regnar."
" For who would govern by the Prince's mean
Must let the Prince still seem to have his way."
Ay, say you so, good Master MachiaVelli ?

SCENE 2 CROMWELL : MALL O' MONKS 241

To sound the Prince's mind, outrun his wish,
To know that treacherous river's pilotage,
His flow and ebb and where the shallows lie,
Shunning the wrecker marks of specious words,
As duty, justice, and high-sounding names
That dwell on princes' lips. Ay, I can do it,
Can do my task, set Thought the prisoner free ;
Thought that should rule the world, and now his

slave,

Fettered with law and custom, priest and faith.
This was the task of all the prophets gone,
And still of all the hereticks to come.
For heretick and prophet, each the same ;
Christ was a heretick once, and still to-day.
They slew him, ay, and slew his doctrine too,
And built a cozening Church and called it his,
And said he'd come again and know it for his own ;
Yet he, once dead, returns no more, but sits
In heaven above, and weeps for the deceit.
Better have lived, better have made it sure,
Made friends of Herod, swayed his sceptred hand,
Than herd with slaves, be crucified and fail . . .
" Chi vuole per il principe regnar,"
" Must let the Prince still seem to have his way."
Ay, so he shall ! Have women, money, love,
Whate'er his heart desire ; and we'll have Freedom.

Enter CAVENDISH and SADLER

CAVENDISH. Good-morrow, Cromwell, you are

strangely moved ;

By what mischance, or loss of hoped-for gain ?
Or pictured passion in the book you read
That makes you start and commune with yourself?

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CROMWELL. The book, boy ? Ay, the book ; my

breviary.

And spake aloud ? Conning my matin- song.
What is it, Cavendish ?

CAVENDISH. You too turned saint ?

CROMWELL. The poor man hath no friend but

Heaven. Who's this ?

CAVENDISH. My uncle Sadler, and a boon of thee.
CROMWELL. A boon ?

CAVENDISH. The place of gaoler at the Tower.

CROMWELL. Ay, Compton's dead. Why, sir, if your

deserts
And my poor word could win the thing you

ask . . .
SADLER. Doubt of your will, but not your power to

help.
CROMWELL. Come, seek a better patron to your

quest.

This boy, unversed in Courts, seeing me knight,
Clerk of the Hanaper, and such small beer,
Deems that I sit among the cherubim,
And wear Jove's thunders tucked beneath my
belt.

Enter TALBOT and SUITOR

TALBOT. Stand ye merry, your Mayships. Give ye good-morrow, Mas Crummle. What, Mas Candish too ? (To CROMWELL) Wouldst thou hear words of rhetoric flow and compliments in issimo, mark me this man. Rehearse the catalogue of your superlatives, gentle sir.

SUITOR. Gravissimo, doctissimo, illustrissimo, jucundissimo, reverendissimo domino Thomaso Cromwellio .

CROMWELL. Is this Latin ?

SUITOR. Ay, good Latin, my lord.

CROMWELL. Speak it in English. This smacks too much of Rome.

SUITOR. You hate Rome, my lord ?

CROMWELL. Hate her ? I love the wench ; I sacked her once. But what is it ?

SUITOR. Marry, my lord, 'tis a document of mine own composing, tho' I be but a spicer.

CROMWELL. But what's the matter of it ?

SUITOR. The matter of it ? 'Tis a petition, worshipful sir, that you would vouchsafe me a certain request.

CROMWELL. Another suitor ? Why, Sir John, what maggot hath gotten into the wits of those about me this morning, that all with one accord come bringing me suits and suitors ? Did the world breakfast on henbane ? Do you take me for the Duke of Norfolk ?

TALBOT. The Duke of Norfolk pah ! Ye have the moldwarp's een, Crummle. See ye not that ye be grown powerful ? You could work on the King an you would but try. Yestreen the King asked where Crummle was, called you a merry Greek and a man of hair, plucked you by the sleeve as he spake with you in his traverse ; small things, good mayster, but straws bewray the wind. ... To our speedy meeting ; I have a merry tale I must go bear to Mistress Anne.

[Exit TALBOT

CAVENDISH. Will you grant my request, Cromwell ?

CROMWELL. Go to the office of the Hanaper. I'll be with you anon.

[Exeunt CAVENDISH, SADLER and SUITOR

CROMWELL. (Alone) What, am I powerful ? Can I
work wonders ?

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Enter LAMBERT and other HERETICKS led by
OFFICERS.

Jack Lambert, and in ward ? What gear is this ?
OFFICER. A band of dangerous hereticks, my master.
Arrested by Sir Thomas More's command
To hold in the Chancery gaol.
CROMWELL. For what desert ?

LAMBERT. For saying bread was bread and wine

was wine.

CROMWELL. Still the same headstrong fool !
LAMBERT. Ay, still the same,

Still bawling in the mart, still bearding Rome,
Still burning with the fury of the Lord,
Not fearing aught that man can do to me.
OFFICER. Ay, marry, when we have you in the

bracks

You'll sing another tune.
LAMBERT. A fico, friend !

The bracks may wring my flesh, but not my

soul.

CROMWELL. (To the OFFICER) The bracks, manner-
less varlet ? I'll brack you.
You'll hang, javel, an you but touch a hair of him.
The bracks, ha ? They shall never hurt a hair,
Believe me, Jack, for I'll stir heaven and

hell . . .

LAMBERT. Nay, fear me not ; I'll answer them.
OFFICER. Along !

[Exeunt LAMBERT, OFFICERS and HERETTCKS
CROMWELL. (Alone) Lambert in ward, in danger of

the torment ?

And Cromwell powerful ? My time is come.
I'll see the King, and put it to the touch ;
I'll try my new- sprung wings to make or mar.

[Exit

SCENE 3 CROMWELL : MALL O' MONKS 245

SCENE 3
The KING'S Closet. HENRY and NORFOLK.

HENRY. I must have money, Norfolk, for the fleet,
Money for guns and muniments of war.

NORFOLK. Still money, Sire ? Still water from the
rock ?

HENRY. They say the envious Almain buildeth

ships ;

The spite enkindled by our growing merchantry
Finds secret fuel in the Court of Rome,

Where Pontiff Clement, prickt by our defiance,
Feeds him with greedy hopes and promises
Of rebel help, to tempt our easy shore ;
While we, with mildewed galleys, rusty guns,
And fortresses in ruin, sit and smile,
And trust to Heaven to save us in our sleep.
God helps who helps himself. I must have
money.

NORFOLK. Pity your people, Highness.

HENRY. Pity, forsooth ?

What pity were it to let the invader in ?

NORFOLK. Gentle and simple, franklins, chapmen,

churls,

Do choir in one the lamentable dump
Of aids, accises, tallies and gabells ;
Their fleece still tattered from thy father's dogs
Is shorn skindeep for Scotch and Frankish wars,
Their markets shut and Nature self turned

stepdam.

The husbandman among his country kine
Looks on a scrannel field of empty husks
And languid awns wagged sadly in the wind.
Where there is naught, there's naught to take away.

246 CROMWELL : MALL O' MONKS ACT in

HENRY. What, have my nobles bit so near the

bone ?

Go to, for famine's self finds store at need.
Busy your brain to seek the magic word.
NORFOLK. I am no alchemist to conjure gold.
HENRY. What, rebel, wilt gainsay me? Deem'st

I made thee

Chief of my Council, and my Treasury
For compliment and easy sinecure ?
Honour enough for us small fry, forsooth,
To deign to live and be thy father's son.
NORFOLK. My deeds by land and sea repugn the

taunt.
HENRY. Basta, thou prating knave ; I bid thee

whist.

A minister's charge to minister not to parley ;
Administer me gold, I prithee, minister,
Or I'll find those who can.

Enter CROMWELL

CROMWELL. Sovran, a boon !

HENRY. Welcome, Sir Thomas, what's your will

with me ?
NORFOLK. I do beseek your Grace's patience yet

To hear the upshot of my argument.
HENRY. What, shall I not be master of mine ears

To choose with whom I speak ? Out of my
sight,

Thou insolence, until I bid thee come !

[Exit NORFOLK

What is it, Cromwell ?
CROMWELL. As I walked but now

Tth' gallery, came catchpoll cursitors,

And in their midst, bound like a dangerous Turk,

Lambert, a learned clerk of Oxenford,

My heart's own friend, a holy, harmless man,

Haled to the Chancellor's Court for heresy.
HENRY. And thou wouldst have me pardon heresy ?
CROMWELL. Not pardon it, but have it duly judged.

If yours the Church, who wrongs the Church wrongs you ;

Your courts must judge, and not a court of priests.

Let Lambert answer in the common bench.
HENRY. What was his crime ?
CROMWELL. Cleaving with Gospel shears

Some knot of gossamer spun in a schoolman's

brain.
HENRY. Beat on the window, call a yeoman here.

I will not look too nicely at his fault ;

Being thy friend, that merit pardons him.
CROMWELL. My life shall show my thank.

Enter YEOMAN

HENRY. Go, Montague,

And bid Sir Thomas More attend me presently.

[Exit YEOMAN

Rede me a rede. The Emperor threatens war
And I, wanting its sinews, tremble the issue.
My treasury drained, my people faint with taxes,
What fount shall save us in the wilderness ?

CROMWELL. The fount that parched it.

HENRY. What fount's that ?

CROMWELL. Look on your land, its goodly plenitude,

Lush leas and spreading acres for the plow,
Your ports and havens thronging with the press
Of galleys, argosies, and caravels.
Would not a stranger say, oh, envied folk
Whose riches overflow upon their King ?

/

Yet they are poor forsooth, the swinking hind
Garners his golden corn in alien barns,
The merchant's toil fills coffers not his own.
Only the priest is fat, and monks and freers
That scrall like Egypt frogs in every vale,
Pilling and polling, horns and hoof and hide,
With dime and tithe and fine and heriot,
With trentals, obits, masses, chantries, alms,

Pardons, and fees for leave be born or die ;
Not they alone; the Pope still claims his share;
In annates, entries, Romescot, Peterpence.
How shall your folk be rich or you be free ?
Rebel, and turn the red Pactolian flood
Into your empty Treasure ; let your Church
Look for its bounty to its bounty's head.

HENRY. Will this hold good in law ?

CROMWELL. And mark what follows ;

The priests dependent on your Grace's grace
Must needs play true or lose by what they live.
Bishops for almsmen, Pope for pensioner,
Who shall gainsay you your supremacy ?
The overmuch that swells their wanton pride
Shall feed the general realm's necessities :
With ships careened and furbished armaments,
With fallen fortresses re-edified,
The Emperor suing peace, the Irish quelled,
The kilted Scots upon their naked knees,
Commons contented, nobles and merchants rich,
Your Court enhanced to fitting radiance,
Outshining the ancient Field of Cloth of Gold,
Were't not a sin to let the minute slip
That's laden with such blessings for your realm ?

HENRY. Get thee behind me, Satan ! How shall I,
The warden of the Church, pillage the Church ?

CROMWELL. Christ is a spirit, and his Church is
spirit ;

SCENE 3 CROMWELL : MALL O' MONKS 249

All that exceeds the spirit is worldly gear

Working against the spirit.
HENRY. The law dispones

Of worldly gear.

CROMWELL. The law gives all to you.
HENRY. Ha, is it true ?

Rehearse me what mine ears hunger to hear.
CROMWELL. Bishop and deacon, all your presbyters

Are guilty with the guilt that Wolsey owed.

If his usurped authority was treason.

Then equal treason their obedience ;

Their lives and goods all forfeit to the State ;

What lesser chastisement you grant is mercy.
HENRY. Taking so much, will not my people

murmur ?
CROMWELL. Begin with small ; and let the fear of more

Persuade them yield the lesser willingly.

I'll be your hound ; unleash me on the prey ;

I'll beard the Bishops in their parliament,

Make them forswear the Pope ; and for the nonce

We'll wipe them of a hundred thousand pounds.
HENRY. It shall be done. Tendering my subjects'
weal,

And for the greater glory of the Lord,

We'll take this gear in hand.

Enter MORE

Gentle Sir Thomas,
Pen me thy fairest Latin in a scroll
To Vicar Cromwell, vicar in my stead,
In all concerns my governance of the Church.
And let my servants know he holds the room
That lately Gardiner held of secretary.
(To CROMWELL) There is my ring.

CROMWELL. (Kneeling) Gramercy, Majesty.

MORE. (Bowing) To hear is to obey.

250 CROMWELL : MALL O' MONKS ACT in

HENRY. Lo, sweet my Chancellor, thine alway zeal
To stint the noyous weed of heresy,
Which else might choke the garden of the faith,
Merits our tender love. But time brings change ;
The rigid law that bound our simple sires
Must not prevail against this subtler age ;
Faith often questions what it most believes
To build it surer. While the Church was young
It walked in leading strings, withouten doubt
Lisping the simple lore its nurses taught ;
But grown to man's estate it needs must sift
What's true, what's old wife fable, proving all
Upon the touchstone of the Gospel word.
Relax your vigour, gentle Chancellor ;
And for the firstling of your clemency
Free me the honest doctor (To CROMWELL)
What's his name

CROMWELL. Lambert, my liege.

HENRY. Let Lambert go in peace.

MORE. Mercy becomes a king, but not to spare
One body and endanger many souls.

HENRY. I hear it is a good and learned clerk.

MORE. The greater clerk, the worse ensample.

HENRY. Once

You taught that tongues were free.

MORE. Once I was young.

HENRY. We've broke the law ourselves, man.

MORE. Majesty,

We that have led the van, the paladins,
But not the common pikemen of the host.

HENRY. Still, let him go, for I require it, More.

MORE. So be it, Sire ; I yield him to your hand ;
And with him yield some toys have lost their price
Since I have lost the thing they signified.

(He opens the door, admitting OFFICERS with his
seal and keys on cushions)

SCENE 3 CROMWELL : MALL O' MONKS 251

Too well I guessed the meaning of this call.
What Henry gave let Henry take again.
While I could serve I served ; but now I see
The groaning realm is pregnant of some change ;
Let others, wiser, worthier than myself,
Be midwife to her throes ; for I am old

And cannot school myself to altered ways.

HENRY. Not wiser, More, nor worthier, nor as much
But since it is your pleasure, set them down,
For I'll have willing ministers or none.
Thanks and farewell, my servant ; Heaven send
A new one half as trusty as the old.

[Exit HENRY and OFFICERS
(MORE and CROMWELL)

MORE. Take heed, oh, Cromwell, you that are young

in hope,

You, that stand smiling in the sun and watch
The ancients groping to the outer dark ;
You too will know the pains that office brings,
The baffled good ; the shame of high intent
Brought low to match with hard expediency.
You see me stark and stern of countenance,
Relentless in the purging of the faith ;
Think you I love to chasten ? Gentleness
And not the rod taught all my household know,
And in the larger world I fain had wrought the

same ;

But rude disorder rears his Titan head,
The ancient hills are shaken from their base
To scale Olympus ; mild- eyed clemency
Must cloke her gentle brow, and turn aside.
You too will sue the softer way in vain.
Ever to flatter, ever to seek his grace,
Ever to grant his wishes ere he ask,
Binding the Prince in bonds of his desires
To grind the mill of Cromwell's policy ;

252 CROMWELL: MALL O' MONKS ACTIII., sc.3

A noble plan, forsooth ! (Have I divined you ?)
How far more slave, you that must crouch and bow
On pain to lose his love and all your toil ;
But once to fail, but once to cross his will,
Love what he hates, or hate what he desires,
Farewell to Cromwell ! See where your j ourney lies,
By stony wilderness and thorny ways,
By pools of blood and shades of infamy,
False to yourself and false to all you love,
If it but stand in yours or Henry's way.
Ah, I'll not trust you, Cromwell, in the hour
My head can serve your turn; you'll dip your hands
In dearer blood than mine, aye, even his
Whose bonds so much concerned you even now.

CROMWELL. Jack Lambert ? He'll be free to preach
his mind.

MORE. Tis done.

CROMWELL. He's free ?

MORE. But he'll not preach the same ;

His doctrine's changed.

CROMWELL. How changed ?

MORE. He hath forsworn

The ancient errors of his creed.

CROMWELL. Forsworn ?

MORE. Ay, under pressure of some fleshly pain.

CROMWELL. Tormented ?

MORE. Ay, the question.

CROMWELL. Bloody slave,

Butcher and hang-dog, you shall pay for this !

[Exit CROMWELL

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE 1

At CROMWELL'S house, a few years later. TALBOT,
MORISON and FOULKES. These two last are soldiers
of fortune ; FOULKES elderly and weatherbeaten ;
MORISON younger, keen-eyed and dashing.

TALBOT. So ye be friends of Cromwell ?

MORISON. Marry, yea,

Sin twenty years agone in jolly Anvers.
Cromwell, the roaring boy, the prince of rufflers,
The first to spring a wench, or crush a can ;
And now a Minister !

TALBOT. The King's Vicegerent,

Baron of Oakham, Lord High Chamberlain,
Knight of the Garter.

MORISON. Zounds !

TALBOT. And holds a state

Becomes a prince. Daily his almses fill
Two hundred empty bellies at his gate.

FOULKES. While we poor misers trudge the planet's

face
Scratching for crumbs of gold.

MORISON. I'll not exchange

My sunburnt beggar for his pallid wealth,
My earrings for his garter, my ten years
Of Chile and Peru for all his life.

TALBOT. You're newly from Atlantis ?

FOULKES. Faith, not I :

Five weary years in Africk, fighting the Moor.
Arrived in Greenwich at the point of day,
As I laid limb across the briny board,
Hungry to tread the dew-washed green again,
Came on our heels a noble galleasse,

Forspent with travel, patched and hoar with

age;

Still bravely bellying from every yard,
As all the seas had buffet her in vain.
And while I stood and mused on her estate,
Out from her side, most like herself, leaped forth
This brisk moustachioed conquistador,

With threadbare jerkin, beaver gaily cocked,
And purse as empty as the day he sailed.

MORISON. So, worthy sir, you know us as ourselves.
And you ?

TALBOT. A castaway poor gentleman,

A trinket of the Court grown somewhat dim
For want of wear ; a kex, a runt, a quondam,
A cracked antiquity, too stiff i' the hams
To bob his way among these bustling times ;
But more than all a friend of Cromwell
That wandered in to bid him sup to-night.

MORISON. And what's the news at Court ?

TALBOT. Alack, fair sirs,

You've fallen on a woeful time. The Queen
Yield up her gentle soul this day at dawn.

MORISON. Sad hearing for my Spanish cabin-mates.
Poor Katharine !

FOULKES. Tut, Spanish Katharine

Is gone long since. So Lady Anne is dead !

TALBOT. Ay, true, 'tis true ; howbeit, five years of

Moorland

Have brought your Fasti something out of date.
Have you not heard ?

FOULKES. Nothing in all these years.

TALBOT. To-day we mourn Queen Jane : a twelvemonth's passed
Since Anne bequeathed her gentle soul to God.

FOULKES. So Lady Anne is dead ! By what distemper ?

TALBOT. Marry, a tempered distemper, that defies
The leech's skill : a hatchet and a block.

FOULKES. Beheaded ?

TALBOT. Ay.

FOULKES. For what ?

TALBOT. For wantonness.

FOULKES. I'll swear the charge was false !

TALBOT. And so will I !

Lord ! when I think of all her dainty ways,
Her mincing smile, and Frenchified ' Dieu

garde, 5

She seems like some white lily of the field
Beat down by an oafish boy, a pretty plaything
Broke in a surly game. And by the bye,
So kind a queen, I cannot praise our friend.

MORISON. Cromwell ?

TALBOT. Oh, mark you, I say naught against him.
There was much wonder at their amity,
And what the matter of their long discourse
Week after week. For I must tell you, sirs,

Their custom was, as every Sabbath came,
To meet in far- spied congress, eye to eye,
In yewbound walks, or by the cloistered hearth
Plotting high policies (that was their secret)
Of how to pluck the priestlihood away
And bring the golden age to earth again.
And I, that shared their counsel,
(Not that I favoured their design) did much

admire

This marriage of the oak-tree and the lily,
The shaggy stradiote and minion queen,
Working to such high ends. The world in

arms

Seemed all too weak a thing to hold them back.
Yet, but a breath, and she was gone ! Alas,
This Queen that's dead (a dainty creature too,

256 CROMWELL : MALL O' MONKS ACT iv

A waiting-maid in Mistress Boleyn's train)
Found favour with the King, and then . . .

MORISON. But stay ;

What part took Cromwell in the Queen's

disgrace ?

So bound a friend, that bully warrior,
Knowing her innocent . . .

TALBOT. Ay, that he knew.

MORISON. Did he not take King Henry by the

beard,

Tell him they lied that blemished her repute,
And stake his head with hers upon the cast ?
That was the Cromwell that I knew of old.

TALBOT. Why, by the Masskin, on the Spanish

main,

In Barbary, Peru, and savage wilds,
There may be still such men ; 1 know not, I ;
But here at Court the breed is out of date.
As careful shipmen hold a finger up
To mark the changes of the fickle wind,
Submit their will to his, sail East or West,
Not as their haven but the tempest rules,
And conquer Aeolus by humouring him,
So we, whose wind is Henry's favouring breath,
To sail, or stand, and drift upon the rocks . . .

MORISON. Enough ; I see your pith ; Cromwell
forsook her.

TALBOT. Well, well, not he alone.

MORISON. Beshrew the day

That ever brought him to your cankered Court.
What, did he steal aside and hold his peace ?

TALBOT. Nay, something more than that; he had

no choice ;

Before the counsellors that judged her cause
He was appointed for an advocate
To plead . . .

MORISON. Her innocence ?

TALBOT. Her guilt.

MORISON. Come, Foulkes.

Out from this poisoned air.

FOULKES. Yet, stay, Peruvian,

New havened from the grey and hungry world
Amid the enchanted splendours of this house,
Rich with the promise of satiety,
I will not be so glib a judge. Who knows ?
There may be reasons that we wot not of.
She was the gentest thing ; I weep for her ;
But still, friends grown to ministers are rare.

MORISON. Well, go thy ways ; set snout to trough ;

grow fat.
And I'll seek out some friend whose money's

spent,

His plans miscarried, place and credit gone,
Cased in a hovel. Such a man perchance
May still have kept the promise of his youth.
Farewell.

FOULKES. Valete, hothead.

TALBOT. Fare you well.

[Exit MORISON

Tut, tut, tut! The Equator hath gotten somewhat into the blood of this picaroon friend of yours. Cromwell came to the Court for other occasions than to have his shoulders sheared for Mistress Boleyn's sake. And yet, Lord ! Lord ! when I think of her . . . and mark you, I much misdoubt but Cromwell himself hath some gnawings and grudgings of heart at the remembrance ; since the day they laid her in two pieces he was never the same man again; somewhat brawnfallen, somewhat hollower in the chaps.

FOULKES. Poor Lady Anne ! 'Tis a sad story.

TALBOT. Ay, so the King thought ; and made a

tragedy of it in five acts even while she lay in the Tower, and showed it about among his friends ; 'twas very movingly writ. And stopped his chase at Epping to hear the gun that signalled the deathsman's stroke, and fetched a deep sigh, thus, before he bade the huntsman uncouple the dogs to follow the sport. Mistress Jane had a day's work to console him, whom he wed next morning. But here cometh the good man of the house.

Enter CROMWELL, CROMWELL'S SON and CAVENDISH.
CAVENDISH pompous and splendidly dressed.

CROMWELL. Whom have we here ? What, Foulkes !
What spirit wafts thee hither ? Come, open thy brisket, man, and fall to ! (They embrace).

FOULKES. You have not forgot old friends ?

CROMWELL. " You, you ? ' Thou me or by this goll I'll break thy sconce. Ho there, some rascal ! Bring flagons ; bring Hippocrass, Hockamore, Brown Bastard and Backrag ; and look ye, stint not. Meat and bread, you rogues ; bestir yourselves. " 'Tis merry when knaves meet ! " We'll drink to Anvers, to Jack Lambert, Hewitt, Harvel, Morison. What's befallen honest Morison ?

FOULKES. He lives, he lives.

CROMWELL. In England ?

FOULKES. Ay.

CROMWELL. We'll find him, never fear. To think how times are changed ; we that scarce durst open our mouths then, even with the sea between, to utter so much as a word against the divell, for fear of scandalum magnatum and the stake. And now . . . But I forget my manners. Be acquainted all, the thing within this gallant case is William Cavendish, of twenty mansions armiger ; this fathom of gravity, my son. Judge it leniently ; 'tis not a finished poem ; 'tis but an impromptu thrown off one sleepless night in Venice. Baron in his own right and married to the dead Queen's sister.

CAVENDISH. To think how times are changed !

TALBOT. Ay, here's Mas Candish, that was proud to be Wolsey's doorkeeper once for ten pound Easter ling by year, so swollen now with monkish acres he'll scarce say Preface to a humble Knight bachelor.

CAVENDISH. (Drinking) Proface ! Proface ! Oh, the venom of jealous tongues ! Those that envy us poor impropriators divine not the weight of the burthen that we have taken on our shoulders. Know ye not that we be but stewards of this trust, holding the lands not to our own use and glory, but for the exercise of that open welcome to all poor, sick, aged and pious persons, and to travellers, which the good monks and fathers exercised afore us ?

TALBOT. Sic vos, non vobis. Oh, most pitiable impropriators !

CAVENDISH. My heart rejoiceth as I think of my children's children to the end of time receiving the halt and the lame with open arms both in town and country in their hospitable houses.

TALBOT. Oh, most blessed children's children !

Enter LAMBERT and RAT

LAMBERT. The Lord be here.

RAT. Christ keep this company.

CROMWELL. Here's all Anvers come to life again. Jack, my own Jack. (Embracing him) Grown graver, Jack ?

LAMBERT. Ay, and you. What, Foulkes ? How fare you, friend ?

FOULKES. Still above the sod, Doctor.
CROMWELL. And who is this ?
LAMBERT. 'Tis a worthy clerk that I met by the way ; he seemeth by his speech a holy man.
RAT. Salve magister ; I am come to thank you for a service rendered me long since.
CROMWELL. A service, sir ?
RAT. You saved my life aforetime, and being newly returned to England I am come to thank you.
CROMWELL. The circumstance, though not a trifling one, has slipped from my mind, sir priest ; but sit you down, you are right welcome. Proface ! Proface !

(All drink except LAMBERT)
LAMBERT. Tell me the tale of your adventures in these wars of Africa.
FOULKES. Nay, I have rehearsed them so often these ten hours that my tongue is already aweary.

CROMWELL. Then let's hear thine, Jack.
LAMBERT. 'Tis but a sorry exchange ; the tale of my faint-heartedness in place of that of Foulkes' brave adventures. Yet seeing that I am come to bid you farewell . . .
CROMWELL. Farewell? Art thou bent on a journey, then ? Pass the flagon, pass the flagon, worshipfuls.
LAMBERT. Ay, on a journey, and a long one, but short in the travelling. I that had been so bold, speaking openly in the market-places, and defying the oppression of man, having recanted from my

faith at the first touch of the torment, fell thereafter into an agony of mind far exceeding such poor fleshly pain as the bracks could impart. And so I passed a year, thinking often to destroy myself, but for the hope that by living I might redeem the shame of my cowardice. And after much meditation I resolved to offer up my poor offending flesh a sacrifice, by declaring yet again my faith with such firmness that they must needs burn, hang or destroy me. And that I might the better ripen and furnish myself to that end and give such reasons to my tormentors and persecutors that they could not gainsay my doctrine, I went back to the schools again and have been this long season in Germany at the feet of the theologians. And now all is ready for my going up to Jerusalem; God shall be glorified in me, and shall receive me out of this wretched world into the regions of His everlasting peace.

CROMWELL. Too late, too late, my honest Jack ! We'll never let thee be a martyr. Live, and proclaim thy faith ! While thou'st been in Germany I have not been idle. Did I not promise thee ? And now, behold, England is free for every man to speak the belief that is in him. Wilt thou deny the Church? Deny it. Wilt thou deny the authority of the Book ? Deny it. No man will hurt a hair of thee. Ay, deny Christ Himself, and His Father in Heaven an thou wilt ; all's one. Did I not promise thee to wash all the dams and hindrances of our liberty away ? Ay, and have done it and quenched the fires of Smithfield in the flood.

LAMBERT. Is it even so, Cromwell ?

TALBOT. Ay, this is sooth, or near it.

LAMBERT. Oh, Lord, how long ? Have I sinned the

unpardonable sin, and must I go forth again to wander like the accursed Cain, and never still the serpent that gnaweth at my heart by day and night ? The peace of the Lord rest with you, friends, that can never rest with me. Farewell. Nay, touch me not, for I am even as a leper and one marked with the mark of the beast. Fare ye well. [Exit LAMBERT

TALBOT. There goes a woeful man.

CROMWELL. No man but hath his secret sorrows. Drink, worshipfuls, drink ; here's to our new-won freedom !

RAT. I'll do you justice. Troll the Rhenish !

FOULKES. I marvel to hear thee, Cromwell, that wast but a merchant's lieger in the old days, talk of high deeds of statecraft as lightly as it were bales and cargoes and the cheaping of freights.

CROMWELL. Forsooth, I'm the King's lieger now.

TALBOT. He hath humbled the high shaven heads.

RAT. Troll the Rhenish ! Troll the Rhenish !

FOULKES. And what of the nobles ?

CROMWELL. A fig for the nobles ! They are brought low long since ; the new smooth-visaged mansions that rise from the ruins of their battlemented castles are the pledge of their lost independence. The Lords, ka ? If the Lords should take me in hand I would give them such a breakfast as never was made in England ; and that the proudest of them should know.

FOULKES. What of the King ?

CROMWELL. The King ? God's benison rest on him. . . .

RAT. (Drunk) Ay ! God bless old King Hal !

CROMWELL. I am sure of the King.

FOULKES. Will he not turn ?

CROMWELL. Though the King should turn, yet will

I not turn. (To RAT) Unhand the flagon, tosspot. Here's to the good cause ! I am ready to fight for it, ay, though all the nation stand against me !

FOULKES. There's my old warrior !

CROMWELL. (Kissing his dagger) On this bodkin ! So let it thrust me to the heart if I do not die in this quarrel against them all.

RAT. Troll the Rhenish !

YEOMAN. How now, art thou not that Dr Rat that is chaplain to my Lord of Norfolk ?

CROMWELL. Leave the clerk in peace, Hal ; whoever he may be, he's welcome here.

YEOMAN. As water in a ship.

RAT. Troll the Rhenish ! Troll the Rhenish !

SCENE 2

At Paul's Cross. FARMERS, PEASANTS, MERCHANTS and TOWNSFOLK.

Enter CROMWELL and CAVENDISH disguised with cloaks.

CROMWELL. What is the cause of this assemblage ?

FARMER. They say that one of the wandering Black Friars, Dan Peto, will preach here at noon.

CROMWELL. (To CAVENDISH) That's my rogue schoolmaster. (To the FARMER) 'Twas a good day for the farmers when these bald heads were cast out of their strongholds.

FARMER. A sorry day, mayster. At the harvest and the haying in sooth one may hire labourers good cheap among the homeless monks and freers ;

but my Lord of Norfolk spake sooth when he said it was merry in England before the new learning came up ; with their saints' days and pardons, their gangweeks and rogations, their churchales and festivals, there was joyance in every season in the old days; and right noble was the cheer that greeted me in their houses as I travelled to the further marts, where now I must lodge in some scald hovel, or else lie in the fields. Nay, give us back our monasteries, say I.

WOMAN. Ay, and zo zay I.

CROMWELL. What, you that were daily robbed by them with their masses for the dead and other such extortions ?

WOMAN. Why, zee now, mayster, how can good Kyrsom folk lack their masses? There was my mother, God assoil her zoul, that died in zin and went to purgatory; and before ever chad time to buy her out, clap comes the new law, and there she must lie in torment till the last trumpet calls her to perdition.

PEASANT. Ay, and shall we have no more hereticks neither, my maysters ? No more vaggot-carry-

ing ? The first time ever I went to the vaggot-carrying there cometh a hooly vreer, saying, " Here be an indoolgence ; go and zin for a moonth," and I went away and zinned for a moonth, and then back to Smithfield and carried another vaggot. Let us have more hereticks, say I !
(CROMWELL goes over to a group of MERCHANTS)

IST MERCHANT. We are all undone unless the quarrel with the Pope and Emperor be soon ended.

CROMWELL. What, shall we not quarrel with the enemies of our faith ?

2ND MERCHANT. " Better kiss a false knave than be troubled with him."

IST MERCHANT. We have lost our trade with Flanders.

CROMWELL. Ay; but think of the Faith.
IST MERCHANT. Faith is not my matter now; my talk is of wool ; we have no mart left for our wool.

CROMWELL. Lay up your treasure in Heaven.
IST MERCHANT. Ay, when I have aught to lay up; but now I stand in danger to go hungry to Heaven ere I have time to lay up any, either above or below.
2ND MERCHANT. And now, worse than ever, with this rebellion in the north and all hands too busy with bills, partisans and hand-guns to think of the homely shears.
IST MERCHANT. It was rumoured on the Change that the Duke of Norfolk had gotten a notable victory over the rebels.
FARMER. Here cometh the worthy Friar, Dan Peto.

Enter DAN PETO followed by CHILDREN dressed as Monks.

MERCHANT. And who be these holy men that follow on his heels ?

CHILDREN. (Breaking up and dancing round PETO)
" I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good,
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood."

(From "Gammer Gurton")
IST MERCHANT. I am aweary of this mocking.
2ND MERCHANT. So are all honest men.
PETO. (To the CHILDREN)

Woe to the loins that gat you, spawn of Satan,
Woe to the womb conceived, the breasts that fed
you,

Woe to the hands that stinted of the rod ;

For as the bear rent those that mocked Elisha,
Vengeance shall light on you and all your
kind.

(The CHILDREN laugh and run away)
(To the PEOPLE)

Behold the Lord's appointed time is near
When He shall come in wrath with whips of

scorpions,

Scatter His enemies before His face,
And thoroughly purge His threshing floor with

fire.

Rejoice, ye faithful servants of the Lord ;
Lift up your heads again, be of good cheer ;
For ye shall hear the gnashing of the teeth.
Your eyes behold the proud oppressor's fall,
His quaking flesh harrowed with gads of iron,
His spirit cast into unquenching flame.
Filled with the Spirit of the Lord, mine eyes,
Piercing the veil of perishable things,
Behold the secret places of the heart.

(Pointing suddenly at CROMWELL)
Cromwell, thou son of Belzebub, stand forth !
(The CROWD murmurs and parts, leaving CROMWELL

and CAVENDISH standing alone)
Thou that these hands have scourged, too selde,

in vain,

Thou and thy King, the rebel runagate
Whose perjured eyes swell out with lust and fatness ;

Ye that have drunk the blood of all the saints,
The dogs shall lick your blood, that licked the

blood

Of Ahab and his servant Obadiah.
Behold, thy course is run, and even now
I hear the feet of those shall bear thee out.

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By treachery lived, by treachery thou shalt die ;
False to thy friends, false to the wanton Queen,
Learn from my lips the falseness of thy King,
Who all unknown to thee is ridden forth
With welcome to thy dearest enemy,
The Duke of Norfolk, where he now returns
In triumph from the rebels of the North.

CROMWELL. (To CAVENDISH) What ! Is it true ?

And never a word to me ?
Come, I must see to this.

[Exeunt CROMWELL and CAVENDISH

PETO. Mark where he goes

With blanching lips, and stricken to the heart.
Repent, for the hand is writing on the wall,
The feast is broken up, the wine cup spilt,
The avenging host is gathering in the plain.
(CURTAIN while fie is speaking)

SCENE 3

At Court. COURTIERS assembled. The DUKE OF LINCOLN walks with BEAULIEU, the French Ambassador.

LINCOLN. (To a LADY) Smile, gentle Marchioness,

upon my friend,
Seigneur Beaulieu, the Prankish Embasseur.

LADY. Soyez le bien-venu en Angleterre.

BEAULIEU. Je suis charme de votre courtoisie.

LINCOLN. This noble bevy is assembled here
To grace the welcome of the Duke of Norfolk
Who comes anon ; with laurel-laden arms,
Stained with the rebel blood of Yorkish kerns,
Westmorland, Lincoln, Durham, Lancashire,
Whose rugged wits inflamed by false alarms,

Hatched in the nido di tradimenti, Rome,
Made what his Grace had done to save the Faith,
Seem but a means to pluck away the Faith.
For six long months the even balance swayed,
England in arms to conquer England's self,
Till we were fain to dig a grave and sing,
"Dirige; vixit Anglia ; England was."

COURTIER A. Who would not be a soldier in such times as these ?

COURTIER B. I' faith, the squeaking of pens and the grave voice of reverend counsellors is drowned in the clang of arms and the braying of trumpets.

COURTIER C. Cedat armis toga.

COURTIER A. Ay, the priests and soldiers bid fair to rule the roast.

COURTIER B. The priests too ?

COURTIER A. Forsooth ; the King's woe for the loss of his Lady hath turned his heart suddenly to religion again, and he is for undoing all that he and Cromwell have done these past years, lest he endanger his soul from going to join her in Heaven.

COURTIER B. Marry, they say that he hath sent for Gardiner out of France.

COURTIER A. We have had changes enough. What say you, Sir John ?

TALBOT. (Greeting those who pass from time to time)
Changes enough forsooth. (God speed you,

Madam.)

I lose my brain in this turmoiling hive ;
Strange faces everywhere, (Give you good den)
Beggars-a-horseback, new smell-carrion lords
Fatted on Minster lands (God 'ield you, sir)
That shut the sunlight from the old noblesse.
Who would have thought, a few short summers since,

To hear the echoing palace walls repeat
Such low uncouth plebeian names as Cecil,
Montague, Paget, Russell, Candish, Seymour ?
Who knows but that some future age of men

May take this gilt for gold, and seeing them lords,
Still sons of lords, may count them equal nobles ?

A LORD. Who knows but once when Alfred burnt

the cakes
Men said the same of Talbot ?

TALBOT. Like enough ;

But we that smote the Dane, and spilt our blood
To chase the miscreant from the Holy Land,
Built in a nobler plot, I ween, than those
Who smote the Monk and stole his tenements.

A LADY. (Clapping her hands) Have at him,
Talbot !

A COURTIER. (Turning his thumb down) Pollice
verso, Vestal !

Enter CROMWELL

COURTIER A. Mark where Cromwell walks, alone

and half unheeded.
COURTIER B. How changed from but a month since

when each one in the Court had some favour to

ask of him !

COURTIER A. Little good does his Garter do him.
COURTIER B. They say some strange and magical

effect worketh in it, ayenst which only the noblest

blood is strong enough to resist.
COURTIER A. Is it that which maketh him so

woebegone ?
COURTIER C. Marry, " the black ox hath trod on his

foot."
COURTIER B. They say that the Lady Anne's spirit

visiteth him in the night season, reproaching him

for his treachery, and that the fear of her hath
engendered these bitter humours.

COURTIER A. God save you, my Lord.

CROMWELL. And you, sir. Is the King not yet
come forth ?

COURTIER A. He is closeted with Gardiner.

CROMWELL. With Gardiner ? Is Gardiner in England ?

COURTIER A. Wist ye not that his Grace had revoked him out of France ?

CROMWELL. Faith, true ! I had forgot.
(CROMWELL walks away)

COURTIER B. He knew naught of it.

COURTIER A. He hath no more part in the King's
secrets.

COURTIER B. He'll go the way of More and Wolsey.

COURTIER C. He's hatchet-ripe.

COURTIER A. Tis a tree blazed for the hewing.

COURTIER B. It will go hard with him an Norfolk and Gardiner have such a hand over the King.

COURTIER A. Norfolk beareth him a sore grudge for the attainder of his brother that married the King's niece.

COURTIER B. Marry, attainder without trial, an injustice unknowen aforetime !

COURTIER A. He'll not forgive him his Garter neither.

COURTIER C. Forsooth, passing the door of the King's closet I have heard him so beknave, befool, bebeast Cromwell ; ay, and beat him too with his jest till he roared for mercy.

COURTIER A. Go to, ye have heard old Tib thwacking her cat.

Enter GARDINER and RAT
CROMWELL. This is a gentle sight, friend Gardiner.

GARDINER. Are ye not astonied at my revocation ?

CROMWELL. 'Twas I that counselled it to the King. (To RAT) God save you, Sir Priest.

RAT. And you, my Lord.

GARDINER. (To LADY ROCHFORD) This is a great day that must be marked with a red stone.

LADY ROCHFORD. There will be greater days yet.

GARDINER. The King seems sad.

LADY ROCHFORD. Marry, I have that laid in lavender which will make him merry.

GARDINER. What secret is this ?

LADY ROCHFORD. A secret that will soon out ; Mistress Katharine Howard, Norfolk's niece, grown now to be more beautiful than words can tell.

Enter the KING on one side ; NORFOLK and SUFFOLK led by CHAMBERLAINS by the sleeves on the other; with trumpets, flags, HALBERDIERS and SOLDIERS.

HENRY. No need, my Lords, to tell at length the

cause

Of this august assemblage. All have felt
The throbbing of the universal joy
Which fills the realm, to know the danger past,
Th'insurging head of rude rebellion
Beat down into the dust. Norfolk, my friend,
Whose honoured life, spent all in deeds of war,
Now finds its crown in this last feat of all,
A worthy sequel to thy father's fame
Reaped in the raftered rigs of Flodden Field ;
Adorned long since with all such dignities
Of title, place, and outward ornament
Which it was mine to give, for this last meed
Take what I have, my love. And for our joy
To welcome thee, we'll make a three days' feast
Of banket, joust, and public holiday.

NORFOLK. I humbly thank your gracious Majesty.

HENRY. Not by the evil of their hearts alone
The boorish rebels of the mutinous North
Were pricked to such adventure. Rome had

sought

On this last throw to win the empire back
Which once she wielded in this land and lost.
Let the ensample of their chastisement
For ever quell the rash insensate hope.
Yet mark, I cast aside the burdening yoke
That galled the Faith, not cast the Faith itself,
Not for our pastime, not for liberty,
To wring the hallowed doctrine of the Church
To our perverted wills ; I thrust away
The ostented power of the Pope to save
The authentic Faith from his false foistings in.
Christ's Church was one ; but Rome hath fall'n

away

And we alone remain to keep it whole ;
A precious burthen in a narrow path.
And for a farther proof, if any need,
Of our intent to keep the doctrine pure,
We shall this very day at the behest
Of Norfolk and my Bishop Gardiner,
Ourselves descend to meet in argument
A boastful heretick who hath denied
The carnal presence in the Eucharist.
His name is Lambert.

CROMWELL Lambert !

HENRY. He was seen of late

Carousing in your house, my Lord of Oakham.

CROMWELL. I know not, Sire ; many resort to me.

HENRY. And lest our lieges in some after time
Should seek to cloke their peevish heresies
With doubtful texts and argumentive twists,
We have declared in brief and certain phrase

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(Devised by my Lord of Winchester)

Six Articles of Faith, of such as seem

Most useful for the saving of the soul ;

As need of shrift, and chastity of clerks,

The Presence of the Saviour in the host.

And whoso in the stiffness of his heart

Shall still withstand the patent means of grace,

Must pay, without the hope of earthly pardon,

Sharp penance by the gibbet and the stake.

Go, good my Lords, and bid my lieges all

Lay by the engines of their handicrafts

And fall to joyance,

For the honour of this happy day.

[Exeunt COURTIERS

NORFOLK. (To SUFFOLK) See, this fellow hath gotten
the Garter while we have been away.

SUFFOLK. It fits him as a saddle fits a sow's back.

NORFOLK. (To CROMWELL) Good joy, my Lord, of
your advancement.

HENRY. My gentle Lords of Norfolk, Suffolk, Oakham and Winchester, a word in your noble ears.
This six- stringed whip which I have twisted for the
scourging of the hucksters from the synagogue is
like to touch one most saintly man on the gall. I
would as lieve cut off my head as hurt a hair of
Cranmer's ; yet I misdoubt greatly but he will be
evil at ease in the matter, seeing that he must now
either put away his wife that he hath lately taken,
or be adjudged to die a felon. Go to him therefore, I beg you, my Lords, and take occasion over
the supper board to assure him of my continued
gracious favour to himward.

[Exit HENRY

SCENE 4

At CRANMER'S house. CRANMER, NORFOLK,
SUFFOLK and GARDINER.

NORFOLK. Thus and much more he said. Take

heart of grace.
CRANMER. Lo, she is gone ; God's blessing rest on

her ;

A holy, innocent woman ; what way worse
Was I, whose soul was no less near to God,
But rather lifted by the flight of hers ?
Still, if His Highness deem . . . What man shall

say,

Thus the Lord wills or thus ? But she is gone
And my heart with her into Germany.

Enter CROMWELL

NORFOLK. Here comes the newly gartered Knight.

All hail !

(Pointing at the Garter which CROMWELL wears)
Strange that the spoil of noble Buckingham,
The dearest toy of honour's armoury
That gentlest great have coveted in vain,
Should ring the humble farrier's ham at last.

CROMWELL. You much debase the worth of your

condition

To fleer at lowly birth in honest men.
Heaven allots to everyone his share,
And some have birth, and some have brain, but all
We have our uses in the Commonwealth.

NORFOLK. A noble thought, my Lord, forsooth!

Who knows ?
Belike your father hammered the iron heels

That bare my father's horse to victory

On Flodden Field.
CROMWELL. Time was methinks

The Howards themselves were no such mighty
gear.

As ivy mends the mason's bungling work

Time lends a gloss to humblest words, and once

Howards were Hogwards, keepers of the swine.
NORFOLK. Thou liest, scurvy knave !
CROMWELL. Take back thy lie !

CRANMER. My Lords ! My Lords !

Cease from these stout despiteful words ;

This that should be a loveday !
NORFOLK. Murderer,

That slew my brother in the Tower !
CROMWELL. Would it had been yourself.

SCENE 5

In the Palace at night. CROMWELL alone, with a
portrait of Anne of Cleves.

CROMWELL. Ay, marry, do they triumph for the

nonce ?

My hand hath lost her cunning with the King ?
But here's a medicine for my cause. Dear maid,
Another lovelier Anne, sweet Anne of Cleves,
I bless the blessed God that made thee fair,
To win the fickle monarch to my ends,
And mend the troubles of the suffering realm.
Wedded to Cleves, he's wed to Cleves's friends,
W T ed to the Protestants of Germany,
To Smalcald and the enemies of Rome ;
And I may snap my fingers in the face
Of Norfolk, Gardiner and all the rest.

Oh, Holbein, blest magician of the brush !
Thy painted cloth saves me and saves us all.

Enter LAMBERT, surrounded by FRIARS, BISHOPS, etc.,
with torches carried by YEOMEN.

CROMWELL. What gear is this? (Taking a torch
and holding it to LAMBERT'S face] Lambert !

LAMBERT. Praise be to God that hath lifted the heavy burthen from my shoulders at last ! When I most thought to confound mine enemies with my wisdom the Lord set a seal on my lips, and I could answer them naught. The King himself hath judged me, and I am condemned to die.

CROMWELL. Must I spend all my days in praying the King for your pardon ?

LAMBERT. No need. I sought death and I have achieved it.

[Exeunt all but CROMWELL and a SECRETARY

SECRETARY. Marry, the prisons overflow with of-

fenders against the new law of the six articles.
There be five hundred in hold already in London
alone.

CROMWELL. So many ?

SECRETARY. Take this paper.

CROMWELL. What is it ?

SECRETARY. Lambert's death warrant.

CROMWELL. 'Tis no gear of mine.

SECRETARY. 'Tis your charge to take it to the
King.

CROMWELL. I'll have none of it.

SECRETARY. Marry, nor I. It must be either signed
or torn asunder. I'll leave it here on the table.

[Puts it down and exit

CROMWELL. Accursed paper ! At such a moment
when I must needs avoid all matter of offence

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with the King ! What must I do ? I'll even
take it and go boldly to him.

Enter HENRY, dressed in white satin.

HENRY. Fear not, I am no spirit, but the King.
(Sitting) Peuh ! I have need of rest ; a weary day,
A weary day, my Cromwell, six long hours
Bandying logic with a heretick.

What is voovpevov, what ova-la,

Whether if attributes of bread remain

The essential substance can be wholly changed ;
You know my vein ; the knave was quite o'er-

whelmed.

Some that were there were pleased to praise my
learning.

CROMWELL. Oh, by your gracious favour, " some

that were there " !

The city rings with praises of your wit ;
Theologers and deepest clerks do muse
When, in the multiplicity of things,
You take occasion to be read so deep,
As far to pass them all. Would I had heard you !

HENRY. Would that ye had, Cromwell. What kept
you thence ?

CROMWELL. Care of your Grace, no less a thing had

done it ;

For, even as I made forth, came messengers
In embassy from John, the Duke of Cleves,
Propounding, by your gracious leave to speak,
A marriage with his sister, Princess Anne.

HENRY. My days of love are done ; deep in the grave
My heart is earthed with Lady Jane ; but still
If she be fair . . . there's balm in beauty.

CROMWELL. See,

Here is her picture, limned by Holbein's hand,

Her faithful image, void of flattery,

By him that erst portrayed your Highness' self.

HENRY. I know him of old, the rogue ; no flatterer
he!

CROMWELL. Look on her dewy lips, her dawning

smile ;

See in her eyes the gentleness that glows
In shady pools on golden summer eves.

HENRY. How sweet on such a gentle breast to lay
The head bowed down with woe. Blessed be God
Who, dealing sorrow for our portion, sent
The comfortable breed of womankind
To solace us ; submissive, modest, mild,
Light- shod, soft- voiced and not too rich in wit,
Like tender music, silent in betimes.

CROMWELL. Such to a jot is the report of her.

HENRY. Then, by St Julian, she shall be my wife ;
I'll have her, Cromwell !

CROMWELL. I rejoice, my Lord ;

I'll send empost to tell the happy news,
And bring her here before the month is out.

HENRY. And I'll go forth to meet her by the way,
Disguised from my true self, to nourish love.

CROMWELL. This news will make all England drunk
with joy.

(A pause)
And have I truly lost your favour ?

HENRY. No ;

Never were nearer to my heart, Cromwell.

CROMWELL. Yet there be those, presuming on your

grace,

That wrest the new-made law in my despite
(I, your Vicegerent) to a tyranny
And terror of the folk. Five hundred souls
On slender surmise of apostasy
Lie in the gaols of London. Let them go !

HENRY. Marry, on such a day it ill beseems
To ply the stricter censure of the law.
My gentle Anne shall plead for those have erred ;
Poor rogues, for love of her, I pardon them.
CROMWELL. And there is one among the rest ? This

Lambert . . .

HENRY. Him that my dialectic overthrew ?
CROMWELL. The same ; let him go back to Germany.
HENRY. Now by this light, my Lord, I much mis-
doubt

Your flattering words be but a coloured guile.

What, I am learned, eh ? The city rings ?
And deepest clerks do muse upon my wit ?
Yet when the main is fought, the cockerel down,
" Let him go back to Germany " ! Odd's bones,
Am I a mocking- stock, a beancake King,
To turn my solemn judgment to a sport ?
CROMWELL. Forgive me, Majesty ; he was my

friend *

What must I do ?

HENRY. A minister has no friends.

CROMWELL. They brought a warrant for his death

to me ;

Here is the scroll.
HENRY. (Refusing it) I have no part in it.

Vicegerent of the Church, this is your gear.
CROMWELL. Yet, noble King . . .
HENRY. I bid you do your duty ;

Sign it, or there be others for your room.

[Exit HENRY
CROMWELL. (Alone) Now curse the folly of this

headstrong knave,
That I must choose . . . Did I not bid him

whist ?

What ? Lose all that I have laboured for so
long?

Build from the base, and at the coping-stone
Go tumbling down ? . . . No wrong to him, I

wis ;

He hath determined on his death himself.
If I refuse, faith, I know Henry's way ;
My head perchance . . . (Signing the Warrant)

Then die, Jack Lambert, die !

CURTAIN

ACT V

SCENE 1

An open place in Rochester. Early morning.
MUSICIANS.

MUSICIAN A. Body o' me, 'tis a bitter frost.
MUSICIAN B. Foul weather for a Serenata, say I.
MUSICIAN A. My dickers be all to-starven with

cold ; an I hold my notes too long they'll freeze

to the vents.

MUSICIAN C. Is it for the King, sayst thou ?
MUSICIAN A. Marry is it : he cometh anon to

greet the Princess of Cleves, and wishing to show

her all that's loveliest in his realm, he hath even sent for thee.

Enter CROMWELL and HENRY disguised as a yeoman.

HENRY. What ween ye ? Will she know me for the

King?

Oh, Cromwell, I'm an amorous boy again,
Agog with hope and trembling at a name.
Can Kings be loved ? The splendour of their

place

Blinds the beholder, and makes affection dumb.
I'll not be King to-day but Yeoman Hal ;
I would be loved as simple men are loved.
But come, let's trudge ; the peevish dawn strikes
cold.

[Exeunt HENRY and CROMWELL
MUSICIAN B. Here's more gay company on the

road.

MUSICIAN A. The fame of our music is gone abroad
and all the Court flocks to hear us.
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Enter NORFOLK, GARDINER, LADY ROCHFORD,
KATHARINE HOWARD and RAT

GARDINER. (To the MUSICIANS) Give you good

morrow, gentle minstrelsy.
Here in this paper is a song set down
That ye must play among the morning's masque
To please his Majesty. Can this be done ?

MUSICIAN. So like your Reverence.

NORFOLK. What song is this ?

GARDINER. A pretty madrigal that Henry writ
And Lady Katharine must sing to-day.

NORFOLK. Does Cromwell know of this ?

GARDINER. I 5 faith, not yet,

But when the King hath seen the Princess Anne
He'll need some comfort for his squandered
sighs.

NORFOLK. Is she so foul ?

GARDINER. Not foul, but all ungainly,

Wanting the grace that toucheth Henry's heart.

Enter HENRY and CROMWELL

HENRY. I muse at this delay ; 'tis bitter cold ;

Why tarries the Princess ?
CROMWELL. She comes anon.

HENRY. (Seeing KATHARINE) What wench is that ?
CROMWELL. I know not, Majesty.

HENRY. Brr ! Odd's body, will the Princess never

come ?
CROMWELL. Yonder she steps from her caroche ;

the masque begins.
HENRY. A masque ! This was no season for a

masque.

THE MASQUE

(The MUSICIANS play. Enter SWAINS and
SHEPHERDESSES, meeting)

SHEPHERDESSES. Ye gentle Shepherds which do

keep

Upon this mountain- side your sheep,
That which doth move our most envy
Ye haven all things plenteously,
Both store of fruit and every meat
In your housen so fresh and sweet,
And pasture for your woolly flocks
Among the groves and mossy rocks ;
And yet you looken piteously,
And tear-drops standen in your ee.
Now tell us what thing ye do lack.

SWAINS. We can not tellen, out alack !
Yet ever in our happiness
Visiteth us this heaviness.
We would fallen and kiss his feet
If any wight should make us meet
What is the cause of this annoy
Which hindereth us from our joy.

SHEPHERDESSES. Have ye no corn to make you
bread ?

SWAINS. On finest manchets we be fed.

SHEPHERDESSES. Have ye no gold in your
pouches ?

SWAINS. We have foison of all richesse.

SHEPHERDESSES. Is it your health some thing
aileth ?

SWAINS. Nay, we ne know sickness ne death.

SHEPHERDESSES. If gold and corn and health ye

vaunt
We cannot tellen what ye want ;

Unless perchance of love ye lack
To give your am'rous sighings back.
SWAINS. Of love, say ye ? What is that thing ?
SHEPHERDESSES. Do ye not know ?
SWAINS. We know nothing.

SHEPHERDESSES. Why, this is love if we do

kiss. (Kissing them)
SWAINS. I ween a joyful thing it is ;
And I could love till evensong
And never think the day was long ;
Such pretty sporting is in this
When you and I together kiss. (Kissing

again)

Who gave this blessing unto men ?
SHEPHERDESSES. The Queen of Love hath it

given.
SWAINS. If I could find this Queen of Love

I would praise her all gods above.
SHEPHERDESSES. Would ye do so ? Ye shall

see her,

Of all this love the kind giver.
She is new comen to this land
On the King to bestow her hand.
SWAINS. To seek her, pray you, hasten hence.
SHEPHERDESSES. We go anon ; have patience.

[Exeunt the SHEPHERDESSES
(The SWAINS dance)

HENRY. Marry, 'tis easy talking. These swains

may well have patience seeing that they can dance

to keep their feet warm ; but my patience, lacking

such remedy, is nigh frozen to death.

CROMWELL. We have reached the heart of the matter

now, your Majesty.
HENRY. Ay, and a sweet heart, I hope.

SWAINS. Here from our dancing let us stay,
For see the Maidens come this way.

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NORFOLK. Now will the murder out. Come Queen

of Love,
Come Cupidon, come Venus and her squabs !

(SHEPHERDESSES come forward dancing)
SHEPHERDESSES. Good Shepherds, pray you

hither look ;

This is that Queen of which we spoke.
(They part and discover ANNE OF CLEVES, who has

entered with her train of attendants]
HENRY. Body o' me, Cromwell, can this be she ?
CROMWELL. It is no other, your Grace.
HENRY. Why, Cromwell, I am stricken to the heart,
that is no Queen of Love, but a great Flanders
mare.

CROMWELL. The cold hath pinched her somewhat.
HENRY. The cold had not pinched that little wench

that was here anon. What must I do ?
CROMWELL. Even put such face on it as you can,
your Majesty ; go forward with it now, and we
will devise some remedy after.
HENRY. (Giving a gold cup to a HERALD) Give the
Princess this cup in Henry's name.

(The HERALD carries the cup to ANNE)
ANNE. (To an attendant) Hier, nimm dass, Hans.
HENRY. She does not look at it.

ANNE. 1st dass der Prinz ?

HERALD. She asks, an't be your Grace.

HENRY. She hath divined me, Cromwell.
ANNE. Er ist dick.

HENRY. What does she say ?
HERALD. She saith your Grace doth wear

A port beseems a King.

HENRY. So much in few ?

CROMWELL. The Masque is done.
GARDINER. A little more ; attend.

SWAINS. Hath she no child, this lovely Queen ?

SHEPHERDESSES. She hath one only child, I

ween,

A child that loveth sport and game ;
The Princess Pastime is her name.
CROMWELL. What is this? This was not in the book.
NORFOLK. Tut, man, you'll not blame her : it is but
meet that a Queen of Love should have a child.

(The MUSICIANS begin to play a song)
HENRY. Ha, a gracious melody forsooth.
GARDINER. It is your own, Majesty.
HENRY. I had forgot I writ so well.

SHEPHERDESSES. Let garlands crown the festal

day,
For see, the Princess comes this way.

Enter KATHARINE HOWARD and sings KING HENRY'S
song : " Pastime in Good Company."

HENRY. Now Spring is come where barren Winter

reigned,

Dew on her lips, and sunshine in her eyes ;
The flowers break forth, birds sing in every bush.
(To the HERALD) Tell the Princess I writ the song

myself.

ANNE. Das lasset man bei uns gemeinen Leuten.
HERALD. She saith, it is well written.
GARDINER. Glozing rogue !

She saith in Almany they leave such toys
To common men.

HENRY. I' faith, a gracious answer !

Go, Cromwell, and attend the Princess Anne ;
Tell her the King is pleased to welcome her.
[Exeunt ANNE and her TRAIN, the MASQUERS,
the MUSICIANS and CROMWELL
(HENRY, GARDINER, NORFOLK, RAT)
HENRY. Who was the maid ?
NORFOLK. My brother's daughter, Kate.

HENRY. Bring her to Greenwich. I must speak
with her.

Of noble birth ; a morsel for a King !
GARDINER. The King will marry with the Princess

Anne ?

HENRY. Never !

GARDINER. 'Tis Cromwell brought you to this pass,

Not tendering your good, but for some sleight

Devised against the Pope and Emperor.

No remedy ! This Anne must be your bride,

If you disown not him that made her so.
HENRY. He is my friend.

GARDINER. Is he indeed your friend ?

NORFOLK. Your friend that joyed because the Queen

was dead ?

GARDINER. And made a banquet for his complices.
NORFOLK. Carousing deep, and boasting in his cups

That he would trounce the Lords if they gainsayed

him.
GARDINER. Said that the King was cowed and dare

not thwart him.

NORFOLK. All witnessed by the worthy Dr Rat.
RAT. Yea, I was there ; he lift a dagger up

And swore he'd plunge it in the King's own heart

If he withstood him.
HENRY. Damned treacherous knave !

If this be proven, he shall die the death.

" Said that the King was cowed " ? Come, let's
along :

I'll see this closer.

GARDINER. Mark where he comes.

HENRY. Anon.

Enter CROMWELL
CROMWELL. Her Highness lays her duty at your feet.

HENRY. Thanks, gentle Lord. For all your travailing

Anent my sponsals with the Dame of Cleves,
Receive the quality of Earl of Essex.
My Chancellor shall bail you the escroll.
GARDINER. Good joy, my Lord.
CROMWELL. Thanks, gentle Gardiner.

[Exeunt HENRY, GARDINER, NORFOLK and RAT
CROMWELL. An Earldom too ! My star that seemed

so low
Climbs to the pole and shines serene again.

SCENE 2

The Council Chamber. GARDINER, SUFFOLK, the
LORD CHANCELLOR and other COUNCILLORS at the
Board ; NORFOLK presiding.

NORFOLK. His guilt is manifest ; the warrant's
signed

For his arrest and lodgement in the Tower.

His Majesty denies to see him more.

CHANCELLOR. What must I do with this ? (Holding

out a scroll)

NORFOLK. What is it, my Lord ?

CHANCELLOR. The scroll of his addition.
NORFOLK. Let him receive it.

Enter CROMWELL, wearing the Garter.

Welcome Baron of Oakham !
CHANCELLOR. Earl of Essex (Handing him the scroll)

As by this instrument you are preferred.
CROMWELL. Thanks, Chancellor.
NORFOLK. Beware of pride, my Lord !

So many honours heaped upon one head ;

The Garter too ! They say prosperity,

SCENE 2 CROMWELL : MALL O' MONKS 289

Unless it wear some blemish on his front,

Is blasted by the eye of envious men,

And at his full is nearest to decay.

Have you no fear of envy ?
CROMWELL. None, my Lord.

NORFOLK. Why, you provoke it, County ; even here

You wear the thong that others leave at home.
CROMWELL. I please myself and not the Duke of

Norfolk.

NORFOLK. Wretch, that too long hast gulled the
gentle King,

I 'rest you of High Treason. To the Tower !
CROMWELL. By what authority ?
NORFOLK. (Showing him a ring) By this, hilding !

Dost thou acknow the King's own ring ?
CROMWELL. I do ;

See that he mock not at you.
NORFOLK. Have no fear ;

He knows your charge.

CROMWELL. I'll answer any charge.

NORFOLK. You'll have no room. You that attaint
my brother

Unheard in his defence, by Act of Parliament,

You forged the engine of your own defeat.
SUFFOLK. Twisted a rod for his own tail, i' faith.
CHANCELLOR. Your tyranny is over !
CROMWELL. Worser tyranny

Will follow on the heels of this.
NORFOLK. Enough !

Enter GUARDS

My Lord of Suffolk, bear him to the Tower.
But stay ! Not in the panoply of honour !

(Tearing off CROMWELL'S Garter)
Thou base-born churl ! Long have my fingers itched
To tear these trappings from thy farrier flesh.

SCENE 3
At Court. GARDINER and NORFOLK.

GARDINER. Whither, my Lord of Norfolk ?
NORFOLK. To the King.

GARDINER. Be ruled by me, my Lord ; we shall r but seem

To be envenomed by some private hate,

Rather than tendering the Kingdom's weal,

If we assail his ear with too much cause

Why thus and thus he should not pardon Cromwell.
NORFOLK. Cranmer's been with him, clamouring for mercy.
GARDINER. His Grace of Canterbury is with him now,

And Sadler, with a letter from the Tower

From Cromwell self.

NORFOLK. Zounds, we shall be undone !

GARDINER. There's one that reasons better than ourselves

Against the side of mercy.
NORFOLK. Who is that ?

GARDINER. Your niece's lips, the Lady Katharine,

Which, only to smile, not speak, outreason all.
(Pointing out of the window)

See where she walks among the cypresses.

Is it a wonder that so fair a face

Should break that wafer cake the Prince's heart ?

Yet if he pardon him there is no way

But he must keep the German for his Queen ;

And so farewell to Lady Katharine.

Enter HENRY, CRANMER and SADLER with a letter.

CRANMER. Sire, I have throughly known him as I know

The bottom of my heart ; a snow-white man ;

There is no guile or treachery in him.

And how he loved your Grace ! Does not his love

Cry from this letter ?

HENRY. Read me that piece again.

SADLER. (Reading) " Beseech your Grace, perpend my woeful lot,

Ready to take the death when it shall please you;

And yet the frailty of the flesh incites

To call for mercy. ..."
HENRY. Ay, " most gracious Prince,

I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy. ..."
NORFOLK. What ?

Did he have mercy ? Did he spare my brother ?
HENRY. Your brother was a traitor, but this man

Has served me faithfully for many years.
NORFOLK. All England cries aloud for vengeance on

him.

HENRY. This is your malice speaks, not love of
England.

England should bless not curse him.
CRANMER. Now I hear

The King's authentic voice speak from his heart.
HENRY. Cranmer, I love him still. . . .
(GARDINER signals from the window, and KATHARINE'S

voice is heard singing in the garden : " Pastime in

Good Company ")

HENRY. Whose voice is that ?

GARDINER. The Lady Katharine, walking in the
shade,

Defies the ousel to a joust of song.
CRANMER. Your Majesty . . .
HENRY. Leave me in peace, Cranmer,

Commons and Lords have judged him ; plead
with them.

SADLER. And shall I bear no message to him ?
HENRY. None.

[Exit HENRY

SCENE 4

In a dungeon of the Tower. Night. The scene is
lighted only by a lantern standing on the floor.
CROMWELL alone.

CROMWELL. Day after day, night after dreadful

night,

I sit and con the story of my past,
My hope, my glory and my swift descent ;
And ever the shadow of my coming death
Creeps slowly forward to my trembling feet.
How often have I watched the sun's first ray
Steal in through yonder grill and kiss the wall,
Rejoicing that another night was gone
With its fantastic shadows and its dreams.
Now when the sun shines in, O misery. . . .

sun, sink into everlasting night,

Clocks stand, and all things make an end of time ;
For I must die upon the point of day.

1 that had seemed so sure ; made Earl of Essex
Only to fat me for the slaughter . . . Hark !

What sound is that ? The headsman's dreadful

tread

Echoes among the vaults of heartless stone,
Keys rattle and the rusty lock cries, Death !

Enter SADLER and a prisoner

Go back ! go back ! the sun's not risen yet ;
I am not fit to die ; I will not die !

SADLER. Do you not know me ? It is I, my Lord,
Sadler that keeps this prison, him that once
Yourself preferred to hold this doleful charge ;
Sadler, that bare your message to the King.

CROMWELL. O gentle Sadler, grief hath made me

blind.

O foolish fear that hid my joy from me ;
For now I know, the King has pardoned me;
You came to wake me with the joyful news.

SADLER. Have no such hope, my Lord.

CROMWELL. He read my letter ?

Was he not moved? Did he not say, Poor
Cromwell ?

SADLER. Banish all hope ; he will not pardon you,
And at the hour of sunrise you must die.
Be brave, my Lord, even as this poor clerk,
For whom the dawn brings death no less than you.

[Exit SADLER, leaving his
prisoner behind him

CROMWELL. Oh, to be brave ! But how can I not

quake

To see the daily pageant of this world,
The leaves, the blades of grass, each tiny stone,
And vulgar things, this lantern and this jug,
All that perceiving means to be alive,
Plunge at the axe's blow to nothingness ?
You, sir, my fellow-prisoner, gentle friend,
You that lie there so still (thinking of what?),
Have you the secret ? How should a man face

Death ?
Teach me the lesson.

(His fellow -prisoner crosses and lifts the lantern so
that its light falls on both their faces, revealing
himself as LAMBERT)

LAMBERT. See, it is I, Cromwell.

CROMWELL. Lambert !

LAMBERT. I know your story. J^You that were brave,
Are you a coward at last and fear to die ?

CROMWELL. A little less, Jack, for the sight of thee.

LAMBERT. Our roads that so long parted meet again ;
Each for the selfsame goal we started forth,
To bring the Kingdom of the Lord to earth.

How hast thou fared ? In Courts and Palaces,
Bending thine honour to a thousand shifts,
Slipping by small and small from brave intents,
Foiled in the end, condemned, afraid to die.

CROMWELL. And thou, O prophet, crying in the

Wilderness,
Hast thou succeeded better ?

LAMBERT. Yea.

CROMWELL. And yet

The selfsame morning brings us to the death,
And still no sign on earth of Kingdom gained.

LAMBERT. I too was blind ; but now mine eyes have
seen.

CROMWELL. When will it come, Jack ?

LAMBERT. It will never come ;

Never but in the heart. Age after age
Mankind will be the unchanging slavish same,
Hugging his chains, and hating those who seek
That freedom which the Christ went forth to

preach.

And when we seem to conquer, shaking off
The load of tyranny that weighed us down
In State or Church, they'll build it up again
In some new shape and called by some new name,
And still be slaves.

CROMWELL. Then have we toiled in vain ?

LAMBERT. No, not in vain

If we have freed one soul, our own or other,
And given it wings to soar above the rest,
Despising mockery, judgment, torment, death,

Too proud to barter freedom for its ease.
Art thou not free, Tom ?
CROMWELL. Thou dost infect me with thy courage,

Jack ;

Give me thy hand, boy ; I'll be brave at last.
Too proud ; ay, that's the word ; too proud to

quail

Before the bludgeoning of this knavish world.
What ! Such a pack of clumsy butchers ? Out

on them !

I'll put forth merrily from this dingy shore
To seek new lands and new adventures . . .
LAMBERT. There's my old Cromwell ! See, the sun

shines in ;

Farewell, it is the hour of our death ;
I to the faggot, thou to the axe. Farewell !

Enter SADLER with EXECUTIONERS, ATTENDANTS
and FRIARS with candles.

CROMWELL. Farewell, my honest Jack ; we'll meet

anon.

SADLER. Farewell to both ! Officers, do your

charge.

(The EXECUTIONERS go to take CROMWELL and

LAMBERT)

CROMWELL. (Offering a piece of gold to the HEADSMAN)
Here, gentle Deathsman, here's guerdon for thy

pains ;

See and shame not thy calling by thy stroke.
HEADSMAN. (Throwing the piece of gold on the ground)
Out, bloody villain ! I'll no gold of thine !
I'll wreak thee vengeance of a nation's tears ;
I'll hack thee, villain, like a shambles prentice-boy,

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And change thy death to twenty thousand

deaths.
CROMWELL. Peace, varlet ; I that fear not death

himself,
Weenest I fear what thou canst do to me ?

[Exeunt in procession with FRIARS chanting

CURTAIN

CINDERELLA

An Ibsen Pantomime in Three Acts

TO THOSE

WHO TOOK PART IN THE

ORIGINAL IMPROMPTU

IBSEN PANTOMIME

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MRS INQUEST

HEDDA, her daughter, a distinguished, fashionable person

HILDA, her stepdaughter

MADAM HELSETH, her servant

AUNT JUDY, her sister

MOPS YM AN, Aunt Judy's dog

8TOCKPISH

TESMAN, his son

A DEMON, a FAIRY, a HIRED WAITER and a THEATRICAL MANAGER

NOTE: The parts of MRS INQUEST and AUNT JUDY are to be
played by men.

PROLOGUE

THE THEATRICAL MANAGER comes before the curtain and introduces the play with a short speech, in which he says that he has endeavoured to please both generations, providing Ibsen for the young and Pantomime for the old. The result is a Pantomime as Ibsen would have written it, if only it had occurred to him to write one.

NOTE : This pantomime is hardly more than a rough draft, written when the idea was fresh and put aside to be worked on when the right moment should come. Unhappily it never came ; but even in its present form the play has seemed too characteristic of its author to be lost, and it is therefore printed as it stands. K. C.

CINDERELLA
ACT I

SCENE 1

Before a drop scene. Red light and a gong.
Enter a DEMON

DEMON. What O ! I am the spirit of the Night.
And to do heevil is my chief delight.
When I see people 'appy I am sad ;
Nothing seems good to me unless it's bad.
Good girls like Cinderella drive me wild ;
She's never naughty ; that's why I hate the child.
And now that she's emergin' from her teens,
I'll give her no pease ; I'll give her beans.
(White light and a gong)

Enter a FAIRY

FAIRY. Turremble, saucy knave ! Behold

The enemy you feared of old !
DEMON. Oh, Lor' ! My word ! That girl again !
FAIRY. De toutes les fees je suis la reine.
DEMON. She's a hundesirable himmigrant.
FAIRY. No harm shall come to Cinderella

From you or any other feller ;

I and my fairies will protect her.
DEMON. They're the police, she's the Inspector.

Where are the others ? Where's the ballet ?
FAIRY. They can't come on the stage to-day, so allez !
DEMON. Why not ?
FAIRY. Oh, Madame Brownf orgot to send their things,

So we're obliged to keep them in the wings.

FAIRY CHORUS. (Behind) 'Ark to the fairies singing

their song,

Dear little fairies singing all wrong ;
If you can't hear our song very plain,
When it is finished we'll sing it again.
DEMON. Oh, spare me ! Spare me ! What have I
done to deserve this ?

(Chorum repeated)

FAIRY. Enough ! Belay there ! It is time
To give the kids their Pantomime.

[Exeunt DEMON and FAIRY

SCENE 2

The drop scene is raised, revealing an Ibsen interior. MRS INQUEST sits at a table and knits. She rings a bell

Enter MADAM HELSETH

MRS INQUEST. Come hither, Madam Helseth, and sit down by me.

MADAM HELSETH. But I've the scuttles to fill.

MRS INQUEST. No matter ; come hither ; I want to talk. Soliloquies are not allowed in modern plays. It is necessary that I should have a confidante.

MADAM HELSETH. I'll take my sewing.

MRS INQUEST. I am a lady of middle age and prepossessing aspect. My name is not Mrs Twankay ; it is Mrs Inquest ; a nice cheerful sort of name with a Scandinavian ring about it. I do nothing all day but knit, knit, knit. It has some sort of symbolical meaning. I never open a book ; we none of us ever do ; there are no books in the house except what we write ourselves. We sit and brood over our sorrows. We are a peculiar family all of us ; we are a thing apart. Our names all begin with an H. There's Hilda, and Hedda, and Helseth . . .

MADAM HELSETH. And Hinquest.

MRS INQUEST. We are all fond of pickles, and all our uncles drink, and we all have green eyes of a peculiar shade.

MADAM HELSETH. But good gracious, Mrs Inquest, I have heard all this a dozen times before.

MRS INQUEST. Very likely, but those good people over there haven't. The name of this house is Rosmersholm ; it is a gloomy place, situated on a bleak and cheerless heath overlooking the fjord. We have no friends ; no neighbours. There is no human habitation within miles and miles, except the gas works. And here we all live side by side, cheek by jowl, but miles apart in soul, Hilda and Hedda and I, and we all detest each other heartily. Hedda is mad ; Hilda is mad ; we are all more or less mad.

MADAM HELSETH. I must go and be about my work.

MRS INQUEST. Nay, hear me out.

MADAM HELSETH. But indeed I must go.

MRS INQUEST. You shall hear me out ! (Forcing her back into her chair) Am I mistress here or not ? Listen and I will tell you the story of my life. I have a past behind me.

MADAM HELSETH. Ha ! This becomes interesting. Do you know, an idea of that sort had crossed my mind already once or twice.

MRS INQUEST. When I was very young I was married to a man with whom I had no single point of sympathy. He loved me, oh, so passionately ! but it was only for my beauty, my charm, my wit. I was not a human being to him ; not a creature with a free, wild will. I was only a chattel, a doll. Even then I wanted to live my

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own life, but he wouldn't so much as let me eat

macaroons.

MADAM HELSETH. Ah ! So you are Nora.
MRS INQUEST. Yes, I am that unhappy woman.
MADAM HELSETH. I know all about you. You ran

away.
MRS INQUEST. (As if she had forgotten) Ran away ?

. . . Oh, that was nothing. 1 soon came back

again. When at last my child was born ...
MADAM HELSETH. Miss Hedda ?
MRS INQUEST. Yes.

MADAM HELSETH. But you had several already ?
MRS INQUEST. Oh, they didn't count. We turned

them out ; they were dolls too. We wanted to

start quite afresh.
MADAM HELSETH. Fancy !
MRS INQUEST. When Hedda was born I determined

to get rid of my husband. His constant presence

irked me ; his perpetual smiles and caresses

seemed to insult my humanity.
MADAM HELSETH. What did you do ?
MRS INQUEST. I drowned him in the mill-race.
MADAM HELSETH. Oh dearie, dearie me ! You

drowned him ?
MRS INQUEST. Yes, I had my undaunted freeborn

will at that time. I pushed him in.
MADAM HELSETH. That was when the White Horse

began to haunt Rosmersholm.
MRS INQUEST. Ah yes, the White Horse. I enjoyed

the luxury of widowhood for many years ; then I

determined, for some very complicated reasons,

to marry again. Oh, he was an angel ; I met him

up at the Baths. He had a daughter already.
MADAM HELSETH. Miss Hilda ?
MRS INQUEST. Yes, her name was Hilda.
MADAM HELSETH. Ah, that was a happy marriage !

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MRS INQUEST. Yes, those are the worst, the happy marriages.

MADAM HELSETH. You always agreed on everything.

MRS INQUEST. Yes, I always insisted on that. But I was bored, mortally bored. All this happened as usual, you will understand, together with a lot of other complicated circumstances, fifteen or twenty years before the play opens. Well, I could stand it no longer ; I had to get rid of him too. He was a miserable, undersized little beast.

MADAM HELSETH. What ! did you kill hini too ?

MRS INQUEST. No, he was good enough to take that trouble off my hands. He hanged himself in the apple orchard. I drove him to it. I drove him mad, inexorably mad. I hinted. I said : " Here is a rope ; there is the apple orchard."

MADAM HELSETH. But that was cruel of you ; it was tactless.

MRS INQUEST. Oh, of course, blame me ! blame me ! A woman is always in the wrong.

MADAM HELSETH. And is that all ? Were there no other children ?

MRS INQUEST. Oh yes, fifteen others.

MADAM HELSETH. What became of them ?

MRS INQUEST. I killed them. Lucky children ! They enjoy the peace and luxury of death. Then at last I began to live, deep down, in the bottom of my soul.

MADAM HELSETH. These secrets are more than I can bear.

MRS INQUEST. But all this is nothing ; it is only the prelude ; you have not heard the worst.

MADAM HELSETH. Oh, Lord ! Have you more confessions to make ? Was there some other crime ?

MRS INQUEST. The worst thing was what came after.

MADAM HELSETH. Oh, let me know the worst !

MRS INQUEST. No, I will keep it for some wet afternoon. It is all in here. (Giving her a portfolio) Here is the key. I want you to take care of it for me. But you must on no account look inside.

MADAM HELSETH. Then why do you give it me ?

MRS INQUEST. 'Sh ! It may be useful in the last act. And now you know why it is that a kind of gloom weighs over the household.

MADAM HELSETH. The White Horse ; yes, yes !

MRS INQUEST. Hedda is clever and writes books. Hilda has a mean, crawling spirit ; she loves drudgery ; she does the housework while you loaf around, gibbering about White Horses and things. I never laugh ; Hilda never laughs ; nobody ev-ver laughs at Rosmersholm.
(HEDDA laughs off)

MADAM HELSETH. Except Miss Hedda.

MRS INQUEST. Yes, Hedda laughs at times. But it's a funereal sort of laugh ; a sardonic, anchovic sort of laugh. It always means death to somebody.

Enter HEDDA

HEDDA. Give me my pistols ; there's a visitor coming up the drive.

[Exit with pistols

MADAM HELSETH. Lor', that Miss Hedda ! The things she does do !

(Pistol-shots without)

TESMAN. (Without) Help ! Help !

(More pistol-shots)

Enter HEDDA laughing.

MRS INQUEST. What is the matter, my child ?

HEDDA. It is only Tesman come to pay a call. I nearly got him, but he dodged.

MRS INQUEST. It is Over-Drain-Inspector Tesman, who is engaged to be married to my daughter Hedda.

MADAM HELSETH. (Impatiently) I know ! I know !

Enter TESMAN, in mittens, carrying a parcel.

HEDDA. You dodged, you mean beast, you dodged !

TESMAN. Do you know, Hedda, I wish you were a little more gentle and winning in your ways.

MRS INQUEST. You mustn't mind Hedda, Tesman ; she overflows with the joy of life.

HEDDA. Why have you come here ?

TESMAN. I came to show you something very wonderful. You will never guess what. It is Aunt Jemima's wedding present. I had never hoped for anything so good from her.

HEDDA. I don't care ; I don't want to see.

TESMAN. (Following her about) But you must, Hedda ; you are one of the family now.

HEDDA. I don't want to see ! I don't want to see !

TESMAN. Uncle Krogstat used to wear them. You never saw such a big pair.

HEDDA. Heavens ! What is he going to show us ?

TESMAN. (Producing them from his parcel) A pair of goloshes. What did you think ? A pair of old goloshes.

MRS INQUEST. Fancy !

TESMAN. Old goloshes ! Think of that, Hedda.

HEDDA. Yes, yes !

TESMAN. Only think, Hedda.

HEDDA. I am thinking.

TESMAN. But that is not the most important thing that I have to tell you. No, there is something more.

MRS INQUEST. Whatever can it be ?

TESMAN. I cannot come and see you now so often.

HEDDA. You can't ?

TESMAN. This valley has become terrible to me.

MRS INQUEST. Why ?

TESMAN. Because I have found my father.

HEDDA. Your father ?

MRS INQUEST. You have a father ?

TESMAN. A long-lost father. He lives up here at the gas-works under an assumed name. You can hear his footstep. (A steady footstep heard pacing up and down) Up and down, up and down.

MRS INQUEST. Up and down, up and down.

TESMAN. For eight long years. On the top of the gas meter.

HEDDA. Are you afraid of your father then ?

TESMAN. Yes, inscrutably afraid ; it is one of the old habits of childhood. But that is not all.

MRS INQUEST. What more is there ?

TESMAN. He has grown tired of his solitude at last. To-day he has determined to come down, to go out into society again. He is coming here.

HEDDA. (At the window) See, he is descending the gas meter.

MRS INQUEST. Slowly step by step he clambers down the ironwork pillars.

HEDDA. He has a stick in his hand.

TESMAN. I must be off. Be kind to him. After all, he is my father. You mustn't mind if he's a little strange in his manner.

MRS INQUEST. He cometh hitherwards.

HEDDA. I must have a shot at him.

TESMAN. No, don't j not on his first visit. He might not understand. It might make him shy of coming again. Here's Hilda ; bully her instead. Good-bye. I must fly. I love him dearly, but my life is not worth a minute's purchase if he finds me here.

[Exit TESMAN

Enter HILDA in green spectacles, with a cardboard shade over her eyes.

HEDDA. Come here, come here, you little coward ! you little mean-spirited wretch ! Why do you wear those goggles and that idiotic shade over your eyes ?

HILDA. Oh, please, Hedda, you know that I have to, for my work.

HEDDA. Your work !

HILDA. The glare of the kitchen fire is too much for me without them. Oh, please forgive me, Hedda. I've got such weak eyes.

HEDDA. You wretched little household drudge !

You're afraid of me, you're afraid of me !

HILDA. Oh, please don't hurt me !

HEDDA. And I can't stand your hair. (Rumpling it) Ugh! It's all fluffy like a Regent Street chicken.

HILDA. Oh, please !

HEDDA. " Oh, please ! " I think I must burn it off after all.

HILDA. Oh no, please not! I'll do anything you tell me.

Enter MADAM HELSETH, ushering in STOCKFISH,
with straw in his hair.

MADAM HELSETH. Mr Stockfish.

(She hands his card to MRS INQUEST)

HEDDA. (Winningly) So glad, I'm sure.

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STOCKFISH. H'mph !

MRS INQUEST. (To MADAM HELSETH) One of my former husbands. (Standing beside the table, like Mrs Borkman) Why have you come here, Stockfish ?

STOCKFISH. Can you not forget ? Can you not forgive ?

MRS INQUEST. I never forgive ! I never forget !

STOCKFISH. After eight years of solitude I could bear it no longer. I waited and waited up there expecting a deputation, but nobody came. This is not life ; I must have company.

MRS INQUEST. Company, Stockfish ? Did / have company when as a girl of thirty-five . . .

HEDDA. Leave us, mamma. Your presence irks me.

[Exit MRS INQUEST

Sit down. Tell us the story of your life.

STOCKFISH. Once I was a builder. I used to build houses.

HILDA. With high towers to them ?

STOCKFISH. How did you know that ? Yes, they had high towers to them. Who is this girl ?

HEDDA. Take no notice of her ; she's the between.

STOCKFISH. I built houses on a new principle. But they always tumbled down, the houses that I built, burying housemaids and clockwork mice in the ruins.

HEDDA. Clockwork mice ?

MADAM HELSETH. Ah, there's some symbolism in that, you may be sure.

HEDDA. It is a pity only that they tumbled down.

STOCKFISH. But that wasn't the worst. It was what happened after they tumbled down that

was the worst.

HEDDA. What was that ?

STOCKFISH. I began to mistrust myself.

HEDDA. To mistrust yourself? Ah, that is the worst sort of mistrust.

STOCKFISH. Yes, I began to doubt whether I had any great mission, any special message to the world, in the architectural line. Others began to doubt it too. I began to be known as the plaster-builder. I resolved to begin a new life ; I resolved to build no more houses.

HEDDA. You were quite right ; houses are so irrelevant.

STOCKFISH. I said to myself ; "I will build gas-works instead."

MADAM HELSETH. Ah, to light the town ; that is the great need of the local situation.

STOCKFISH. No, that is where I had been wrong all my life. I had been trying to serve mankind. I had been trying to do something useful.

HEDDA. Useful ! How I hate that mean, ugly word !

STOCKFISH. I said : " I will no longer do what is useful. I will no longer build little humdrum houses for little humdrum people to live in. I will build gas-works out in some wild, desolate spot, far from all human habitation, among the peaks and the great waste places, where they can nev-ver, nev-ver be of any use to anybody at all."

HEDDA. Oh, that was noble of you, Stockfish !

STOCKFISH. Do you know what I am ? I am an Idealist. Whatever I do has a symbolical meaning.

HEDDA. And the gas ?

STOCKFISH. That is symbolical too. ... I cast off my family ; I changed my name.

HEDDA. Why?

STOCKFISH. Do you not understand ? I wanted to start quite afresh. Besides, I owed money in the town.

HEDDA. You were quite right. All that sort of thing is so irrelevant.

STOCKFISH. The soulless toil of the wage-earner has always aroused a sickening aversion in me. That is why I cast off my son, Tesman.

HEDDA. Tesman !

STOCKFISH. You know him ?

HEDDA. Oh, slightly.

MADAM HELSETH. Ahem !

HEDDA. You'd better go and get on with the housework, I think, Madam Helseth.

[Exit MADAM HELSETH

STOCKFISH. He insisted on working. He worked nearly six hours a day, and lived on what he earned.

HEDDA. Shame !

STOCKFISH. He haunted me with the vision of the humdrum citizen, the good bourgeois. I said, "Epatons-le," and I epatted him. He wanted to be respectable. I kicked him out. I want none of that.

HEDDA. I should think not indeed !

HILDA. Serve him jolly well right !

STOCKFISH. He is a drudge.

HILDA. Down with him !

STOCKFISH. Besides, as Over-Drain-Inspector to the Stockholm County Council he had condemned several of the houses that I built. And so for eight long years I have been up in this valley, making gas that no one will ev-ver burn.

HEDDA. That no one will ev-ver burn ! How beautiful !

STOCKFISH. The solitude up there at the gas-works is something awful ; you can't think. You could cut it with a knife.

HEDDA. What, are you quite alone ?

STOCKFISH. 'Sh ! No, I am not quite alone.
HEDDA. Is there some other person . . .
STOCKFISH. No, it is not a person. 'Sh ! It's a great secret. I keep it in the box-room. You shall see it when you come up.
HEDDA. Oh, what can it be ?
STOCKFISH. This evening you will see. At last I have grown sick of this life. Even gas-making palls in the end. This morning I said to myself : "I will go out into Society again ; I will marry."
HEDDA. Marry !
HILDA. One of us ?

HEDDA. I am engaged ; but I can easily break it off.
STOCKFISH. I have determined to give a party. I am going to break the ice. I invite you to my party.

HEDDA. This evening ?
STOCKFISH. Yes, just this evening.
HILDA. Oh, how ripping !
HEDDA. Nonsense, you're not asked.
STOCKFISH. Of course not. I only want the eligible ladies of the neighbourhood ; just the County.
HEDDA. And what amusements will there be at the party ?

STOCKFISH. We will play paper games.
HEDDA. How beautiful ! Long dreary paper

games ! I'll go and ask mamma. We shall have

to titivate a bit, change our clothes and all that.
STOCKFISH. Oh, clothes are so irrelevant !
HILDA. How I wish I could go too !
HEDDA. You indeed ! Ugh ! I think I shall have

to burn your hair off after all.
HILDA. Oh, please not, Hedda ! Spare me ! Spare

me ! I am weak and feeble.

[Exit HEDDA

Oh, sir, I want to ask a favour of you.

STOCKFISH. A favour ? You ?

HILDA. Mayn't I come to your party too ?

STOCKFISH. A little tame beast like you ? No
indeed ! I want no mouse-faces about me, no
lap-dog muzzles, no turtle-bills. Give me tiger-
snouts and ravening wolf- jowls !

HILDA. Oh dear, oh dear ! Why am I such a
miserable teeny-weeny little mizzler ? I am
enormously fetched by you, Stockfish ; there is
something very taking about you.

STOCKFISH. Pah, scrub !

Enter MRS INQUEST and HEDDA in hooded cloaks.

(To MRS INQUEST) What, are you coming too ?
MRS INQUEST. Stockfish, during fifteen years I

wrestled with another woman once for your soul,

and now I mean to have it.
STOCKFISH. Oh, Sophonisba, how will all this

end?

[Exit STOCKFISH
MRS INQUEST. (To HILDA) Have the milk hot when

we come back, and don't forget to feed the cat.

And by the by, don't let anybody in while we're

away.
HILDA. Who is likely to come ? No one ever comes

here.
MRS INQUEST. My sister has been seen in the hills,

your godmother, Aunt Judy.
HILDA. Aunt Judy ? My godmother ? Why, I

never even heard of her !
MRS INQUEST. She's a bad lot. They call her the

Rat-wife. Heaven grant that you may never

meet her. (AUNT JUDY laughs without) Why,

what was that ?
MADAM HELSETH. The White Horse !

HEDDA. Ugh ! you wait till I get back.

[Exeunt MRS INQUEST and HEDDA
MADAM HELSETH. Heaven grant they may not

meet the White Horse on the way.
HILDA. All alone ! All alone ! All alone !
MADAM HELSETH. Why, you've got me, dearie.

(HILDA sings a song expressing solitude and dejection)

HILDA. And now I suppose I shall have to spend

the evening scrubbing those pots and pans.

How I hate pots and pans !
MADAM HELSETH. Are we down-hearted ? No !
HILDA. And I'm hungry too ; they give me nothing

to eat.
MADAM HELSETH. Lord love a duck, young lady,

I'll toss you up a bit of a pancake for your supper

in no time.
HILDA. I tell you what we'll do ; we'll read Hedda's

book together. That'll be a lark.
MADAM HELSETH. What ! Is Miss Hedda writing

a book ?
HILDA. Didn't you know ? Yes, on Deportment

for Young Ladies.

MADAM HELSETH. Fancy ! That ought to be something quite new. (A bell rings) Hark! there's

the bell. Whoever can it be ? I'll go and

see.
HILDA. Yes, do !

[Exit MADAM HELSETH

(Reading) My ! The things Hedda does say ! If

mamma only knew !

Enter MADAM HELSETH

MADAM HELSETH. It's an elderly woman downstairs who wants to see you,
HILDA. Who is she ?

MADAM HELSETH. She's not much to look at. She
seems what you might call a bit crazed ; balmy,
so to speak, on the crumpet, and that's a fact.

HILDA. Ah, well, she won't be out of place here.
Ask her to come up.

MADAM HELSETH. I did. I told her to follow
me ; but she said she preferred coming her own
way.

(A gong, music and red light)

Enter AUNT JUDY through a trap-door. She has a
hooked nose, and wears a Welsh witch costume with
tall hat and cap frill.

AUNT JUDY. Well ? Here we are again ! Pardon,

seductive lady, you don't remember me ?

HILDA. I don't think I ever had the pleasure.
AUNT JUDY. Why, I'm your Aunt Judy.
HILDA. Aunt Judy ? The lady I wasn't to admit under any circumstances ? Come in ! Come in !
AUNT JUDY. I'm your godmother.
HILDA. I know.

AUNT JUDY. Your fairy godmother.
HILDA. What, are you a fairy ?
AUNT JUDY. Yes, I'm a troll. (Singing and dancing)
Fol de rol lol,
I'm a troll, I'm a troll !
Fol de rol lay,
Toujours gaie, toujours gaie !
Fol de rol lee,
You'll never catch me !
Fol de rol lol de rol lido !

(Spoken) Ha, ha, ha, my elegant mermaid, what do you think of that ?

HILDA. What an engaging old lady you are ! Are you always as gay as that ?

SCENE 2 CINDERELLA 315

AUNT JUDY. Rather 1 I sing and dance all day and all night. Allegro con brio is my lay.

HILDA. And is it true that you are a bad lot ?

AUNT JUDY. Ah, they told you that ! Fi done ! That's their spitefulness, my unspeakable jam puff, because I went my own way without listening to them. Donnerwetter, ma chere, I was never cut out to be a myrmidon of morality. I'm an emancipee, that's what I am. I've always lived my own life ; comprenez ? What are cork-screws made for ? Ahem ! I say no more.

HILDA. Aha ! You've been brought up by hand ?

AUNT JUDY. You have hit it, gracious lady ! I've signed the pledge a dozen times, but, bless you, Aunt Judy still remains the woman she always was. Since then they call me the Rat-wife. That's the j oiliest thing in the world that anyone can be.

HILDA. Are you so fond of rats then ?

AUNT JUDY. Fond of them ? I've got to be fond of them whether I like it or not. I see rats, rats, rats everywhere. Big rats, little rats, pink rats with purple eyes. Look at them ! Rats and pumpkins ! They're all over the floor. And white mice too !

HILDA. Ugh ! (Jumping on a chair) I don't see no mice.

AUNT JUDY. Ah, you wait till you've signed the pledge ! They come creepy-crawly up in the beds all night long. They plump into the milk-cans. They go pittering pattering all over the floor, backwards and forwards, and up and down, nibbling and gnawing and creeping and crawling, all the rats and the blessed little rat-children ; and I go about following and following after them, I and my lovely little dog Mopsyman.

HILDA. What, have you got a dog too ?

AUNT JUDY. A dog ? Of course I have.

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HILDA. A real dog ?

AUNT JUDY. I should think so indeed ! He drinks whisky too.

HILDA. Real whisky ?

AUNT JUDY. Yes, Scotch reel. (She calls.)

Enter MOPSYMAN

Ah, you should see him dance ! Why, what's this ? A pair of clogs ? Four of them ; a pair for me and a pair for you, Mopsyman. Let's have a clog dance.

(AUNT JUDY and MOPSYMAN dance)

Basta ! I'm blown. So the rest of the family have gone out to a party and left you all alone at home ?

HILDA. Yes.

AUNT JUDY. I overheard all that they said. I was under the window. I said to myself : What ho ! Capisco, meine Damen. I'll have my revenge. I'll put some stiffening into that tame little ash-cat Hilda, and twist old Inquest's tail. I've come to revolutionise you. You've got to stand up and be a man.

HILDA. Me? Oh no, I'm a little soft Early Victorian thing ; you can't stiffen me.

AUNT JUDY. What, are you contented with your position here ?

HILDA. Oh no.

AUNT JUDY. To be a drudge, a cinder-minx ?

HILDA. No, I crave for great things, great enormous irrelevant things.

AUNT JUDY. Ha, ha ! You want to live your own life.

HILDA. Yes, that's it. I want to live my own life. If only I knew how to begin !

SCENE 2 CINDERELLA 317

AUNT JUDY. Odds ratikins, that's easy. Every woman begins with the same thing.

HILDA. What's that ?

AUNT JUDY. A man.

HILDA. A man ? Oh, my ! How ripping !

AUNT JUDY. A little soft whiskery man to scrunch up in your dainty fingerkins.

HILDA. Oh, wouldn't I like it ! (Running about) Oh, where's a man, where's a man ?

AUNT JUDY. There's Stockfish to begin with.

HILDA. Stockfish ?

AUNT JUDY. You can practise on him for a start. Go up to the party at the gas-works.

HILDA. But Hedda would burn my hair off.

AUNT JUDY. Hedda indeed ! Who's afraid of Hedda ? Disguise yourself.

HILDA. But how am I to disguise myself ?

AUNT JUDY. I have it ! ... Wash !

HILDA. I will !

AUNT JUDY. And fig yourself up in some of Hedda's clothes.

HILDA. Right- o ! I will. I will get my self up in the height of fashion.

(AUNT JUDY and MOPSYMAN get out clothes ; HILDA washes and dresses)

There, what do you think of that ?

AUNT JUDY. Be free ! Be free ! Don't let others prescribe your life for you. Don't be a myrmidon of morality any longer. Go it, you cripple ! Paint the little homestead red !

HILDA. I will ! I'm damned if I don't !

AUNT JUDY. Come, you're beginning to swear. That's better.

HILDA. (Jumping across the stage like a kangaroo in a hobble skirt) Women must be free, untrammelled. We have been tied up too long. I'm going to be a

new woman, a bold-faced jig. But don't you think they'll recognise me ?

AUNT JUDY. Not they ! It isn't much of a disguise outwardly ; but you're disguised mentally ; that's the important thing.

HILDA. And what am I to do next ?

AUNT JUDY. Something symbolic something to show your new-found freedom.

HILDA. I know ! Hedda said she would burn off my hair. Well, I tell you what ; I'll burn Hedda's book, her manuscript on Deportment for Young Ladies. What a lark ! She burned Lovborg's book, you know. Serve her right, the cat ! That'll larn her ! (Burning the MS.) Now I am burning your child, Hedda ; I am burning your child. What ho, she bumps ! This is prime fun ! Why wasn't I a suffragette before ?

AUNT JUDY. Now let's be off.

HILDA. But how are we to get there ? I can't walk ; it's raining.

Enter MADAM HELSETH

MADAM HELSETH. Lor, Miss Hilda, you do look a swell ! Well I never ! Miss Hedda's fichu, too !

HILDA. We're going to the party.

MADAM HELSETH. But you can't walk, not in them shoes.

HILDA. Now for some of those rats and mice and pumpkins of yours, Aunt Judy.

AUNT JUDY. Oh, but they're only imaginary rats and mice. They won't take you anywhere. Why, here's the very thing, just at the door. A pair of ...

HILDA. Horses?

MADAM HELSETH. White horses ?

AUNT JUDY. No, no ; a pair of goloshes.
HILDA. That'll do. I'll go in them. . . . It's frightfully thrilling !

[Exeunt AUNT JUDY, MOPSYMAN and HILDA, trailing her big goloshes

(Music)
Enter the FAIRY

FAIRY. Behold me, Cinderella, in your hour of need,
What time the others to the party speed !
Would you not like to go as well ?

MADAM HELSETH. Too late ! She's gone.

FAIRY. Oh, what a sell !

CHORUS. (Behind) 'Ark to the fairies singing their song, etc.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE 1

At the gas-works. The scene is only a few feet deep. Behind the back cloth there is a great din of hammering, and occasionally a blow on the cloth itself. STOCKFISH alone. At home he is an ordinary peevish nervous householder.

STOCKFISH. Oh dear, oh dear ! I wish I had never undertaken to give a party. If I had known all the preparations that it would involve ! This fearful noise going on all day ; nowhere to sit down or anything ; and as soon as I get a little privacy someone is sure to come intruding.

Enter TESMAN disguised as a waiter, with a false nose and a long beard. Another WAITER with him, small and Jewish. Both wear big white cotton gloves.

Now what do you want ? Who on earth are you ?

TESMAN and WAITER. (Stepping absurdly together, and keeping exact time in their words and gestures) We are the first and second hired waiters.

STOCKFISH. Ah, the men from Gunter's. Now you know that I'm expecting a small party here to-night. . . . Oh dear, oh dear, what is all that noise behind ?

TESMAN and WAITER. It is the stage-carpenters preparing the big scene, the big set scene.

STOCKFISH. I do wish they could be a little quieter about it. Well, as I say, I am expecting a small party. . . .

(He is interrupted by a blow on the back cloth near his head)

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SCENE 1 CINDERELLA 321

There ! that one nearly got me. Relling and Morvik will be here, Nigel Playfair, little Aslaksen and the old crew, some chamberlains, a thin-haired gentleman, a flabby gentleman, a short-sighted gentleman, courtiers, peasants, soldiers, servants, etcetera. . . . For heaven's sake go and tell those people behind to be a little bit quieter ; the audience won't hear a word I have to say.

TESMAN and WAITER. (Together) Master, we hearken and obey. Salaam !

[Exeunt TESMAN and WAITER

(STOCKFISH endeavours to make a speech to the audience but is drowned by the noise)

Enter MRS INQUEST and HEDDA

STOCKFISH. Hullo, what's this ?

MRS INQUEST. You didn't say anything about clothes ; so we thought it best to come in fancy dress.

HEDDA. I have come in classical costume ; I am Aspasia.

MRS INQUEST. (Funereally) My costume is symbolical ; I am Joy.

(They all sit and yawn)

STOCKFISH. How shall we amuse ourselves ?

MRS INQUEST. Let us look at albums of photographs of cathedrals and places of interest that we have never visited.

HEDDA. You promised to play paper games.

STOCKFISH. Paper games ?

HEDDA. Long dreary paper games.

MRS INQUEST. Let us play at Words. We will take some long word . . .

HEDDA. Some long dreary word.

MRS INQUEST. Aleximorkigarticonologialness.

(All repeat)

STOCKFISH. And what do we do then ?

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MRS INQUEST. We make little words out of it.

HEDDA. Words of not less than eight letters.

MRS INQUEST. Beginning in "x."

STOCKFISH. How long shall we have ?

MRS INQUEST. Forty minutes.

(They sit with pencils and paper. After a moment

MRS INQUEST produces a big flute and plays the

Dead March in " Saul " ; they all say " Ugh / " at

the chords)

HEDDA. We are having an excessively jolly evening.
MRS INQUEST. It might best be described as an orgy.
STOCKFISH. How many words have you ?
HEDDA. None.
MRS INQUEST. None.
STOCKFISH. I also have none.
MRS INQUEST. With my flute in my hand and you

two at my side I can be happy.
HEDDA. Let us play at telegrams.
STOCKFISH. Let us play at prehistoric animals in

" m."

MRS INQUEST. I do not care what game we play ;

all are equally dreary. Let us penetrate the

blackest depths of gloom.
(HILDA is heard singing without : " / am free, I am

free, I am free ! ")
STOCKFISH. What is that ?
MRS INQUEST. It is seldom that anyone sings near

Rosmersholm.

STOCKFISH. Or near the gas-works.
MRS INQUEST. Even the birds only make a sort of

croaking noise.

Enter HILDA in goloshes.

HILDA. (Singing) I am free, I am free, I am free !
No more life in the prison for me !
I am free as a flea, I am free !

SCENE 1 CINDERELLA

HEDDA. (Looking at her through long-handled eye-glasses) Who can this be ?

MRS INQUEST. We haven't a notion who this can be.

STOCKFISH. What an enchanting creature !

HEDDA. A little bourgeois.

MRS INQUEST. No style.

HEDDA. Rather rococo.

HILDA. My, what a picnic ! Are you playing at wax- works ? Chambers of Horrors, sixpence extra.

STOCKFISH. What astonishing persiflage !

MRS INQUEST. What a pert little minx !

HEDDA. Bad form, I call it, to be so familiar.

HILDA. Are you alive ?

HEDDA. Yes, we are living . . . deep down.

MRS INQUEST. We are going it ... inside.

HILDA. Do you call this living ? Pah ! You don't know what life is. Life is to leap and dance in the woods, to catch skylarks with the hands, to chase the roebuck and leap down the rocks.

HEDDA. You can't do that at the gas-works.

MRS INQUEST. We shall have to play that game some other day.

STOCKFISH. Aha ! So that's the sort you are ! One of the alive lot ! We'll go hunting, you and I, right up there in the mountains, in the mists and clouds, near the Bathing Establishment. You're a huntress, aren't you ?

HILDA. Yes, a huntress of men.

STOCKFISH. A pretty wit, i' faith ! I'll show you my dogs ; you shall see them gulp down great bones, huge beef bones covered with flesh and gore.

HILDA. Ah, give me gore ! That's life !

STOCKFISH. Come, let's all be jolly ; let's climb down off our perch a bit. We're too intense. It's all very well for the children, but we must think of the old folk too. Remember that this is a Pantomime.

MRS INQUEST. All right ; what shall we do ?

STOCKFISH. Let's have a song and dance.

HEDDA. Right you are !

MRS INQUEST. I'm game.

STOCKFISH. (To TESMAN and WAITER) Just keep things going till we're ready.

TESMAN. Shall we do a short turn, Guv 'nor ?

STOCKFISH. Yes.

[Exeunt STOCKFISH and HILDA

MRS INQUEST. Now mind, whatever you do, let your entertainment be refined.

TESMAN and WAITER. (Together) Madam, of course.

MRS INQUEST. Something that the children can thoroughly understand, something really Drury-Lanian. I should suggest, for instance, that you both pretend you're brokers' men and one of you is drunk and toasts a herring over a candle. You see ? Something amusing but refined.

[Exit MRS INQUEST

TESMAN. (To HEDDA) 'Sh ! Not a word ! You know me?

HEDDA. You are Bernard Shaw.

TESMAN. No. I am your affianced bride. I am Tessman of the D'Urbervilles. (Introducing the WAITER) This is Jude the Obscure. One must earn one's living somehow.

[Exit HEDDA

Something amusing but refined. I know ! We'll do the ticket business.

Enter AUNT JUDY and MOPSYMAN

TESMAN and WAITER. Now then, what do you want here?

SCENE 1 CINDERELLA 325

AUNT JUDY. Oh, please, Mr Gentleman, we want to go to the party.

TESMAN and WAITER. Very well then ; where's your ticket ?

AUNT JUDY. We haven't got no ticket.

TESMAN and WAITER. You can't come in without a ticket. The Guv 'nor said he'd saw my leg off if I let anybody in without a ticket.

AUNT JUDY. (To MOPSYMAN) We must disguise ourselves.

MOPSYMAN. What as ?

AUNT JUDY. I know. Ibsen characters.

(They disguise themselves, MOPSYMAN in bathing drawers, AUNT JUDY as a bathing woman)

Please, Mr Gentleman, this is little Eyolf, and I am the Lady from the Sea. I'm just going to give him a dip.

TESMAN and WAITER. Very well, where's your tickets then ?

(TESMAN and WAITER turn them out. They re-enter newly disguised)

Who are you ?

AUNT JUDY. We're Pillars of Society.

TESMAN and WAITER. Where's your ticket then ?

(They turn them out. They re-enter in sheets)

AUNT JUDY. We are Gh-o-o-osts ! (They pass and turn) Don't be so frightened ; we're not real ghosts.

TESMAN and WAITER. Not real ghosts ? What are you then ?

AUNT JUDY. We're the Pretenders.

(AUNT JUDY and MOPSYMAN throw their sheets over the others and run away)

TESMAN and WAITER. (Pursuing) Where's your ticket ? Where's your ticket ?

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SCENE 2

A deeper scene, with palace staircase and crowd of guests painted at the back. The middle of this painting is a practicable, double door ; but the doors are not painted as doors ; parts of the staircase and crowd swing back when they are opened. STOCK-

FISH shakes hands and converses with the painted guests, and the WAITERS offer them refreshments. STOCKFISH, MRS INQUEST, HEDDA and HILDA discovered.

STOCKFISH. Well, here we all are then.

HEDDA. And what is this ?

MRS INQUEST. (Referring to a catalogue) This is the

Pageant of Empire ; Gallery No. 17 ; meeting of

Colonial Premiers.
STOCKFISH. Not bad for gas-works, eh ? This is the

Board Room, the room where the Directors come

when they're bored.
MRS INQUEST. (Dancing) Come, let us be sportive

and merry. Let us have a song and dance.
STOCKFISH. How are you ? Are you feeling pretty

fit?
MRS INQUEST. Fit ! Yes, fit for anything. (With

emphasis) I am fit to be made a peer.

(The BANDMASTER taps his desk. MRS INQUEST clears

her throat)

HEDDA. (To HILDA) You hear ? Tap, tap, tap ! She's going to sing. I knew how it would be if we took her out to a party. The coffee goes to her head at once.

SCENE 2 CINDERELLA 827

SONG 1

(MRS INQUEST with the other three as chorus)

I

Ho, poor old Mr Hasquith

Is very 'ard- worked, I fear ;
'E's tryin' to find five 'undred men

That's fit to be made a peer.

Chorus

'E's tryin' to find five 'undred men

That's fit to be made a peer.
What O ! You know !

That's fit to be made a peer.

2

Well, 'e wouldn't look long if 'e 'eard this song

For someone to make a nob ;
There's me and there's 'im and there's Bill and there's Jim

Is ready to tyke the job. Chorus.

3

There's me and there's 'im and there's Bill and there's Jim

Is ready to tyke the job.

What O ! You know I

Is ready to tyke the job. Chorus.

4

The day this girl is made a Hearl,

O my, won't I feel queer !
I'll walk in the Row with my helbows so

When I am made a peer. Chorus.

1 To be replaced by something topical at the moment when the play is produced.

5

You won't catch me at the A. B.C.

Nor Lockhart's then, no fear !
I'll do myself well at the Carl ton Hotel

When I am made a peer. Chorus.

6

I won't eat no more sausages

Nor drink no ginger-beer ;
I'll wet my gum with the finest Mumm

When I am made a peer. Chorus.

7

He must mend his ways in the coming days
Must Mr Lloyd George, that's clear ;

I'll not let him rob the riches of the nob
When I am made a peer. Chorus.

(After each chorus the singers walk round repeating

the chorus to the words-)
Umpery umpery umpery um

When Hi am made a peer. ^

(Having finished the song, MRS INQUEST takes the

stage)

MRS INQUEST. Talking of the House of Lords always reminds me of that dear old ditty The Corpse.

(The BANDMASTER taps his desk)
STOCKFISH. Heavens ! She's going to sing again.
MRS INQUEST. (Singing drearily)

It was a corpse lay on a bier

Beneath the silvery moon.

STOCKFISH. There, there, that's enough. You've had your song. You must make way for someone else now.

MRS INQUEST. What ! So I have got to make room now ? To make room for the new generation ?

For little chits of girls ? No ! I will never make

room ! I will never retire ! I will go on singing
for ever and ever.

(They hustle her)

(Singing) It was a corpse lay on a bier
Beneath the silvery moon.
(She is bundled out The rrtusic plays a dance)

HEDDA. What is this ?

STOCKFISH. This is our principal ballet. It is a
Grand Pageant of All Nations. The dresses alone
cost fifty thousand pounds. Hush, they come !
(Ballet of Four Hired Waiters. TESMAN dances
a la russe and says : " Gop, Gop / Do6shenka
may a ! ' The JEW wears three hats. An ITALIAN
WAITER says : " Caramba /" A GERMAN
WAITER carries three glass mugs in either hand
and exclaims: " Potztausend Donnerwetter ! ")
(To TESMAN) Come hither, Dandini ; I would
quaff a goblet of brown October. (TESMAN
serves him) Thank you.

TESMAN. Do not thank me. It is my simple duty.
I am paid to do it.

STOCKFISH. (Leaning his elbow on TESMAN'S shoulder
and looking at HILDA) Tell me, Dandini, who is
yon virgin of peerless beauty ?

TESMAN. I know not, your Majesty ; but fain
would I right gladly meet with her anon in the
twi-twi-light.

(The BANDMASTER taps)

STOCKFISH. Nay, not that, for heaven's sake !
Ring off ! Oh, spare me, spare me !

TESMAN. Do not kneel to me, old man ! Do you
not know me ? 1 am Tesman, your long-lost
son. (He takes off his beard and nose)

STOCKFISH. You ! What, have you turned up
again ?

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TESMAN. And this is Hedda, my little Hedda ; we

are engaged.
STOCKFISH. You engaged ? You don't mean to say

you ever had the courage to propose to her ?
TESMAN. Yes, last Tuesday I took the . . . header.

There were many that sought her hand. I was

jealous. I said : " Hedda, I wish to be the only

cock on your fowl-roost."
STOCKFISH. And what did she say ?
TESMAN. She said : " Buk, buk, buk, buk, bukaha ! "
STOCKFISH. Bless you, my children ! (Aside) Be-

shrew him ! Ever this varlet foils my plans. I

must be revenged. (Aloud) Come, let us amuse

ourselves as we did of yore in the old Stockholm

days, with a little knockabout business ; you

remember ?

TESMAN. Only too well.
(They put on small straw hats and do a knockabout

business in which STOCKFISH is beaten worst)
STOCKFISH. And now I will keep the promise that I

made you. I will show you the great secret, the

mystery of the box-room.
HEDDA. Ah yes, the thing that isn't a person.
STOCKFISH. I must put on my uniform first. I like

to do everything in style. [Exit

HEDDA. What is the mystery of the box-room ?
TESMAN. Oh, it's a symbol (A cymbal is sounded in

the orchestra) like that.

(Song : " It 9 s a Symbol ")

Enter STOCKFISH suddenly in a cocked hat, standing
in a Napoleon attitude.

STOCKFISH. I am the rightful heir to the throne of
France. I am Napoleon returned to his own.

The Island of Elba was too small for me ; I had no
Elba-room.

TESMAN. He was in the volunteers, you know.

STOCKFISH. And now for the secret, the great secret.
'Sh ! (He goes on tiptoe, and opens the folding
doors at the back)

ALL. 'Sh!

TESMAN. Is she awake ?

STOCKFISH. I can't quite tell yet ; she's in her
hutch. I told you you should see her, and so
you shall. [Exit into box-room

HEDDA. What has he got in there ?

TESMAN. Poor old man, you must humour him. It's
an idea of his. It's all the pleasure that he has
now. Since he gave up taking real outdoor exercise
he goes in for big-game shooting in the box-room.

HEDDA. What does he shoot ?

TESMAN. That's the secret. It's a guinea-pig.

HEDDA. A guinea-pig ?

TESMAN. A real wild guinea-pig.

HEDDA. But why a guinea-pig ?

TESMAN. Oh, he was swindled out of some money
once by a company director. He creeps round
among the boxes and trunks he pretends they're
trunks of trees and shoots at it with a pop-gun.

Enter STOCKFISH, alarmed.

STOCKFISH. I say, there's something rather queer
about that guinea-pig to-day. (His pop-gun goes
off and frightens him) She looks so fierce ; she
seems much bigger than usual and uncommonly
lively.

(A gong. MOPSYMAN jumps in from the box-room,
and AUNT JUDY behind, laughing)

AUNT JUDY. Here we are again ! Did little Mopsyman give you a bit of a turn, Herr Militar ? Aha ! The forest avenges itself with a vengeance. We always like coming in in these funny ways if we can.

STOCKFISH. Who is this ?

TESMAN. This is Aunt Judy. She's not respectable. She's been in jail, you know.

STOCKFISH. In jail ? Well, well, that's a bond of union ; so have I.

Enter MRS INQUEST and MADAM HELSETH

TESMAN. Why, here's Madam Helseth too. How very mixed Norwegian society is becoming.

(Song and dance: MRS INQUEST, AUNT JUDY, HEDDA, and MADAM HELSETH)

We're the Ib-sen Gib-son rickety rackety gells,
True blood, blue blood, Scandinavian swells,
Queer girls, dear girls, take us all in a lump ;
We're rather rough,
And we're up to snuff,
And we're all of us off our chump ;
Yes, all of us, all of us, all of us, all of us,
All of us off our chump.

[Exit HILDA

HEDDA. Come, Aunt Judy, let's have a drink together. It's a long time since we met.

AUNT JUDY. No, thank you, nothing for me. I've signed the pledge.

MRS INQUEST. What, again ?

HEDDA. What does it matter ? Pledges are so irrelevant. Come, a little cold punch.

MRS INQUEST. Better not press her, my dear.

HEDDA. Do have a glass !

AUNT JUDY. No, thank you.

HEDDA. Aha, you dare not ! You preach freedom to others, but you dare not be free yourself. Didn't you see the way they smiled when you said No ? Come, be secure, be confident of yourself !

AUNT JUDY. (Drinking five or six glasses) Well, well, here goes then !

MRS INQUEST. Did you see that ? She wolfed the lot, my dear, wolfed the bally show !

Enter DEMON and FAIRY, meeting.

FAIRY. Oh, there's someone I know at last !

DEMON. (With an eyeglass) Ah, how dy do, how dy do ! Don't you know many people here ?

FAIRY. Not a soul.

DEMON. Ton my word, queer set of folk they've

got together ; wonder where they rake them up ?
FAIRY. I feel rather out of it.
DEMON. May I have the pleasure of taking you in to

supper ?

[Exeunt arm in arm. All have
gone but STOCKFISH

Enter HILDA in cloak and goloshes.

HILDA. At last I find you alone !

STOCKFISH. You're not going ?

HILDA. Alas, poor man, it were better for you that

I should. I must be back by twelve.
STOCKFISH. But it's only eight. (Eight strikes)

You've got four hours.
HILDA. All too little for what I have to say. This

is a moment that I have waited for for years.
STOCKFISH. Who are you, mysterious stranger ?

HILDA. I am a woman who has found herself at last. I am the apostle of freedom ; freedom for everyone to be themselves ; no social conventions, no duties, nothing but to do and to be ! You are still a slave, I see, a slave of little things. You love your furniture, your glasses. I will free you from them ! (She goes round with a hammer breaking evert/thing) There ! That's the sort of hairpin I am ! (Nine strikes) Nine o'clock ! Goodness, how time flies when you're enjoying yourself. Do you feel it beginning ?

STOCKFISH. Feel what ?

HILDA. Love.

STOCKFISH. No, I feel only dread.

HILDA. That's right. That's how it should be. I want you to loathe me and to dread me ; that is what binds people together. For you are mine, mine, mine ! (Embracing him)

STOCKFISH. Unhand me, wench ; you are strangling me.

HILDA. Will you return my passion ?

STOCKFISH. I will do anything, if you will only let me go.

HILDA. Do you loathe and love me ?

STOCKFISH. I will care for you with the quiet tenderness of a middle-aged man.

HILDA. I want no tenderness ; I want no quiet ; I want to be loved as your dogs love those great bloody bones they swallow whole. Oh, how lovely that must be !

STOCKFISH. What, would you like to swallow big bones whole ?

HILDA. No ; but to be swallowed whole ! (Ten o'clock strikes) Ten o'clock. I must hasten ; I must get to the point. Listen to me, Stockfish ; when first I saw the gas-works I knew that it was all over with me. It was so tremenjously thrilling. I couldn't believe there was anybody in the world could have built such great enormous gasworks. Ever since I was born I love you, love you, love you !

STOCKFISH. But we have never met before !

HILDA. Yes, don't you remember ? Long, long ago. That was up at the Bathing Establishment. Do you not remember ? It lives in my memory as if it were but yesterday. I was only three weeks old then. You picked me out of my cradle and kissed me passionately.

STOCKFISH. It isn't true. I always detested babies.

HILDA. It is true. You kissed me, here.

STOCKFISH. Did I ?

HILDA. Since that moment our seals are souled for one another.

STOCKFISH. I have no recollection.

HILDA. But that isn't what mattered. That wasn't the important thing. The thing that mattered was what came after.

STOCKFISH. I know that phrase. It is always what came after that matters.

HILDA. You took the coral necklace off my neck and hid it in your pocket.

STOCKFISH. Fancy !

HILDA. And I said to myself for I couldn't talk out loud then I said, "That is the man for me, a real man, a man who is master of his own soul and not bound down by little petty conventions and rules of etiquette."

STOCKFISH. I don't remember a word of all this.

HILDA. (Aside) Nor do I. (Eleven strikes) Eleven o'clock. My time is nearly out.

STOCKFISH. Come, tell me who you are !

HILDA. No ; that you must never learn, not now nor nevermore. That must always remain a secret between us, a beautiful secret, symbolical of the relation between the two sexes.

STOCKFISH. Tell me your address.

HILDA. Never !

STOCKFISH. Tell me at least your telephone number.

HILDA. No, no.

STOCKFISH. I am bewildered. I do not know what I ought to do.

HILDA. Do you not know ? Listen ; we two are the only waking creatures here. Do you not understand me ?

STOCKFISH. No, I do not understand you.

HILDA. (Getting on the table) The champagne is on the table.

STOCKFISH. I do not see any champagne.

HILDA. " There stood the champagne, but he tasted it not."

STOCKFISH. Ah, now at last I understand.
(He runs after her. Twelve strikes)

HILDA. Stop, stop ! There's twelve striking.

STOCKFISH. Come here, you little witch !

HILDA. I've got to get back.

STOCKFISH. One kiss ! One kiss ! (She boxes his ears and runs away. He follows her out and returns with a golosh) She's gone ! She's gone ! But in her flight she dropped this precious relic. (Kissing it) Oh nyum nyum nyum nyum !

Enter TESMAN. STOCKFISH hides the golosh.

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TESMAN. See, father, three chamberlains are playing blind-man's buff with Madam Helseth.

STOCKFISH. What do I care ? Tush, I would be alone !

SCENE 2 CINDERELLA 337

Enter MADAM HELSETH and THREE CHAMBERLAINS

MADAM HELSETH. (Very arch) Ah ! It isn't always

the oldest wine that is the best.
A CHAMBERLAIN. She's coming out at our expense.
TESMAN. Oh, fie ! Oh, fie ! What raillery !

Enter MRS INQUEST and HEDDA and AUNT JUDY

AUNT JUDY. I am bored to death with insipid conversation and heartless amusement. I am stifled with the taint of marsh vapours. Oh ! if only 1 could find the address of the Alcohol Refraining Society. I would send in my resignation.

STOCKFISH. You're not going ?

AUNT JUDY. I am home-sick for the mighty nothingness. Farewell, old horse ; good-night, respected sir.

STOCKFISH. I'll see you out.

AUNT JUDY. No, thank you ; I'll go my own road.
(Red fire and a gong)
[Exit AUNT JUDY through the ceiling

MRS INQUEST. Please excuse her ; she's always been a little eccentric.

STOCKFISH. And now it's time that you all went. I want to be alone.

(He kisses the golosh)

MRS INQUEST. Well, after a broad hint like that !

HEDDA. W T e'd better say good-night

ALL. Good-night. Good-night. May you have no
dreams. Let us pray that we may none of us
have any dreams.

(TESMAN, MRS INQUEST and the WAITER stand as a
comic American unaccompanied trio, TESMAN in
little straw hat, WAITER in a Newgate fringe)

TRIO

O put my nighty by the fire

And make my gruel hot ;
And go and get the warming-pan

To warm my little cot.
(FALSETTO) My little cot.
(BASS) To warm, to warm.
(ALL) My little cot.

STOCKFISH. Come, that's enough. Why don't you go?

Enter FAIRY : she trips forward and takes the stage.

FAIRY. And now that all the rest have had their say,

Comes Fairy Bright-Eyes, whom mortals all obey.

Behold the triumph of my . . .
STOCKFISH. Oh, you won't go, won't you ? Then

I'll turn off the gas.

(Darkness. Screaming, laughter and pistol-shots)

CURTAIN

ACT III

The same scene as in Act I., Scene 2. STOCKFISH, in a garland of leaves, sits with HEDDA and MRS INQUEST at a small round table, on which stands a bottle of champagne. MADAM HELSETH stands by them.

MRS INQUEST. Did you sleep well after it ?
STOCKFISH. I slept a little towards morning.
HEDDA. I felt an oppressive burden here.
STOCKFISH. I saw crocodiles and hippopotamuses

all night, dancing and making faces at me.
MADAM HELSETH. I saw white horses.
MRS INQUEST. Have a little more champagne.

Enter HILDA in spectacles and eye-shade, with a tray

of pies.

Ah, here are some pies that Hedda has made, on purpose for you, Over-Gas-Purveyor Stockfish.

HILDA. (Aside) I love to see him with the vine leaves in his hair.

STOCKFISH. My aunt is dead, Eilert is dead, Ekdal is dead, Aslaksen is dead, the governess of the gardener's children is dead, everyone is dead.

MRS INQUEST. You are in low spirits, Stockfish.

STOCKFISH. The cloth is dirty ; the wine is flat ; the pies are bad ; absolutely uneatable ! (One of them goes off, like a Jack-in-the box)

HEDDA. Whatever I touch I make a mess of! Have some more wine ? (She pours the wine all over the table) I am bored, and tired of life.

MRS INQUEST. My Hedda is thirsty. Bring more champagne I Bring a magnum ! (MADAM HELSETH puts a Jeroboam on the table) I want my wee

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girlie to be happy. She shan't go racking her brains.

HEDDA. Never a gleam of brightness to lighten our home ! It isn't a home ; it's a cage.

STOCKFISH. It's a menagerie. ... I cannot rest until I have found out who that girl was who came last night that princess.

HEDDA. She wasn't a princess.

STOCKFISH. Well, she had on a princess skirt. There she stood on the table, as it might be that bottle of champagne. I practically had only to draw the cork.

HEDDA. Who can it have been ?

MRS INQUEST. We cannot guess.

(HILDA sings without : " / am free, I am free ")

STOCKFISH. There ! I hear her voice. (He runs off and returns) No, there's nobody there ; only that little mouse- jowled slut of a slavey. There was I, there was the table, and there she stood.

(HILDA sings above)

There ! I'll swear that was her voice. (He runs up and returns) No, there's nobody there ; only that pulp-headed Abigail upstairs dusting the hay-loft. Well, as I was saying, there we stood ; I was where that chair is, and she was . . .

(HILDA sings below)

This time I'm sure ! (He looks down through a trap-door) No, not a soul ! Nobody but the she-serf down in the cellar drawing the beer. Well, for the present I must be off. However, our friendship mustn't end like this. I will come and see you again to-morrow ; I will come and see you again this afternoon ; I will come and see you two or three times every day. Oh, if I could but find her again ! She left a gum-

ACT in CINDERELLA 341

shoe behind her : it might prove a clue. I'll let

you know.

(A loud knocking at the front door)
MRS INQUEST. Who on earth can that be ?
HEDDA. Are you expecting anyone ?

MRS INQUEST. No, no one. There isn't a soul but ourselves up this mountain except the hired waiters.

STOCKFISH. And they've gone back to town again.

MRS INQUEST. Go and see who it is, Madam Helseth.

STOCKFISH. Well, I must be off.

HEDDA. Don't forget about the golosh.

STOCKFISH. No, no.

[Exit STOCKFISH

DEMON. (Without) I beg your pardon, guv 'nor.

STOCKFISH. (Without) Not at all, not at all.

Enter DEMON and FAIRY

DEMON. I 'ope you'll excuse the liberty.

FAIRY. We are sorry to interrupt the course of the Pantomime.

MRS INQUEST. What has happened ? What's the matter ?

FAIRY. We wanted to ask you a question. The fact is, we were both at Mr Stockfish's party last night and couldn't help overhearing a good deal of the conversation around us. We were both profoundly astonished.

MRS INQUEST. What sort of conversation ? What about ?

DEMON. The moral haspect, lady.

HEDDA. The moral aspect : what does he mean, mother ?

FAIRY. The point of view seems to have changed so much since our young days.

DEMON. It used to be so heasy.

FAIRY. In fact, we were fairly confused by all we heard and what we want to know is, what is Right and what is Wrong ?

MRS INQUEST. (To HEDDA) What a comical, old-fashioned pair, my dear ; quite a couple of drolleries !

HEDDA. (Looking at them through her long-handled glasses) Such people don't exist nowadays.

MRS INQUEST. My dear children, these arbitrary distinctions of Right and Wrong have quite gone out ; they have been abolished.

DEMON and FAIRY. Well, I never ! You don't say so !

MRS INQUEST. In place of them, we have nowadays the Expression of our Personality.

DEMON. Crikey !

MRS INQUEST. It is our duty to express our

Personality in our lives just as much as ever

we can ; and if in doing so we break the

criminal law, well, so much the worse for the

criminal law.
DEMON. But look 'ere, lady ; in that case I am just

as good, just as moral, as she is.
MRS INQUEST. More so, in all probability, because

you've more snap in you, more expression of your

Personality.
DEMON. My ! Do you 'ear that, Titania ? And I've

always looked on myself as such a bad lot !
MRS INQUEST. My poor fellow, you've been reproaching yourself quite unnecessarily.
DEMON. Yes ; but look 'ere, I love heevil !
MRS INQUEST. Quite right ; so do we all. It was

made to be loved.
DEMON. Yes, but I do heevil.
MRS INQUEST. You try to, but you never do

any harm really. Your intentions are always
baffled ; haven't you noticed that ?

DEMON. Yes, she foils me every time.

MRS INQUEST. Evil intentions never come to anything ; it's only good intentions that ever do any
harm. But bless my soul, why should two innocents like you worry your heads over these
matters ?

DEMON. The fact is, lady, it isn't only curiosity,
prying into things that's too high for us, like;
it's, well . . . We've met so often, in the way of
business, all these four or five thousand years . . .

FAIRY. Since the creation of the world, you know.

DEMON. That we're . . .

FAIRY. We've come rather to like one another. In
fact he wants to marry me.

DEMON. I've got a little 'ome ready for her in the
Garden Suburb.

FAIRY. But I've felt it my duty to refuse him, as
he's such a very, very bad man.

MRS INQUEST. Then in that case it is you who are
the devil, because you're preventing him from
expressing his personality.

FAIRY. Then it's really me that ought to wear the
horns ?

MRS INQUEST. Yes, and he ought to have a halo.
(The DEMON puts on a halo and poses like a saint)

DEMON. 'Ow do I look, Tity ?

(The FAIRY puts on his horns. They laugh
heartily)

MRS INQUEST. You must have a little something in
the servants' hall before you go.

(MRS INQUEST leads them out. HEDDA looks at them

through her glasses. The FAIRY lowers her horns
at HEDDA and bellows wickedly. Exeunt all but
HEDDA)

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Enter HILDA

HEDDA. So there you are, miss. Now I'm going to

give you what-for.
HILDA. Give me what-for, Hedda ? Surely you

wouldn't bang your little Hilda ?
HEDDA. I suppose you think we didn't know you at

the party last night ? I suppose you thought you

were very fine and smart in my clothes, eh ?
HILDA. I didn't think you'd mind, Hedda.
HEDDA. Who gave you leave to wear my ninon

ballet-skirt and plum-coloured pelerine ? Who

gave you leave to splash one of my slippers all

over with mud ?
HILDA. Oh, what are you going to do to me,

Hedda ?
HEDDA. (Producing a pistol) I am going to shoot

you.

HILDA. Oh, not shoot me, Hedda !
HEDDA. Yes, shoot you.

HILDA. Are you sure you mean to shoot me, Hedda ?
HEDDA. Quite sure.
HILDA. Come on then ! Two can play at that

game ! (Producing a gun) What ho !
HEDDA. What ! You ! You have the courage ?
HILDA. I have courage for this or for anything now !

I have awakened from the dead ; I have found

myself at last !
HEDDA. Oh, joy! Hooray! (Embracing her) At last

you are one of us !
HILDA. Yes, I'm a real rickety rackety Ibsen girl at

last.
HEDDA. Oh, Hilda, what a wonderful thing it is at

last to have a sister that one can love ! But what

about my lover, Hilda ?
HILDA. Tesman ?

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HEDDA. No, Stockfish. You will not steal him

from me, Hilda ?
HILDA. No, Hedda, I will not steal him from you,

Hedda. We will share him fairly between us,

Hedda.

HEDDA. How can we do that, Hilda ?
HILDA. Wait and see, Hedda.

Enter MADAM HELSETH, dragging MRS INQUEST.

TESMAN follows.

HEDDA. What is this ?

MRS INQUEST. Spare me ! Spare me ! Do not

shame me before my children. What I did, I did

with a good purpose.
HILDA. Oh, what has she done ?
TESMAN. Don't be harsh with her, Madam Helseth !
MADAM HELSETH. Children, your mother is a fraud.

She has been leading a double life ; she has been

deceiving us !

MRS INQUEST. No, no ; do not expose me !
MADAM HELSETH. I must ; it is my simple duty.

All these years your mother has been living on

the reputation of a mysterious past full of fearful

crimes.

HEDDA. Yes, yes, we respect her for it.
MADAM HELSETH. Know then that your respect

is founded on a lie ! I have examined this

portfolio.

MRS INQUEST. I forbade you to open it !
MADAM HELSETH. I looked for murder, arson,

robbery, forgery, the usual things. What do I

find ? " Nothing but blameless innocence.
HEDDA. Oh, horror !

MADAM HELSETH. A pious and well-spent youth.
HEDDA. Oh, shame ! You, our mother !

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MADAM HELSETH. I hardly like to tell you the
things that woman has done, the things she has
been.

HEDDA. Let us know the worst.

MADAM HELSETH. A Sunday school teacher.

HEDDA and HILDA. Oh !

MADAM HELSETH. President of the Gothenburg
Dorcas Society.

HEDDA and HILDA. Oh !

MADAM HELSETH. Organising Secretary for the
Diocesan Mothers' Treat.

HEDDA and HILDA. Oh !

MADAM HELSETH. And Treasurer of the Orphan
Curates' Sustentation Fund.

HEDDA and HILDA. This is too awful.

MRS INQUEST. I can never face my children again.

HEDDA. From henceforth, mother, we declare to
you solemnly that your authority in this house is
at an end. You must take a back seat. I never
did believe much in those dark stories of fifteen or
twenty years ago. I and Hilda at least have real

crimes that we can boast of.

MRS INQUEST. Hilda ? No, not my innocent Hilda I

HILDA. If I have committed no crimes as yet, mother, I am about to do so on a stupendous scale.

MRS INQUEST. My reign is over ! There is nothing left for me but to sit and gibber in the chimney-corner now. My salts ! My salts !

HEDDA. Her salts ! Has it come to this, then ? Our mother has weak nerves! (A bell rings) There's someone ringing ; a visitor ; please, please compose yourself.

[Exeunt MRS INQUEST, HEDDA and HILDA

TESMAN. Do you know, at times I almost regret my promise to marry Hedda.

ACT in CINDERELLA 347

MADAM HELSETH. Whatever made you fall in love with her I cannot understand. You'll never have a moment's peace. It'll be another Doll's House ; or more like a Punch and Judy show, in which you'll be the baby.

TESMAN. Do you know, Madam Helseth, in spite of the disparity of our years, I have half-a-mind to kiss you.

MADAM HELSETH. God bless me ! Whatever put such an idea into your head ?

TESMAN. I sometimes think that you and I are the only two sane people here, although the author evidently meant to guy us. ...

(TESMAN kisses MADAM HELSETH)

MADAM HELSETH. There ! There !

TESMAN. It's very annoying ; I've searched and searched.

MADAM HELSETH. Have you lost something, Mr Tesman ?

TESMAN. I could have sworn I left a pair of goloshes here yesterday, and now there is only one of them.

[Exeunt TESMAN and MADAM HELSETH

Enter STOCKFISH, MRS INQUEST, HEDDA and HILDA

STOCKFISH. Here is the golosh that she left behind her. Now, if you've got such a thing as a bloodhound about you . . .

MRS INQUEST. Perhaps it's got the name of the maker inside ; that might be a clue.

STOCKFISH. "Rabbits." Where does he live, I wonder ?

MRS INQUEST. I know ; in the Borough.

HEDDA. What if it should belong to someone in this house ?

STOCKFISH. That is hardly likely.

MRS INQUEST. We look so different by candle-light.

STOCKFISH. Well, I don't care ; I swear that I will marry the rightful owner of this golosh, whoever it be.

(TESMAN runs on)

TESMAN. Father, father ! It is mine ! It is your own Tessie Wessie's. I am yours, yours for ever !

STOCKFISH. Oh, confound this jackanapes ! Wherever I turn I find him in my road. Take that, you oaf, take that ! (He kicks him out)

HILDA. Let me try it on.

MRS INQUEST. You indeed !

HILDA. Come here, Stockfish !

STOCKFISH. What is it, Backfish ?

HILDA. Let me murmur in your ear.

STOCKFISH. Murmur away.

HILDA. (Shouting) There stood the champagne, but he tasted it not !

STOCKFISH. You !

(HILDA takes off her spectacles and eye-shade)

Go, all of you ! I must be alone with this girl.

[Exeunt all but HILDA and STOCKFISH

So it was you !

HILDA. Me, me, me ! Oh, if you knew the hungry hanker that I feel for you ! For a man that could do such a delightful asinine thing as build those great clumping gas-works on such a desolate mountain-side.

STOCKFISH. Then if I love you and you love me, there is only one thing to be done. We must marry.

HILDA. Marry, Stockfish ? What do you take me for ? A heroine of second-rate English comedy ? What ! We meet on the lofty plane of affinity, aspiration, high towers and big gas-works, and then you drag us down to this ! To marriage !

How humiliating ! How irrelevant ! There, there ! I didn't mean to be harsh ; but surely my own boy knows that such a solution is impossible. I have higher things than that for you !

STOCKFISH. Only tell me what they are, Hilda.

HILDA. Listen ! I am about to take hold of life with a strong hand. I am going to ask a big thing of you.

STOCKFISH. Whatever you ask !

HILDA. I want no commonplace contentment. I want something rare ; something with a sting and an ache in it ; bliss with a groan in it.

STOCKFISH. Oh, what is it, what is it ? 1 will give it you.

HILDA. I have a wild uncontrollable desire to see you suffer, suffer horribly, unendurably. Finish well what you have begun so well. Get on these gas-works that you have built and blow yourself up.

STOCKFISH. Not that ! Not that !

HILDA. Only that.

STOCKFISH. I would do anything to please you, Hilda; but this. . . Oh, I am afraid, I am afraid !

HILDA. Do you mean to tell me that you, my hero, are afraid to blow yourself up on gas-works that you yourself have built ?

STOCKFISH. Oh, Hilda, you know that I would gladly do anything in reason to amuse and entertain you ; but this is too much ! How if I refuse ?

HILDA. Then I shall shoot you, in the stomach, where Lovborg shot himself.

STOCKFISH. What an awful choice to have to make ! This then is what love means ?

HILDA. Scandinavian love. But don't look downcast, Stockfish. This is the only way that I can have you utterly, utterly to myself. When you are blown to bits, then at last I can know for certain that you will never be anybody's else's. For my sake you must do it gladly. Take this wreath ; I had prepared it for this moment.

STOCKFISH. You knew that I should come ?

HILDA. Something told me. It was made ready for you to wear at your own funeral. Immortelles ; a pretty idea. I want you to do it beautifully, with the vine-leaves in your hair. Beautifully, Stockfish, promise me that.

STOCKFISH. Farewell, Hilda Inquest 1

HILDA. Farewell, Half-done Stockfish ! This is the end.

(STOCKFISH goes out and returns)

STOCKFISH. But supposing the gas won't catch fire, Hilda ? It may turn out to be quite incombustible, you know.

HILDA. Fancy, Stockfish ! There'll be a sort of sporting interest in that. Good-bye.

[Exit STOCKFISH

This is frightfully thrilling ! (She dances a hornpipe)

Enter HEDDA

HEDDA. Why is Stockfish going about from room to room with a wreath in his hand, asking everybody to lend him a crowbar and a naming torch ?

HILDA. Stockfish has gone to kill himself.

HEDDA. To kill himself ? Fancy ! Why is Stockfish going to kill himself ?

HILDA. I made him.

HEDDA. You made him ?

HILDA. I did. He is to ascend to the highest peak of the gas-works and blow himself up.

ACT in CINDERELLA 351

HEDDA. Hilda, I adore you ! You have the true Viking spirit.

Enter MRS INQUEST and MADAM HELSETH

Mamma, Stockfish is going to kill himself. He is going to turn away from the banquet of life and blow himself up on the gas-works.

MRS INQUEST. Ha ! At last a bold deed. There is beauty in this. We shall have a good view from this window. Why doesn't he hurry up ?

MADAM HELSETH. Dear Lord, Miss Hilda, how could you do such a crool thing !

HILDA. He bored me.

MADAM HELSETH. You will never have any peace of soul again after this.

HILDA. Who cares ?

HEDDA. Peace of soul ! What a humiliating idea ! Who wants peace of soul ?

MRS INQUEST. It sounds like " Snacks of fish, threepence " ; doesn't it ?

MADAM HELSETH. This then is what the White Horse meant !

HILDA. What's that White Horse she's always talking about ?

MRS INQUEST. Oh, it's a public-house down the road here.

HEDDA. (At window) See, see, there he goes to his death !

MRS INQUEST. Now he ascends the little path.

HEDDA. Now he clambers slowly up the ironwork, with the crowbar in his teeth and the wreath about his neck.

MRS INQUEST. Now he has arrived. He looks round. He wipes his brow with a red bandana handkerchief.

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HEDDA. Now he is the only cock on the fowl-roost at last.

MRS INQUEST. Now he plunges the crowbar into the gas meter.

HEDDA. Now he sets the torch to the orifice.
(An explosion without. They imitate a rocket, look up high and clap their hands)
MRS INQUEST. My word !
ALL. What a beauty !

MRS INQUEST. Well, there's an end of him !
HILDA. He's blown himself up ! He's blown himself up.

(ALL sing and dance)

Enter TESMAN, weeping.

TESMAN. Blown up ! Gone to glory ! I shall nev-ver, nev-ver see them again.
MRS INQUEST. Them ? What's them ?
TESMAN. It's the little things that hurt one most, the things that some people would look on as almost nothing.
MRS INQUEST. Come, Tesman, what things do you mean ?

TESMAN. He went up in my goloshes !
HEDDA. Your goloshes ?
TESMAN. My beautiful big goloshes that Aunt Jemima gave me.
HILDA. (Waving a handkerchief and dancing) My plaster-builder !
TESMAN. My goloshes !
HILDA. My plaster-builder !
TESMAN. My goloshes !

CURTAIN

Calderon, George
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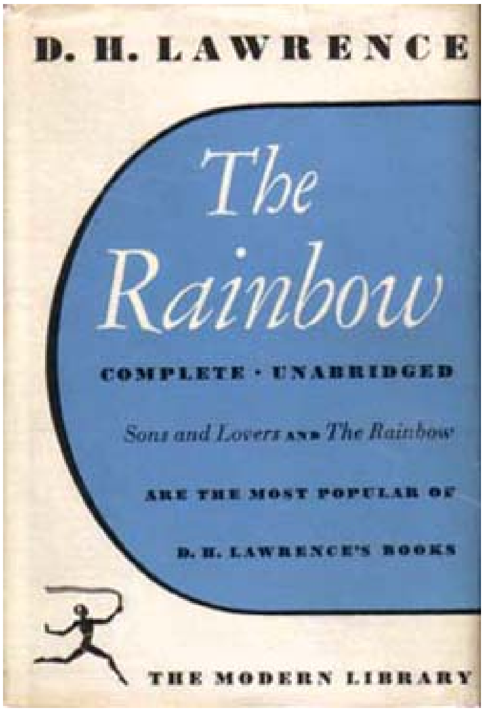
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Chapter 1

How Tom Brangwen Married a Polish Lady

I

The Brangwens had lived for generations on the Marsh Farm, in the meadows where the Erewash twisted sluggishly through alder trees, separating Derbyshire from Nottinghamshire. Two miles away, a church-tower stood on a hill, the houses of the little country town climbing assiduously up to it. Whenever one of the Brangwens in the fields lifted his head from his work, he saw the church-tower at Ilkeston in the empty sky. So that as he turned again to the horizontal land, he was aware of something standing above him and beyond him in the distance.

There was a look in the eyes of the Brangwens as if they were expecting something unknown, about which they were eager. They had that air of readiness for what would come to them, a kind of surety, an expectancy, the look of an inheritor.

They were fresh, blond, slow-speaking people, revealing themselves plainly, but slowly, so that one could watch the change in their eyes from laughter to anger, blue, lit-up laughter, to a hard blue-staring anger; through all the irresolute stages of the sky when the weather is changing.

Living on rich land, on their own land, near to a growing town, they had forgotten what it was to be in straitened circumstances. They had never become rich, because there were always children, and the patrimony was divided every time. But always, at the Marsh, there was ample.

So the Brangwens came and went without fear of necessity, working hard because of the life that was in them, not for want of the money. Neither were they thriftless. They were aware of the last halfpenny, and instinct made them not waste the peeling of their apple, for it would help to feed the cattle. But heaven and earth was teeming around them, and how should this cease? They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth. They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the daytime, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds' nests no longer worth hiding. Their life and interrelations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow for the grain, and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away. The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and, with hand on the bridle-rings, drew the heaving of the horses after their will.

In autumn the partridges whirred up, birds in flocks blew like spray across the fallow, rooks appeared on the grey, watery heavens, and flew cawing into the winter. Then the men sat by the fire in the house where the women moved about with surety, and the limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day.

The women were different. On them too was the drowse of blood-intimacy, calves sucking and hens running together in droves, and young geese palpitating in the hand while the food was pushed down their throttle. But the women looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life, to the spoken world beyond. They were aware of the lips and the mind of the world speaking and giving utterance, they heard the sound in the distance, and they strained to listen.

It was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrow to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about; it was enough that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand. So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn round.

But the woman wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy. Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faced outwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom; whereas the Brangwen men faced inwards to the teeming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins.

Looking out, as she must, from the front of her house towards the activity of man in the world at large, whilst her husband looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land, she strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to knowledge, she strained to hear how he uttered himself in his conquest, her deepest desire hung on the battle that she heard, far off, being waged on the edge of the unknown. She also wanted to know, and to be of the fighting host.

At home, even so near as Cossethay, was the vicar, who spoke the other, magic language, and had the other, finer bearing, both of which she could perceive, but could never attain to. The vicar moved in worlds beyond where her own menfolk existed. Did she not know her own menfolk: fresh, slow, full-built men, masterful enough, but easy, native to the earth, lacking outwardness and range of motion. Whereas the vicar, dark and dry and small beside her husband, had yet a quickness and a range of being that made Brangwen, in his large geniality, seem dull and local. She knew her husband. But in the vicar's nature was that which passed beyond her knowledge. As Brangwen had power over the cattle so the vicar had power over her husband. What was it in the vicar, that raised him above the common men as man is raised above the beast? She craved to know. She craved to achieve this higher being, if not in herself, then in her children. That which makes a man strong even if he be little and frail in body, just as any man is little and frail beside a bull, and yet stronger than the bull, what was it? It was not money nor power nor position. What power had the vicar over Tom Brangwen-none. Yet strip them and set them on a desert island, and the vicar was the master. His soul was master of the other man's. And why-why? She decided it was a question of knowledge.

The curate was poor enough, and not very efficacious as a man, either, yet he took rank with those others, the superior. She watched his children being born, she saw them running as tiny things beside their mother. And already they were separate from her own children, distinct. Why were her own children marked below the others? Why should the curate's children inevitably take precedence over her children, why should dominance be given them from the start? It was not money, nor even class. It was education and experience, she decided.

It was this, this education, this higher form of being, that the mother wished to give to her children, so that they too could live the supreme life on earth. For her children, at least the children of her heart, had the complete nature that should take place in equality with the living, vital people in the land, not be left behind obscure among the labourers. Why must they remain obscured and stifled all their lives, why should they suffer from lack of freedom to move? How should they learn the entry into the finer, more vivid circle of life?

Her imagination was fired by the squire's lady at Shelly Hall, who came to church at Cossethay with her little children, girls in tidy capes of beaver fur, and smart little hats, herself like a winter rose, so fair and delicate. So fair, so fine in mould, so luminous, what was it that Mrs. Hardy felt which she, Mrs. Brangwen, did not feel? How was Mrs. Hardy's nature different from that of the common women of Cossethay, in what was it beyond them? All the women of Cossethay talked eagerly about Mrs. Hardy, of her husband, her children, her guests, her dress, of her servants and her housekeeping. The lady of the Hall was the living dream of their lives, her life was the epic that inspired their lives. In her they lived imaginatively, and in gossiping of her husband who drank, of her scandalous brother, of Lord William Bentley her friend, member of Parliament for the division, they had their own Odyssey enacting itself, Penelope and Ulysses before them, and Circe and the swine and the endless web.

So the women of the village were fortunate. They saw themselves in the lady of the manor, each of them lived her own fulfilment of the life of Mrs. Hardy. And the Brangwen wife of the Marsh aspired beyond herself, towards the further life of the finer woman, towards the extended being she revealed, as a traveller in his self-contained manner reveals far-off countries present in himself. But why should a knowledge of far-off countries make a man's life a different thing, finer, bigger? And why is a man more than the beast and the cattle that serve him? It is the same thing.

The male part of the poem was filled in by such men as the vicar and Lord William, lean, eager men with strange movements, men who had command of the further fields, whose lives ranged over a great extent. Ah, it was something very desirable to know, this touch of the wonderful men who had the power of thought and comprehension. The women of the village might be much fonder of Tom Brangwen, and more at their ease with him, yet if their lives had been robbed of the vicar, and of Lord William, the leading shoot would have been cut away from them, they would have been heavy and uninspired and inclined to hate. So long as the wonder of the beyond was before them, they could get along, whatever their lot. And Mrs. Hardy, and the vicar, and Lord William, these moved in the wonder of the beyond, and were visible to the eyes of Cossethay in their motion.

II

About 1840, a canal was constructed across the meadows of the Marsh Farm, connecting the newly-opened collieries of the Erewash Valley. A high embankment travelled along the fields to carry the canal, which passed close to the homestead, and, reaching the road, went over in a heavy bridge.

So the Marsh was shut off from Ilkeston, and enclosed in the small valley bed, which ended in a bushy hill and the village spire of Cossethay.

The Brangwens received a fair sum of money from this trespass across their land. Then, a short time afterwards, a colliery was sunk on the other side of the canal, and in a while the Midland Railway came down the valley at the foot of the Ilkeston hill, and the invasion was complete. The town grew rapidly, the Brangwens were kept busy producing supplies, they became richer, they were almost tradesmen.

Still the Marsh remained remote and original, on the old, quiet side of the canal embankment, in the sunny valley where slow water wound along in company of stiff alders, and the road went under ash-trees past the Brangwens' garden gate.

But, looking from the garden gate down the road to the right, there, through the dark archway of the canal's square aqueduct, was a colliery spinning away in the near distance, and further, red, crude houses plastered on the valley in masses, and beyond all, the dim smoking hill of the town.

The homestead was just on the safe side of civilisation, outside the gate. The house stood bare from the road, approached by a straight garden path, along which at spring the daffodils were thick in green and yellow. At the sides of the house were bushes of lilac and guelder-rose and privet, entirely hiding the farm buildings behind.

At the back a confusion of sheds spread into the home-close from out of two or three indistinct yards. The duck-pond lay beyond the furthest wall, littering its white feathers on the padded earthen banks, blowing its stray soiled feathers into the grass and the gorse bushes below the canal embankment, which rose like a high rampart near at hand, so that occasionally a man's figure passed in silhouette, or a man and a towing horse traversed the sky.

At first the Brangwens were astonished by all this commotion around them. The building of a canal across their land made them strangers in their own place, this raw bank of earth shutting them off disconcerted them. As they worked in the fields, from beyond the now familiar embankment came the rhythmic run of the winding engines, startling at first, but afterwards a narcotic to the brain. Then the shrill whistle of the trains re-echoed through the heart, with fearsome pleasure, announcing the far-off come near and imminent.

As they drove home from town, the farmers of the land met the blackened colliers trooping from the pit-mouth. As they gathered the harvest, the west wind brought a faint, sulphurous smell of pit-refuse burning. As they pulled the turnips in November, the sharp clink-clink-clink-clink-clink of empty trucks shunting on the line, vibrated in their hearts with the fact of other activity going on beyond them.

The Alfred Brangwen of this period had married a woman from Heanor, a daughter of the "Black Horse". She was a slim, pretty, dark woman, quaint in her speech, whimsical, so that the sharp things she said did not hurt. She was oddly a thing to herself, rather querulous in her manner, but intrinsically separate and indifferent, so that her long lamentable complaints, when she raised her voice against her husband in particular and against everybody else after him, only made those who heard her wonder and feel affectionately towards her, even while they were irritated and impatient with her. She railed long and loud about her husband, but always with a balanced, easy-flying voice and a quaint manner of speech that warmed his belly with pride and male triumph while he scowled with mortification at the things she said.

Consequently Brangwen himself had a humorous puckering at the eyes, a sort of fat laugh, very quiet and full, and he was spoilt like a lord of creation. He calmly did as he liked, laughed at their railing, excused himself in a teasing tone that she loved, followed his natural inclinations, and sometimes, pricked too near the quick, frightened and broke her by a deep, tense fury which seemed to fix on him and hold him for days, and which she would give anything to placate in him. They were two very separate beings, vitally connected, knowing nothing of each other, yet living in their separate ways from one root.

There were four sons and two daughters. The eldest boy ran away early to sea, and did not come back. After this the mother was more the node and centre of attraction in the home. The second boy, Alfred, whom the mother admired most, was the most reserved. He was sent to school in Ilkeston and made some progress. But in spite of his dogged, yearning effort, he could not get beyond the rudiments of anything, save of drawing. At this, in which he had some power, he worked, as if it were his hope. After much grumbling and savage rebellion against everything, after much trying and shifting about, when his father was incensed against him and his mother almost despairing, he became a draughtsman in a lace-factory in Nottingham.

He remained heavy and somewhat uncouth, speaking with broad Derbyshire accent, adhering with all his tenacity to his work and to his town position, making good designs, and becoming fairly well-off. But at drawing, his hand swung naturally in big, bold lines, rather lax, so that it was cruel for him to pedgill away at the lace designing, working from the tiny squares of his paper, counting and plotting and niggling. He did it stubbornly, with anguish, crushing the bowels within him, adhering to his chosen lot whatever it should cost. And he came back into life set and rigid, a rare-spoken, almost surly man.

He married the daughter of a chemist, who affected some social superiority, and he became something of a snob, in his dogged fashion, with a passion for outward refinement in the household, mad when anything clumsy or gross occurred. Later, when his three children were growing up, and he seemed a staid, almost middle-aged man, he turned after strange women, and became a silent, inscrutable follower of forbidden pleasure, neglecting his indignant bourgeois wife without a qualm.

Frank, the third son, refused from the first to have anything to do with learning. From the first he hung round the slaughter-house which stood away in the third yard at the back of the farm. The Brangwens had always killed their own meat, and supplied the neighbourhood. Out of this grew a regular butcher's business in connection with the farm.

As a child Frank had been drawn by the trickle of dark blood that ran across the pavement from the slaughter-house to the crew-yard, by the sight of the man carrying across to the meat-shed a huge side of beef, with the kidneys showing, embedded in their heavy laps of fat.

He was a handsome lad with soft brown hair and regular features something like a later Roman youth. He was more easily excitable, more readily carried away than the rest, weaker in character. At eighteen he married a little factory girl, a pale, plump, quiet thing with sly eyes and a wheedling voice, who insinuated herself into him and bore him a child every year and made a fool of him. When he had taken over the butchery business, already a growing callousness to it, and a sort of contempt made him neglectful of it. He drank, and was often to be found in his public house blathering away as if he knew everything, when in reality he was a noisy fool.

Of the daughters, Alice, the elder, married a collier and lived for a time stormily in Ilkeston, before moving away to Yorkshire with her numerous young family. Effie, the younger, remained at home.

The last child, Tom, was considerably younger than his brothers, so had belonged rather to the company of his sisters. He was his mother's favourite. She roused herself to determination, and sent him forcibly away to a grammar-school in Derby when he was twelve years old. He did not want to go, and his father would have given way, but Mrs. Brangwen had set her heart on it. Her slender, pretty, tightly-covered body, with full skirts, was now the centre of resolution in the house, and when she had once set upon anything, which was not often, the family failed before her.

So Tom went to school, an unwilling failure from the first. He believed his mother was right in decreeing school for him, but he knew she was only right because she would not acknowledge his constitution. He knew, with a child's deep, instinctive foreknowledge of what is going to happen to him, that he would cut a sorry figure at school. But he took the infliction as inevitable, as if he were guilty of his own nature, as if his being were wrong, and his mother's conception right. If he could have been what he liked, he would have been that which his mother fondly but deludedly hoped he was. He would have been clever, and capable of becoming a gentleman. It was her aspiration for him, therefore he knew it as the true aspiration for any boy. But you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, as he told his mother very early, with regard to himself; much to her mortification and chagrin.

When he got to school, he made a violent struggle against his physical inability to study. He sat gripped, making himself pale and ghastly in his effort to concentrate on the book, to take in what he had to learn. But it was no good. If he beat down his first repulsion, and got like a suicide to the stuff, he went very little further. He could not learn deliberately. His mind simply did not work.

In feeling he was developed, sensitive to the atmosphere around him, brutal perhaps, but at the same time delicate, very delicate. So he had a low opinion of himself. He knew his own limitation. He knew that his brain was a slow hopeless good-for-nothing. So he was humble.

But at the same time his feelings were more discriminating than those of most of the boys, and he was confused. He was more sensuously developed, more refined in instinct than they. For their mechanical stupidity he hated them, and suffered cruel contempt for them. But when it came to mental things, then he was at a disadvantage. He was at their mercy. He was a fool. He had not the power to controvert even the most stupid argument, so that he was forced to admit things he did not in the least believe. And having admitted them, he did not know whether he believed them or not; he rather thought he did.

But he loved anyone who could convey enlightenment to him through feeling. He sat betrayed with emotion when the teacher of literature read, in a moving fashion, Tennyson's "Ulysses", or Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind". His lips parted, his eyes filled with a strained, almost suffering light. And the teacher read on, fired by his power over the boy. Tom Brangwen was moved by this experience beyond all calculation, he almost dreaded it, it was so deep. But when, almost secretly and shamefully, he came to take the book himself, and began the words "Oh wild west wind, thou breath of autumn's being," the very fact of the print caused a prickly sensation of repulsion to go over his skin, the blood came to his face, his heart filled with a bursting passion of rage and incompetence. He threw the book down and walked over it and went out to the cricket field. And he hated books as if they were his enemies. He hated them worse than ever he hated any person.

He could not voluntarily control his attention. His mind had no fixed habits to go by, he had nothing to get hold of, nowhere to start from. For him there was nothing palpable, nothing known in himself, that he could apply to learning. He did not know how to begin. Therefore he was helpless when it came to deliberate understanding or deliberate learning.

He had an instinct for mathematics, but if this failed him, he was helpless as an idiot. So that he felt that the ground was never sure under his feet, he was nowhere. His final downfall was his complete inability to attend to a question put without suggestion. If he had to write a formal composition on the Army, he did at last learn to repeat the few facts he knew: "You can join the army at eighteen. You have to be over five foot eight." But he had all the time a living conviction that this was a dodge and that his common-places were beneath contempt. Then he reddened furiously, felt his bowels sink with shame, scratched out what he had written, made an agonised effort to think of something in the real composition style, failed, became sullen with rage and humiliation, put the pen down and would have been torn to pieces rather than attempt to write another word.

He soon got used to the Grammar School, and the Grammar School got used to him, setting him down as a hopeless duffer at learning, but respecting him for a generous, honest nature. Only one narrow, domineering fellow, the Latin master, bullied him and made the blue eyes mad with shame and rage. There was a horrid scene, when the boy laid open the master's head with a slate, and then things went on as before. The teacher got little sympathy. But Brangwen winced and could not bear to think of the deed, not even long after, when he was a grown man.

He was glad to leave school. It had not been unpleasant, he had enjoyed the companionship of the other youths, or had thought he enjoyed it, the time had passed very quickly, in endless activity. But he knew all the time that he was in an ignominious position, in this place of learning. He was aware of failure all the while, of incapacity. But he was too healthy and sanguine to be wretched, he was too much alive. Yet his soul was wretched almost to hopelessness.

He had loved one warm, clever boy who was frail in body, a consumptive type. The two had had an almost classic friendship, David and Jonathan, wherein Brangwen was the Jonathan, the server. But he had never felt equal with his friend, because the other's mind outpaced his, and left him ashamed, far in the rear. So the two boys went at once apart on leaving school. But Brangwen always remembered his friend that had been, kept him as a sort of light, a fine experience to remember.

Tom Brangwen was glad to get back to the farm, where he was in his own again. "I have got a turnip on my shoulders, let me stick to th' fallow," he said to his exasperated mother. He had too low an opinion of himself. But he went about at his work on the farm gladly enough, glad of the active labour and the smell of the land again, having youth and vigour and humour, and a comic wit, having the will and the power to forget his own shortcomings, finding himself violent with occasional rages, but usually on good terms with everybody and everything.

When he was seventeen, his father fell from a stack and broke his neck. Then the mother and son and daughter lived on at the farm, interrupted by occasional loud-mouthed lamenting, jealous-spirited visitations from the butcher Frank, who had a grievance against the world, which he felt was always giving him less than his dues. Frank was particularly against the young Tom, whom he called a mardy baby, and Tom returned the hatred violently, his face growing red and his blue eyes staring. Effie sided with Tom against Frank. But when Alfred came, from Nottingham, heavy jowled and lowering, speaking very little, but treating those at home with some contempt, Effie and the mother sided with him and put Tom into the shade. It irritated the youth that his elder brother should be made something of a hero by the women, just because he didn't live at home and was a lace-designer and almost a gentleman. But Alfred was something of a Prometheus Bound, so the women loved him. Tom came later to understand his brother better.

As youngest son, Tom felt some importance when the care of the farm devolved on to him. He was only eighteen, but he was quite capable of doing everything his father had done. And of course, his mother remained as centre to the house.

The young man grew up very fresh and alert, with zest for every moment of life. He worked and rode and drove to market, he went out with companions and got tipsy occasionally and played skittles and went to the little travelling theatres. Once, when he was drunk at a public house, he went upstairs with a prostitute who seduced him. He was then nineteen.

The thing was something of a shock to him. In the close intimacy of the farm kitchen, the woman occupied the supreme position. The men deferred to her in the house, on all household points, on all points of morality and behaviour. The woman was the symbol for that further life which comprised religion and love and morality. The men placed in her hands their own conscience, they said to her "Be my conscience-keeper, be the angel at the doorway guarding my outgoing and my incoming." And the woman fulfilled her trust, the men rested implicitly in her, receiving her praise or her blame with pleasure or with anger, rebelling and storming, but never for a moment really escaping in their own souls from her prerogative. They depended on her for their stability. Without her, they would have felt like straws in the wind, to be blown hither and thither at random. She was the anchor and the security, she was the restraining hand of God, at times highly to be execrated.

Now when Tom Brangwen, at nineteen, a youth fresh like a plant, rooted in his mother and his sister, found that he had lain with a prostitute woman in a common public house, he was very much startled. For him there was until that time only one kind of woman-his mother and sister.

But now? He did not know what to feel. There was a slight wonder, a pang of anger, of disappointment, a first taste of ash and of cold fear lest this was all that would happen, lest his relations with woman were going to be no more than this nothingness; there was a slight sense of shame before the prostitute, fear that she would despise him for his inefficiency; there was a cold distaste for her, and a fear of her; there was a moment of paralysed horror when he felt he might have taken a disease from her; and upon all this startled tumult of emotion, was laid the steadying hand of common sense, which said it did not matter very much, so long as he had no disease. He soon recovered balance, and really it did not matter so very much.

But it had shocked him, and put a mistrust into his heart, and emphasised his fear of what was within himself. He was, however, in a few days going about again in his own careless, happy-go-lucky fashion, his blue eyes just as clear and honest as ever, his face just as fresh, his appetite just as keen.

Or apparently so. He had, in fact, lost some of his buoyant confidence, and doubt hindered his outgoing.

For some time after this, he was quieter, more conscious when he drank, more backward from companionship. The disillusion of his first carnal contact with woman, strengthened by his innate desire to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses, put a bit in his mouth. He had something to lose which he was afraid of losing, which he was not sure even of possessing. This first affair did not matter much: but the business of love was, at the bottom of his soul, the most serious and terrifying of all to him.

He was tormented now with sex desire, his imagination reverted always to lustful scenes. But what really prevented his returning to a loose woman, over and above the natural squeamishness, was the recollection of the paucity of the last experience. It had been so nothing, so dribbling and functional, that he was ashamed to expose himself to the risk of a repetition of it.

He made a strong, instinctive fight to retain his native cheerfulness unimpaired. He had naturally a plentiful stream of life and humour, a sense of sufficiency and exuberance, giving ease. But now it tended to cause tension. A strained light came into his eyes, he had a slight knitting of the brows. His boisterous humour gave place to lowering silences, and days passed by in a sort of suspense.

He did not know there was any difference in him, exactly; for the most part he was filled with slow anger and resentment. But he knew he was always thinking of women, or a woman, day in, day out, and that infuriated him. He could not get free: and he was ashamed. He had one or two sweethearts, starting with them in the hope of speedy development. But when he had a nice girl, he found that he was incapable of pushing the desired development. The very presence of the girl beside him made it impossible. He could not think of her like that, he could not think of her actual nakedness. She was a girl and he liked her, and dreaded violently even the thought of uncovering her. He knew that, in these last issues of nakedness, he did not exist to her nor she to him. Again, if he had a loose girl, and things began to develop, she offended him so deeply all the time, that he never knew whether he was going to get away from her as quickly as possible, or whether he were going to take her out of inflamed necessity. Again he learnt his lesson: if he took her it was a paucity which he was forced to despise. He did not despise himself nor the girl. But he despised the net result in him of the experience-he despised it deeply and bitterly.

Then, when he was twenty-three, his mother died, and he was left at home with Effie. His mother's death was another blow out of the dark. He could not understand it, he knew it was no good his trying. One had to submit to these unforeseen blows that come unawares and leave a bruise that remains and hurts whenever it is touched. He began to be afraid of all that which was up against him. He had loved his mother.

After this, Effie and he quarrelled fiercely. They meant a very great deal to each other, but they were both under a strange, unnatural tension. He stayed out of the house as much as possible. He got a special corner for himself at the "Red Lion" at Cossethay, and became a usual figure by the fire, a fresh, fair young fellow with heavy limbs and head held back, mostly silent, though alert and attentive, very hearty in his greeting of everybody he knew, shy of strangers. He teased all the women, who liked him extremely, and he was very attentive to the talk of the men, very respectful.

To drink made him quickly flush very red in the face, and brought out the look of self-consciousness and unsureness, almost bewilderment, in his blue eyes. When he came home in this state of tipsy confusion his sister hated him and abused him, and he went off his head, like a mad bull with rage.

He had still another turn with a light-o'-love. One Whitsuntide he went a jaunt with two other young fellows, on horseback, to Matlock and thence to Bakewell. Matlock was at that time just becoming a famous beauty-spot, visited from Manchester and from the Staffordshire towns. In the hotel where the young men took lunch, were two girls, and the parties struck up a friendship.

The Miss who made up to Tom Brangwen, then twenty-four years old, was a handsome, reckless girl neglected for an afternoon by the man who had brought her out. She saw Brangwen and liked him, as all women did, for his warmth and his generous nature, and for the innate delicacy in him. But she saw he was one who would have to be brought to the scratch. However, she was roused and unsatisfied and made mischievous, so she dared anything. It would be an easy interlude, restoring her pride.

She was a handsome girl with a bosom, and dark hair and blue eyes, a girl full of easy laughter, flushed from the sun, inclined to wipe her laughing face in a very natural and taking manner.

Brangwen was in a state of wonder. He treated her with his chaffing deference, roused, but very unsure of himself, afraid to death of being too forward, ashamed lest he might be thought backward, mad with desire yet restrained by instinctive regard for women from making any definite approach, feeling all the while that his attitude was ridiculous, and flushing deep with confusion. She, however, became hard and daring as he became confused, it amused her to see him come on.

"When must you get back?" she asked.

"I'm not particular," he said.

There the conversation again broke down.

Brangwen's companions were ready to go on.

"Art commin', Tom," they called, "or art for stoppin'?"

"Ay, I'm commin'," he replied, rising reluctantly, an angry sense of futility and disappointment spreading over him.

He met the full, almost taunting look of the girl, and he trembled with unusedness.

"Shall you come an' have a look at my mare," he said to her, with his hearty kindliness that was now shaken with trepidation.

"Oh, I should like to," she said, rising.

And she followed him, his rather sloping shoulders and his cloth riding-gaiters, out of the room. The young men got their own horses out of the stable.

"Can you ride?" Brangwen asked her.

"I should like to if I could-I have never tried," she said.

"Come then, an' have a try," he said.

And he lifted her, he blushing, she laughing, into the saddle.

"I s'll slip off-it's not a lady's saddle," she cried.

"Hold yer tight," he said, and he led her out of the hotel gate.

The girl sat very insecurely, clinging fast. He put a hand on her waist, to support her. And he held her closely, he clasped her as in an embrace, he was weak with desire as he strode beside her.

The horse walked by the river.

"You want to sit straddle-leg," he said to her.

"I know I do," she said.

It was the time of very full skirts. She managed to get astride the horse, quite decently, showing an intent concern for covering her pretty leg.

"It's a lot's better this road," she said, looking down at him.

"Ay, it is," he said, feeling the marrow melt in his bones from the look in her eyes. "I dunno why they have that side-saddle business, twistin' a woman in two."

"Should us leave you then-you seem to be fixed up there?" called Brangwen's companions from the road.

He went red with anger.

"Ay-don't worry," he called back.

"How long are yer stoppin'?" they asked.

"Not after Christmas," he said.

And the girl gave a tinkling peal of laughter.

"All right-by-bye!" called his friends.

And they cantered off, leaving him very flushed, trying to be quite normal with the girl. But presently he had gone back to the hotel and given his horse into the charge of an ostler and had gone off with the girl into the woods, not quite knowing where he was or what he was doing. His heart thumped and he thought it the most glorious adventure, and was mad with desire for the girl.

Afterwards he glowed with pleasure. By Jove, but that was something like! He stayed the afternoon with the girl, and wanted to stay the night. She, however, told him this was impossible: her own man would be back by dark, and she must be with him. He, Brangwen, must not let on that there had been anything between them.

She gave him an intimate smile, which made him feel confused and gratified.

He could not tear himself away, though he had promised not to interfere with the girl. He stayed on at the hotel over night. He saw the other fellow at the evening meal: a small, middle-aged man with iron-grey hair and a curious face, like a monkey's, but interesting, in its way almost beautiful. Brangwen guessed that he was a foreigner. He was in company with another, an Englishman, dry and hard. The four sat at table, two men and two women. Brangwen watched with all his eyes.

He saw how the foreigner treated the women with courteous contempt, as if they were pleasing animals. Brangwen's girl had put on a ladylike manner, but her voice betrayed her. She wanted to win back her man. When dessert came on, however, the little foreigner turned round from his table and calmly surveyed the room, like one unoccupied. Brangwen marvelled over the cold, animal intelligence of the face. The brown eyes were round, showing all the brown pupil, like a monkey's, and just calmly looking, perceiving the other person without referring to him at all. They rested on Brangwen. The latter marvelled at the old face turned round on him, looking at him without considering it necessary to know him at all. The eyebrows of the round, perceiving, but unconcerned eyes were rather high up, with slight wrinkles above them, just as a monkey's had. It was an old, ageless face.

The man was most amazingly a gentleman all the time, an aristocrat. Brangwen stared fascinated. The girl was pushing her crumbs about on the cloth, uneasily, flushed and angry.

As Brangwen sat motionless in the hall afterwards, too much moved and lost to know what to do, the little stranger came up to him with a beautiful smile and manner, offering a cigarette and saying:

"Will you smoke?"

Brangwen never smoked cigarettes, yet he took the one offered, fumbling painfully with thick fingers, blushing to the roots of his hair. Then he looked with his warm blue eyes at the almost sardonic, lidded eyes of the foreigner. The latter sat down beside him, and they began to talk, chiefly of horses.

Brangwen loved the other man for his exquisite graciousness, for his tact and reserve, and for his ageless, monkey-like self-surety. They talked of horses, and of Derbyshire, and of farming. The stranger warmed to the young fellow with real warmth, and Brangwen was excited. He was transported at meeting this odd, middle-aged, dry-skinned man, personally. The talk was pleasant, but that did not matter so much. It was the gracious manner, the fine contact that was all.

They talked a long while together, Brangwen flushing like a girl when the other did not understand his idiom. Then they said good night, and shook hands. Again the foreigner bowed and repeated his good night.

"Good night, and bon voyage."

Then he turned to the stairs.

Brangwen went up to his room and lay staring out at the stars of the summer night, his whole being in a whirl. What was it all? There was a life so different from what he knew it. What was there outside his knowledge, how much? What was this that he had touched? What was he in this new influence? What did everything mean? Where was life, in that which he knew or all outside him?

He fell asleep, and in the morning had ridden away before any other visitors were awake. He shrank from seeing any of them again, in the morning.

His mind was one big excitement. The girl and the foreigner: he knew neither of their names. Yet they had set fire to the homestead of his nature, and he would be burned out of cover. Of the two experiences, perhaps the meeting with the foreigner was the more significant. But the girl-he had not settled about the girl.

He did not know. He had to leave it there, as it was. He could not sum up his experiences.

The result of these encounters was, that he dreamed day and night, absorbedly, of a voluptuous woman and of the meeting with a small, withered foreigner of ancient breeding. No sooner was his mind free, no sooner had he left his own companions, than he began to imagine an intimacy with fine-textured, subtle-mannered people such as the foreigner at Matlock, and amidst this subtle intimacy was always the satisfaction of a voluptuous woman.

He went about absorbed in the interest and the actuality of this dream. His eyes glowed, he walked with his head up, full of the exquisite pleasure of aristocratic subtlety and grace, tormented with the desire for the girl.

Then gradually the glow began to fade, and the cold material of his customary life to show through. He resented it. Was he cheated in his illusion? He balked the mean enclosure of reality, stood stubbornly like a bull at a gate, refusing to re-enter the well-known round of his own life.

He drank more than usual to keep up the glow. But it faded more and more for all that. He set his teeth at the commonplace, to which he would not submit. It resolved itself starkly before him, for all that.

He wanted to marry, to get settled somehow, to get out of the quandary he found himself in. But how? He felt unable to move his limbs. He had seen a little creature caught in bird-lime, and the sight was a nightmare to him. He began to feel mad with the rage of impotency.

He wanted something to get hold of, to pull himself out. But there was nothing. Steadfastly he looked at the young women, to find a one he could marry. But not one of them did he want. And he knew that the idea of a life among such people as the foreigner was ridiculous.

Yet he dreamed of it, and stuck to his dreams, and would not have the reality of Cossethay and Ilkeston. There he sat stubbornly in his corner at the "Red Lion", smoking and musing and occasionally lifting his beer-pot, and saying nothing, for all the world like a gorping farm-labourer, as he said himself.

Then a fever of restless anger came upon him. He wanted to go away-right away. He dreamed of foreign parts. But somehow he had no contact with them. And it was a very strong root which held him to the Marsh, to his own house and land.

Then Effie got married, and he was left in the house with only Tilly, the cross-eyed woman-servant who had been with them for fifteen years. He felt things coming to a close. All the time, he had held himself stubbornly resistant to the action of the commonplace unreality which wanted to absorb him. But now he had to do something.

He was by nature temperate. Being sensitive and emotional, his nausea prevented him from drinking too much.

But, in futile anger, with the greatest of determination and apparent good humour, he began to drink in order to get drunk. "Damn it," he said to himself, "you must have it one road or another-you can't hitch your horse to the shadow of a gate-post-if you've got legs you've got to rise off your backside some time or other."

So he rose and went down to Ilkeston, rather awkwardly took his place among a gang of young bloods, stood drinks to the company, and discovered he could carry it off quite well. He had an idea that everybody in the room was a man after his own heart, that everything was glorious, everything was perfect. When somebody in alarm told him his coat pocket was on fire, he could only beam from a red, blissful face and say "Iss-all-ri-ight-iss-al'-ri-ight-it's a' right-let it be, let it be-" and he laughed with pleasure, and was rather indignant that the others should think it unnatural for his coat pocket to burn:-it was the happiest and most natural thing in the world-what?

He went home talking to himself and to the moon, that was very high and small, stumbling at the flashes of moonlight from the puddles at his feet, wondering What the Hanover! then laughing confidently to the moon, assuring her this was first class, this was.

In the morning he woke up and thought about it, and for the first time in his life, knew what it was to feel really acutely irritable, in a misery of real bad temper. After bawling and snarling at Tilly, he took himself off for very shame, to be alone. And looking at the ashen fields and the putty roads, he wondered what in the name of Hell he could do to get out of this prickly sense of disgust and physical repulsion. And he knew that this was the result of his glorious evening.

And his stomach did not want any more brandy. He went doggedly across the fields with his terrier, and looked at everything with a jaundiced eye.

The next evening found him back again in his place at the "Red Lion", moderate and decent. There he sat and stubbornly waited for what would happen next.

Did he, or did he not believe that he belonged to this world of Cossethay and Ilkeston? There was nothing in it he wanted. Yet could he ever get out of it? Was there anything in himself that would carry him out of it? Or was he a dunderheaded baby, not man enough to be like the other young fellows who drank a good deal and wenched a little without any question, and were satisfied.

He went on stubbornly for a time. Then the strain became too great for him. A hot, accumulated consciousness was always awake in his chest, his wrists felt swelled and quivering, his mind became full of lustful images, his eyes seemed blood-flushed. He fought with himself furiously, to remain normal. He did not seek any woman. He just went on as if he were normal. Till he must either take some action or beat his head against the wall.

Then he went deliberately to Ilkeston, in silence, intent and beaten. He drank to get drunk. He gulped down the brandy, and more brandy, till his face became pale, his eyes burning. And still he could not get free. He went to sleep in drunken unconsciousness, woke up at four o'clock in the morning and continued drinking. He would get free. Gradually the tension in him began to relax. He began to feel happy. His riveted silence was unfastened, he began to talk and babble. He was happy and at one with all the world, he was united with all flesh in a hot blood-relationship. So, after three days of incessant brandy-drinking, he had burned out the youth from his blood, he had achieved this kindled state of oneness with all the world, which is the end of youth's most passionate desire. But he had achieved his satisfaction by obliterating his own individuality, that which it depended on his manhood to preserve and develop.

So he became a bout-drinker, having at intervals these bouts of three or four days of brandy-drinking, when he was drunk for the whole time. He did not think about it. A deep resentment burned in him. He kept aloof from any women, antagonistic.

When he was twenty-eight, a thick-limbed, stiff, fair man with fresh complexion, and blue eyes staring very straight ahead, he was coming one day down from Cossethay with a load of seed out of Nottingham. It was a time when he was getting ready for another bout of drinking, so he stared fixedly before him, watchful yet absorbed, seeing everything and aware of nothing, coiled in himself. It was early in the year.

He walked steadily beside the horse, the load clanked behind as the hill descended steeper. The road curved down-hill before him, under banks and hedges, seen only for a few yards ahead.

Slowly turning the curve at the steepest part of the slope, his horse britching between the shafts, he saw a woman approaching. But he was thinking for the moment of the horse.

Then he turned to look at her. She was dressed in black, was apparently rather small and slight, beneath her long black cloak, and she wore a black bonnet. She walked hastily, as if unseeing, her head rather forward. It was her curious, absorbed, flitting motion, as if she were passing unseen by everybody, that first arrested him.

She had heard the cart, and looked up. Her face was pale and clear, she had thick dark eyebrows and a wide mouth, curiously held. He saw her face clearly, as if by a light in the air. He saw her face so distinctly, that he ceased to coil on himself, and was suspended.

"That's her," he said involuntarily. As the cart passed by, splashing through the thin mud, she stood back against the bank. Then, as he walked still beside his britching horse, his eyes met hers. He looked quickly away, pressing back his head, a pain of joy running through him. He could not bear to think of anything.

He turned round at the last moment. He saw her bonnet, her shape in the black cloak, the movement as she walked. Then she was gone round the bend.

She had passed by. He felt as if he were walking again in a far world, not Cossethay, a far world, the fragile reality. He went on, quiet, suspended, rarefied. He could not bear to think or to speak, nor make any sound or sign, nor change his fixed motion. He could scarcely bear to think of her face. He moved within the knowledge of her, in the world that was beyond reality.

The feeling that they had exchanged recognition possessed him like a madness, like a torment. How could he be sure, what confirmation had he? The doubt was like a sense of infinite space, a nothingness, annihilating. He kept within his breast the will to surety. They had exchanged recognition.

He walked about in this state for the next few days. And then again like a mist it began to break to let through the common, barren world. He was very gentle with man and beast, but he dreaded the starkness of disillusion cropping through again.

As he was standing with his back to the fire after dinner a few days later, he saw the woman passing. He wanted to know that she knew him, that she was aware. He wanted it said that there was something between them. So he stood anxiously watching, looking at her as she went down the road. He called to Tilly.

"Who might that be?" he asked.

Tilly, the cross-eyed woman of forty, who adored him, ran gladly to the window to look. She was glad when he asked her for anything. She craned her head over the short curtain, the little tight knob of her black hair sticking out pathetically as she bobbed about.

"Oh why"-she lifted her head and peered with her twisted, keen brown eyes-"why, you know who it is-it's her from th' vicarage-you know-"

"How do I know, you hen-bird," he shouted.

Tilly blushed and drew her neck in and looked at him with her squinting, sharp, almost reproachful look.

"Why you do-it's the new housekeeper."

"Ay-an' what by that?"

"Well, an' what by that?" rejoined the indignant Tilly.

"She's a woman, isn't she, housekeeper or no housekeeper? She's got more to her than that! Who is she-she's got a name?"

"Well, if she has, I don't know," retorted Tilly, not to be badgered by this lad who had grown up into a man.

"What's her name?" he asked, more gently.

"I'm sure I couldn't tell you," replied Tilly, on her dignity.

"An' is that all as you've gathered, as she's housekeeping at the vicarage?"

"I've 'eered mention of 'er name, but I couldn't remember it for my life."

"Why, yer riddle-skulled woman o' nonsense, what have you got a head for?"

"For what other folks 'as got theirs for," retorted Tilly, who loved nothing more than these tilts when he would call her names.

There was a lull.

"I don't believe as anybody could keep it in their head," the woman-servant continued, tentatively.

"What?" he asked.

"Why, 'er name."

"How's that?"

"She's fra some foreign parts or other."

"Who told you that?"

"That's all I do know, as she is."

"An' wheer do you reckon she's from, then?"

"I don't know. They do say as she hails fra th' Pole. I don't know," Tilly hastened to add, knowing he would attack her.

"Fra th' Pole, why do you hail fra th' Pole? Who set up that menagerie confabulation?"

"That's what they say-I don't know-"

"Who says?"

"Mrs. Bentley says as she's fra th' Pole-else she is a Pole, or summat."

Tilly was only afraid she was landing herself deeper now.

"Who says she's a Pole?"

"They all say so."

"Then what's brought her to these parts?"

"I couldn't tell you. She's got a little girl with her."

"Got a little girl with her?"

"Of three or four, with a head like a fuzz-ball."

"Black?"

"White-fair as can be, an' all of a fuzz."

"Is there a father, then?"

"Not to my knowledge. I don't know."

"What brought her here?"

"I couldn't say, without th' vicar axed her."

"Is the child her child?"

"I s'd think so-they say so."

"Who told you about her?"

"Why, Lizzie-a-Monday-we seed her goin' past."

"You'd have to be rattling your tongues if anything went past."

Brangwen stood musing. That evening he went up to Cossethay to the "Red Lion", half with the intention of hearing more.

She was the widow of a Polish doctor, he gathered. Her husband had died, a refugee, in London. She spoke a bit foreign-like, but you could easily make out what she said. She had one little girl named Anna. Lensky was the woman's name, Mrs. Lensky.

Brangwen felt that here was the unreality established at last. He felt also a curious certainty about her, as if she were destined to him. It was to him a profound satisfaction that she was a foreigner.

A swift change had taken place on the earth for him, as if a new creation were fulfilled, in which he had real existence. Things had all been stark, unreal, barren, mere nullities before. Now they were actualities that he could handle.

He dared scarcely think of the woman. He was afraid. Only all the time he was aware of her presence not far off, he lived in her. But he dared not know her, even acquaint himself with her by thinking of her.

One day he met her walking along the road with her little girl. It was a child with a face like a bud of apple-blossom, and glistening fair hair like thistle-down sticking out in straight, wild, flamy pieces, and very dark eyes. The child clung jealously to her mother's side when he looked at her, staring with resentful black eyes. But the mother glanced at him again, almost vacantly. And the very vacancy of her look inflamed him. She had wide grey-brown eyes with very dark, fathomless pupils. He felt the fine flame running under his skin, as if all his veins had caught fire on the surface. And he went on walking without knowledge.

It was coming, he knew, his fate. The world was submitting to its transformation. He made no move: it would come, what would come.

When his sister Effie came to the Marsh for a week, he went with her for once to church. In the tiny place, with its mere dozen pews, he sat not far from the stranger. There was a fineness about her, a poignancy about the way she sat and held her head lifted. She was strange, from far off, yet so intimate. She was from far away, a presence, so close to his soul. She was not really there, sitting in Cossethay church beside her little girl. She was not living the apparent life of her days. She belonged to somewhere else. He felt it poignantly, as something real and natural. But a pang of fear for his own concrete life, that was only Cossethay, hurt him, and gave him misgiving.

Her thick dark brows almost met above her irregular nose, she had a wide, rather thick mouth. But her face was lifted to another world of life: not to heaven or death: but to some place where she still lived, in spite of her body's absence.

The child beside her watched everything with wide, black eyes. She had an odd little defiant look, her little red mouth was pinched shut. She seemed to be jealously guarding something, to be always on the alert for defence. She met Brangwen's near, vacant, intimate gaze, and a palpitating hostility, almost like a flame of pain, came into the wide, over-conscious dark eyes.

The old clergyman droned on, Cossethay sat unmoved as usual. And there was the foreign woman with a foreign air about her, inviolate, and the strange child, also foreign, jealously guarding something.

When the service was over, he walked in the way of another existence out of the church. As he went down the churchpath with his sister, behind the woman and child, the little girl suddenly broke from her mother's hand, and slipped back with quick, almost invisible movement, and was picking at something almost under Brangwen's feet. Her tiny fingers were fine and quick, but they missed the red button.

"Have you found something?" said Brangwen to her.

And he also stooped for the button. But she had got it, and she stood back with it pressed against her little coat, her black eyes flaring at him, as if to forbid him to notice her. Then, having silenced him, she turned with a swift "Mother-," and was gone down the path.

The mother had stood watching impassive, looking not at the child, but at Brangwen. He became aware of the woman looking at him, standing there isolated yet for him dominant in her foreign existence.

He did not know what to do, and turned to his sister. But the wide grey eyes, almost vacant yet so moving, held him beyond himself.

"Mother, I may have it, mayn't I?" came the child's proud, silvery tones. "Mother"-she seemed always to be calling her mother to remember her-"mother"-and she had nothing to continue now her mother had replied "Yes, my child." But, with ready invention, the child stumbled and ran on, "What are those people's names?"

Brangwen heard the abstract:

"I don't know, dear."

He went on down the road as if he were not living inside himself, but somewhere outside.

"Who was that person?" his sister Effie asked.

"I couldn't tell you," he answered unknowing.

"She's somebody very funny," said Effie, almost in condemnation. "That child's like one bewitched."

"Bewitched-how bewitched?" he repeated.

"You can see for yourself. The mother's plain, I must say-but the child is like a changeling. She'd be about thirty-five."

But he took no notice. His sister talked on.

"There's your woman for you," she continued. "You'd better marry her." But still he took no notice. Things were as they were.

Another day, at tea-time, as he sat alone at table, there came a knock at the front door. It startled him like a portent. No one ever knocked at the front door. He rose and began slotting back the bolts, turning the big key. When he had opened the door, the strange woman stood on the threshold.

"Can you give me a pound of butter?" she asked, in a curious detached way of one speaking a foreign language.

He tried to attend to her question. She was looking at him questioningly. But underneath the question, what was there, in her very standing motionless, which affected him?

He stepped aside and she at once entered the house, as if the door had been opened to admit her. That startled him. It was the custom for everybody to wait on the doorstep till asked inside. He went into the kitchen and she followed.

His tea-things were spread on the scrubbed deal table, a big fire was burning, a dog rose from the hearth and went to her. She stood motionless just inside the kitchen.

"Tilly," he called loudly, "have we got any butter?"

The stranger stood there like a silence in her black cloak.

"Eh?" came the shrill cry from the distance.

He shouted his question again.

"We've got what's on t' table," answered Tilly's shrill voice out of the dairy.

Brangwen looked at the table. There was a large pat of butter on a plate, almost a pound. It was round, and stamped with acorns and oak-leaves.

"Can't you come when you're wanted?" he shouted.

"Why, what d'you want?" Tilly protested, as she came peeking inquisitively through the other door.

She saw the strange woman, stared at her with cross-eyes, but said nothing.

"Haven't we any butter?" asked Brangwen again, impatiently, as if he could command some by his question.

"I tell you there's what's on t' table," said Tilly, impatient that she was unable to create any to his demand. "We haven't a morsel besides."

There was a moment's silence.

The stranger spoke, in her curiously distinct, detached manner of one who must think her speech first.

"Oh, then thank you very much. I am sorry that I have come to trouble you."

She could not understand the entire lack of manners, was slightly puzzled. Any politeness would have made the situation quite impersonal. But here it was a case of wills in confusion. Brangwen flushed at her polite speech. Still he did not let her go.

"Get summat an' wrap that up for her," he said to Tilly, looking at the butter on the table.

And taking a clean knife, he cut off that side of the butter where it was touched.

His speech, the "for her", penetrated slowly into the foreign woman and angered Tilly.

"Vicar has his butter fra Brown's by rights," said the insuppressible servant-woman. "We s'll be churnin' to-morrow mornin' first thing."

"Yes"-the long-drawn foreign yes-"yes," said the Polish woman, "I went to Mrs. Brown's. She hasn't any more."

Tilly bridled her head, bursting to say that, according to the etiquette of people who bought butter, it was no sort of manners whatever coming to a place cool as you like and knocking at the front door asking for a pound as a stop-gap while your other people were short. If you go to Brown's you go to Brown's, an' my butter isn't just to make shift when Brown's has got none.

Brangwen understood perfectly this unspoken speech of Tilly's. The Polish lady did not. And as she wanted butter for the vicar, and as Tilly was churning in the morning, she waited.

"Sluther up now," said Brangwen loudly after this silence had resolved itself out; and Tilly disappeared through the inner door.

"I am afraid that I should not come, so," said the stranger, looking at him enquiringly, as if referring to him for what it was usual to do.

He felt confused.

"How's that?" he said, trying to be genial and being only protective.

"Do you--?" she began deliberately. But she was not sure of her ground, and the conversation came to an end. Her eyes looked at him all the while, because she could not speak the language.

They stood facing each other. The dog walked away from her to him. He bent down to it.

"And how's your little girl?" he asked.

"Yes, thank you, she is very well," was the reply, a phrase of polite speech in a foreign language merely.

"Sit you down," he said.

And she sat in a chair, her slim arms, coming through the slits of her cloak, resting on her lap.

"You're not used to these parts," he said, still standing on the hearthrug with his back to the fire, coatless, looking with curious directness at the woman. Her self-possession pleased him and inspired him, set him curiously free. It seemed to him almost brutal to feel so master of himself and of the situation.

Her eyes rested on him for a moment, questioning, as she thought of the meaning of his speech.

"No," she said, understanding. "No-it is strange."

"You find it middlin' rough?" he said.

Her eyes waited on him, so that he should say it again.

"Our ways are rough to you," he repeated.

"Yes-yes, I understand. Yes, it is different, it is strange. But I was in Yorkshire--"

"Oh, well then," he said, "it's no worse here than what they are up there."

She did not quite understand. His protective manner, and his sureness, and his intimacy, puzzled her. What did he mean? If he was her equal, why did he behave so without formality?

"No--" she said, vaguely, her eyes resting on him.

She saw him fresh and naive, uncouth, almost entirely beyond relationship with her. Yet he was good-looking, with his fair hair and blue eyes full of energy, and with his healthy body that seemed to take equality with her. She watched him steadily. He was difficult for her to understand, warm, uncouth, and confident as he was, sure on his feet as if he did not know what it was to be unsure. What then was it that gave him this curious stability?

She did not know. She wondered. She looked round the room he lived in. It had a close intimacy that fascinated and almost frightened her. The furniture was old and familiar as old people, the whole place seemed so kin to him, as if it partook of his being, that she was uneasy.

"It is already a long time that you have lived in this house-yes?" she asked.

"I've always lived here," he said.

"Yes-but your people-your family?"

"We've been here above two hundred years," he said. Her eyes were on him all the time, wide-open and trying to grasp him. He felt that he was there for her.

"It is your own place, the house, the farm--?"

"Yes," he said. He looked down at her and met her look. It disturbed her. She did not know him. He was a foreigner, they had nothing to do with each other. Yet his look disturbed her to knowledge of him. He was so strangely confident and direct.

"You live quite alone?"

"Yes-if you call it alone?"

She did not understand. It seemed unusual to her. What was the meaning of it?

And whenever her eyes, after watching him for some time, inevitably met his, she was aware of a heat beating up over her consciousness. She sat motionless and in conflict. Who was this strange man who was at once so near to her? What was happening to her? Something in his young, warm-twinkling eyes seemed to assume a right to her, to speak to her, to extend her his protection. But how? Why did he speak to her? Why were his eyes so certain, so full of light and confident, waiting for no permission nor signal?

Tilly returned with a large leaf and found the two silent. At once he felt it incumbent on him to speak, now the serving-woman had come back.

"How old is your little girl?" he asked.

"Four years," she replied.

"Her father hasn't been dead long, then?" he asked.

"She was one year when he died."

"Three years?"

"Yes, three years that he is dead-yes."

Curiously quiet she was, almost abstracted, answering these questions. She looked at him again, with some maidenhood opening in her eyes. He felt he could not move, neither towards her nor away from her. Something about her presence hurt him, till he was almost rigid before her. He saw the girl's wondering look rise in her eyes.

Tilly handed her the butter and she rose.

"Thank you very much," she said. "How much is it?"

"We'll make th' vicar a present of it," he said. "It'll do for me goin' to church."

"It 'ud look better of you if you went to church and took th' money for your butter," said Tilly, persistent in her claim to him.

"You'd have to put in, shouldn't you?" he said.

"How much, please?" said the Polish woman to Tilly. Brangwen stood by and let be.

"Then, thank you very much," she said.

"Bring your little girl down sometime to look at th' fowls and horses," he said,-"if she'd like it."

"Yes, she would like it," said the stranger.

And she went. Brangwen stood dimmed by her departure. He could not notice Tilly, who was looking at him uneasily, wanting to be reassured. He could not think of anything. He felt that he had made some invisible connection with the strange woman.

A daze had come over his mind, he had another centre of consciousness. In his breast, or in his bowels, somewhere in his body, there had started another activity. It was as if a strong light were burning there, and he was blind within it, unable to know anything, except that this transfiguration burned between him and her, connecting them, like a secret power.

Since she had come to the house he went about in a daze, scarcely seeing even the things he handled, drifting, quiescent, in a state of metamorphosis. He submitted to that which was happening to him, letting go his will, suffering the loss of himself, dormant always on the brink of ecstasy, like a creature evolving to a new birth.

She came twice with her child to the farm, but there was this lull between them, an intense calm and passivity like a torpor upon them, so that there was no active change took place. He was almost unaware of the child, yet by his native good humour he gained her confidence, even her affection, setting her on a horse to ride, giving her corn for the fowls.

Once he drove the mother and child from Ilkeston, picking them up on the road. The child huddled close to him as if for love, the mother sat very still. There was a vagueness, like a soft mist over all of them, and a silence as if their wills were suspended. Only he saw her hands, ungloved, folded in her lap, and he noticed the wedding-ring on her finger. It excluded him: it was a closed circle. It bound her life, the wedding-ring, it stood for her life in which he could have no part. Nevertheless, beyond all this, there was herself and himself which should meet.

As he helped her down from the trap, almost lifting her, he felt he had some right to take her thus between his hands. She belonged as yet to that other, to that which was behind. But he must care for her also. She was too living to be neglected.

Sometimes her vagueness, in which he was lost, made him angry, made him rage. But he held himself still as yet. She had no response, no being towards him. It puzzled and enraged him, but he submitted for a long time. Then, from the accumulated troubling of her ignoring him, gradually a fury broke out, destructive, and he wanted to go away, to escape her.

It happened she came down to the Marsh with the child whilst he was in this state. Then he stood over against her, strong and heavy in his revolt, and though he said nothing, still she felt his anger and heavy impatience grip hold of her, she was shaken again as out of a torpor. Again her heart stirred with a quick, out-running impulse, she looked at him, at the stranger who was not a gentleman yet who insisted on coming into her life, and the pain of a new birth in herself strung all her veins to a new form. She would have to begin again, to find a new being, a new form, to respond to that blind, insistent figure standing over against her.

A shiver, a sickness of new birth passed over her, the flame leaped up him, under his skin. She wanted it, this new life from him, with him, yet she must defend herself against it, for it was a destruction.

As he worked alone on the land, or sat up with his ewes at lambing time, the facts and material of his daily life fell away, leaving the kernel of his purpose clean. And then it came upon him that he would marry her and she would be his life.

Gradually, even without seeing her, he came to know her. He would have liked to think of her as of something given into his protection, like a child without parents. But it was forbidden him. He had to come down from this pleasant view of the case. She might refuse him. And besides, he was afraid of her.

But during the long February nights with the ewes in labour, looking out from the shelter into the flashing stars, he knew he did not belong to himself. He must admit that he was only fragmentary, something incomplete and subject. There were the stars in the dark heaven travelling, the whole host passing by on some eternal voyage. So he sat small and submissive to the greater ordering.

Unless she would come to him, he must remain as a nothingness. It was a hard experience. But, after her repeated obliviousness to him, after he had seen so often that he did not exist for her, after he had raged and tried to escape, and said he was good enough by himself, he was a man, and could stand alone, he must, in the starry multiplicity of the night humble himself, and admit and know that without her he was nothing.

He was nothing. But with her, he would be real. If she were now walking across the frosty grass near the sheep-shelter, through the fretful bleating of the ewes and lambs, she would bring him completeness and perfection. And if it should be so, that she should come to him! It should be so-it was ordained so.

He was a long time resolving definitely to ask her to marry him. And he knew, if he asked her, she must really acquiesce. She must, it could not be otherwise.

He had learned a little of her. She was poor, quite alone, and had had a hard time in London, both before and after her husband died. But in Poland she was a lady well born, a landowner's daughter.

All these things were only words to him, the fact of her superior birth, the fact that her husband had been a brilliant doctor, the fact that he himself was her inferior in almost every way of distinction. There was an inner reality, a logic of the soul, which connected her with him.

One evening in March, when the wind was roaring outside, came the moment to ask her. He had sat with his hands before him, leaning to the fire. And as he watched the fire, he knew almost without thinking that he was going this evening.

"Have you got a clean shirt?" he asked Tilly.

"You know you've got clean shirts," she said.

"Ay,-bring me a white one."

Tilly brought down one of the linen shirts he had inherited from his father, putting it before him to air at the fire. She loved him with a dumb, aching love as he sat leaning with his arms on his knees, still and absorbed, unaware of her. Lately, a quivering inclination to cry had come over her, when she did anything for him in his presence. Now her hands trembled as she spread the shirt. He was never shouting and teasing now. The deep stillness there was in the house made her tremble.

He went to wash himself. Queer little breaks of consciousness seemed to rise and burst like bubbles out of the depths of his stillness.

"It's got to be done," he said as he stooped to take the shirt out of the fender, "it's got to be done, so why balk it?" And as he combed his hair before the mirror on the wall, he retorted to himself, superficially: "The woman's not speechless dumb. She's not clutterin' at the nipple. She's got the right to please herself, and displease whosoever she likes."

This streak of common sense carried him a little further.

"Did you want anythink?" asked Tilly, suddenly appearing, having heard him speak. She stood watching him comb his fair beard. His eyes were calm and uninterrupted.

"Ay," he said, "where have you put the scissors?"

She brought them to him, and stood watching as, chin forward, he trimmed his beard.

"Don't go an' crop yourself as if you was at a shearin' contest," she said, anxiously. He blew the fine-curled hair quickly off his lips.

He put on all clean clothes, folded his stock carefully, and donned his best coat. Then, being ready, as grey twilight was falling, he went across to the orchard to gather the daffodils. The wind was roaring in the apple trees, the yellow flowers swayed violently up and down, he heard even the fine whisper of their spears as he stooped to break the flattened, brittle stems of the flowers.

"What's to-do?" shouted a friend who met him as he left the garden gate.

"Bit of courtin', like," said Brangwen.

And Tilly, in a great state of trepidation and excitement, let the wind whisk her over the field to the big gate, whence she could watch him go.

He went up the hill and on towards the vicarage, the wind roaring through the hedges, whilst he tried to shelter his bunch of daffodils by his side. He did not think of anything, only knew that the wind was blowing.

Night was falling, the bare trees drummed and whistled. The vicar, he knew, would be in his study, the Polish woman in the kitchen, a comfortable room, with her child. In the darkest of twilight, he went through the gate and down the path where a few daffodils stooped in the wind, and shattered crocuses made a pale, colourless ravel.

There was a light streaming on to the bushes at the back from the kitchen window. He began to hesitate. How could he do this? Looking through the window, he saw her seated in the rocking-chair with the child, already in its nightdress, sitting on her knee. The fair head with its wild, fierce hair was drooping towards the fire-warmth, which reflected on the bright cheeks and clear skin of the child, who seemed to be musing, almost like a grown-up person. The mother's face was dark and still, and he saw, with a pang, that she was away back in the life that had been. The child's hair gleamed like spun glass, her face was illuminated till it seemed like wax lit up from the inside. The wind boomed strongly. Mother and child sat motionless, silent, the child staring with vacant dark eyes into the fire, the mother looking into space. The little girl was almost asleep. It was her will which kept her eyes so wide.

Suddenly she looked round, troubled, as the wind shook the house, and Brangwen saw the small lips move. The mother began to rock, he heard the slight crunch of the rockers of the chair. Then he heard the low, monotonous murmur of a song in a foreign language. Then a great burst of wind, the mother seemed to have drifted away, the child's eyes were black and dilated. Brangwen looked up at the clouds which packed in great, alarming haste across the dark sky.

Then there came the child's high, complaining, yet imperative voice:

"Don't sing that stuff, mother; I don't want to hear it."

The singing died away.

"You will go to bed," said the mother.

He saw the clinging protest of the child, the unmoved farawayness of the mother, the clinging, grasping effort of the child. Then suddenly the clear childish challenge:

"I want you to tell me a story."

The wind blew, the story began, the child nestled against the mother, Brangwen waited outside, suspended, looking at the wild waving of the trees in the wind and the gathering darkness. He had his fate to follow, he lingered there at the threshold.

The child crouched distinct and motionless, curled in against her mother, the eyes dark and unblinking among the keen wisps of hair, like a curled-up animal asleep but for the eyes. The mother sat as if in shadow, the story went on as if by itself. Brangwen stood outside seeing the night fall. He did not notice the passage of time. The hand that held the daffodils was fixed and cold.

The story came to an end, the mother rose at last, with the child clinging round her neck. She must be strong, to carry so large a child so easily. The little Anna clung round her mother's neck. The fair, strange face of the child looked over the shoulder of the mother, all asleep but the eyes, and these, wide and dark, kept up the resistance and the fight with something unseen.

When they were gone, Brangwen stirred for the first time from the place where he stood, and looked round at the night. He wished it were really as beautiful and familiar as it seemed in these few moments of release. Along with the child, he felt a curious strain on him, a suffering, like a fate.

The mother came down again, and began folding the child's clothes. He knocked. She opened wondering, a little bit at bay, like a foreigner, uneasy.

"Good evening," he said. "I'll just come in a minute."

A change went quickly over her face; she was unprepared. She looked down at him as he stood in the light from the window, holding the daffodils, the darkness behind. In his black clothes she again did not know him. She was almost afraid.

But he was already stepping on to the threshold, and closing the door behind him. She turned into the kitchen, startled out of herself by this invasion from the night. He took off his hat, and came towards her. Then he stood in the light, in his black clothes and his black stock, hat in one hand and yellow flowers in the other. She stood away, at his mercy, snatched out of herself. She did not know him, only she knew he was a man come for her. She could only see the dark-clad man's figure standing there upon her, and the gripped fist of flowers. She could not see the face and the living eyes.

He was watching her, without knowing her, only aware underneath of her presence.

"I come to have a word with you," he said, striding forward to the table, laying down his hat and the flowers, which tumbled apart and lay in a loose heap. She had flinched from his advance. She had no will, no being. The wind boomed in the chimney, and he waited. He had disembarrassed his hands. Now he shut his fists.

He was aware of her standing there unknown, dread, yet related to him.

"I came up," he said, speaking curiously matter-of-fact and level, "to ask if you'd marry me. You are free, aren't you?"

There was a long silence, whilst his blue eyes, strangely impersonal, looked into her eyes to seek an answer to the truth. He was looking for the truth out of her. And she, as if hypnotised, must answer at length.

"Yes, I am free to marry."

The expression of his eyes changed, became less impersonal, as if he were looking almost at her, for the truth of her. Steady and intent and eternal they were, as if they would never change. They seemed to fix and to resolve her. She quivered, feeling herself created, will-less, lapsing into him, into a common will with him.

"You want me?" she said.

A pallor came over his face.

"Yes," he said.

Still there was no response and silence.

"No," she said, not of herself. "No, I don't know."

He felt the tension breaking up in him, his fists slackened, he was unable to move. He stood there looking at her, helpless in his vague collapse. For the moment she had become unreal to him. Then he saw her come to him, curiously direct and as if without movement, in a sudden flow. She put her hand to his coat.

"Yes I want to," she said, impersonally, looking at him with wide, candid, newly-opened eyes, opened now with supreme truth. He went very white as he stood, and did not move, only his eyes were held by hers, and he suffered. She seemed to see him with her newly-opened, wide eyes, almost of a child, and with a strange movement, that was agony to him, she reached slowly forward her dark face and her breast to him, with a slow insinuation of a kiss that made something break in his brain, and it was darkness over him for a few moments.

He had her in his arms, and, obliterated, was kissing her. And it was sheer, bleached agony to him, to break away from himself. She was there so small and light and accepting in his arms, like a child, and yet with such an insinuation of embrace, of infinite embrace, that he could not bear it, he could not stand.

He turned and looked for a chair, and keeping her still in his arms, sat down with her close to him, to his breast. Then, for a few seconds, he went utterly to sleep, asleep and sealed in the darkest sleep, utter, extreme oblivion.

From which he came to gradually, always holding her warm and close upon him, and she as utterly silent as he, involved in the same oblivion, the fecund darkness.

He returned gradually, but newly created, as after a gestation, a new birth, in the womb of darkness. Aerial and light everything was, new as a morning, fresh and newly-begun. Like a dawn the newness and the bliss filled in. And she sat utterly still with him, as if in the same.

Then she looked up at him, the wide, young eyes blazing with light. And he bent down and kissed her on the lips. And the dawn blazed in them, their new life came to pass, it was beyond all conceiving good, it was so good, that it was almost like a passing-away, a trespass. He drew her suddenly closer to him.

For soon the light began to fade in her, gradually, and as she was in his arms, her head sank, she leaned it against him, and lay still, with sunk head, a little tired, effaced because she was tired. And in her tiredness was a certain negation of him.

"There is the child," she said, out of the long silence.

He did not understand. It was a long time since he had heard a voice. Now also he heard the wind roaring, as if it had just begun again.

"Yes," he said, not understanding. There was a slight contraction of pain at his heart, a slight tension on his brows. Something he wanted to grasp and could not.

"You will love her?" she said.

The quick contraction, like pain, went over him again.

"I love her now," he said.

She lay still against him, taking his physical warmth without heed. It was great confirmation for him to feel her there, absorbing the warmth from him, giving him back her weight and her strange confidence. But where was she, that she seemed so absent? His mind was open with wonder. He did not know her.

"But I am much older than you," she said.

"How old?" he asked.

"I am thirty-four," she said.

"I am twenty-eight," he said.

"Six years."

She was oddly concerned, even as if it pleased her a little. He sat and listened and wondered. It was rather splendid, to be so ignored by her, whilst she lay against him, and he lifted her with his breathing, and felt her weight upon his living, so he had a completeness and an inviolable power. He did not interfere with her. He did not even know her. It was so strange that she lay there with her weight abandoned upon him. He was silent with delight. He felt strong, physically, carrying her on his breathing. The strange, inviolable completeness of the two of them made him feel as sure and as stable as God. Amused, he wondered what the vicar would say if he knew.

"You needn't stop here much longer, housekeeping," he said.

"I like it also, here," she said. "When one has been in many places, it is very nice here."

He was silent again at this. So close on him she lay, and yet she answered him from so far away. But he did not mind.

"What was your own home like, when you were little?" he asked.

"My father was a landowner," she replied. "It was near a river."

This did not convey much to him. All was as vague as before. But he did not care, whilst she was so close.

"I am a landowner-a little one," he said.

"Yes," she said.

He had not dared to move. He sat there with his arms round her, her lying motionless on his breathing, and for a long time he did not stir. Then softly, timidly, his hand settled on the roundness of her arm, on the unknown. She seemed to lie a little closer. A hot flame licked up from his belly to his chest.

But it was too soon. She rose, and went across the room to a drawer, taking out a little tray-cloth. There was something quiet and professional about her. She had been a nurse beside her husband, both in Warsaw and in the rebellion afterwards. She proceeded to set a tray. It was as if she ignored Brangwen. He sat up, unable to bear a contradiction in her. She moved about inscrutably.

Then, as he sat there, all mused and wondering, she came near to him, looking at him with wide, grey eyes that almost smiled with a low light. But her ugly-beautiful mouth was still unmoved and sad. He was afraid.

His eyes, strained and roused with unusedness, quailed a little before her, he felt himself quailing and yet he rose, as if obedient to her, he bent and kissed her heavy, sad, wide mouth, that was kissed, and did not alter. Fear was too strong in him. Again he had not got her.

She turned away. The vicarage kitchen was untidy, and yet to him beautiful with the untidiness of her and her child. Such a wonderful remoteness there was about her, and then something in touch with him, that made his heart knock in his chest. He stood there and waited, suspended.

Again she came to him, as he stood in his black clothes, with blue eyes very bright and puzzled for her, his face tensely alive, his hair dishevelled. She came close up to him, to his intent, black-clothed body, and laid her hand on his arm. He remained unmoved. Her eyes, with a blackness of memory struggling with passion, primitive and electric away at the back of them, rejected him and absorbed him at once. But he remained himself. He breathed with difficulty, and sweat came out at the roots of his hair, on his forehead.

"Do you want to marry me?" she asked slowly, always uncertain.

He was afraid lest he could not speak. He drew breath hard, saying:

"I do."

Then again, what was agony to him, with one hand lightly resting on his arm, she leaned forward a little, and with a strange, primeval suggestion of embrace, held him her mouth. It was ugly-beautiful, and he could not bear it. He put his mouth on hers, and slowly, slowly the response came, gathering force and passion, till it seemed to him she was thundering at him till he could bear no more. He drew away, white, unbreathing. Only, in his blue eyes, was something of himself concentrated. And in her eyes was a little smile upon a black void.

She was drifting away from him again. And he wanted to go away. It was intolerable. He could bear no more. He must go. Yet he was irresolute. But she turned away from him.

With a little pang of anguish, of denial, it was decided.

"I'll come an' speak to the vicar to-morrow," he said, taking his hat.

She looked at him, her eyes expressionless and full of darkness. He could see no answer.

"That'll do, won't it?" he said.

"Yes," she answered, mere echo without body or meaning.

"Good night," he said.

"Good night."

He left her standing there, expressionless and void as she was. Then she went on laying the tray for the vicar. Needing the table, she put the daffodils aside on the dresser without noticing them. Only their coolness, touching her hand, remained echoing there a long while.

They were such strangers, they must for ever be such strangers, that his passion was a clanging torment to him. Such intimacy of embrace, and such utter foreignness of contact! It was unbearable. He could not bear to be near her, and know the utter foreignness between them, know how entirely they were strangers to each other. He went out into the wind. Big holes were blown into the sky, the moonlight blew about. Sometimes a high moon, liquid-brilliant, scudded across a hollow space and took cover under electric, brown-iridescent cloud-edges. Then there was a blot of cloud, and shadow. Then somewhere in the night a radiance again, like a vapour. And all the sky was teeming and tearing along, a vast disorder of flying shapes and darkness and ragged fumes of light and a great brown circling halo, then the terror of a moon running liquid-brilliant into the open for a moment, hurting the eyes before she plunged under cover of cloud again.

Chapter 2

They Live at the Marsh

She was the daughter of a Polish landowner who, deeply in debt to the Jews, had married a German wife with money, and who had died just before the rebellion. Quite young, she had married Paul Lensky, an intellectual who had studied at Berlin, and had returned to Warsaw a patriot. Her mother had married a German merchant and gone away.

Lydia Lensky, married to the young doctor, became with him a patriot and an emancipee. They were poor, but they were very conceited. She learned nursing as a mark of her emancipation. They represented in Poland the new movement just begun in Russia. But they were very patriotic: and, at the same time, very "European".

They had two children. Then came the great rebellion. Lensky, very ardent and full of words, went about inciting his countrymen. Little Poles flamed down the streets of Warsaw, on the way to shoot every Muscovite. So they crossed into the south of Russia, and it was common for six little insurgents to ride into a Jewish village, brandishing swords and words, emphasising the fact that they were going to shoot every living Muscovite.

Lensky was something of a fire-eater also. Lydia, tempered by her German blood, coming of a different family, was obliterated, carried along in her husband's emphasis of declaration, and his whirl of patriotism. He was indeed a brave man, but no bravery could quite have equalled the vividness of his talk. He worked very hard, till nothing lived in him but his eyes. And Lydia, as if drugged, followed him like a shadow, serving, echoing. Sometimes she had her two children, sometimes they were left behind.

She returned once to find them both dead of diphtheria. Her husband wept aloud, unaware of everybody. But the war went on, and soon he was back at his work. A darkness had come over Lydia's mind. She walked always in a shadow, silenced, with a strange, deep terror having hold of her, her desire was to seek satisfaction in dread, to enter a nunnery, to satisfy the instincts of dread in her, through service of a dark religion. But she could not.

Then came the flight to London. Lensky, the little, thin man, had got all his life locked into a resistance and could not relax again. He lived in a sort of insane irritability, touchy, haughty to the last degree, fractious, so that as assistant doctor in one of the hospitals he soon became impossible. They were almost beggars. But he kept still his great ideas of himself, he seemed to live in a complete hallucination, where he himself figured vivid and lordly. He guarded his wife jealously against the ignominy of her position, rushed round her like a brandished weapon, an amazing sight to the English eye, had her in his power, as if he hypnotised her. She was passive, dark, always in shadow.

He was wasting away. Already when the child was born he seemed nothing but skin and bone and fixed idea. She watched him dying, nursed him, nursed the baby, but really took no notice of anything. A darkness was on her, like remorse, or like a remembering of the dark, savage, mystic ride of dread, of death, of the shadow of revenge. When her husband died, she was relieved. He would no longer dart about her.

England fitted her mood, its aloofness and foreignness. She had known a little of the language before coming, and a sort of parrot-mind made her pick it up fairly easily. But she knew nothing of the English, nor of English life. Indeed, these did not exist for her. She was like one walking in the Underworld, where the shades throng intelligibly but have no connection with one. She felt the English people as a potent, cold, slightly hostile host amongst whom she walked isolated.

The English people themselves were almost deferential to her, the Church saw that she did not want. She walked without passion, like a shade, tormented into moments of love by the child. Her dying husband with his tortured eyes and the skin drawn tight over his face, he was as a vision to her, not a reality. In a vision he was buried and put away. Then the vision ceased, she was untroubled, time went on grey, uncoloured, like a long journey where she sat unconscious as the landscape unrolled beside her. When she rocked her baby at evening, maybe she fell into a Polish slumber song, or she talked sometimes to herself in Polish. Otherwise she did not think of Poland, nor of that life to which she had belonged. It was a great blot looming blank in its darkness. In the superficial activity of her life, she was all English. She even thought in English. But her long blanks and darknesses of abstraction were Polish.

So she lived for some time. Then, with slight uneasiness, she used half to awake to the streets of London. She realised that there was something around her, very foreign, she realised she was in a strange place. And then, she was sent away into the country. There came into her mind now the memory of her home where she had been a child, the big house among the land, the peasants of the village.

She was sent to Yorkshire, to nurse an old rector in his rectory by the sea. This was the first shake of the kaleidoscope that brought in front of her eyes something she must see. It hurt her brain, the open country and the moors. It hurt her and hurt her. Yet it forced itself upon her as something living, it roused some potency of her childhood in her, it had some relation to her.

There was green and silver and blue in the air about her now. And there was a strange insistence of light from the sea, to which she must attend. Primroses glimmered around, many of them, and she stooped to the disturbing influence near her feet, she even picked one or two flowers, faintly remembering in the new colour of life, what had been. All the day long, as she sat at the upper window, the light came off the sea, constantly, constantly, without refusal, till it seemed to bear her away, and the noise of the sea created a drowsiness in her, a relaxation like sleep. Her automatic consciousness gave way a little, she stumbled sometimes, she had a poignant, momentary vision of her living child, that hurt her unspeakably. Her soul roused to attention.

Very strange was the constant glitter of the sea unsheathed in heaven, very warm and sweet the graveyard, in a nook of the hill catching the sunshine and holding it as one holds a bee between the palms of the hands, when it is benumbed. Grey grass and lichens and a little church, and snowdrops among coarse grass, and a cupful of incredibly warm sunshine.

She was troubled in spirit. Hearing the rushing of the beck away down under the trees, she was startled, and wondered what it was. Walking down, she found the bluebells around her glowing like a presence, among the trees.

Summer came, the moors were tangled with harebells like water in the ruts of the roads, the heather came rosy under the skies, setting the whole world awake. And she was uneasy. She went past the gorse bushes shrinking from their presence, she stepped into the heather as into a quickening bath that almost hurt. Her fingers moved over the clasped fingers of the child, she heard the anxious voice of the baby, as it tried to make her talk, distraught.

And she shrank away again, back into her darkness, and for a long while remained blotted safely away from living. But autumn came with the faint red glimmer of robins singing, winter darkened the moors, and almost savagely she turned again to life, demanding her life back again, demanding that it should be as it had been when she was a girl, on the land at home, under the sky. Snow lay in great expanses, the telegraph posts strode over the white earth, away under the gloom of the sky. And savagely her desire rose in her again, demanding that this was Poland, her youth, that all was her own again.

But there were no sledges nor bells, she did not see the peasants coming out like new people, in their sheepskins and their fresh, ruddy, bright faces, that seemed to become new and vivid when the snow lit up the ground. It did not come to her, the life of her youth, it did not come back. There was a little agony of struggle, then a relapse into the darkness of the convent, where Satan and the devils raged round the walls, and Christ was white on the cross of victory.

She watched from the sick-room the snow whirl past, like flocks of shadows in haste, flying on some final mission out to a leaden inalterable sea, beyond the final whiteness of the curving shore, and the snow-speckled blackness of the rocks half submerged. But near at hand on the trees the snow was soft in bloom. Only the voice of the dying vicar spoke grey and querulous from behind.

By the time the snowdrops were out, however, he was dead. He was dead. But with curious equanimity the returning woman watched the snowdrops on the edge of the grass below, blown white in the wind, but not to be blown away. She watched them fluttering and bobbing, the white, shut flowers, anchored by a thread to the grey-green grass, yet never blown away, not drifting with the wind.

As she rose in the morning, the dawn was beating up white, gusts of light blown like a thin snowstorm from the east, blown stronger and fiercer, till the rose appeared, and the gold, and the sea lit up below. She was impassive and indifferent. Yet she was outside the enclosure of darkness.

There passed a space of shadow again, the familiarity of dread-worship, during which she was moved, oblivious, to Cossethay. There, at first, there was nothing-just grey nothing. But then one morning there was a light from the yellow jasmine caught her, and after that, morning and evening, the persistent ringing of thrushes from the shrubbery, till her heart, beaten upon, was forced to lift up its voice in rivalry and answer. Little tunes came into her mind. She was full of trouble almost like anguish. Resistant, she knew she was beaten, and from fear of darkness turned to fear of light. She would have hidden herself indoors, if she could. Above all, she craved for the peace and heavy oblivion of her old state. She could not bear to come to, to realise. The first pangs of this new parturition were so acute, she knew she could not bear it. She would rather remain out of life, than be torn, mutilated into this birth, which she could not survive. She had not the strength to come to life now, in England, so foreign, skies so hostile. She knew she would die like an early, colourless, scentless flower that the end of the winter puts forth mercilessly. And she wanted to harbour her modicum of twinkling life.

But a sunshiny day came full of the scent of a mezereon tree, when bees were tumbling into the yellow crocuses, and she forgot, she felt like somebody else, not herself, a new person, quite glad. But she knew it was fragile, and she dreaded it. The vicar put pea-flower into the crocuses, for his bees to roll in, and she laughed. Then night came, with brilliant stars that she knew of old, from her girlhood. And they flashed so bright, she knew they were victors.

She could neither wake nor sleep. As if crushed between the past and the future, like a flower that comes above-ground to find a great stone lying above it, she was helpless.

The bewilderment and helplessness continued, she was surrounded by great moving masses that must crush her. And there was no escape. Save in the old obliviousness, the cold darkness she strove to retain. But the vicar showed her eggs in the thrush's nest near the back door. She saw herself the mother-thrush upon the nest, and the way her wings were spread, so eager down upon her secret. The tense, eager, nesting wings moved her beyond endurance. She thought of them in the morning, when she heard the thrush whistling as he got up, and she thought, "Why didn't I die out there, why am I brought here?"

She was aware of people who passed around her, not as persons, but as looming presences. It was very difficult for her to adjust herself. In Poland, the peasantry, the people, had been cattle to her, they had been her cattle that she owned and used. What were these people? Now she was coming awake, she was lost.

But she had felt Brangwen go by almost as if he had brushed her. She had tingled in body as she had gone on up the road. After she had been with him in the Marsh kitchen, the voice of her body had risen strong and insistent. Soon, she wanted him. He was the man who had come nearest to her for her awakening.

Always, however, between-whiles she lapsed into the old unconsciousness, indifference and there was a will in her to save herself from living any more. But she would wake in the morning one day and feel her blood running, feel herself lying open like a flower unsheathed in the sun, insistent and potent with demand.

She got to know him better, and her instinct fixed on him--just on him. Her impulse was strong against him, because he was not of her own sort. But one blind instinct led her, to take him, to leave him, and then to relinquish herself to him. It would be safety. She felt the rooted safety of him, and the life in him. Also he was young and very fresh. The blue, steady livingness of his eyes she enjoyed like morning. He was very young.

Then she lapsed again to stupor and indifference. This, however, was bound to pass. The warmth flowed through her, she felt herself opening, unfolding, asking, as a flower opens in full request under the sun, as the beaks of tiny birds open flat, to receive, to receive. And unfolded she turned to him, straight to him. And he came, slowly, afraid, held back by uncouth fear, and driven by a desire bigger than himself.

When she opened and turned to him, then all that had been and all that was, was gone from her, she was as new as a flower that unsheathes itself and stands always ready, waiting, receptive. He could not understand this. He forced himself, through lack of understanding, to the adherence to the line of honourable courtship and sanctioned, licensed marriage. Therefore, after he had gone to the vicarage and asked for her, she remained for some days held in this one spell, open, receptive to him, before him. He was roused to chaos. He spoke to the vicar and gave in the banns. Then he stood to wait.

She remained attentive and instinctively expectant before him, unfolded, ready to receive him. He could not act, because of self-fear and because of his conception of honour towards her. So he remained in a state of chaos.

And after a few days, gradually she closed again, away from him, was sheathed over, impervious to him, oblivious. Then a black, bottomless despair became real to him, he knew what he had lost. He felt he had lost it for good, he knew what it was to have been in communication with her, and to be cast off again. In misery, his heart like a heavy stone, he went about unliving.

Till gradually he became desperate, lost his understanding, was plunged in a revolt that knew no bounds. Inarticulate, he moved with her at the Marsh in violent, gloomy, wordless passion, almost in hatred of her. Till gradually she became aware of him, aware of herself with regard to him, her blood stirred to life, she began to open towards him, to flow towards him again. He waited till the spell was between them again, till they were together within one rushing, hastening flame. And then again he was bewildered, he was tied up as with cords, and could not move to her. So she came to him, and unfastened the breast of his waistcoat and his shirt, and put her hand on him, needing to know him. For it was cruel to her, to be opened and offered to him, yet not to know what he was, not even that he was there. She gave herself to the hour, but he could not, and he bungled in taking her.

So that he lived in suspense, as if only half his faculties worked, until the wedding. She did not understand. But the vagueness came over her again, and the days lapsed by. He could not get definitely into touch with her. For the time being, she let him go again.

He suffered very much from the thought of actual marriage, the intimacy and nakedness of marriage. He knew her so little. They were so foreign to each other, they were such strangers. And they could not talk to each other. When she talked, of Poland or of what had been, it was all so foreign, she scarcely communicated anything to him. And when he looked at her, an over-much reverence and fear of the unknown changed the nature of his desire into a sort of worship, holding her aloof from his physical desire, self-thwarting.

She did not know this, she did not understand. They had looked at each other, and had accepted each other. It was so, then there was nothing to balk at, it was complete between them.

At the wedding, his face was stiff and expressionless. He wanted to drink, to get rid of his forethought and afterthought, to set the moment free. But he could not. The suspense only tightened at his heart. The jesting and joviality and jolly, broad insinuation of the guests only coiled him more. He could not hear. That which was impending obsessed him, he could not get free.

She sat quiet, with a strange, still smile. She was not afraid. Having accepted him, she wanted to take him, she belonged altogether to the hour, now. No future, no past, only this, her hour. She did not even notice him, as she sat beside him at the head of the table. He was very near, their coming together was close at hand. What more!

As the time came for all the guests to go, her dark face was softly lighted, the bend of her head was proud, her grey eyes clear and dilated, so that the men could not look at her, and the women were elated by her, they served her. Very wonderful she was, as she bade farewell, her ugly wide mouth smiling with pride and recognition, her voice speaking softly and richly in the foreign accent, her dilated eyes ignoring one and all the departing guests. Her manner was gracious and fascinating, but she ignored the being of him or her to whom she gave her hand.

And Brangwen stood beside her, giving his hearty handshake to his friends, receiving their regard gratefully, glad of their attention. His heart was tormented within him, he did not try to smile. The time of his trial and his admittance, his Gethsemane and his Triumphal Entry in one, had come now.

Behind her, there was so much unknown to him. When he approached her, he came to such a terrible painful unknown. How could he embrace it and fathom it? How could he close his arms round all this darkness and hold it to his breast and give himself to it? What might not happen to him? If he stretched and strained for ever he would never be able to grasp it all, and to yield himself naked out of his own hands into the unknown power! How could a man be strong enough to take her, put his arms round her and have her, and be sure he could conquer this awful unknown next his heart? What was it then that she was, to which he must also deliver himself up, and which at the same time he must embrace, contain?

He was to be her husband. It was established so. And he wanted it more than he wanted life, or anything. She stood beside him in her silk dress, looking at him strangely, so that a certain terror, horror took possession of him, because she was strange and impending and he had no choice. He could not bear to meet her look from under her strange, thick brows.

"Is it late?" she said.

He looked at his watch.

"No-half-past eleven," he said. And he made an excuse to go into the kitchen, leaving her standing in the room among the disorder and the drinking-glasses.

Tilly was seated beside the fire in the kitchen, her head in her hands. She started up when he entered.

"Why haven't you gone to bed?" he said.

"I thought I'd better stop an' lock up an' do," she said. Her agitation quietened him. He gave her some little order, then returned, steadied now, almost ashamed, to his wife. She stood a moment watching him, as he moved with averted face. Then she said:

"You will be good to me, won't you?"

She was small and girlish and terrible, with a queer, wide look in her eyes. His heart leaped in him, in anguish of love and desire, he went blindly to her and took her in his arms.

"I want to," he said as he drew her closer and closer in. She was soothed by the stress of his embrace, and remained quite still, relaxed against him, mingling in to him. And he let himself go from past and future, was reduced to the moment with her. In which he took her and was with her and there was nothing beyond, they were together in an elemental embrace beyond their superficial foreignness. But in the morning he was uneasy again. She was still foreign and unknown to him. Only, within the fear was pride, belief in himself as mate for her. And she, everything forgotten in her new hour of coming to life, radiated vigour and joy, so that he quivered to touch her.

It made a great difference to him, marriage. Things became so remote and of so little significance, as he knew the powerful source of his life, his eyes opened on a new universe, and he wondered in thinking of his triviality before. A new, calm relationship showed to him in the things he saw, in the cattle he used, the young wheat as it eddied in a wind.

And each time he returned home, he went steadily, expectantly, like a man who goes to a profound, unknown satisfaction. At dinner-time, he appeared in the doorway, hanging back a moment from entering, to see if she was there. He saw her setting the plates on the white-scrubbed table. Her arms were slim, she had a slim body and full skirts, she had a dark, shapely head with close-banded hair. Somehow it was her head, so shapely and poignant, that revealed her his woman to him. As she moved about clothed closely, fullskirted and wearing her little silk apron, her dark hair smoothly parted, her head revealed itself to him in all its subtle, intrinsic beauty, and he knew she was his woman, he knew her essence, that it was his to possess. And he seemed to live thus in contact with her, in contact with the unknown, the unaccountable and incalculable.

They did not take much notice of each other, consciously.

"I'm betimes," he said.

"Yes," she answered.

He turned to the dogs, or to the child if she was there. The little Anna played about the farm, flitting constantly in to call something to her mother, to fling her arms round her mother's skirts, to be noticed, perhaps caressed, then, forgetting, to slip out again.

Then Brangwen, talking to the child, or to the dog between his knees, would be aware of his wife, as, in her tight, dark bodice and her lace fichu, she was reaching up to the corner cupboard. He realised with a sharp pang that she belonged to him, and he to her. He realised that he lived by her. Did he own her? Was she here for ever? Or might she go away? She was not really his, it was not a real marriage, this marriage between them. She might go away. He did not feel like a master, husband, father of her children. She belonged elsewhere. Any moment, she might be gone. And he was ever drawn to her, drawn after her, with ever-raging, ever-unsatisfied desire. He must always turn home, wherever his steps were taking him, always to her, and he could never quite reach her, he could never quite be satisfied, never be at peace, because she might go away.

At evening, he was glad. Then, when he had finished in the yard, and come in and washed himself, when the child was put to bed, he could sit on the other side of the fire with his beer on the hob and his long white pipe in his fingers, conscious of her there opposite him, as she worked at her embroidery, or as she talked to him, and he was safe with her now, till morning. She was curiously self-sufficient and did not say very much. Occasionally she lifted her head, her grey eyes shining with a strange light, that had nothing to do with him or with this place, and would tell him about herself. She seemed to be back again in the past, chiefly in her childhood or her girlhood, with her father. She very rarely talked of her first husband. But sometimes, all shining-eyed, she was back at her own home, telling him about the riotous times, the trip to Paris with her father, tales of the mad acts of the peasants when a burst of religious, self-hurting fervour had passed over the country.

She would lift her head and say:

"When they brought the railway across the country, they made afterwards smaller railways, of shorter width, to come down to our town-a hundred miles. When I was a girl, Gisla, my German gouvernante, was very shocked and she would not tell me. But I heard the servants talking. I remember, it was Pierre, the coachman. And my father, and some of his friends, landowners, they had taken a wagon, a whole railway wagon-that you travel in--"

"A railway-carriage," said Brangwen.

She laughed to herself.

"I know it was a great scandal: yes-a whole wagon, and they had girls, you know, filles, naked, all the wagon-full, and so they came down to our village. They came through villages of the Jews, and it was a great scandal. Can you imagine? All the countryside! And my mother, she did not like it. Gisla said to me, 'Madame, she must not know that you have heard such things.'

"My mother, she used to cry, and she wished to beat my father, plainly beat him. He would say, when she cried because he sold the forest, the wood, to jingle money in his pocket, and go to Warsaw or Paris or Kiev, when she said he must take back his word, he must not sell the forest, he would stand and say, 'I know, I know, I have heard it all, I have heard it all before. Tell me some new thing. I know, I know, I know.' Oh, but can you understand, I loved him when he stood there under the door, saying only, 'I know, I know, I know it all already.' She could not change him, no, not if she killed herself for it. And she could change everybody else, but him, she could not change him--"

Brangwen could not understand. He had pictures of a cattle-truck full of naked girls riding from nowhere to nowhere, of Lydia laughing because her father made great debts and said, "I know, I know"; of Jews running down the street shouting in Yiddish, "Don't do it, don't do it," and being cut down by demented peasants-she called them "cattle"-whilst she looked on interested and even amused; of tutors and governesses and Paris and a convent. It was too much for him. And there she sat, telling the tales to the open space, not to him, arrogating a curious superiority to him, a distance between them, something strange and foreign and outside his life, talking, rattling, without rhyme or reason, laughing when he was shocked or astounded, condemning nothing, confounding his mind and making the whole world a chaos, without order or stability of any kind. Then, when they went to bed, he knew that he had nothing to do with her. She was back in her childhood, he was a peasant, a serf, a servant, a lover, a paramour, a shadow, a nothing. He lay still in amazement, staring at the room he knew so well, and wondering whether it was really there, the window, the chest of drawers, or whether it was merely a figment in the atmosphere. And gradually he grew into a raging fury against her. But because he was so much amazed, and there was as yet such a distance between them, and she was such an amazing thing to him, with all wonder opening out behind her, he made no retaliation on her. Only he lay still and wide-eyed with rage, inarticulate, not understanding, but solid with hostility.

And he remained wrathful and distinct from her, unchanged outwardly to her, but underneath a solid power of antagonism to her. Of which she became gradually aware. And it irritated her to be made aware of him as a separate power. She lapsed into a sort of sombre exclusion, a curious communion with mysterious powers, a sort of mystic, dark state which drove him and the child nearly mad. He walked about for days stiffened with resistance to her, stiff with a will to destroy her as she was. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, there was connection between them again. It came on him as he was working in the fields. The tension, the bond, burst, and the passionate flood broke forward into a tremendous, magnificent rush, so that he felt he could snap off the trees as he passed, and create the world afresh.

And when he arrived home, there was no sign between them. He waited and waited till she came. And as he waited, his limbs seemed strong and splendid to him, his hands seemed like passionate servants to him, goodly, he felt a stupendous power in himself, of life, and of urgent, strong blood.

She was sure to come at last, and touch him. Then he burst into flame for her, and lost himself. They looked at each other, a deep laugh at the bottom of their eyes, and he went to take of her again, wholesale, mad to revel in the inexhaustible wealth of her, to bury himself in the depths of her in an inexhaustible exploration, she all the while revelling in that he revelled in her, tossed all her secrets aside and plunged to that which was secret to her as well, whilst she quivered with fear and the last anguish of delight.

What did it matter who they were, whether they knew each other or not?

The hour passed away again, there was severance between them, and rage and misery and bereavement for her, and deposition and toiling at the mill with slaves for him. But no matter. They had had their hour, and should it chime again, they were ready for it, ready to renew the game at the point where it was left off, on the edge of the outer darkness, when the secrets within the woman are game for the man, hunted doggedly, when the secrets of the woman are the man's adventure, and they both give themselves to the adventure.

She was with child, and there was again the silence and distance between them. She did not want him nor his secrets nor his game, he was deposed, he was cast out. He seethed with fury at the small, ugly- mouthed woman who had nothing to do with him. Sometimes his anger broke on her, but she did not cry. She turned on him like a tiger, and there was battle.

He had to learn to contain himself again, and he hated it. He hated her that she was not there for him. And he took himself off, anywhere.

But an instinct of gratitude and a knowledge that she would receive him back again, that later on she would be there for him again, prevented his straying very far. He cautiously did not go too far. He knew she might lapse into ignorance of him, lapse away from him, farther, farther, farther, till she was lost to him. He had sense enough, premonition enough in himself, to be aware of this and to measure himself accordingly. For he did not want to lose her: he did not want her to lapse away.

Cold, he called her, selfish, only caring about herself, a foreigner with a bad nature, caring really about nothing, having no proper feelings at the bottom of her, and no proper niceness. He raged, and piled up accusations that had some measure of truth in them all. But a certain grace in him forbade him from going too far. He knew, and he quivered with rage and hatred, that she was all these vile things, that she was everything vile and detestable. But he had grace at the bottom of him, which told him that, above all things, he did not want to lose her, he was not going to lose her.

So he kept some consideration for her, he preserved some relationship. He went out more often, to the "Red Lion" again, to escape the madness of sitting next to her when she did not belong to him, when she was as absent as any woman in indifference could be. He could not stay at home. So he went to the "Red Lion". And sometimes he got drunk. But he preserved his measure, some things between them he never forfeited.

A tormented look came into his eyes, as if something were always dogging him. He glanced sharp and quick, he could not bear to sit still doing nothing. He had to go out, to find company, to give himself away there. For he had no other outlet, he could not work to give himself out, he had not the knowledge.

As the months of her pregnancy went on, she left him more and more alone, she was more and more unaware of him, his existence was annulled. And he felt bound down, bound, unable to stir, beginning to go mad, ready to rave. For she was quiet and polite, as if he did not exist, as one is quiet and polite to a servant.

Nevertheless she was great with his child, it was his turn to submit. She sat opposite him, sewing, her foreign face inscrutable and indifferent. He felt he wanted to break her into acknowledgment of him, into awareness of him. It was insufferable that she had so obliterated him. He would smash her into regarding him. He had a raging agony of desire to do so.

But something bigger in him withheld him, kept him motionless. So he went out of the house for relief. Or he turned to the little girl for her sympathy and her love, he appealed with all his power to the small Anna. So soon they were like lovers, father and child.

For he was afraid of his wife. As she sat there with bent head, silent, working or reading, but so unutterably silent that his heart seemed under the millstone of it, she became herself like the upper millstone lying on him, crushing him, as sometimes a heavy sky lies on the earth.

Yet he knew he could not tear her away from the heavy obscurity into which she was merged. He must not try to tear her into recognition of himself, and agreement with himself. It were disastrous, impious. So, let him rage as he might, he must withhold himself. But his wrists trembled and seemed mad, seemed as if they would burst.

When, in November, the leaves came beating against the window shutters, with a lashing sound, he started, and his eyes flickered with flame. The dog looked up at him, he sunk his head to the fire. But his wife was startled. He was aware of her listening.

"They blow up with a rattle," he said.

"What?" she asked.

"The leaves."

She sank away again. The strange leaves beating in the wind on the wood had come nearer than she. The tension in the room was overpowering, it was difficult for him to move his head. He sat with every nerve, every vein, every fibre of muscle in his body stretched on a tension. He felt like a broken arch thrust sickeningly out from support. For her response was gone, he thrust at nothing. And he remained himself, he saved himself from crashing down into nothingness, from being squandered into fragments, by sheer tension, sheer backward resistance.

During the last months of her pregnancy, he went about in a surcharged, imminent state that did not exhaust itself. She was also depressed, and sometimes she cried. It needed so much life to begin afresh, after she had lost so lavishly. Sometimes she cried. Then he stood stiff, feeling his heart would burst. For she did not want him, she did not want even to be made aware of him. By the very puckering of her face he knew that he must stand back, leave her intact, alone. For it was the old grief come back in her, the old loss, the pain of the old life, the dead husband, the dead children. This was sacred to her, and he must not violate her with his comfort. For what she wanted she would come to him. He stood aloof with turgid heart.

He had to see her tears come, fall over her scarcely moving face, that only puckered sometimes, down on to her breast, that was so still, scarcely moving. And there was no noise, save now and again, when, with a strange, somnambulant movement, she took her handkerchief and wiped her face and blew her nose, and went on with the noiseless weeping. He knew that any offer of comfort from himself would be worse than useless, hateful to her, jangling her. She must cry. But it drove him insane. His heart was scalded, his brain hurt in his head, he went away, out of the house.

His great and chiefest source of solace was the child. She had been at first aloof from him, reserved. However friendly she might seem one day, the next she would have lapsed to her original disregard of him, cold, detached, at her distance.

The first morning after his marriage he had discovered it would not be so easy with the child. At the break of dawn he had started awake hearing a small voice outside the door saying plaintively:

"Mother!"

He rose and opened the door. She stood on the threshold in her night-dress, as she had climbed out of bed, black eyes staring round and hostile, her fair hair sticking out in a wild fleece. The man and child confronted each other.

"I want my mother," she said, jealously accenting the "my".

"Come on then," he said gently.

"Where's my mother?"

"She's here-come on."

The child's eyes, staring at the man with ruffled hair and beard, did not change. The mother's voice called softly. The little bare feet entered the room with trepidation.

"Mother!"

"Come, my dear."

The small bare feet approached swiftly.

"I wondered where you were," came the plaintive voice. The mother stretched out her arms. The child stood beside the high bed. Brangwen lightly lifted the tiny girl, with an "up-a-daisy", then took his own place in the bed again.

"Mother!" cried the child, as in anguish.

"What, my pet?"

Anna wriggled close into her mother's arms, clinging tight, hiding from the fact of the man. Brangwen lay still, and waited. There was a long silence.

Then suddenly, Anna looked round, as if she thought he would be gone. She saw the face of the man lying upturned to the ceiling. Her black eyes stared antagonistic from her exquisite face, her arms clung tightly to her mother, afraid. He did not move for some time, not knowing what to say. His face was smooth and soft-skinned with love, his eyes full of soft light. He looked at her, scarcely moving his head, his eyes smiling.

"Have you just wakened up?" he said.

"Go away," she retorted, with a little darting forward of the head, something like a viper.

"Nay," he answered, "I'm not going. You can go."

"Go away," came the sharp little command.

"There's room for you," he said.

"You can't send your father from his own bed, my little bird," said her mother, pleasantly.

The child glowered at him, miserable in her impotence.

"There's room for you as well," he said. "It's a big bed enough."

She glowered without answering, then turned and clung to her mother. She would not allow it.

During the day she asked her mother several times:

"When are we going home, mother?"

"We are at home, darling, we live here now. This is our house, we live here with your father."

The child was forced to accept it. But she remained against the man. As night came on, she asked:

"Where are you going to sleep, mother?"

"I sleep with the father now."

And when Brangwen came in, the child asked fiercely:

"Why do you sleep with my mother? My mother sleeps with me," her voice quivering.

"You come as well, an' sleep with both of us," he coaxed.

"Mother!" she cried, turning, appealing against him.

"But I must have a husband, darling. All women must have a husband."

"And you like to have a father with your mother, don't you?" said Brangwen.

Anna glowered at him. She seemed to cogitate.

"No," she cried fiercely at length, "no, I don't want." And slowly her face puckered, she sobbed bitterly. He stood and watched her, sorry. But there could be no altering it.

Which, when she knew, she became quiet. He was easy with her, talking to her, taking her to see the live creatures, bringing her the first chickens in his cap, taking her to gather the eggs, letting her throw crusts to the horse. She would easily accompany him, and take all he had to give, but she remained neutral still.

She was curiously, incomprehensibly jealous of her mother, always anxiously concerned about her. If Brangwen drove with his wife to Nottingham, Anna ran about happily enough, or unconcerned, for a long time. Then, as afternoon came on, there was only one cry-"I want my mother, I want my mother--" and a bitter, pathetic sobbing that soon had the soft-hearted Tilly sobbing too. The child's anguish was that her mother was gone, gone.

Yet as a rule, Anna seemed cold, resenting her mother, critical of her. It was:

"I don't like you to do that, mother," or, "I don't like you to say that." She was a sore problem to Brangwen and to all the people at the Marsh. As a rule, however, she was active, lightly flitting about the farmyard, only appearing now and again to assure herself of her mother. Happy she never seemed, but quick, sharp, absorbed, full of imagination and changeability. Tilly said she was bewitched. But it did not matter so long as she did not cry. There was something heart-rending about Anna's crying, her childish anguish seemed so utter and so timeless, as if it were a thing of all the ages.

She made playmates of the creatures of the farmyard, talking to them, telling them the stories she had from her mother, counselling them and correcting them. Brangwen found her at the gate leading to the paddock and to the duckpond. She was peering through the bars and shouting to the stately white geese, that stood in a curving line:

"You're not to call at people when they want to come. You must not do it."

The heavy, balanced birds looked at the fierce little face and the fleece of keen hair thrust between the bars, and they raised their heads and swayed off, producing the long, can-canking, protesting noise of geese, rocking their ship-like, beautiful white bodies in a line beyond the gate.

"You're naughty, you're naughty," cried Anna, tears of dismay and vexation in her eyes. And she stamped her slipper.

"Why, what are they doing?" said Brangwen.

"They won't let me come in," she said, turning her flushed little face to him.

"Yi, they will. You can go in if you want to," and he pushed open the gate for her.

She stood irresolute, looking at the group of bluey-white geese standing monumental under the grey, cold day.

"Go on," he said.

She marched valiantly a few steps in. Her little body started convulsively at the sudden, derisive can-cank-ank of the geese. A blankness spread over her. The geese trailed away with uplifted heads under the low grey sky.

"They don't know you," said Brangwen. "You should tell 'em what your name is."

"They're naughty to shout at me," she flashed.

"They think you don't live here," he said.

Later he found her at the gate calling shrilly and imperiously:

"My name is Anna, Anna Lensky, and I live here, because Mr. Brangwen's my father now. He is, yes he is. And I live here."

This pleased Brangwen very much. And gradually, without knowing it herself, she clung to him, in her lost, childish, desolate moments, when it was good to creep up to something big and warm, and bury her little self in his big, unlimited being. Instinctively he was careful of her, careful to recognise her and to give himself to her disposal.

She was difficult of her affections. For Tilly, she had a childish, essential contempt, almost dislike, because the poor woman was such a servant. The child would not let the serving-woman attend to her, do intimate things for her, not for a long time. She treated her as one of an inferior race. Brangwen did not like it.

"Why aren't you fond of Tilly?" he asked.

"Because-because-because she looks at me with her eyes bent."

Then gradually she accepted Tilly as belonging to the household, never as a person.

For the first weeks, the black eyes of the child were for ever on the watch. Brangwen, good-humoured but impatient, spoiled by Tilly, was an easy blusterer. If for a few minutes he upset the household with his noisy impatience, he found at the end the child glowering at him with intense black eyes, and she was sure to dart forward her little head, like a serpent, with her biting:

"Go away."

"I'm not going away," he shouted, irritated at last. "Go yourself-hustle-stir thysen-hop." And he pointed to the door. The child backed away from him, pale with fear. Then she gathered up courage, seeing him become patient.

"We don't live with you," she said, thrusting forward her little head at him. "You-you're-you're a bomakle."

"A what?" he shouted.

Her voice wavered-but it came.

"A bomakle."

"Ay, an' you're a comakle."

She meditated. Then she hissed forwards her head.

"I'm not."

"Not what?"

"A comakle."

"No more am I a bomakle."

He was really cross.

Other times she would say:

"My mother doesn't live here."

"Oh, ay?"

"I want her to go away."

"Then want's your portion," he replied laconically.

So they drew nearer together. He would take her with him when he went out in the trap. The horse ready at the gate, he came noisily into the house, which seemed quiet and peaceful till he appeared to set everything awake.

"Now then, Topsy, pop into thy bonnet."

The child drew herself up, resenting the indignity of the address.

"I can't fasten my bonnet myself," she said haughtily.

"Not man enough yet," he said, tying the ribbons under her chin with clumsy fingers.

She held up her face to him. Her little bright-red lips moved as he fumbled under her chin.

"You talk-nonsents," she said, re-echoing one of his phrases.

"That face shouts for th' pump," he said, and taking out a big red handkerchief, that smelled of strong tobacco, began wiping round her mouth.

"Is Kitty waiting for me?" she asked.

"Ay," he said. "Let's finish wiping your face-it'll pass wi' a cat-lick."

She submitted prettily. Then, when he let her go, she began to skip, with a curious flicking up of one leg behind her.

"Now my young buck-rabbit," he said. "Slippy!"

She came and was shaken into her coat, and the two set off. She sat very close beside him in the gig, tucked tightly, feeling his big body sway, against her, very splendid. She loved the rocking of the gig, when his big, live body swayed upon her, against her. She laughed, a poignant little shrill laugh, and her black eyes glowed.

She was curiously hard, and then passionately tenderhearted. Her mother was ill, the child stole about on tip-toe in the bedroom for hours, being nurse, and doing the thing thoughtfully and diligently. Another day, her mother was unhappy. Anna would stand with her legs apart, glowering, balancing on the sides of her slippers. She laughed when the goslings wriggled in Tilly's hand, as the pellets of food were rammed down their throats with a skewer, she laughed nervously. She was hard and imperious with the animals, squandering no love, running about amongst them like a cruel mistress.

Summer came, and hay-harvest, Anna was a brown elfish mite dancing about. Tilly always marvelled over her, more than she loved her.

But always in the child was some anxious connection with the mother. So long as Mrs. Brangwen was all right, the little girl played about and took very little notice of her. But corn-harvest went by, the autumn drew on, and the mother, the later months of her pregnancy beginning, was strange and detached, Brangwen began to knit his brows, the old, unhealthy uneasiness, the unskinned susceptibility came on the child again. If she went to the fields with her father, then, instead of playing about carelessly, it was:

"I want to go home."

"Home, why tha's nobbut this minute come."

"I want to go home."

"What for? What ails thee?"

"I want my mother."

"Thy mother! Thy mother none wants thee."

"I want to go home."

There would be tears in a moment.

"Can ter find t'road, then?"

And he watched her scudding, silent and intent, along the hedge-bottom, at a steady, anxious pace, till she turned and was gone through the gateway. Then he saw her two fields off, still pressing forward, small and urgent. His face was clouded as he turned to plough up the stubble.

The year drew on, in the hedges the berries shone red and twinkling above bare twigs, robins were seen, great droves of birds dashed like spray from the fallow, rooks appeared, black and flapping down to earth, the ground was cold as he pulled the turnips, the roads were churned deep in mud. Then the turnips were pitted and work was slack.

Inside the house it was dark, and quiet. The child flitted uneasily round, and now and again came her plaintive, startled cry:

"Mother!"

Mrs. Brangwen was heavy and unresponsive, tired, lapsed back. Brangwen went on working out of doors.

At evening, when he came in to milk, the child would run behind him. Then, in the cosy cow-sheds, with the doors shut and the air looking warm by the light of the hanging lantern, above the branching horns of the cows, she would stand watching his hands squeezing rhythmically the teats of the placid beast, watch the froth and the leaping squirt of milk, watch his hand sometimes rubbing slowly, understandingly, upon a hanging udder. So they kept each other company, but at a distance, rarely speaking.

The darkest days of the year came on, the child was fretful, sighing as if some oppression were on her, running hither and thither without relief. And Brangwen went about at his work, heavy, his heart heavy as the sodden earth.

The winter nights fell early, the lamp was lighted before tea-time, the shutters were closed, they were all shut into the room with the tension and stress. Mrs. Brangwen went early to bed, Anna playing on the floor beside her. Brangwen sat in the emptiness of the downstairs room, smoking, scarcely conscious even of his own misery. And very often he went out to escape it.

Christmas passed, the wet, drenched, cold days of January recurred monotonously, with now and then a brilliance of blue flashing in, when Brangwen went out into a morning like crystal, when every sound rang again, and the birds were many and sudden and brusque in the hedges. Then an elation came over him in spite of everything, whether his wife were strange or sad, or whether he craved for her to be with him, it did not matter, the air rang with clear noises, the sky was like crystal, like a bell, and the earth was hard. Then he worked and was happy, his eyes shining, his cheeks flushed. And the zest of life was strong in him.

The birds pecked busily round him, the horses were fresh and ready, the bare branches of the trees flung themselves up like a man yawning, taut with energy, the twigs radiated off into the clear light. He was alive and full of zest for it all. And if his wife were heavy, separated from him, extinguished, then, let her be, let him remain himself. Things would be as they would be. Meanwhile he heard the ringing crow of a cockerel in the distance, he saw the pale shell of the moon effaced on a blue sky.

So he shouted to the horses, and was happy. If, driving into Ilkeston, a fresh young woman were going in to do her shopping, he hailed her, and reined in his horse, and picked her up. Then he was glad to have her near him, his eyes shone, his voice, laughing, teasing in a warm fashion, made the poise of her head more beautiful, her blood ran quicker. They were both stimulated, the morning was fine.

What did it matter that, at the bottom of his heart, was care and pain? It was at the bottom, let it stop at the bottom. His wife, her suffering, her coming pain-well, it must be so. She suffered, but he was out of doors, full in life, and it would be ridiculous, indecent, to pull a long face and to insist on being miserable. He was happy, this morning, driving to town, with the hoofs of the horse spanking the hard earth. Well he was happy, if half the world were weeping at the funeral of the other half. And it was a jolly girl sitting beside him. And Woman was immortal, whatever happened, whoever turned towards death. Let the misery come when it could not be resisted.

The evening arrived later very beautiful, with a rosy flush hovering above the sunset, and passing away into violet and lavender, with turquoise green north and south in the sky, and in the east, a great, yellow moon hanging heavy and radiant. It was magnificent to walk between the sunset and the moon, on a road where little holly trees thrust black into the rose and lavender, and starlings flickered in droves across the light. But what was the end of the journey? The pain came right enough, later on, when his heart and his feet were heavy, his brain dead, his life stopped.

One afternoon, the pains began, Mrs. Brangwen was put to bed, the midwife came. Night fell, the shutters were closed, Brangwen came in to tea, to the loaf and the pewter teapot, the child, silent and quivering, playing with glass beads, the house, empty, it seemed, or exposed to the winter night, as if it had no walls.

Sometimes there sounded, long and remote in the house, vibrating through everything, the moaning cry of a woman in labour. Brangwen, sitting downstairs, was divided. His lower, deeper self was with her, bound to her, suffering. But the big shell of his body remembered the sound of owls that used to fly round the farmstead when he was a boy. He was back in his youth, a boy, haunted by the sound of the owls, waking up his brother to speak to him. And his mind drifted away to the birds, their solemn, dignified faces, their flight so soft and broad-winged. And then to the birds his brother had shot, fluffy, dust-coloured, dead heaps of softness with faces absurdly asleep. It was a queer thing, a dead owl.

He lifted his cup to his lips, he watched the child with the beads. But his mind was occupied with owls, and the atmosphere of his boyhood, with his brothers and sisters. Elsewhere, fundamental, he was with his wife in labour, the child was being brought forth out of their one flesh. He and she, one flesh, out of which life must be put forth. The rent was not in his body, but it was of his body. On her the blows fell, but the quiver ran through to him, to his last fibre. She must be torn asunder for life to come forth, yet still they were one flesh, and still, from further back, the life came out of him to her, and still he was the unbroken that has the broken rock in its arms, their flesh was one rock from which the life gushed, out of her who was smitten and rent, from him who quivered and yielded.

He went upstairs to her. As he came to the bedside she spoke to him in Polish.

"Is it very bad?" he asked.

She looked at him, and oh, the weariness to her, of the effort to understand another language, the weariness of hearing him, attending to him, making out who he was, as he stood there fair-bearded and alien, looking at her. She knew something of him, of his eyes. But she could not grasp him. She closed her eyes.

He turned away, white to the gills.

"It's not so very bad," said the midwife.

He knew he was a strain on his wife. He went downstairs.

The child glanced up at him, frightened.

"I want my mother," she quavered.

"Ay, but she's badly," he said mildly, unheeding.

She looked at him with lost, frightened eyes.

"Has she got a headache?"

"No-she's going to have a baby."

The child looked round. He was unaware of her. She was alone again in terror.

"I want my mother," came the cry of panic.

"Let Tilly undress you," he said. "You're tired."

There was another silence. Again came the cry of labour.

"I want my mother," rang automatically from the wincing, panic-stricken child, that felt cut off and lost in a horror of desolation.

Tilly came forward, her heart wrung.

"Come an' let me undress her then, pet-lamb," she crooned. "You s'll have your mother in th' mornin', don't you fret, my duckie; never mind, angel."

But Anna stood upon the sofa, her back to the wall.

"I want my mother," she cried, her little face quivering, and the great tears of childish, utter anguish falling.

"She's poorly, my lamb, she's poorly to-night, but she'll be better by mornin'. Oh, don't cry, don't cry, love, she doesn't want you to cry, precious little heart, no, she doesn't."

Tilly took gently hold of the child's skirts. Anna snatched back her dress, and cried, in a little hysteria:

"No, you're not to undress me-I want my mother,"-and her child's face was running with grief and tears, her body shaken.

"Oh, but let Tilly undress you. Let Tilly undress you, who loves you, don't be wilful to-night. Mother's poorly, she doesn't want you to cry."

The child sobbed distractedly, she could not hear.

"I want my mother," she wept.

"When you're undressed, you s'll go up to see your mother--when you're undressed, pet, when you've let Tilly undress you, when you're a little jewel in your nightie, love. Oh, don't you cry, don't you--"

Brangwen sat stiff in his chair. He felt his brain going tighter. He crossed over the room, aware only of the maddening sobbing.

"Don't make a noise," he said.

And a new fear shook the child from the sound of his voice. She cried mechanically, her eyes looking watchful through her tears, in terror, alert to what might happen.

"I want-my-mother," quavered the sobbing, blind voice.

A shiver of irritation went over the man's limbs. It was the utter, persistent unreason, the maddening blindness of the voice and the crying.

"You must come and be undressed," he said, in a quiet voice that was thin with anger.

And he reached his hand and grasped her. He felt her body catch in a convulsive sob. But he too was blind, and intent, irritated into mechanical action. He began to unfasten her little apron. She would have shrunk from him, but could not. So her small body remained in his grasp, while he fumbled at the little buttons and tapes, unthinking, intent, unaware of anything but the irritation of her. Her body was held taut and resistant, he pushed off the little dress and the petticoats, revealing the white arms. She kept stiff, overpowered, violated, he went on with his task. And all the while she sobbed, choking:

"I want my mother."

He was unheedingly silent, his face stiff. The child was now incapable of understanding, she had become a little, mechanical thing of fixed will. She wept, her body convulsed, her voice repeating the same cry.

"Eh, dear o' me!" cried Tilly, becoming distracted herself. Brangwen, slow, clumsy, blind, intent, got off all the little garments, and stood the child naked in its shift upon the sofa.

"Where's her nightie?" he asked.

Tilly brought it, and he put it on her. Anna did not move her limbs to his desire. He had to push them into place. She stood, with fixed, blind will, resistant, a small, convulsed, unchangeable thing weeping ever and repeating the same phrase. He lifted one foot after the other, pulled off slippers and socks. She was ready.

"Do you want a drink?" he asked.

She did not change. Unheeding, uncaring, she stood on the sofa, standing back, alone, her hands shut and half lifted, her face, all tears, raised and blind. And through the sobbing and choking came the broken:

"I-want-my-mother."

"Do you want a drink?" he said again.

There was no answer. He lifted the stiff, denying body between his hands. Its stiff blindness made a flash of rage go through him. He would like to break it.

He set the child on his knee, and sat again in his chair beside the fire, the wet, sobbing, inarticulate noise going on near his ear, the child sitting stiff, not yielding to him or anything, not aware.

A new degree of anger came over him. What did it all matter? What did it matter if the mother talked Polish and cried in labour, if this child were stiff with resistance, and crying? Why take it to heart? Let the mother cry in labour, let the child cry in resistance, since they would do so. Why should he fight against it, why resist? Let it be, if it were so. Let them be as they were, if they insisted.

And in a daze he sat, offering no fight. The child cried on, the minutes ticked away, a sort of torpor was on him.

It was some little time before he came to, and turned to attend to the child. He was shocked by her little wet, blinded face. A bit dazed, he pushed back the wet hair. Like a living statue of grief, her blind face cried on.

"Nay," he said, "not as bad as that. It's not as bad as that, Anna, my child. Come, what are you crying for so much? Come, stop now, it'll make you sick. I wipe you dry, don't wet your face any more. Don't cry any more wet tears, don't, it's better not to. Don't cry-it's not so bad as all that. Hush now, hush-let it be enough."

His voice was queer and distant and calm. He looked at the child. She was beside herself now. He wanted her to stop, he wanted it all to stop, to become natural.

"Come," he said, rising to turn away, "we'll go an' supper-up the beast."

He took a big shawl, folded her round, and went out into the kitchen for a lantern.

"You're never taking the child out, of a night like this," said Tilly.

"Ay, it'll quieten her," he answered.

It was raining. The child was suddenly still, shocked, finding the rain on its face, the darkness.

"We'll just give the cows their something-to-eat, afore they go to bed," Brangwen was saying to her, holding her close and sure.

There was a trickling of water into the butt, a burst of rain-drops sputtering on to her shawl, and the light of the lantern swinging, flashing on a wet pavement and the base of a wet wall. Otherwise it was black darkness: one breathed darkness.

He opened the doors, upper and lower, and they entered into the high, dry barn, that smelled warm even if it were not warm. He hung the lantern on the nail and shut the door. They were in another world now. The light shed softly on the timbered barn, on the whitewashed walls, and the great heap of hay; instruments cast their shadows largely, a ladder rose to the dark arch of a loft. Outside there was the driving rain, inside, the softly-illuminated stillness and calmness of the barn.

Holding the child on one arm, he set about preparing the food for the cows, filling a pan with chopped hay and brewer's grains and a little meal. The child, all wonder, watched what he did. A new being was created in her for the new conditions. Sometimes, a little spasm, eddying from the bygone storm of sobbing, shook her small body. Her eyes were wide and wondering, pathetic. She was silent, quite still.

In a sort of dream, his heart sunk to the bottom, leaving the surface of him still, quite still, he rose with the panful of food, carefully balancing the child on one arm, the pan in the other hand. The silky fringe of the shawl swayed softly, grains and hay trickled to the floor; he went along a dimly-lit passage behind the mangers, where the horns of the cows pricked out of the obscurity. The child shrank, he balanced stiffly, rested the pan on the manger wall, and tipped out the food, half to this cow, half to the next. There was a noise of chains running, as the cows lifted or dropped their heads sharply; then a contented, soothing sound, a long snuffing as the beasts ate in silence.

The journey had to be performed several times. There was the rhythmic sound of the shovel in the barn, then the man returned walking stiffly between the two weights, the face of the child peering out from the shawl. Then the next time, as he stooped, she freed her arm and put it round his neck, clinging soft and warm, making all easier.

The beasts fed, he dropped the pan and sat down on a box, to arrange the child.

"Will the cows go to sleep now?" she said, catching her breath as she spoke.

"Yes."

"Will they eat all their stuff up first?"

"Yes. Hark at them."

And the two sat still listening to the snuffing and breathing of cows feeding in the sheds communicating with this small barn. The lantern shed a soft, steady light from one wall. All outside was still in the rain. He looked down at the silky folds of the paisley shawl. It reminded him of his mother. She used to go to church in it. He was back again in the old irresponsibility and security, a boy at home.

The two sat very quiet. His mind, in a sort of trance, seemed to become more and more vague. He held the child close to him. A quivering little shudder, re-echoing from her sobbing, went down her limbs. He held her closer. Gradually she relaxed, the eyelids began to sink over her dark, watchful eyes. As she sank to sleep, his mind became blank.

When he came to, as if from sleep, he seemed to be sitting in a timeless stillness. What was he listening for? He seemed to be listening for some sound a long way off, from beyond life. He remembered his wife. He must go back to her. The child was asleep, the eyelids not quite shut, showing a slight film of black pupil between. Why did she not shut her eyes? Her mouth was also a little open.

He rose quickly and went back to the house.

"Is she asleep?" whispered Tilly.

He nodded. The servant-woman came to look at the child who slept in the shawl, with cheeks flushed hot and red, and a whiteness, a wanness round the eyes.

"God-a-mercy!" whispered Tilly, shaking her head.

He pushed off his boots and went upstairs with the child. He became aware of the anxiety grasped tight at his heart, because of his wife. But he remained still. The house was silent save for the wind outside, and the noisy trickling and splattering of water in the water-butts. There was a slit of light under his wife's door.

He put the child into bed wrapped as she was in the shawl, for the sheets would be cold. Then he was afraid that she might not be able to move her arms, so he loosened her. The black eyes opened, rested on him vacantly, sank shut again. He covered her up. The last little quiver from the sobbing shook her breathing.

This was his room, the room he had had before he married. It was familiar. He remembered what it was to be a young man, untouched.

He remained suspended. The child slept, pushing her small fists from the shawl. He could tell the woman her child was asleep. But he must go to the other landing. He started. There was the sound of the owls-the moaning of the woman. What an uncanny sound! It was not human-at least to a man.

He went down to her room, entering softly. She was lying still, with eyes shut, pale, tired. His heart leapt, fearing she was dead. Yet he knew perfectly well she was not. He saw the way her hair went loose over her temples, her mouth was shut with suffering in a sort of grin. She was beautiful to him-but it was not human. He had a dread of her as she lay there. What had she to do with him? She was other than himself.

Something made him go and touch her fingers that were still grasped on the sheet. Her brown-grey eyes opened and looked at him. She did not know him as himself. But she knew him as the man. She looked at him as a woman in childbirth looks at the man who begot the child in her: an impersonal look, in the extreme hour, female to male. Her eyes closed again. A great, scalding peace went over him, burning his heart and his entrails, passing off into the infinite.

When her pains began afresh, tearing her, he turned aside, and could not look. But his heart in torture was at peace, his bowels were glad. He went downstairs, and to the door, outside, lifted his face to the rain, and felt the darkness striking unseen and steadily upon him.

The swift, unseen threshing of the night upon him silenced him and he was overcome. He turned away indoors, humbly. There was the infinite world, eternal, unchanging, as well as the world of life.

Chapter 3

Childhood of Anna Lensky

Tom Brangwen never loved his own son as he loved his stepchild Anna. When they told him it was a boy, he had a thrill of pleasure. He liked the confirmation of fatherhood. It gave him satisfaction to know he had a son. But he felt not very much outgoing to the baby itself. He was its father, that was enough.

He was glad that his wife was mother of his child. She was serene, a little bit shadowy, as if she were transplanted. In the birth of the child she seemed to lose connection with her former self. She became now really English, really Mrs. Brangwen. Her vitality, however, seemed lowered.

She was still, to Brangwen, immeasurably beautiful. She was still passionate, with a flame of being. But the flame was not robust and present. Her eyes shone, her face glowed for him, but like some flower opened in the shade, that could not bear the full light. She loved the baby. But even this, with a sort of dimness, a faint absence about her, a shadowiness even in her mother-love. When Brangwen saw her nursing his child, happy, absorbed in it, a pain went over him like a thin flame. For he perceived how he must subdue himself in his approach to her. And he wanted again the robust, moral exchange of love and passion such as he had had at first with her, at one time and another, when they were matched at their highest intensity. This was the one experience for him now. And he wanted it, always, with remorseless craving.

She came to him again, with the same lifting of her mouth as had driven him almost mad with trammelled passion at first. She came to him again, and, his heart delirious in delight and readiness, he took her. And it was almost as before.

Perhaps it was quite as before. At any rate, it made him know perfection, it established in him a constant eternal knowledge.

But it died down before he wanted it to die down. She was finished, she could take no more. And he was not exhausted, he wanted to go on. But it could not be.

So he had to begin the bitter lesson, to abate himself, to take less than he wanted. For she was Woman to him, all other women were her shadows. For she had satisfied him. And he wanted it to go on. And it could not. However he raged, and, filled with suppression that became hot and bitter, hated her in his soul that she did not want him, however he had mad outbursts, and drank and made ugly scenes, still he knew, he was only kicking against the pricks. It was not, he had to learn, that she would not want him enough, as much as he demanded that she should want him. It was that she could not. She could only want him in her own way, and to her own measure. And she had spent much life before he found her as she was, the woman who could take him and give him fulfilment. She had taken him and given him fulfilment. She still could do so, in her own times and ways. But he must control himself, measure himself to her.

He wanted to give her all his love, all his passion, all his essential energy. But it could not be. He must find other things than her, other centres of living. She sat close and impregnable with the child. And he was jealous of the child.

But he loved her, and time came to give some sort of course to his troublesome current of life, so that it did not foam and flood and make misery. He formed another centre of love in her child, Anna. Gradually a part of his stream of life was diverted to the child, relieving the main flood to his wife. Also he sought the company of men, he drank heavily now and again.

The child ceased to have so much anxiety for her mother after the baby came. Seeing the mother with the baby boy, delighted and serene and secure, Anna was at first puzzled, then gradually she became indignant, and at last her little life settled on its own swivel, she was no more strained and distorted to support her mother. She became more childish, not so abnormal, not charged with cares she could not understand. The charge of the mother, the satisfying of the mother, had devolved elsewhere than on her. Gradually the child was freed. She became an independent, forgetful little soul, loving from her own centre.

Of her own choice, she then loved Brangwen most, or most obviously. For these two made a little life together, they had a joint activity. It amused him, at evening, to teach her to count, or to say her letters. He remembered for her all the little nursery rhymes and childish songs that lay forgotten at the bottom of his brain.

At first she thought them rubbish. But he laughed, and she laughed. They became to her a huge joke. Old King Cole she thought was Brangwen. Mother Hubbard was Tilly, her mother was the old woman who lived in a shoe. It was a huge, it was a frantic delight to the child, this nonsense, after her years with her mother, after the poignant folk-tales she had had from her mother, which always troubled and mystified her soul.

She shared a sort of recklessness with her father, a complete, chosen carelessness that had the laugh of ridicule in it. He loved to make her voice go high and shouting and defiant with laughter. The baby was dark-skinned and dark-haired, like the mother, and had hazel eyes. Brangwen called him the blackbird.

"Hallo," Brangwen would cry, starting as he heard the wail of the child announcing it wanted to be taken out of the cradle, "there's the blackbird tuning up."

"The blackbird's singing," Anna would shout with delight, "the blackbird's singing."

"When the pie was opened," Brangwen shouted in his bawling bass voice, going over to the cradle, "the bird began to sing."

"Wasn't it a dainty dish to set before a king?" cried Anna, her eyes flashing with joy as she uttered the cryptic words, looking at Brangwen for confirmation. He sat down with the baby, saying loudly:

"Sing up, my lad, sing up."

And the baby cried loudly, and Anna shouted lustily, dancing in wild bliss:

"Sing a song of sixpence Pocketful of posies, Ascha! Ascha!----"

Then she stopped suddenly in silence and looked at Brangwen again, her eyes flashing, as she shouted loudly and delightedly:

"I've got it wrong, I've got it wrong."

"Oh, my sirs," said Tilly entering, "what a racket!"

Brangwen hushed the child and Anna flipped and danced on. She loved her wild bursts of rowdiness with her father. Tilly hated it, Mrs. Brangwen did not mind.

Anna did not care much for other children. She domineered them, she treated them as if they were extremely young and incapable, to her they were little people, they were not her equals. So she was mostly alone, flying round the farm, entertaining the farm-hands and Tilly and the servant-girl, whirring on and never ceasing.

She loved driving with Brangwen in the trap. Then, sitting high up and bowling along, her passion for eminence and dominance was satisfied. She was like a little savage in her arrogance. She thought her father important, she was installed beside him on high. And they spanked along, beside the high, flourishing hedge-tops, surveying the activity of the countryside. When people shouted a greeting to him from the road below, and Brangwen shouted jovially back, her little voice was soon heard shrilling along with his, followed by her chuckling laugh, when she looked up at her father with bright eyes, and they laughed at each other. And soon it was the custom for the passerby to sing out: "How are ter, Tom? Well, my lady!" or else, "Mornin', Tom, mornin', my Lass!" or else, "You're off together then?" or else, "You're lookin' rarely, you two."

Anna would respond, with her father: "How are you, John! Good mornin', William! Ay, makin' for Derby," shrilling as loudly as she could. Though often, in response to "You're off out a bit then," she would reply, "Yes, we are," to the great joy of all. She did not like the people who saluted him and did not salute her.

She went into the public-house with him, if he had to call, and often sat beside him in the bar-parlour as he drank his beer or brandy. The landladies paid court to her, in the obsequious way landladies have.

"Well, little lady, an' what's your name?"

"Anna Brangwen," came the immediate, haughty answer.

"Indeed it is! An' do you like driving in a trap with your father?"

"Yes," said Anna, shy, but bored by these inanities. She had a touch-me-not way of blighting the inane inquiries of grown-up people.

"My word, she's a fawce little thing," the landlady would say to Brangwen.

"Ay," he answered, not encouraging comments on the child. Then there followed the present of a biscuit, or of cake, which Anna accepted as her dues.

"What does she say, that I'm a fawce little thing?" the small girl asked afterwards.

"She means your're a sharp-shins."

Anna hesitated. She did not understand. Then she laughed at some absurdity she found.

Soon he took her every week to market with him. "I can come, can't I?" she asked every Saturday, or Thursday morning, when he made himself look fine in his dress of a gentleman farmer. And his face clouded at having to refuse her.

So at last, he overcame his own shyness, and tucked her beside him. They drove into Nottingham and put up at the "Black Swan". So far all right. Then he wanted to leave her at the inn. But he saw her face, and knew it was impossible. So he mustered his courage, and set off with her, holding her hand, to the cattle-market.

She stared in bewilderment, flitting silent at his side. But in the cattle-market she shrank from the press of men, all men, all in heavy, filthy boots, and leathern leggins. And the road underfoot was all nasty with cow-muck. And it frightened her to see the cattle in the square pens, so many horns, and so little enclosure, and such a madness of men and a yelling of drovers. Also she felt her father was embarrassed by her, and ill-at-ease.

He brought her a cake at the refreshment-booth, and set her on a seat. A man hailed him.

"Good morning, Tom. That thine, then?"-and the bearded farmer jerked his head at Anna.

"Ay," said Brangwen, deprecating.

"I did-na know tha'd one that old."

"No, it's my missis's."

"Oh, that's it!" And the man looked at Anna as if she were some odd little cattle. She glowered with black eyes.

Brangwen left her there, in charge of the barman, whilst he went to see about the selling of some young stirks. Farmers, butchers, drovers, dirty, uncouth men from whom she shrank instinctively stared down at her as she sat on her seat, then went to get their drink, talking in unabated tones. All was big and violent about her.

"Whose child met that be?" they asked of the barman.

"It belongs to Tom Brangwen."

The child sat on in neglect, watching the door for her father. He never came; many, many men came, but not he, and she sat like a shadow. She knew one did not cry in such a place. And every man looked at her inquisitively, she shut herself away from them.

A deep, gathering coldness of isolation took hold on her. He was never coming back. She sat on, frozen, unmoving.

When she had become blank and timeless he came, and she slipped off her seat to him, like one come back from the dead. He had sold his beast as quickly as he could. But all the business was not finished. He took her again through the hurtling welter of the cattle-market.

Then at last they turned and went out through the gate. He was always hailing one man or another, always stopping to gossip about land and cattle and horses and other things she did not understand, standing in the filth and the smell, among the legs and great boots of men. And always she heard the questions:

"What lass is that, then? I didn't know tha'd one o' that age."

"It belongs to my missis."

Anna was very conscious of her derivation from her mother, in the end, and of her alienation.

But at last they were away, and Brangwen went with her into a little dark, ancient eating-house in the Bridlesmith-Gate. They had cow's-tail soup, and meat and cabbage and potatoes. Other men, other people, came into the dark, vaulted place, to eat. Anna was wide-eyed and silent with wonder.

Then they went into the big market, into the corn exchange, then to shops. He bought her a little book off a stall. He loved buying things, odd things that he thought would be useful. Then they went to the "Black Swan", and she drank milk and he brandy, and they harnessed the horse and drove off, up the Derby Road.

She was tired out with wonder and marvelling. But the next day, when she thought of it, she skipped, flipping her leg in the odd dance she did, and talked the whole time of what had happened to her, of what she had seen. It lasted her all the week. And the next Saturday she was eager to go again.

She became a familiar figure in the cattle-market, sitting waiting in the little booth. But she liked best to go to Derby. There her father had more friends. And she liked the familiarity of the smaller town, the nearness of the river, the strangeness that did not frighten her, it was so much smaller. She liked the covered-in market, and the old women. She liked the "George Inn", where her father put up. The landlord was Brangwen's old friend, and Anna was made much of. She sat many a day in the cosy parlour talking to Mr. Wigginton, a fat man with red hair, the landlord. And when the farmers all gathered at twelve o'clock for dinner, she was a little heroine.

At first she would only glower or hiss at these strange men with their uncouth accent. But they were good-humoured. She was a little oddity, with her fierce, fair hair like spun glass sticking out in a flamy halo round the apple-blossom face and the black eyes, and the men liked an oddity. She kindled their attention.

She was very angry because Marriott, a gentleman-farmer from Ambergate, called her the little pole-cat.

"Why, you're a pole-cat," he said to her.

"I'm not," she flashed.

"You are. That's just how a pole-cat goes."

She thought about it.

"Well, you're-you're--" she began.

"I'm what?"

She looked him up and down.

"You're a bow-leg man."

Which he was. There was a roar of laughter. They loved her that she was indomitable.

"Ah," said Marriott. "Only a pole-cat says that."

"Well, I am a pole-cat," she flamed.

There was another roar of laughter from the men.

They loved to tease her.

"Well, me little maid," Braithwaite would say to her, "an' how's th' lamb's wool?"

He gave a tug at a glistening, pale piece of her hair.

"It's not lamb's wool," said Anna, indignantly putting back her offended lock.

"Why, what'st ca' it then?"

"It's hair."

"Hair! Wheriver dun they rear that sort?"

"Wheriver dun they?" she asked, in dialect, her curiosity overcoming her.

Instead of answering he shouted with joy. It was the triumph, to make her speak dialect.

She had one enemy, the man they called Nut-Nat, or Nat-Nut, a cretin, with inturned feet, who came flap-lapping along, shoulder jerking up at every step. This poor creature sold nuts in the public-houses where he was known. He had no roof to his mouth, and the men used to mock his speech.

The first time he came into the "George" when Anna was there, she asked, after he had gone, her eyes very round:

"Why does he do that when he walks?"

"'E canna 'elp 'isself, Duckie, it's th' make o' th' fellow."

She thought about it, then she laughed nervously. And then she bethought herself, her cheeks flushed, and she cried:

"He's a horrid man."

"Nay, he's non horrid; he canna help it if he wor struck that road."

But when poor Nat came wambling in again, she slid away. And she would not eat his nuts, if the men bought them for her. And when the farmers gambled at dominoes for them, she was angry.

"They are dirty-man's nuts," she cried.

So a revulsion started against Nat, who had not long after to go to the workhouse.

There grew in Brangwen's heart now a secret desire to make her a lady. His brother Alfred, in Nottingham, had caused a great scandal by becoming the lover of an educated woman, a lady, widow of a doctor. Very often, Alfred Brangwen went down as a friend to her cottage, which was in Derbyshire, leaving his wife and family for a day or two, then returning to them. And no-one dared gainsay him, for he was a strong-willed, direct man, and he said he was a friend of this widow.

One day Brangwen met his brother on the station.

"Where are you going to, then?" asked the younger brother.

"I'm going down to Wirksworth."

"You've got friends down there, I'm told."

"Yes."

"I s'll have to be lookin' in when I'm down that road."

"You please yourself."

Tom Brangwen was so curious about the woman that the next time he was in Wirksworth he asked for her house.

He found a beautiful cottage on the steep side of a hill, looking clean over the town, that lay in the bottom of the basin, and away at the old quarries on the opposite side of the space. Mrs. Forbes was in the garden. She was a tall woman with white hair. She came up the path taking off her thick gloves, laying down her shears. It was autumn. She wore a wide-brimmed hat.

Brangwen blushed to the roots of his hair, and did not know what to say.

"I thought I might look in," he said, "knowing you were friends of my brother's. I had to come to Wirksworth."

She saw at once that he was a Brangwen.

"Will you come in?" she said. "My father is lying down."

She took him into a drawing-room, full of books, with a piano and a violin-stand. And they talked, she simply and easily. She was full of dignity. The room was of a kind Brangwen had never known; the atmosphere seemed open and spacious, like a mountain-top to him.

"Does my brother like reading?" he asked.

"Some things. He has been reading Herbert Spencer. And we read Browning sometimes."

Brangwen was full of admiration, deep thrilling, almost reverential admiration. He looked at her with lit-up eyes when she said, "we read". At last he burst out, looking round the room:

"I didn't know our Alfred was this way inclined."

"He is quite an unusual man."

He looked at her in amazement. She evidently had a new idea of his brother: she evidently appreciated him. He looked again at the woman. She was about forty, straight, rather hard, a curious, separate creature. Himself, he was not in love with her, there was something chilling about her. But he was filled with boundless admiration.

At tea-time he was introduced to her father, an invalid who had to be helped about, but who was ruddy and well-favoured, with snowy hair and watery blue eyes, and a courtly naive manner that again was new and strange to Brangwen, so sauve, so merry, so innocent.

His brother was this woman's lover! It was too amazing. Brangwen went home despising himself for his own poor way of life. He was a clod-hopper and a boor, dull, stuck in the mud. More than ever he wanted to clamber out, to this visionary polite world.

He was well off. He was as well off as Alfred, who could not have above six hundred a year, all told. He himself made about four hundred, and could make more. His investments got better every day. Why did he not do something? His wife was a lady also.

But when he got to the Marsh, he realised how fixed everything was, how the other form of life was beyond him, and he regretted for the first time that he had succeeded to the farm. He felt a prisoner, sitting safe and easy and unadventurous. He might, with risk, have done more with himself. He could neither read Browning nor Herbert Spencer, nor have access to such a room as Mrs. Forbes's. All that form of life was outside him.

But then, he said he did not want it. The excitement of the visit began to pass off. The next day he was himself, and if he thought of the other woman, there was something about her and her place that he did not like, something cold something alien, as if she were not a woman, but an inhuman being who used up human life for cold, unliving purposes.

The evening came on, he played with Anna, and then sat alone with his own wife. She was sewing. He sat very still, smoking, perturbed. He was aware of his wife's quiet figure, and quiet dark head bent over her needle. It was too quiet for him. It was too peaceful. He wanted to smash the walls down, and let the night in, so that his wife should not be so secure and quiet, sitting there. He wished the air were not so close and narrow. His wife was obliterated from him, she was in her own world, quiet, secure, unnoticed, unnoticing. He was shut down by her.

He rose to go out. He could not sit still any longer. He must get out of this oppressive, shut-down, woman-haunt.

His wife lifted her head and looked at him.

"Are you going out?" she asked.

He looked down and met her eyes. They were darker than darkness, and gave deeper space. He felt himself retreating before her, defensive, whilst her eyes followed and tracked him own.

"I was just going up to Cossethay," he said.

She remained watching him.

"Why do you go?" she said.

His heart beat fast, and he sat down, slowly.

"No reason particular," he said, beginning to fill his pipe again, mechanically.

"Why do you go away so often?" she said.

"But you don't want me," he replied.

She was silent for a while.

"You do not want to be with me any more," she said.

It startled him. How did she know this truth? He thought it was his secret.

"Yi," he said.

"You want to find something else," she said.

He did not answer. "Did he?" he asked himself.

"You should not want so much attention," she said. "You are not a baby."

"I'm not grumbling," he said. Yet he knew he was.

"You think you have not enough," she said.

"How enough?"

"You think you have not enough in me. But how do you know me? What do you do to make me love you?"

He was flabbergasted.

"I never said I hadn't enough in you," he replied. "I didn't know you wanted making to love me. What do you want?"

"You don't make it good between us any more, you are not interested. You do not make me want you."

"And you don't make me want you, do you now?" There was a silence. They were such strangers.

"Would you like to have another woman?" she asked.

His eyes grew round, he did not know where he was. How could she, his own wife, say such a thing? But she sat there, small and foreign and separate. It dawned upon him she did not consider herself his wife, except in so far as they agreed. She did not feel she had married him. At any rate, she was willing to allow he might want another woman. A gap, a space opened before him.

"No," he said slowly. "What other woman should I want?"

"Like your brother," she said.

He was silent for some time, ashamed also.

"What of her?" he said. "I didn't like the woman."

"Yes, you liked her," she answered persistently.

He stared in wonder at his own wife as she told him his own heart so callously. And he was indignant. What right had she to sit there telling him these things? She was his wife, what right had she to speak to him like this, as if she were a stranger.

"I didn't," he said. "I want no woman."

"Yes, you would like to be like Alfred."

His silence was one of angry frustration. He was astonished. He had told her of his visit to Wirksworth, but briefly, without interest, he thought.

As she sat with her strange dark face turned towards him, her eyes watched him, inscrutable, casting him up. He began to oppose her. She was again the active unknown facing him. Must he admit her? He resisted involuntarily.

"Why should you want to find a woman who is more to you than me?" she said.

The turbulence raged in his breast.

"I don't," he said.

"Why do you?" she repeated. "Why do you want to deny me?"

Suddenly, in a flash, he saw she might be lonely, isolated, unsure. She had seemed to him the utterly certain, satisfied, absolute, excluding him. Could she need anything?

"Why aren't you satisfied with me?-I'm not satisfied with you. Paul used to come to me and take me like a man does. You only leave me alone or take me like your cattle, quickly, to forget me again-so that you can forget me again."

"What am I to remember about you?" said Brangwen.

"I want you to know there is somebody there besides yourself."

"Well, don't I know it?"

"You come to me as if it was for nothing, as if I was nothing there. When Paul came to me, I was something to him-a woman, I was. To you I am nothing-it is like cattle-or nothing--"

"You make me feel as if I was nothing," he said.

They were silent. She sat watching him. He could not move, his soul was seething and chaotic. She turned to her sewing again. But the sight of her bent before him held him and would not let him be. She was a strange, hostile, dominant thing. Yet not quite hostile. As he sat he felt his limbs were strong and hard, he sat in strength.

She was silent for a long time, stitching. He was aware, poignantly, of the round shape of her head, very intimate, compelling. She lifted her head and sighed. The blood burned in him, her voice ran to him like fire.

"Come here," she said, unsure.

For some moments he did not move. Then he rose slowly and went across the hearth. It required an almost deathly effort of volition, or of acquiescence. He stood before her and looked down at her. Her face was shining again, her eyes were shining again like terrible laughter. It was to him terrible, how she could be transfigured. He could not look at her, it burnt his heart.

"My love!" she said.

And she put her arms round him as he stood before her round his thighs, pressing him against her breast. And her hands on him seemed to reveal to him the mould of his own nakedness, he was passionately lovely to himself. He could not bear to look at her.

"My dear!" she said. He knew she spoke a foreign language. The fear was like bliss in his heart. He looked down. Her face was shining, her eyes were full of light, she was awful. He suffered from the compulsion to her. She was the awful unknown. He bent down to her, suffering, unable to let go, unable to let himself go, yet drawn, driven. She was now the transfigured, she was wonderful, beyond him. He wanted to go. But he could not as yet kiss her. He was himself apart. Easiest he could kiss her feet. But he was too ashamed for the actual deed, which were like an affront. She waited for him to meet her, not to bow before her and serve her. She wanted his active participation, not his submission. She put her fingers on him. And it was torture to him, that he must give himself to her actively, participate in her, that he must meet and embrace and know her, who was other than himself. There was that in him which shrank from yielding to her, resisted the relaxing towards her, opposed the mingling with her, even while he most desired it. He was afraid, he wanted to save himself.

There were a few moments of stillness. Then gradually, the tension, the withholding relaxed in him, and he began to flow towards her. She was beyond him, the unattainable. But he let go his hold on himself, he relinquished himself, and knew the subterranean force of his desire to come to her, to be with her, to mingle with her, losing himself to find her, to find himself in her. He began to approach her, to draw near.

His blood beat up in waves of desire. He wanted to come to her, to meet her. She was there, if he could reach her. The reality of her who was just beyond him absorbed him. Blind and destroyed, he pressed forward, nearer, nearer, to receive the consummation of himself, he received within the darkness which should swallow him and yield him up to himself. If he could come really within the blazing kernel of darkness, if really he could be destroyed, burnt away till he lit with her in one consummation, that were supreme, supreme.

Their coming together now, after two years of married life, was much more wonderful to them than it had been before. It was the entry into another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation. Their feet trod strange ground of knowledge, their footsteps were lit-up with discovery. Wherever they walked, it was well, the world re-echoed round them in discovery. They went gladly and forgetful. Everything was lost, and everything was found. The new world was discovered, it remained only to be explored.

They had passed through the doorway into the further space, where movement was so big, that it contained bonds and constraints and labours, and still was complete liberty. She was the doorway to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, glorification, the admission.

And always the light of the transfiguration burned on in their hearts. He went his way, as before, she went her way, to the rest of the world there seemed no change. But to the two of them, there was the perpetual wonder of the transfiguration.

He did not know her any better, any more precisely, now that he knew her altogether. Poland, her husband, the war--he understood no more of this in her. He did not understand her foreign nature, half German, half Polish, nor her foreign speech. But he knew her, he knew her meaning, without understanding. What she said, what she spoke, this was a blind gesture on her part. In herself she walked strong and clear, he knew her, he saluted her, was with her. What was memory after all, but the recording of a number of possibilities which had never been fulfilled? What was Paul Lensky to her, but an unfulfilled possibility to which he, Brangwen, was the reality and the fulfilment? What did it matter, that Anna Lensky was born of Lydia and Paul? God was her father and her mother. He had passed through the married pair without fully making Himself known to them.

Now He was declared to Brangwen and to Lydia Brangwen, as they stood together. When at last they had joined hands, the house was finished, and the Lord took up his abode. And they were glad.

The days went on as before, Brangwen went out to his work, his wife nursed her child and attended in some measure to the farm. They did not think of each other-why should they? Only when she touched him, he knew her instantly, that she was with him, near him, that she was the gateway and the way out, that she was beyond, and that he was travelling in her through the beyond. Whither?-What does it matter? He responded always. When she called, he answered, when he asked, her response came at once, or at length.

Anna's soul was put at peace between them. She looked from one to the other, and she saw them established to her safety, and she was free. She played between the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud in confidence, having the assurance on her right hand and the assurance on her left. She was no longer called upon to uphold with her childish might the broken end of the arch. Her father and her mother now met to the span of the heavens, and she, the child, was free to play in the space beneath, between.

Chapter 4

Girlhood of Anna Brangwen

When Anna was nine years old, Brangwen sent her to the dames' school in Cossethay. There she went, flipping and dancing in her inconsequential fashion, doing very much as she liked, disconcerting old Miss Coates by her indifference to respectability and by her lack of reverence. Anna only laughed at Miss Coates, liked her, and patronised her in superb, childish fashion.

The girl was at once shy and wild. She had a curious contempt for ordinary people, a benevolent superiority. She was very shy, and tortured with misery when people did not like her. On the other hand, she cared very little for anybody save her mother, whom she still rather resentfully worshipped, and her father, whom she loved and patronised, but upon whom she depended. These two, her mother and father, held her still in fee. But she was free of other people, towards whom, on the whole, she took the benevolent attitude. She deeply hated ugliness or intrusion or arrogance, however. As a child, she was as proud and shadowy as a tiger, and as aloof. She could confer favours, but, save from her mother and father, she could receive none. She hated people who came too near to her. Like a wild thing, she wanted her distance. She mistrusted intimacy.

In Cossethay and Ilkeston she was always an alien. She had plenty of acquaintances, but no friends. Very few people whom she met were significant to her. They seemed part of a herd, undistinguished. She did not take people very seriously.

She had tow brothers, Tom, dark-haired, small, volatile, whom she was intimately related to but whom she never mingled with, and Fred, fair and responsive, whom she adored but did not consider as a real, separate thing. She was too much the centre of her own universe, too little aware of anything outside.

The first person she met, who affected her as a real, living person, whom she regarded as having definite existence, was Baron Skrebensky, her mother's friend. He also was a Polish exile, who had taken orders, and had received from Mr. Gladstone a small country living in Yorkshire.

When Anna was about ten years old, she went with her mother to spend a few days with the Baron Skrebensky. He was very unhappy in his red-brick vicarage. He was vicar of a country church, a living worth a little over two hundred pounds a year, but he had a large parish containing several collieries, with a new, raw, heathen population. He went to the north of England expecting homage from the common people, for he was an aristocrat. He was roughly, even cruelly received. But he never understood it. He remained a fiery aristocrat. Only he had to learn to avoid his parishioners.

Anna was very much impressed by him. He was a smallish man with a rugged, rather crumpled face and blue eyes set very deep and glowing. His wife was a tall thin woman, of noble Polish family, mad with pride. He still spoke broken English, for he had kept very close to his wife, both of them forlorn in this strange, inhospitable country, and they always spoke in Polish together. He was disappointed with Mrs. Brangwen's soft, natural English, very disappointed that her child spoke no Polish.

Anna loved to watch him. She liked the big, new, rambling vicarage, desolate and stark on its hill. It was so exposed, so bleak and bold after the Marsh. The Baron talked endlessly in Polish to Mrs. Brangwen; he made furious gestures with his hands, his blue eyes were full of fire. And to Anna, there was a significance about his sharp, flinging movements. Something in her responded to his extravagance and his exuberant manner. She thought him a very wonderful person. She was shy of him, she liked him to talk to her. She felt a sense of freedom near him.

She never could tell how she knew it, but she did know that he was a knight of Malta. She could never remember whether she had seen his star, or cross, of his order or not, but it flashed in her mind, like a symbol.

He at any rate represented to the child the real world, where kings and lords and princes moved and fulfilled their shining lives, whilst queens and ladies and princesses upheld the noble order.

She had recognised the Baron Skrebensky as a real person, he had had some regard for her. But when she did not see him any more, he faded and became a memory. But as a memory he was always alive to her.

Anna became a tall, awkward girl. Her eyes were still very dark and quick, but they had grown careless, they had lost their watchful, hostile look. Her fierce, spun hair turned brown, it grew heavier and was tied back. She was sent to a young ladies' school in Nottingham.

And at this period she was absorbed in becoming a young lady. She was intelligent enough, but not interested in learning. At first, she thought all the girls at school very ladylike and wonderful, and she wanted to be like them. She came to a speedy disillusion: they galled and maddened her, they were petty and mean. After the loose, generous atmosphere of her home, where little things did not count, she was always uneasy in the world, that would snap and bite at every trifle.

A quick change came over her. She mistrusted herself, she mistrusted the outer world. She did not want to go on, she did not want to go out into it, she wanted to go no further.

"What do I care about that lot of girls?" she would say to her father, contemptuously; "they are nobody."

The trouble was that the girls would not accept Anna at her measure. They would have her according to themselves or not at all. So she was confused, seduced, she became as they were for a time, and then, in revulsion, she hated them furiously.

"Why don't you ask some of your girls here?" her father would say.

"They're not coming here," she cried.

"And why not?"

"They're bagatelle," she said, using one of her mother's rare phrases.

"Bagatelles or billiards, it makes no matter, they're nice young lasses enough."

But Anna was not to be won over. She had a curious shrinking from commonplace people, and particularly from the young lady of her day. She would not go into company because of the ill-at-ease feeling other people brought upon her. And she never could decide whether it were her fault or theirs. She half respected these other people, and continuous disillusion maddened her. She wanted to respect them. Still she thought the people she did not know were wonderful. Those she knew seemed always to be limiting her, tying her up in little falsities that irritated her beyond bearing. She would rather stay at home and avoid the rest of the world, leaving it illusory.

For at the Marsh life had indeed a certain freedom and largeness. There was no fret about money, no mean little precedence, nor care for what other people thought, because neither Mrs. Brangwen nor Brangwen could be sensible of any judgment passed on them from outside. Their lives were too separate.

So Anna was only easy at home, where the common sense and the supreme relation between her parents produced a freer standard of being than she could find outside. Where, outside the Marsh, could she find the tolerant dignity she had been brought up in? Her parents stood undiminished and unaware of criticism. The people she met outside seemed to begrudge her her very existence. They seemed to want to belittle her also. She was exceedingly reluctant to go amongst them. She depended upon her mother and her father. And yet she wanted to go out.

At school, or in the world, she was usually at fault, she felt usually that she ought to be slinking in disgrace. She never felt quite sure, in herself, whether she were wrong, or whether the others were wrong. She had not done her lessons: well, she did not see any reason why she should do her lessons, if she did not want to. Was there some occult reason why she should? Were these people, schoolmistresses, representatives of some mystic Right, some Higher Good? They seemed to think so themselves. But she could not for her life see why a woman should bully and insult her because she did not know thirty lines of As You Like It. After all, what did it matter if she knew them or not? Nothing could persuade her that it was of the slightest importance. Because she despised inwardly the coarsely working nature of the mistress. Therefore she was always at outs with authority. From constant telling, she came almost to believe in her own badness, her own intrinsic inferiority. She felt that she ought always to be in a state of slinking disgrace, if she fulfilled what was expected of her. But she rebelled. She never really believed in her own badness. At the bottom of her heart she despised the other people, who carped and were loud over trifles. She despised them, and wanted revenge on them. She hated them whilst they had power over her.

Still she kept an ideal: a free, proud lady absolved from the petty ties, existing beyond petty considerations. She would see such ladies in pictures: Alexandra, Princess of Wales, was one of her models. This lady was proud and royal, and stepped indifferently over all small, mean desires: so thought Anna, in her heart. And the girl did up her hair high under a little slanting hat, her skirts were fashionably bunched up, she wore an elegant, skin-fitting coat.

Her father was delighted. Anna was very proud in her bearing, too naturally indifferent to smaller bonds to satisfy Ilkeston, which would have liked to put her down. But Brangwen was having no such thing. If she chose to be royal, royal she should be. He stood like a rock between her and the world.

After the fashion of his family, he grew stout and handsome. His blue eyes were full of light, twinkling and sensitive, his manner was deliberate, but hearty, warm. His capacity for living his own life without attention from his neighbours made them respect him. They would run to do anything for him. He did not consider them, but was open-handed towards them, so they made profit of their willingness. He liked people, so long as they remained in the background.

Mrs. Brangwen went on in her own way, following her own devices. She had her husband, her two sons and Anna. These staked out and marked her horizon. The other people were outsiders. Inside her own world, her life passed along like a dream for her, it lapsed, and she lived within its lapse, active and always pleased, intent. She scarcely noticed the outer things at all. What was outside was outside, non-existent. She did not mind if the boys fought, so long as it was out of her presence. But if they fought when she was by, she was angry, and they were afraid of her. She did not care if they broke a window of a railway carriage or sold their watches to have a revel at the Goose Fair. Brangwen was perhaps angry over these things. To the mother they were insignificant. It was odd little things that offended her. She was furious if the boys hung around the slaughter-house, she was displeased when the school reports were bad. It did not matter how many sins her boys were accused of, so long as they were not stupid, or inferior. If they seemed to brook insult, she hated them. And it was only a certain gaucherie, a gawkiness on Anna's part that irritated her against the girl. Certain forms of clumsiness, grossness, made the mother's eyes glow with curious rage. Otherwise she was pleased, indifferent.

Pursuing her splendid-lady ideal, Anna became a lofty demoiselle of sixteen, plagued by family shortcomings. She was very sensitive to her father. She knew if he had been drinking, were he ever so little affected, and she could not bear it. He flushed when he drank, the veins stood out on his temples, there was a twinkling, cavalier boisterousness in his eye, his manner was jovially overbearing and mocking. And it angered her. When she heard his loud, roaring, boisterous mockery, an anger of resentment filled her. She was quick to forestall him, the moment he came in.

"You look a sight, you do, red in the face," she cried.

"I might look worse if I was green," he answered.

"Boozing in Ilkeston."

"And what's wrong wi' Il'son?"

She flounced away. He watched her with amused, twinkling eyes, yet in spite of himself said that she flouted him.

They were a curious family, a law to themselves, separate from the world, isolated, a small republic set in invisible bounds. The mother was quite indifferent to Ilkeston and Cossethay, to any claims made on her from outside, she was very shy of any outsider, exceedingly courteous, winning even. But the moment the visitor had gone, she laughed and dismissed him, he did not exist. It had been all a game to her. She was still a foreigner, unsure of her ground. But alone with her own children and husband at the Marsh, she was mistress of a little native land that lacked nothing.

She had some beliefs somewhere, never defined. She had been brought up a Roman Catholic. She had gone to the Church of England for protection. The outward form was a matter of indifference to her. Yet she had some fundamental religion. It was as if she worshipped God as a mystery, never seeking in the least to define what He was.

And inside her, the subtle sense of the Great Absolute wherein she had her being was very strong. The English dogma never reached her: the language was too foreign. Through it all she felt the great Separator who held life in His hands, gleaming, imminent, terrible, the Great Mystery, immediate beyond all telling.

She shone and gleamed to the Mystery, Whom she knew through all her senses, she glanced with strange, mystic superstitions that never found expression in the English language, never mounted to thought in English. But so she lived, within a potent, sensuous belief that included her family and contained her destiny.

To this she had reduced her husband. He existed with her entirely indifferent to the general values of the world. Her very ways, the very mark of her eyebrows were symbols and indication to him. There, on the farm with her, he lived through a mystery of life and death and creation, strange, profound ecstasies and incommunicable satisfactions, of which the rest of the world knew nothing; which made the pair of them apart and respected in the English village, for they were also well-to-do.

But Anna was only half safe within her mother's unthinking knowledge. She had a mother-of-pearl rosary that had been her own father's. What it meant to her she could never say. But the string of moonlight and silver, when she had it between her fingers, filled her with strange passion. She learned at school a little Latin, she learned an Ave Maria and a Pater Noster, she learned how to say her rosary. But that was no good. "Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus. Ave Maria, Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae, Amen."

It was not right, somehow. What these words meant when translated was not the same as the pale rosary meant. There was a discrepancy, a falsehood. It irritated her to say, "Dominus tecum," or, "benedicta tu in mulieribus." She loved the mystic words, "Ave Maria, Sancta Maria;" she was moved by "benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus," and by "nunc et in hora mortis nostrae." But none of it was quite real. It was not satisfactory, somehow.

She avoided her rosary, because, moving her with curious passion as it did, it meant only these not very significant things. She put it away. It was her instinct to put all these things away. It was her instinct to avoid thinking, to avoid it, to save herself.

She was seventeen, touchy, full of spirits, and very moody: quick to flush, and always uneasy, uncertain. For some reason or other, she turned more to her father, she felt almost flashes of hatred for her mother. Her mother's dark muzzle and curiously insidious ways, her mother's utter surety and confidence, her strange satisfaction, even triumph, her mother's way of laughing at things and her mother's silent overriding of vexatious propositions, most of all her mother's triumphant power maddened the girl.

She became sudden and incalculable. Often she stood at the window, looking out, as if she wanted to go. Sometimes she went, she mixed with people. But always she came home in anger, as if she were diminished, belittled, almost degraded.

There was over the house a kind of dark silence and intensity, in which passion worked its inevitable conclusions. There was in the house a sort of richness, a deep, inarticulate interchange which made other places seem thin and unsatisfying. Brangwen could sit silent, smoking in his chair, the mother could move about in her quiet, insidious way, and the sense of the two presences was powerful, sustaining. The whole intercourse was wordless, intense and close.

But Anna was uneasy. She wanted to get away. Yet wherever she went, there came upon her that feeling of thinness, as if she were made smaller, belittled. She hastened home.

There she raged and interrupted the strong, settled interchange. Sometimes her mother turned on her with a fierce, destructive anger, in which was no pity or consideration. And Anna shrank, afraid. She went to her father.

He would still listen to the spoken word, which fell sterile on the unheeding mother. Sometimes Anna talked to her father. She tried to discuss people, she wanted to know what was meant. But her father became uneasy. He did not want to have things dragged into consciousness. Only out of consideration for her he listened. And there was a kind of bristling rousedness in the room. The cat got up and stretching itself, went uneasily to the door. Mrs. Brangwen was silent, she seemed ominous. Anna could not go on with her fault-finding, her criticism, her expression of dissatisfactions. She felt even her father against her. He had a strong, dark bond with her mother, a potent intimacy that existed inarticulate and wild, following its own course, and savage if interrupted, uncovered.

Nevertheless Brangwen was uneasy about the girl, the whole house continued to be disturbed. She had a pathetic, baffled appeal. She was hostile to her parents, even whilst she lived entirely with them, within their spell.

Many ways she tried, of escape. She became an assiduous church-goer. But the language meant nothing to her: it seemed false. She hated to hear things expressed, put into words. Whilst the religious feelings were inside her they were passionately moving. In the mouth of the clergyman, they were false, indecent. She tried to read. But again the tedium and the sense of the falsity of the spoken word put her off. She went to stay with girl friends. At first she thought it splendid. But then the inner boredom came on, it seemed to her all nothingness. And she felt always belittled, as if never, never could she stretch her length and stride her stride.

Her mind reverted often to the torture cell of a certain Bishop of France, in which the victim could neither stand nor lie stretched out, never. Not that she thought of herself in any connection with this. But often there came into her mind the wonder, how the cell was built, and she could feel the horror of the crampedness, as something very real.

She was, however, only eighteen when a letter came from Mrs. Alfred Brangwen, in Nottingham, saying that her son William was coming to Ilkeston to take a place as junior draughtsman, scarcely more than apprentice, in a lace factory. He was twenty years old, and would the Marsh Brangwens be friendly with him.

Tom Brangwen at once wrote offering the young man a home at the Marsh. This was not accepted, but the Nottingham Brangwens expressed gratitude.

There had never been much love lost between the Nottingham Brangwens and the Marsh. Indeed, Mrs. Alfred, having inherited three thousand pounds, and having occasion to be dissatisfied with her husband, held aloof from all the Brangwens whatsoever. She affected, however, some esteem of Mrs. Tom, as she called the Polish woman, saying that at any rate she was a lady.

Anna Brangwen was faintly excited at the news of her Cousin Will's coming to Ilkeston. She knew plenty of young men, but they had never become real to her. She had seen in this young gallant a nose she liked, in that a pleasant moustache, in the other a nice way of wearing clothes, in one a ridiculous fringe of hair, in another a comical way of talking. They were objects of amusement and faint wonder to her, rather than real beings, the young men.

The only man she knew was her father; and, as he was something large, looming, a kind of Godhead, he embraced all manhood for her, and other men were just incidental.

She remembered her cousin Will. He had town clothes and was thin, with a very curious head, black as jet, with hair like sleek, thin fur. It was a curious head: it reminded her she knew not of what: of some animal, some mysterious animal that lived in the darkness under the leaves and never came out, but which lived vividly, swift and intense. She always thought of him with that black, keen, blind head. And she considered him odd.

He appeared at the Marsh one Sunday morning: a rather long, thin youth with a bright face and a curious self-possession among his shyness, a native unawareness of what other people might be, since he was himself.

When Anna came downstairs in her Sunday clothes, ready for church, he rose and greeted her conventionally, shaking hands. His manners were better than hers. She flushed. She noticed that he now had a thick fledge on his upper lip, a black, finely-shapen line marking his wide mouth. It rather repelled her. It reminded her of the thin, fine fur of his hair. She was aware of something strange in him.

His voice had rather high upper notes, and very resonant middle notes. It was queer. She wondered why he did it. But he sat very naturally in the Marsh living-room. He had some uncouthness, some natural self-possession of the Brangwens, that made him at home there.

Anna was rather troubled by the strangely intimate, affectionate way her father had towards this young man. He seemed gentle towards him, he put himself aside in order to fill out the young man. This irritated Anna.

"Father," she said abruptly, "give me some collection."

"What collection?" asked Brangwen.

"Don't be ridiculous," she cried, flushing.

"Nay," he said, "what collection's this?"

"You know it's the first Sunday of the month."

Anna stood confused. Why was he doing this, why was he making her conspicuous before this stranger?

"I want some collection," she reasserted.

"So tha says," he replied indifferently, looking at her, then turning again to this nephew.

She went forward, and thrust her hand into his breeches pocket. He smoked steadily, making no resistance, talking to his nephew. Her hand groped about in his pocket, and then drew out his leathern purse. Her colour was bright in her clear cheeks, her eyes shone. Brangwen's eyes were twinkling. The nephew sat sheepishly. Anna, in her finery, sat down and slid all the money into her lap. There was silver and gold. The youth could not help watching her. She was bent over the heap of money, fingering the different coins.

"I've a good mind to take half a sovereign," she said, and she looked up with glowing dark eyes. She met the light-brown eyes of her cousin, close and intent upon her. She was startled. She laughed quickly, and turned to her father.

"I've a good mind to take half a sovereign, our Dad," she said.

"Yes, nimble fingers," said her father. "You take what's your own."

"Are you coming, our Anna?" asked her brother from the door.

She suddenly chilled to normal, forgetting both her father and her cousin.

"Yes, I'm ready," she said, taking sixpence from the heap of money and sliding the rest back into the purse, which she laid on the table.

"Give it here," said her father.

Hastily she thrust the purse into his pocket and was going out.

"You'd better go wi' 'em, lad, hadn't you?" said the father to the nephew.

Will Brangwen rose uncertainly. He had golden-brown, quick, steady eyes, like a bird's, like a hawk's, which cannot look afraid.

"Your Cousin Will 'll come with you," said the father.

Anna glanced at the strange youth again. She felt him waiting there for her to notice him. He was hovering on the edge of her consciousness, ready to come in. She did not want to look at him. She was antagonistic to him.

She waited without speaking. Her cousin took his hat and joined her. It was summer outside. Her brother Fred was plucking a sprig of flowery currant to put in his coat, from the bush at the angle of the house. She took no notice. Her cousin followed just behind her.

They were on the high road. She was aware of a strangeness in her being. It made her uncertain. She caught sight of the flowering currant in her brother's buttonhole.

"Oh, our Fred," she cried. "Don't wear that stuff to go to church."

Fred looked down protectively at the pink adornment on his breast.

"Why, I like it," he said.

"Then you're the only one who does, I'm sure," she said.

And she turned to her cousin.

"Do you like the smell of it?" she asked.

He was there beside her, tall and uncouth and yet self-possessed. It excited her.

"I can't say whether I do or not," he replied.

"Give it here, Fred, don't have it smelling in church," she said to the little boy, her page.

Her fair, small brother handed her the flower dutifully. She sniffed it and gave it without a word to her cousin, for his judgment. He smelled the dangling flower curiously.

"It's a funny smell," he said.

And suddenly she laughed, and a quick light came on all their faces, there was a blithe trip in the small boy's walk.

The bells were ringing, they were going up the summery hill in their Sunday clothes. Anna was very fine in a silk frock of brown and white stripes, tight along the arms and the body, bunched up very elegantly behind the skirt. There was something of the cavalier about Will Brangwen, and he was well dressed.

He walked along with the sprig of currant-blossom dangling between his fingers, and none of them spoke. The sun shone brightly on little showers of buttercup down the bank, in the fields the fool's-parsley was foamy, held very high and proud above a number of flowers that flitted in the greenish twilight of the mowing-grass below.

They reached the church. Fred led the way to the pew, followed by the cousin, then Anna. She felt very conspicuous and important. Somehow, this young man gave her away to other people. He stood aside and let her pass to her place, then sat next to her. It was a curious sensation, to sit next to him.

The colour came streaming from the painted window above her. It lit on the dark wood of the pew, on the stone, worn aisle, on the pillar behind her cousin, and on her cousin's hands, as they lay on his knees. She sat amid illumination, illumination and luminous shadow all around her, her soul very bright. She sat, without knowing it, conscious of the hands and motionless knees of her cousin. Something strange had entered into her world, something entirely strange and unlike what she knew.

She was curiously elated. She sat in a glowing world of unreality, very delightful. A brooding light, like laughter, was in her eyes. She was aware of a strange influence entering in to her, which she enjoyed. It was a dark enrichening influence she had not known before. She did not think of her cousin. But she was startled when his hands moved.

She wished he would not say the responses so plainly. It diverted her from her vague enjoyment. Why would he obtrude, and draw notice to himself? It was bad taste. But she went on all right till the hymn came. He stood up beside her to sing, and that pleased her. Then suddenly, at the very first word, his voice came strong and over-riding, filling the church. He was singing the tenor. Her soul opened in amazement. His voice filled the church! It rang out like a trumpet, and rang out again. She started to giggle over her hymn-book. But he went on, perfectly steady. Up and down rang his voice, going its own way. She was helplessly shocked into laughter. Between moments of dead silence in herself she shook with laughter. On came the laughter, seized her and shook her till the tears were in her eyes. She was amazed, and rather enjoyed it. And still the hymn rolled on, and still she laughed. She bent over her hymn-book crimson with confusion, but still her sides shook with laughter. She pretended to cough, she pretended to have a crumb in her throat. Fred was gazing up at her with clear blue eyes. She was recovering herself. And then a slur in the strong, blind voice at her side brought it all on again, in a gust of mad laughter.

She bent down to prayer in cold reproof of herself. And yet, as she knelt, little eddies of giggling went over her. The very sight of his knees on the praying cushion sent the little shock of laughter over her.

She gathered herself together and sat with prim, pure face, white and pink and cold as a christmas rose, her hands in her silk gloves folded on her lap, her dark eyes all vague, abstracted in a sort of dream, oblivious of everything.

The sermon rolled on vaguely, in a tide of pregnant peace.

Her cousin took out his pocket-handkerchief. He seemed to be drifted absorbed into the sermon. He put his handkerchief to his face. Then something dropped on to his knee. There lay the bit of flowering currant! He was looking down at it in real astonishment. A wild snort of laughter came from Anna. Everybody heard: it was torture. He had shut the crumpled flower in his hand and was looking up again with the same absorbed attention to the sermon. Another snort of laughter from Anna. Fred nudged her remindingly.

Her cousin sat motionless. Somehow he was aware that his face was red. She could feel him. His hand, closed over the flower, remained quite still, pretending to be normal. Another wild struggle in Anna's breast, and the snort of laughter. She bent forward shaking with laughter. It was now no joke. Fred was nudge-nudging at her. She nudged him back fiercely. Then another vicious spasm of laughter seized her. She tried to ward it off in a little cough. The cough ended in a suppressed whoop. She wanted to die. And the closed hand crept away to the pocket. Whilst she sat in taut suspense, the laughter rushed back at her, knowing he was fumbling in his pocket to shove the flower away.

In the end, she felt weak, exhausted and thoroughly depressed. A blankness of wincing depression came over her. She hated the presence of the other people. Her face became quite haughty. She was unaware of her cousin any more.

When the collection arrived with the last hynm, her cousin was again singing resoundingly. And still it amused her. In spite of the shameful exhibition she had made of herself, it amused her still. She listened to it in a spell of amusement. And the bag was thrust in front of her, and her sixpence was mingled in the folds of her glove. In her haste to get it out, it flipped away and went twinkling in the next pew. She stood and giggled. She could not help it: she laughed outright, a figure of shame.

"What were you laughing about, our Anna?" asked Fred, the moment they were out of the church.

"Oh, I couldn't help it," she said, in her careless, half-mocking fashion. "I don't know why Cousin Will's singing set me off."

"What was there in my singing to make you laugh?" he asked.

"It was so loud," she said.

They did not look at each other, but they both laughed again, both reddening.

"What were you snorting and laughing for, our Anna?" asked Tom, the elder brother, at the dinner table, his hazel eyes bright with joy. "Everybody stopped to look at you." Tom was in the choir.

She was aware of Will's eyes shining steadily upon her, waiting for her to speak.

"It was Cousin Will's singing," she said.

At which her cousin burst into a suppressed, chuckling laugh, suddenly showing all his small, regular, rather sharp teeth, and just as quickly closing his mouth again.

"Has he got such a remarkable voice on him then?" asked Brangwen.

"No, it's not that," said Anna. "Only it tickled me-I couldn't tell you why."

And again a ripple of laughter went down the table.

Will Brangwen thrust forward his dark face, his eyes dancing, and said:

"I'm in the choir of St. Nicholas."

"Oh, you go to church then!" said Brangwen.

"Mother does-father doesn't," replied the youth.

It was the little things, his movement, the funny tones of his voice, that showed up big to Anna. The matter-of-fact things he said were absurd in contrast. The things her father said seemed meaningless and neutral.

During the afternoon they sat in the parlour, that smelled of geranium, and they ate cherries, and talked. Will Brangwen was called on to give himself forth. And soon he was drawn out.

He was interested in churches, in church architecture. The influence of Ruskin had stimulated him to a pleasure in the medieval forms. His talk was fragmentary, he was only half articulate. But listening to him, as he spoke of church after church, of nave and chancel and transept, of rood-screen and font, of hatchet-carving and moulding and tracery, speaking always with close passion of particular things, particular places, there gathered in her heart a pregnant hush of churches, a mystery, a ponderous significance of bowed stone, a dim-coloured light through which something took place obscurely, passing into darkness: a high, delighted framework of the mystic screen, and beyond, in the furthest beyond, the altar. It was a very real experience. She was carried away. And the land seemed to be covered with a vast, mystic church, reserved in gloom, thrilled with an unknown Presence.

Almost it hurt her, to look out of the window and see the lilacs towering in the vivid sunshine. Or was this the jewelled glass?

He talked of Gothic and Renaissance and Perpendicular, and Early English and Norman. The words thrilled her.

"Have you been to Southwell?" he said. "I was there at twelve o'clock at midday, eating my lunch in the churchyard. And the bells played a hymn.

"Ay, it's a fine Minster, Southwell, heavy. It's got heavy, round arches, rather low, on thick pillars. It's grand, the way those arches travel forward.

"There's a sedilia as well-pretty. But I like the main body of the church-and that north porch--"

He was very much excited and filled with himself that afternoon. A flame kindled round him, making his experience passionate and glowing, burningly real.

His uncle listened with twinkling eyes, half-moved. His aunt bent forward her dark face, half-moved, but held by other knowledge. Anna went with him.

He returned to his lodging at night treading quick, his eyes glittering, and his face shining darkly as if he came from some passionate, vital tryst.

The glow remained in him, the fire burned, his heart was fierce like a sun. He enjoyed his unknown life and his own self. And he was ready to go back to the Marsh.

Without knowing it, Anna was wanting him to come. In him she had escaped. In him the bounds of her experience were transgressed: he was the hole in the wall, beyond which the sunshine blazed on an outside world.

He came. Sometimes, not often, but sometimes, talking again, there recurred the strange, remote reality which carried everything before it. Sometimes, he talked of his father, whom he hated with a hatred that was burningly close to love, of his mother, whom he loved, with a love that was keenly close to hatred, or to revolt. His sentences were clumsy, he was only half articulate. But he had the wonderful voice, that could ring its vibration through the girl's soul, transport her into his feeling. Sometimes his voice was hot and declamatory, sometimes it had a strange, twanging, almost cat-like sound, sometimes it hesitated, puzzled, sometimes there was the break of a little laugh. Anna was taken by him. She loved the running flame that coursed through her as she listened to him. And his mother and his father became to her two separate people in her life.

For some weeks the youth came frequently, and was received gladly by them all. He sat amongst them, his dark face glowing, an eagerness and a touch of derisiveness on his wide mouth, something grinning and twisted, his eyes always shining like a bird's, utterly without depth. There was no getting hold of the fellow, Brangwen irritably thought. He was like a grinning young tom-cat, that came when he thought he would, and without cognisance of the other person.

At first the youth had looked towards Tom Brangwen when he talked; and then he looked towards his aunt, for her appreciation, valuing it more than his uncle's; and then he turned to Anna, because from her he got what he wanted, which was not in the elder people.

So that the two young people, from being always attendant on the elder, began to draw apart and establish a separate kingdom. Sometimes Tom Brangwen was irritated. His nephew irritated him. The lad seemed to him too special, self-contained. His nature was fierce enough, but too much abstracted, like a separate thing, like a cat's nature. A cat could lie perfectly peacefully on the hearthrug whilst its master or mistress writhed in agony a yard away. It had nothing to do with other people's affairs. What did the lad really care about anything, save his own instinctive affairs?

Brangwen was irritated. Nevertheless he liked and respected his nephew. Mrs. Brangwen was irritated by Anna, who was suddenly changed, under the influence of the youth. The mother liked the boy: he was not quite an outsider. But she did not like her daughter to be so much under the spell.

So that gradually the two young people drew apart, escaped from the elders, to create a new thing by themselves. He worked in the garden to propitiate his uncle. He talked churches to propitiate his aunt. He followed Anna like a shadow: like a long, persistent, unswerving black shadow he went after the girl. It irritated Brangwen exceedingly. It exasperated him beyond bearing, to see the lit-up grin, the cat-grin as he called it, on his nephew's face.

And Anna had a new reserve, a new independence. Suddenly she began to act independently of her parents, to live beyond them. Her mother had flashes of anger.

But the courtship went on. Anna would find occasion to go shopping in Ilkeston at evening. She always returned with her cousin; he walking with his head over her shoulder, a little bit behind her, like the Devil looking over Lincoln, as Brangwen noted angrily and yet with satisfaction.

To his own wonder, Will Brangwen found himself in an electric state of passion. To his wonder, he had stopped her at the gate as they came home from Ilkeston one night, and had kissed her, blocking her way and kissing her whilst he felt as if some blow were struck at him in the dark. And when they went indoors, he was acutely angry that her parents looked up scrutinisingly at him and her. What right had they there: why should they look up! Let them remove themselves, or look elsewhere.

And the youth went home with the stars in heaven whirling fiercely about the blackness of his head, and his heart fierce, insistent, but fierce as if he felt something baulking him. He wanted to smash through something.

A spell was cast over her. And how uneasy her parents were, as she went about the house unnoticing, not noticing them, moving in a spell as if she were invisible to them. She was invisible to them. It made them angry. Yet they had to submit. She went about absorbed, obscured for a while.

Over him too the darkness of obscurity settled. He seemed to be hidden in a tense, electric darkness, in which his soul, his life was intensely active, but without his aid or attention. His mind was obscured. He worked swiftly and mechanically, and he produced some beautiful things.

His favourite work was wood-carving. The first thing he made for her was a butter-stamper. In it he carved a mythological bird, a phoenix, something like an eagle, rising on symmetrical wings, from a circle of very beautiful flickering flames that rose upwards from the rim of the cup.

Anna thought nothing of the gift on the evening when he gave it to her. In the morning, however, when the butter was made, she fetched his seal in place of the old wooden stamper of oak-leaves and acorns. She was curiously excited to see how it would turn out. Strange, the uncouth bird moulded there, in the cup-like hollow, with curious, thick waverings running inwards from a smooth rim. She pressed another mould. Strange, to lift the stamp and see that eagle-beaked bird raising its breast to her. She loved creating it over and over again. And every time she looked, it seemed a new thing come to life. Every piece of butter became this strange, vital emblem.

She showed it to her mother and father.

"That is beautiful," said her mother, a little light coming on to her face.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed the father, puzzled, fretted. "Why, what sort of a bird does he call it?"

And this was the question put by the customers during the next weeks.

"What sort of a bird do you call that, as you've got on th' butter?"

When he came in the evening, she took him into the dairy to show him.

"Do you like it?" he asked, in his loud, vibrating voice that always sounded strange, re-echoing in the dark places of her being.

They very rarely touched each other. They liked to be alone together, near to each other, but there was still a distance between them.

In the cool dairy the candle-light lit on the large, white surfaces of the cream pans. He turned his head sharply. It was so cool and remote in there, so remote. His mouth was open in a little, strained laugh. She stood with her head bent, turned aside. He wanted to go near to her. He had kissed her once. Again his eye rested on the round blocks of butter, where the emblematic bird lifted its breast from the shadow cast by the candle flame. What was restraining him? Her breast was near him; his head lifted like an eagle's. She did not move. Suddenly, with an incredibly quick, delicate movement, he put his arms round her and drew her to him. It was quick, cleanly done, like a bird that swoops and sinks close, closer.

He was kissing her throat. She turned and looked at him. Her eyes were dark and flowing with fire. His eyes were hard and bright with a fierce purpose and gladness, like a hawk's. She felt him flying into the dark space of her flames, like a brand, like a gleaming hawk.

They had looked at each other, and seen each other strange, yet near, very near, like a hawk stooping, swooping, dropping into a flame of darkness. So she took the candle and they went back to the kitchen.

They went on in this way for some time, always coming together, but rarely touching, very seldom did they kiss. And then, often, it was merely a touch of the lips, a sign. But her eyes began to waken with a constant fire, she paused often in the midst of her transit, as if to recollect something, or to discover something.

And his face became sombre, intent, he did not really hear what was said to him.

One evening in August he came when it was raining. He came in with his jacket collar turned up, his jacket buttoned close, his face wet. And he looked so slim and definite, coming out of the chill rain, she was suddenly blinded with love for him. Yet he sat and talked with her father and mother, meaninglessly, whilst her blood seethed to anguish in her. She wanted to touch him now, only to touch him.

There was the queer, abstract look on her silvery radiant face that maddened her father, her dark eyes were hidden. But she raised them to the youth. And they were dark with a flare that made him quail for a moment.

She went into the second kitchen and took a lantern. Her father watched her as she returned.

"Come with me, Will," she said to her cousin. "I want to see if I put the brick over where that rat comes in."

"You've no need to do that," retorted her father. She took no notice. The youth was between the two wills. The colour mounted into the father's face, his blue eyes stared. The girl stood near the door, her head held slightly back, like an indication that the youth must come. He rose, in his silent, intent way, and was gone with her. The blood swelled in Brangwen's forehead veins.

It was raining. The light of the lantern flashed on the cobbled path and the bottom of the wall. She came to a small ladder, and climbed up. He reached her the lantern, and followed. Up there in the fowl-loft, the birds sat in fat bunches on the perches, the red combs shining like fire. Bright, sharp eyes opened. There was a sharp crawk of expostulation as one of the hens shifted over. The cock sat watching, his yellow neck-feathers bright as glass. Anna went across the dirty floor. Brangwen crouched in the loft watching. The light was soft under the red, naked tiles. The girl crouched in a corner. There was another explosive bustle of a hen springing from her perch.

Anna came back, stooping under the perches. He was waiting for her near the door. Suddenly she had her arms round him, was clinging close to him, cleaving her body against his, and crying, in a whispering, whimpering sound.

"Will, I love you, I love you, Will, I love you." It sounded as if it were tearing her.

He was not even very much surprised. He held her in his arms, and his bones melted. He leaned back against the wall. The door of the loft was open. Outside, the rain slanted by in fine, steely, mysterious haste, emerging out of the gulf of darkness. He held her in his arms, and he and she together seemed to be swinging in big, swooping oscillations, the two of them clasped together up in the darkness. Outside the open door of the loft in which they stood, beyond them and below them, was darkness, with a travelling veil of rain.

"I love you, Will, I love you," she moaned, "I love you, Will."

He held her as thought they were one, and was silent.

In the house, Tom Brangwen waited a while. Then he got up and went out. He went down the yard. He saw the curious misty shaft coming from the loft door. He scarcely knew it was the light in the rain. He went on till the illumination fell on him dimly. Then looking up, through the blurr, he saw the youth and the girl together, the youth with his back against the wall, his head sunk over the head of the girl. The elder man saw them, blurred through the rain, but lit up. They thought themselves so buried in the night. He even saw the lighted dryness of the loft behind, and shadows and bunches of roosting fowls, up in the night, strange shadows cast from the lantern on the floor.

And a black gloom of anger, and a tenderness of self-effacement, fought in his heart. She did not understand what she was doing. She betrayed herself. She was a child, a mere child. She did not know how much of herself she was squandering. And he was blackly and furiously miserable. Was he then an old man, that he should be giving her away in marriage? Was he old? He was not old. He was younger than that young thoughtless fellow in whose arms she lay. Who knew her-he or that blind-headed youth? To whom did she belong, if not to himself?

He thought again of the child he had carried out at night into the barn, whilst his wife was in labour with the young Tom. He remembered the soft, warm weight of the little girl on his arm, round his neck. Now she would say he was finished. She was going away, to deny him, to leave an unendurable emptiness in him, a void that he could not bear. Almost he hated her. How dared she say he was old. He walked on in the rain, sweating with pain, with the horror of being old, with the agony of having to relinquish what was life to him.

Will Brangwen went home without having seen his uncle. He held his hot face to the rain, and walked on in a trance. "I love you, Will, I love you." The words repeated themselves endlessly. The veils had ripped and issued him naked into the endless space, and he shuddered. The walls had thrust him out and given him a vast space to walk in. Whither, through this darkness of infinite space, was he walking blindly? Where, at the end of all the darkness, was God the Almighty still darkly, seated, thrusting him on? "I love you, Will, I love you." He trembled with fear as the words beat in his heart again. And he dared not think of her face, of her eyes which shone, and of her strange, transfigured face. The hand of the Hidden Almighty, burning bright, had thrust out of the darkness and gripped him. He went on subject and in fear, his heart gripped and burning from the touch.

The days went by, they ran on dark-padded feet in silence. He went to see Anna, but again there had come a reserve between them. Tom Brangwen was gloomy, his blue eyes sombre. Anna was strange and delivered up. Her face in its delicate colouring was mute, touched dumb and poignant. The mother bowed her head and moved in her own dark world, that was pregnant again with fulfilment.

Will Brangwen worked at his wood-carving. It was a passion, a passion for him to have the chisel under his grip. Verily the passion of his heart lifted the fine bite of steel. He was carving, as he had always wanted, the Creation of Eve. It was a panel in low relief, for a church. Adam lay asleep as if suffering, and God, a dim, large figure, stooped towards him, stretching forward His unveiled hand; and Eve, a small vivid, naked female shape, was issuing like a flame towards the hand of God, from the torn side of Adam.

Now, Will Brangwen was working at the Eve. She was thin, a keen, unripe thing. With trembling passion, fine as a breath of air, he sent the chisel over her belly, her hard, unripe, small belly. She was a stiff little figure, with sharp lines, in the throes and torture and ecstasy of her creation. But he trembled as he touched her. He had not finished any of his figures. There was a bird on a bough overhead, lifting its wings for flight, and a serpent wreathing up to it. It was not finished yet. He trembled with passion, at last able to create the new, sharp body of his Eve.

At the sides, at the far sides, at either end, were two Angels covering their faces with their wings. They were like trees. As he went to the Marsh, in the twilight, he felt that the Angels, with covered faces, were standing back as he went by. The darkness was of their shadows and the covering of their faces. When he went through the Canal bridge, the evening glowed in its last deep colours, the sky was dark blue, the stars glittered from afar, very remote and approaching above the darkening cluster of the farm, above the paths of crystal along the edge of the heavens.

She waited for him like the glow of light, and as if his face were covered. And he dared not lift his face to look at her.

Corn harvest came on. One evening they walked out through the farm buildings at nightfall. A large gold moon hung heavily to the grey horizon, trees hovered tall, standing back in the dusk, waiting. Anna and the young man went on noiselessly by the hedge, along where the farm-carts had made dark ruts in the grass. They came through a gate into a wide open field where still much light seemed to spread against their faces. In the under-shadow the sheaves lay on the ground where the reapers had left them, many sheaves like bodies prostrate in shadowy bulk; others were riding hazily in shocks, like ships in the haze of moonlight and of dusk, farther off.

They did not want to turn back, yet whither were they to go, towards the moon? For they were separate, single.

"We will put up some sheaves," said Anna. So they could remain there in the broad, open place.

They went across the stubble to where the long rows of upreared shocks ended. Curiously populous that part of the field looked, where the shocks rode erect; the rest was open and prostrate.

The air was all hoary silver. She looked around her. Trees stood vaguely at their distance, as if waiting like heralds, for the signal to approach. In this space of vague crystal her heart seemed like a bell ringing. She was afraid lest the sound should be heard.

"You take this row," she said to the youth, and passing on, she stooped in the next row of lying sheaves, grasping her hands in the tresses of the oats, lifting the heavy corn in either hand, carrying it, as it hung heavily against her, to the cleared space, where she set the two sheaves sharply down, bringing them together with a faint, keen clash. Her two bulks stood leaning together. He was coming, walking shadowily with the gossamer dusk, carrying his two sheaves. She waited near-by. He set his sheaves with a keen, faint clash, next to her sheaves. They rode unsteadily. He tangled the tresses of corn. It hissed like a fountain. He looked up and laughed.

Then she turned away towards the moon, which seemed glowingly to uncover her bosom every time she faced it. He went to the vague emptiness of the field opposite, dutifully.

They stooped, grasped the wet, soft hair of the corn, lifted the heavy bundles, and returned. She was always first. She set down her sheaves, making a pent-house with those others. He was coming shadowy across the stubble, carrying his bundles, She turned away, hearing only the sharp hiss of his mingling corn. She walked between the moon and his shadowy figure.

She took her two new sheaves and walked towards him, as he rose from stooping over the earth. He was coming out of the near distance. She set down her sheaves to make a new stook. They were unsure. Her hands fluttered. Yet she broke away, and turned to the moon, which laid bare her bosom, so she felt as if her bosom were heaving and panting with moonlight. And he had to put up her two sheaves, which had fallen down. He worked in silence. The rhythm of the work carried him away again, as she was coming near.

They worked together, coming and going, in a rhythm, which carried their feet and their bodies in tune. She stooped, she lifted the burden of sheaves, she turned her face to the dimness where he was, and went with her burden over the stubble. She hesitated, set down her sheaves, there was a swish and hiss of mingling oats, he was drawing near, and she must turn again. And there was the flaring moon laying bare her bosom again, making her drift and ebb like a wave.

He worked steadily, engrossed, threading backwards and forwards like a shuttle across the strip of cleared stubble, weaving the long line of riding shocks, nearer and nearer to the shadowy trees, threading his sheaves with hers.

And always, she was gone before he came. As he came, she drew away, as he drew away, she came. Were they never to meet? Gradually a low, deep-sounding will in him vibrated to her, tried to set her in accord, tried to bring her gradually to him, to a meeting, till they should be together, till they should meet as the sheaves that swished together.

And the work went on. The moon grew brighter, clearer, the corn glistened. He bent over the prostrate bundles, there was a hiss as the sheaves left the ground, a trailing of heavy bodies against him, a dazzle of moonlight on his eyes. And then he was setting the corn together at the stook. And she was coming near.

He waited for her, he fumbled at the stook. She came. But she stood back till he drew away. He saw her in shadow, a dark column, and spoke to her, and she answered. She saw the moonlight flash question on his face. But there was a space between them, and he went away, the work carried them, rhythmic.

Why was there always a space between them, why were they apart? Why, as she came up from under the moon, would she halt and stand off from him? Why was he held away from her? His will drummed persistently, darkly, it drowned everything else.

Into the rhythm of his work there came a pulse and a steadied purpose. He stooped, he lifted the weight, he heaved it towards her, setting it as in her, under the moonlit space. And he went back for more. Ever with increasing closeness he lifted the sheaves and swung striding to the centre with them, ever he drove her more nearly to the meeting, ever he did his share, and drew towards her, overtaking her. There was only the moving to and fro in the moonlight, engrossed, the swinging in the silence, that was marked only by the splash of sheaves, and silence, and a splash of sheaves. And ever the splash of his sheaves broke swifter, beating up to hers, and ever the splash of her sheaves recurred monotonously, unchanging, and ever the splash of his sheaves beat nearer.

Till at last, they met at the shock, facing each other, sheaves in hand. And he was silvery with moonlight, with a moonlit, shadowy face that frightened her. She waited for him.

"Put yours down," she said.

"No, it's your turn." His voice was twanging and insistent.

She set her sheaves against the shock. He saw her hands glisten among the spray of grain. And he dropped his sheaves and he trembled as he took her in his arms. He had over-taken her, and it was his privilege to kiss her. She was sweet and fresh with the night air, and sweet with the scent of grain. And the whole rhythm of him beat into his kisses, and still he pursued her, in his kisses, and still she was not quite overcome. He wondered over the moonlight on her nose! All the moonlight upon her, all the darkness within her! All the night in his arms, darkness and shine, he possessed of it all! All the night for him now, to unfold, to venture within, all the mystery to be entered, all the discovery to be made.

Trembling with keen triumph, his heart was white as a star as he drove his kisses nearer.

"My love!" she called, in a low voice, from afar. The low sound seemed to call to him from far off, under the moon, to him who was unaware. He stopped, quivered, and listened.

"My love," came again the low, plaintive call, like a bird unseen in the night.

He was afraid. His heart quivered and broke. He was stopped.

"Anna," he said, as if he answered her from a distance, unsure.

"My love."

And he drew near, and she drew near.

"Anna," he said, in wonder and the birthpain of love.

"My love," she said, her voice growing rapturous. And they kissed on the mouth, in rapture and surprise, long, real kisses. The kiss lasted, there among the moonlight. He kissed her again, and she kissed him. And again they were kissing together. Till something happened in him, he was strange. He wanted her. He wanted her exceedingly. She was something new. They stood there folded, suspended in the night. And his whole being quivered with surprise, as from a blow. He wanted her, and he wanted to tell her so. But the shock was too great to him. He had never realised before. He trembled with irritation and unusedness, he did not know what to do. He held her more gently, gently, much more gently. The conflict was gone by. And he was glad, and breathless, and almost in tears. But he knew he wanted her. Something fixed in him for ever. He was hers. And he was very glad and afraid. He did not know what to do, as they stood there in the open, moonlit field. He looked through her hair at the moon, which seemed to swim liquid-bright.

She sighed, and seemed to wake up, then she kissed him again. Then she loosened herself away from him and took his hand. It hurt him when she drew away from his breast. It hurt him with a chagrin. Why did she draw away from him? But she held his hand.

"I want to go home," she said, looking at him in a way he could not understand.

He held close to her hand. He was dazed and he could not move, he did not know how to move. She drew him away.

He walked helplessly beside her, holding her hand. She went with bent head. Suddenly he said, as the simple solution stated itself to him:

"We'll get married, Anna."

She was silent.

"We'll get married, Anna, shall we?"

She stopped in the field again and kissed him, clinging to him passionately, in a way he could not understand. He could not understand. But he left it all now, to marriage. That was the solution now, fixed ahead. He wanted her, he wanted to be married to her, he wanted to have her altogether, as his own for ever. And he waited, intent, for the accomplishment. But there was all the while a slight tension of irritation.

He spoke to his uncle and aunt that night.

"Uncle," he said, "Anna and me think of getting married."

"Oh ay!" said Brangwen.

"But how, you have no money?" said the mother.

The youth went pale. He hated these words. But he was like a gleaming, bright pebble, something bright and inalterable. He did not think. He sat there in his hard brightness, and did not speak.

"Have you mentioned it to your own mother?" asked Brangwen.

"No-I'll tell her on Saturday."

"You'll go and see her?"

"Yes."

There was a long pause.

"And what are you going to marry on-your pound a week?"

Again the youth went pale, as if the spirit were being injured in him.

"I don't know," he said, looking at his uncle with his bright inhuman eyes, like a hawk's.

Brangwen stirred in hatred.

"It needs knowing," he said.

"I shall have the money later on," said the nephew. "I will raise some now, and pay it back then."

"Oh ay!-And why this desperate hurry? She's a child of eighteen, and you're a boy of twenty. You're neither of you of age to do as you like yet."

Will Brangwen ducked his head and looked at his uncle with swift, mistrustful eyes, like a caged hawk.

"What does it matter how old she is, and how old I am?" he said. "What's the difference between me now and when I'm thirty?"

"A big difference, let us hope."

"But you have no experience-you have no experience, and no money. Why do you want to marry, without experience or money?" asked the aunt.

"What experience do I want, Aunt?" asked the boy.

And if Brangwen's heart had not been hard and intact with anger, like a precious stone, he would have agreed.

Will Brangwen went home strange and untouched. He felt he could not alter from what he was fixed upon, his will was set. To alter it he must be destroyed. And he would not be destroyed. He had no money. But he would get some from somewhere, it did not matter. He lay awake for many hours, hard and clear and unthinking, his soul crystallising more inalterably. Then he went fast asleep.

It was as if his soul had turned into a hard crystal. He might tremble and quiver and suffer, it did not alter.

The next morning Tom Brangwen, inhuman with anger spoke to Anna.

"What's this about wanting to get married?" he said.

She stood, paling a little, her dark eyes springing to the hostile, startled look of a savage thing that will defend itself, but trembles with sensitiveness.

"I do," she said, out of her unconsciousness.

His anger rose, and he would have liked to break her.

"You do-you do-and what for?" he sneered with contempt. The old, childish agony, the blindness that could recognise nobody, the palpitating antagonism as of a raw, helpless, undefended thing came back on her.

"I do because I do," she cried, in the shrill, hysterical way of her childhood. "You are not my father-my father is dead-you are not my father."

She was still a stranger. She did not recognise him. The cold blade cut down, deep into Brangwen's soul. It cut him off from her.

"And what if I'm not?" he said.

But he could not bear it. It had been so passionately dear to him, her "Father-Daddie."

He went about for some days as if stunned. His wife was bemused. She did not understand. She only thought the marriage was impeded for want of money and position.

There was a horrible silence in the house. Anna kept out of sight as much as possible. She could be for hours alone.

Will Brangwen came back, after stupid scenes at Nottingham. He too was pale and blank, but unchanging. His uncle hated him. He hated this youth, who was so inhuman and obstinate. Nevertheless, it was to Will Brangwen that the uncle, one evening, handed over the shares which he had transferred to Anna Lensky. They were for two thousand five hundred pounds. Will Brangwen looked at his uncle. It was a great deal of the Marsh capital here given away. The youth, however, was only colder and more fixed. He was abstract, purely a fixed will. He gave the shares to Anna.

After which she cried for a whole day, sobbing her eyes out. And at night, when she had heard her mother go to bed, she slipped down and hung in the doorway. Her father sat in his heavy silence, like a monument. He turned his head slowly.

"Daddy," she cried from the doorway, and she ran to him sobbing as if her heart would break. "Daddy-daddy-daddy."

She crouched on the hearthrug with her arms round him and her face against him. His body was so big and comfortable. But something hurt her head intolerably. She sobbed almost with hysteria.

He was silent, with his hand on her shoulder. His heart was bleak. He was not her father. That beloved image she had broken. Who was he then? A man put apart with those whose life has no more developments. He was isolated from her. There was a generation between them, he was old, he had died out from hot life. A great deal of ash was in his fire, cold ash. He felt the inevitable coldness, and in bitterness forgot the fire. He sat in his coldness of age and isolation. He had his own wife. And he blamed himself, he sneered at himself, for this clinging to the young, wanting the young to belong to him.

The child who clung to him wanted her child-husband. As was natural. And from him, Brangwen, she wanted help, so that her life might be properly fitted out. But love she did not want. Why should there be love between them, between the stout, middle-aged man and this child? How could there be anything between them, but mere human willingness to help each other? He was her guardian, no more. His heart was like ice, his face cold and expressionless. She could not move him any more than a statue.

She crept to bed, and cried. But she was going to be married to Will Brangwen, and then she need not bother any more. Brangwen went to bed with a hard, cold heart, and cursed himself. He looked at his wife. She was still his wife. Her dark hair was threaded with grey, her face was beautiful in its gathering age. She was just fifty. How poignantly he saw her! And he wanted to cut out some of his own heart, which was incontinent, and demanded still to share the rapid life of youth. How he hated himself.

His wife was so poignant and timely. She was still young and naive, with some girl's freshness. But she did not want any more the fight, the battle, the control, as he, in his incontinence, still did. She was so natural, and he was ugly, unnatural, in his inability to yield place. How hideous, this greedy middle-age, which must stand in the way of life, like a large demon.

What was missing in his life, that, in his ravening soul, he was not satisfied? He had had that friend at school, his mother, his wife, and Anna? What had he done? He had failed with his friend, he had been a poor son; but he had known satifaction with his wife, let it be enough; he loathed himself for the state he was in over Anna. Yet he was not satisfied. It was agony to know it.

Was his life nothing? Had he nothing to show, no work? He did not count his work, anybody could have done it. What had he known, but the long, marital embrace with his wife! Curious, that this was what his life amounted to! At any rate, it was something, it was eternal. He would say so to anybody, and be proud of it. He lay with his wife in his arms, and she was still his fulfilment, just the same as ever. And that was the be-all and the end-all. Yes, and he was proud of it.

But the bitterness, underneath, that there still remained an unsatisfied Tom Brangwen, who suffered agony because a girl cared nothing for him. He loved his sons-he had them also. But it was the further, the creative life with the girl, he wanted as well. Oh, and he was ashamed. He trampled himself to extinguish himself.

What weariness! There was no peace, however old one grew! One was never right, never decent, never master of oneself. It was as if his hope had been in the girl.

Anna quickly lapsed again into her love for the youth. Will Brangwen had fixed his marriage for the Saturday before Christmas. And he waited for her, in his bright, unquestioning fashion, until then. He wanted her, she was his, he suspended his being till the day should come. The wedding day, December the twenty-third, had come into being for him as an absolute thing. He lived in it.

He did not count the days. But like a man who journeys in a ship, he was suspended till the coming to port.

He worked at his carving, he worked in his office, he came to see her; all was but a form of waiting, without thought or question.

She was much more alive. She wanted to enjoy courtship. He seemed to come and go like the wind, without asking why or whither. But she wanted to enjoy his presence. For her, he was the kernel of life, to touch him alone was bliss. But for him, she was the essence of life. She existed as much when he was at his carving in his lodging in Ilkeston, as when she sat looking at him in the Marsh kitchen. In himself, he knew her. But his outward faculties seemed suspended. He did not see her with his eyes, nor hear her with his voice.

And yet he trembled, sometimes into a kind of swoon, holding her in his arms. They would stand sometimes folded together in the barn, in silence. Then to her, as she felt his young, tense figure with her hands, the bliss was intolerable, intolerable the sense that she possessed him. For his body was so keen and wonderful, it was the only reality in her world. In her world, there was this one tense, vivid body of a man, and then many other shadowy men, all unreal. In him, she touched the centre of reality. And they were together, he and she, at the heart of the secret. How she clutched him to her, his body the central body of all life. Out of the rock of his form the very fountain of life flowed.

But to him, she was a flame that consumed him. The flame flowed up his limbs, flowed through him, till he was consumed, till he existed only as an unconscious, dark transit of flame, deriving from her.

Sometimes, in the darkness, a cow coughed. There was, in the darkness, a slow sound of cud chewing. And it all seemed to flow round them and upon them as the hot blood flows through the womb, laving the unborn young.

Sometimes, when it was cold, they stood to be lovers in the stables, where the air was warm and sharp with ammonia. And during these dark vigils, he learned to know her, her body against his, they drew nearer and nearer together, the kisses came more subtly close and fitting. So when in the thick darkness a horse suddenly scrambled to its feet, with a dull, thunderous sound, they listened as one person listening, they knew as one person, they were conscious of the horse.

Tom Brangwen had taken them a cottage at Cossethay, on a twenty-one years' lease. Will Brangwen's eyes lit up as he saw it. It was the cottage next the church, with dark yewtrees, very black old trees, along the side of the house and the grassy front garden; a red, squarish cottage with a low slate roof, and low windows. It had a long dairy-scullery, a big flagged kitchen, and a low parlour, that went up one step from the kitchen. There were whitewashed beams across the ceilings, and odd corners with cupboards. Looking out through the windows, there was the grassy garden, the procession of black yew trees down one side, and along the other sides, a red wall with ivy separating the place from the high-road and the churchyard. The old, little church, with its small spire on a square tower, seemed to be looking back at the cottage windows.

"There'll be no need to have a clock," said Will Brangwen, peeping out at the white clock-face on the tower, his neighbour.

At the back of the house was a garden adjoining the paddock, a cowshed with standing for two cows, pig-cotes and fowl-houses. Will Brangwen was very happy. Anna was glad to think of being mistress of her own place.

Tom Brangwen was now the fairy godfather. He was never happy unless he was buying something. Will Brangwen, with his interest in all wood-work, was getting the furniture. He was left to buy tables and round-staved chairs and the dressers, quite ordinary stuff, but such as was identified with his cottage.

Tom Brangwen, with more particular thought, spied out what he called handy little things for her. He appeared with a set of new-fangled cooking-pans, with a special sort of hanging lamp, though the rooms were so low, with canny little machines for grinding meat or mashing potatoes or whisking eggs.

Anna took a sharp interest in what he bought, though she was not always pleased. Some of the little contrivances, which he thought so canny, left her doubtful. Nevertheless she was always expectant, on market days there was always a long thrill of anticipation. He arrived with the first darkness, the copper lamps of his cart glowing. And she ran to the gate, as he, a dark, burly figure up in the cart, was bending over his parcels.

"It's cupboard love as brings you out so sharp," he said, his voice resounding in the cold darkness. Nevertheless he was excited. And she, taking one of the cart lamps, poked and peered among the jumble of things he had brought, pushing aside the oil or implements he had got for himself.

She dragged out a pair of small, strong bellows, registered them in her mind, and then pulled uncertainly at something else. It had a long handle, and a piece of brown paper round the middle of it, like a waistcoat.

"What's this?" she said, poking.

He stopped to look at her. She went to the lamp-light by the horse, and stood there bent over the new thing, while her hair was like bronze, her apron white and cheerful. Her fingers plucked busily at the paper. She dragged forth a little wringer, with clean indiarubber rollers. She examined it critically, not knowing quite how it worked.

She looked up at him. He stood a shadowy presence beyond the light.

"How does it go?" she asked.

"Why, it's for pulpin' turnips," he replied.

She looked at him. His voice disturbed her.

"Don't be silly. It's a little mangle," she said. "How do you stand it, though?"

"You screw it on th' side o' your wash-tub." He came and held it out to her.

"Oh, yes!" she cried, with one of her little skipping movements, which still came when she was suddenly glad.

And without another thought she ran off into the house, leaving him to untackle the horse. And when he came into the scullery, he found her there, with the little wringer fixed on the dolly-tub, turning blissfully at the handle, and Tilly beside her, exclaiming:

"My word, that's a natty little thing! That'll save you luggin' your inside out. That's the latest contraption, that is."

And Anna turned away at the handle, with great gusto of possession. Then she let Tilly have a turn.

"It fair runs by itself," said Tilly, turning on and on. "Your clothes'll nip out on to th' line."

Chapter 5

Wedding at the Marsh

It was a beautiful sunny day for the wedding, a muddy earth but a bright sky. They had three cabs and two big closed-in vehicles. Everybody crowded in the parlour in excitement. Anna was still upstairs. Her father kept taking a nip of brandy. He was handsome in his black coat and grey trousers. His voice was hearty but troubled. His wife came down in dark grey silk with lace, and a touch of peacock- blue in her bonnet. Her little body was very sure and definite. Brangwen was thankful she was there, to sustain him among all these people.

The carriages! The Nottingham Mrs. Brangwen, in silk brocade, stands in the doorway saying who must go with whom. There is a great bustle. The front door is opened, and the wedding guests are walking down the garden path, whilst those still waiting peer through the window, and the little crowd at the gate gorps and stretches. How funny such dressed-up people look in the winter sunshine!

They are gone-another lot! There begins to be more room. Anna comes down blushing and very shy, to be viewed in her white silk and her veil. Her mother-in-law surveys her objectively, twitches the white train, arranges the folds of the veil and asserts herself.

Loud exclamations from the window that the bridegroom's carriage has just passed.

"Where's your hat, father, and your gloves?" cries the bride, stamping her white slipper, her eyes flashing through her veil. He hunts round-his hair is ruffled. Everybody has gone but the bride and her father. He is ready-his face very red and daunted. Tilly dithers in the little porch, waiting to open the door. A waiting woman walks round Anna, who asks:

"Am I all right?"

She is ready. She bridles herself and looks queenly. She waves her hand sharply to her father:

"Come here!"

He goes. She puts her hand very lightly on his arm, and holding her bouquet like a shower, stepping, oh, very graciously, just a little impatient with her father for being so red in the face, she sweeps slowly past the fluttering Tilly, and down the path. There are hoarse shouts at the gate, and all her floating foamy whiteness passes slowly into the cab.

Her father notices her slim ankle and foot as she steps up: a child's foot. His heart is hard with tenderness. But she is in ecstasies with herself for making such a lovely spectacle. All the way she sat flamboyant with bliss because it was all so lovely. She looked down solicitously at her bouquet: white roses and lilies-of-the-valley and tube-roses and maidenhair fern-very rich and cascade-like.

Her father sat bewildered with all this strangeness, his heart was so full it felt hard, and he couldn't think of anything.

The church was decorated for Christmas, dark with evergreens, cold and snowy with white flowers. He went vaguely down to the altar. How long was it since he had gone to be married himself? He was not sure whether he was going to be married now, or what he had come for. He had a troubled notion that he had to do something or other. He saw his wife's bonnet, and wondered why she wasn't there with him.

They stood before the altar. He was staring up at the east window, that glowed intensely, a sort of blue purple: it was deep blue glowing, and some crimson, and little yellow flowers held fast in veins of shadow, in a heavy web of darkness. How it burned alive in radiance among its black web.

"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" He felt somebody touch him. He started. The words still re-echoed in his memory, but were drawing off.

"Me," he said hastily.

Ann bent her head and smiled in her veil. How absurd he was.

Brangwen was staring away at the burning blue window at the back of the altar, and wondering vaguely, with pain, if he ever should get old, if he ever should feel arrived and established. He was here at Anna's wedding. Well, what right had he to feel responsible, like a father? He was still as unsure and unfixed as when he had married himself. His wife and he! With a pang of anguish he realised what uncertainties they both were. He was a man of forty-five. Forty-five! In five more years fifty. Then sixty-then seventy-then it was finished. My God-and one still was so unestablished!

How did one grow old-how could one become confident? He wished he felt older. Why, what difference was there, as far as he felt matured or completed, between him now and him at his own wedding? He might be getting married over again-he and his wife. He felt himself tiny, a little, upright figure on a plain circled round with the immense, roaring sky: he and his wife, two little, upright figures walking across this plain, whilst the heavens shimmered and roared about them. When did one come to an end? In which direction was it finished? There was no end, no finish, only this roaring vast space. Did one never get old, never die? That was the clue. He exulted strangely, with torture. He would go on with his wife, he and she like two children camping in the plains. What was sure but the endless sky? But that was so sure, so boundless.

Still the royal blue colour burned and blazed and sported itself in the web of darkness before him, unwearingly rich and splendid. How rich and splendid his own life was, red and burning and blazing and sporting itself in the dark meshes of his body: and his wife, how she glowed and burned dark within her meshes! Always it was so unfinished and unformed!

There was a loud noise of the organ. The whole party was trooping to the vestry. There was a blotted, scrawled book-and that young girl putting back her veil in her vanity, and laying her hand with the wedding-ring self-consciously conspicuous, and signing her name proudly because of the vain spectacle she made:

"Anna Theresa Lensky."

"Anna Theresa Lensky"-what a vain, independent minx she was! The bridegroom, slender in his black swallow-tail and grey trousers, solemn as a young solemn cat, was writing seriously:

"William Brangwen."

That looked more like it.

"Come and sign, father," cried the imperious young hussy.

"Thomas Brangwen-clumsy-fist," he said to himself as he signed.

Then his brother, a big, sallow fellow with black side-whiskers wrote:

"Alfred Brangwen."

"How many more Brangwens?" said Tom Brangwen, ashamed of the too-frequent recurrence of his family name.

When they were out again in the sunshine, and he saw the frost hoary and blue among the long grass under the tomb-stones, the holly-berries overhead twinkling scarlet as the bells rang, the yew trees hanging their black, motionless, ragged boughs, everything seemed like a vision.

The marriage party went across the graveyard to the wall, mounted it by the little steps, and descended. Oh, a vain white peacock of a bride perching herself on the top of the wall and giving her hand to the bridegroom on the other side, to be helped down! The vanity of her white, slim, daintily-stepping feet, and her arched neck. And the regal impudence with which she seemed to dismiss them all, the others, parents and wedding guests, as she went with her young husband.

In the cottage big fires were burning, there were dozens of glasses on the table, and holly and mistletoe hanging up. The wedding party crowded in, and Tom Brangwen, becoming roisterous, poured out drinks. Everybody must drink. The bells were ringing away against the windows.

"Lift your glasses up," shouted Tom Brangwen from the parlour, "lift your glasses up, an' drink to the hearth an' home-hearth an' home, an' may they enjoy it."

"Night an' day, an' may they enjoy it," shouted Frank Brangwen, in addition.

"Hammer an' tongs, and may they enjoy it," shouted Alfred Brangwen, the saturnine.

"Fill your glasses up, an' let's have it all over again," shouted Tom Brangwen.

"Hearth an' home, an' may ye enjoy it."

There was a ragged shout of the company in response.

"Bed an' blessin', an' may ye enjoy it," shouted Frank Brangwen.

There was a swelling chorus in answer.

"Comin' and goin', an' may ye enjoy it," shouted the saturnine Alfred Brangwen, and the men roared by now boldly, and the women said, "Just hark, now!"

There was a touch of scandal in the air.

Then the party rolled off in the carriages, full speed back to the Marsh, to a large meal of the high-tea order, which lasted for an hour and a half. The bride and bridegroom sat at the head of the table, very prim and shining both of them, wordless, whilst the company raged down the table.

The Brangwen men had brandy in their tea, and were becoming unmanageable. The saturnine Alfred had glittering, unseeing eyes, and a strange, fierce way of laughing that showed his teeth. His wife glowered at him and jerked her head at him like a snake. He was oblivious. Frank Brangwen, the butcher, flushed and florid and handsome, roared echoes to his two brothers. Tom Brangwen, in his solid fashion, was letting himself go at last.

These three brothers dominated the whole company. Tom Brangwen wanted to make a speech. For the first time in his life, he must spread himself wordily.

"Marriage," he began, his eyes twinkling and yet quite profound, for he was deeply serious and hugely amused at the same time, "Marriage," he said, speaking in the slow, full-mouthed way of the Brangwens, "is what we're made for----"

"Let him talk," said Alfred Brangwen, slowly and inscrutably, "let him talk." Mrs. Alfred darted indignant eyes at her husband.

"A man," continued Tom Brangwen, "enjoys being a man: for what purpose was he made a man, if not to enjoy it?"

"That a true word," said Frank, floridly.

"And likewise," continued Tom Brangwen, "a woman enjoys being a woman: at least we surmise she does----"

"Oh, don't you bother----" called a farmer's wife.

"You may back your life they'd be summisin'." said Frank's wife.

"Now," continued Tom Brangwen, "for a man to be a man, it takes a woman----"

"It does that," said a woman grimly.

"And for a woman to be a woman, it takes a man----" continued Tom Brangwen.

"All speak up, men," chimed in a feminine voice.

"Therefore we have marriage," continued Tom Brangwen.

"Hold, hold," said Alfred Brangwen. "Don't run us off our legs."

And in dead silence the glasses were filled. The bride and bridegroom, two children, sat with intent, shining faces at the head of the table, abstracted.

"There's no marriage in heaven," went on Tom Brangwen; "but on earth there is marriage."

"That's the difference between 'em," said Alfred Brangwen, mocking.

"Alfred," said Tom Brangwen, "keep your remarks till afterwards, and then we'll thank you for them.-There's very little else, on earth, but marriage. You can talk about making money, or saving souls. You can save your own soul seven times over, and you may have a mint of money, but your soul goes gnawin', gnawin', gnawin', and it says there's something it must have. In heaven there is no marriage. But on earth there is marriage, else heaven drops out, and there's no bottom to it."

"Just hark you now," said Frank's wife.

"Go on, Thomas," said Alfred sardonically.

"If we've got to be Angels," went on Tom Brangwen, haranguing the company at large, "and if there is no such thing as a man nor a woman amongst them, then it seems to me as a married couple makes one Angel."

"It's the brandy," said Alfred Brangwen wearily.

"For," said Tom Brangwen, and the company was listening to the conundrum, "an Angel can't be less than a human being. And if it was only the soul of a man minus the man, then it would be less than a human being."

"Decidedly," said Alfred.

And a laugh went round the table. But Tom Brangwen was inspired.

"An Angel's got to be more than a human being," he continued. "So I say, an Angel is the soul of man and woman in one: they rise united at the Judgment Day, as one Angel----"

"Praising the Lord," said Frank.

"Praising the Lord," repeated Tom.

"And what about the women left over?" asked Alfred, jeering. The company was getting uneasy.

"That I can't tell. How do I know as there is anybody left over at the Judgment Day? Let that be. What I say is, that when a man's soul and a woman's soul unites together--that makes an Angel----"

"I dunno about souls. I know as one plus one makes three, sometimes," said Frank. But he had the laugh to himself.

"Bodies and souls, it's the same," said Tom.

"And what about your missis, who was married afore you knew her?" asked Alfred, set on edge by this discourse.

"That I can't tell you. If I am to become an Angel, it'll be my married soul, and not my single soul. It'll not be the soul of me when I was a lad: for I hadn't a soul as would make an Angel then."

"I can always remember," said Frank's wife, "when our Harold was bad, he did nothink but see an angel at th' back o' th' lookin'-glass. 'Look, mother,' 'e said, 'at that angel!' 'Theer isn't no angel, my duck,' I said, but he wouldn't have it. I took th' lookin'-glass off'n th' dressin'-table, but it made no difference. He kep' on sayin' it was there. My word, it did give me a turn. I thought for sure as I'd lost him."

"I can remember," said another man, Tom's sister's husband, "my mother gave me a good hidin' once, for sayin' I'd got an angel up my nose. She seed me pokin', an' she said: 'What are you pokin' at your nose for-give over.' 'There's an angel up it,' I said, an' she fetched me such a wipe. But there was. We used to call them thistle things 'angels' as wafts about. An' I'd pushed one o' these up my nose, for some reason or other."

"It's wonderful what children will get up their noses," said Frank's wife. "I c'n remember our Hemmie, she shoved one o' them bluebell things out o' th' middle of a bluebell, what they call 'candles', up her nose, and oh, we had some work! I'd seen her stickin' 'em on the end of her nose, like, but I never thought she'd be so soft as to shove it right up. She was a gel of eight or more. Oh, my word, we got a crochet-hook an' I don't know what ..."

Tom Brangwen's mood of inspiration began to pass away. He forgot all about it, and was soon roaring and shouting with the rest. Outside the wake came, singing the carols. They were invited into the bursting house. They had two fiddles and a piccolo. There in the parlour they played carols, and the whole company sang them at the top of its voice. Only the bride and bridegroom sat with shining eyes and strange, bright faces, and scarcely sang, or only with just moving lips.

The wake departed, and the guysers came. There was loud applause, and shouting and excitement as the old mystery play of St. George, in which every man present had acted as a boy, proceeded, with banging and thumping of club and dripping pan.

"By Jove, I got a crack once, when I was playin' Beelzebub," said Tom Brangwen, his eyes full of water with laughing. "It knocked all th' sense out of me as you'd crack an egg. But I tell you, when I come to, I played Old Johnny Roger with St. George, I did that."

He was shaking with laughter. Another knock came at the door. There was a hush.

"It's th' cab," said somebody from the door.

"Walk in," shouted Tom Brangwen, and a red-faced grinning man entered.

"Now, you two, get yourselves ready an' off to blanket fair," shouted Tom Brangwen. "Strike a daisy, but if you're not off like a blink o' lightnin', you shanna go, you s'll sleep separate."

Anna rose silently and went to change her dress. Will Brangwen would have gone out, but Tilly came with his hat and coat. The youth was helped on.

"Well, here's luck, my boy," shouted his father.

"When th' fat's in th' fire, let it frizzle," admonished his uncle Frank.

"Fair and softly does it, fair an' softly does it," cried his aunt, Frank's wife, contrary.

"You don't want to fall over yourself," said his uncle by marriage. "You're not a bull at a gate."

"Let a man have his own road," said Tom Brangwen testily. "Don't be so free of your advice-it's his wedding this time, not yours."

"'E don't want many sign-posts," said his father. "There's some roads a man has to be led, an' there's some roads a boss-eyed man can only follow wi' one eye shut. But this road can't be lost by a blind man nor a boss-eyed man nor a cripple-and he's neither, thank God."

"Don't you be so sure o' your walkin' powers," cried Frank's wife. "There's many a man gets no further than half-way, nor can't to save his life, let him live for ever."

"Why, how do you know?" said Alfred.

"It's plain enough in th' looks o' some," retorted Lizzie, his sister-in-law.

The youth stood with a faint, half-hearing smile on his face. He was tense and abstracted. These things, or anything, scarcely touched him.

Anna came down, in her day dress, very elusive. She kissed everybody, men and women, Will Brangwen shook hands with everybody, kissed his mother, who began to cry, and the whole party went surging out to the cab.

The young couple were shut up, last injunctions shouted at them.

"Drive on," shouted Tom Brangwen.

The cab rolled off. They saw the light diminish under the ash trees. Then the whole party, quietened, went indoors.

"They'll have three good fires burning," said Tom Brangwen, looking at his watch. "I told Emma to make 'em up at nine, an' then leave the door on th' latch. It's only half-past. They'll have three fires burning, an' lamps lighted, an' Emma will ha' warmed th' bed wi' th' warmin' pan. So I s'd think they'll be all right."

The party was much quieter. They talked of the young couple.

"She said she didn't want a servant in," said Tom Brangwen. "The house isn't big enough, she'd always have the creature under her nose. Emma'll do what is wanted of her, an' they'll be to themselves."

"It's best," said Lizzie, "you're more free."

The party talked on slowly. Brangwen looked at his watch.

"Let's go an' give 'em a carol," he said. "We s'll find th' fiddles at the 'Cock an' Robin'."

"Ay, come on," said Frank.

Alfred rose in silence. The brother-in-law and one of Will's brothers rose also.

The five men went out. The night was flashing with stars. Sirius blazed like a signal at the side of the hill, Orion, stately and magnificent, was sloping along.

Tom walked with his brother, Alfred. The men's heels rang on the ground.

"It's a fine night," said Tom.

"Ay," said Alfred.

"Nice to get out."

"Ay."

The brothers walked close together, the bond of blood strong between them. Tom always felt very much the junior to Alfred.

"It's a long while since you left home," he said.

"Ay," said Alfred. "I thought I was getting a bit oldish-but I'm not. It's the things you've got as gets worn out, it's not you yourself."

"Why, what's worn out?"

"Most folks as I've anything to do with-as has anything to do with me. They all break down. You've got to go on by yourself, if it's only to perdition. There's nobody going alongside even there."

Tom Brangwen meditated this.

"Maybe you was never broken in," he said.

"No, I never was," said Alfred proudly.

And Tom felt his elder brother despised him a little. He winced under it.

"Everybody's got a way of their own," he said, stubbornly. "It's only a dog as hasn't. An' them as can't take what they give an' give what they take, they must go by themselves, or get a dog as'll follow 'em."

"They can do without the dog," said his brother. And again Tom Brangwen was humble, thinking his brother was bigger than himself. But if he was, he was. And if it were finer to go alone, it was: he did not want to go for all that.

They went over the field, where a thin, keen wind blew round the ball of the hill, in the starlight. They came to the stile, and to the side of Anna's house. The lights were out, only on the blinds of the rooms downstairs, and of a bedroom upstairs, firelight flickered.

"We'd better leave 'em alone," said Alfred Brangwen.

"Nay, nay," said Tom. "We'll carol 'em, for th' last time."

And in a quarter of an hour's time, eleven silent, rather tipsy men scrambled over the wall, and into the garden by the yew trees, outside the windows where faint firelight glowered on the blinds. There came a shrill sound, two violins and a piccolo shrilling on the frosty air.

"In the fields with their flocks abiding." A commotion of men's voices broke out singing in ragged unison.

Anna Brangwen had started up, listening, when the music began. She was afraid.

"It's the wake," he whispered.

She remained tense, her heart beating heavily, possessed with strange, strong fear. Then there came the burst of men's singing, rather uneven. She strained still, listening.

"It's Dad," she said, in a low voice. They were silent, listening.

"And my father," he said.

She listened still. But she was sure. She sank down again into bed, into his arms. He held her very close, kissing her. The hymn rambled on outside, all the men singing their best, having forgotten everything else under the spell of the fiddles and the tune. The firelight glowed against the darkness in the room. Anna could hear her father singing with gusto.

"Aren't they silly," she whispered.

And they crept closer, closer together, hearts beating to one another. And even as the hymn rolled on, they ceased to hear it.

Chapter 6

Anna Victrix

Will Brangwen had some weeks of holiday after his marriage, so the two took their honeymoon in full hands, alone in their cottage together.

And to him, as the days went by, it was as if the heavens had fallen, and he were sitting with her among the ruins, in a new world, everybody else buried, themselves two blissful survivors, with everything to squander as they would. At first, he could not get rid of a culpable sense of licence on his part. Wasn't there some duty outside, calling him and he did not come?

It was all very well at night, when the doors were locked and the darkness drawn round the two of them. Then they were the only inhabitants of the visible earth, the rest were under the flood. And being alone in the world, they were a law unto themselves, they could enjoy and squander and waste like conscienceless gods.

But in the morning, as the carts clanked by, and children shouted down the lane; as the hucksters came calling their wares, and the church clock struck eleven, and he and she had not got up yet, even to breakfast, he could not help feeling guilty, as if he were committing a breach of the law-ashamed that he was not up and doing.

"Doing what?" she asked. "What is there to do? You will only lounge about."

Still, even lounging about was respectable. One was at least in connection with the world, then. Whereas now, lying so still and peacefully, while the daylight came obscurely through the drawn blind, one was severed from the world, one shut oneself off in tacit denial of the world. And he was troubled.

But it was so sweet and satisfying lying there talking desultorily with her. It was sweeter than sunshine, and not so evanescent. It was even irritating the way the church-clock kept on chiming: there seemed no space between the hours, just a moment, golden and still, whilst she traced his features with her finger-tips, utterly careless and happy, and he loved her to do it.

But he was strange and unused. So suddenly, everything that had been before was shed away and gone. One day, he was a bachelor, living with the world. The next day, he was with her, as remote from the world as if the two of them were buried like a seed in darkness. Suddenly, like a chestnut falling out of a burr, he was shed naked and glistening on to a soft, fecund earth, leaving behind him the hard rind of worldly knowledge and experience. He heard it in the huckster's cries, the noise of carts, the calling of children. And it was all like the hard, shed rind, discarded. Inside, in the softness and stillness of the room, was the naked kernel, that palpitated in silent activity, absorbed in reality.

Inside the room was a great steadiness, a core of living eternity. Only far outside, at the rim, went on the noise and the destruction. Here at the centre the great wheel was motionless, centred upon itself. Here was a poised, unflawed stillness that was beyond time, because it remained the same, inexhaustible, unchanging, unexhausted.

As they lay close together, complete and beyond the touch of time or change, it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space and the rapid agitation of life, deep, deep inside them all, at the centre where there is utter radiance, and eternal being, and the silence absorbed in praise: the steady core of all movements, the unawakened sleep of all wakefulness. They found themselves there, and they lay still, in each other's arms; for their moment they were at the heart of eternity, whilst time roared far off, for ever far off, towards the rim.

Then gradually they were passed away from the supreme centre, down the circles of praise and joy and gladness, further and further out, towards the noise and the friction. But their hearts had burned and were tempered by the inner reality, they were unalterably glad.

Gradually they began to wake up, the noises outside became more real. They understood and answered the call outside. They counted the strokes of the bell. And when they counted midday, they understood that it was midday, in the world, and for themselves also.

It dawned upon her that she was hungry. She had been getting hungrier for a lifetime. But even yet it was not sufficiently real to rouse her. A long way off she could hear the words, "I am dying of hunger." Yet she lay still, separate, at peace, and the words were unuttered. There was still another lapse.

And then, quite calmly, even a little surprised, she was in the present, and was saying:

"I am dying with hunger."

"So am I," he said calmly, as if it were of not the slightest significance. And they relapsed into the warm, golden stillness. And the minutes flowed unheeded past the window outside.

Then suddenly she stirred against him.

"My dear, I am dying of hunger," she said.

It was a slight pain to him to be brought to.

"We'll get up," he said, unmoving.

And she sank her head on to him again, and they lay still, lapsing. Half consciously, he heard the clock chime the hour. She did not hear.

"Do get up," she murmured at length, "and give me something to eat."

"Yes," he said, and he put his arms round her, and she lay with her face on him. They were faintly astonished that they did not move. The minutes rustled louder at the window.

"Let me go then," he said.

She lifted her head from him, relinquishingly. With a little breaking away, he moved out of bed, and was taking his clothes. She stretched out her hand to him.

"You are so nice," she said, and he went back for a moment or two.

Then actually he did slip into some clothes, and, looking round quickly at her, was gone out of the room. She lay translated again into a pale, clearer peace. As if she were a spirit, she listened to the noise of him downstairs, as if she were no longer of the material world.

It was half-past one. He looked at the silent kitchen, untouched from last night, dim with the drawn blind. And he hastened to draw up the blind, so people should know they were not in bed any later. Well, it was his own house, it did not matter. Hastily he put wood in the grate and made a fire. He exulted in himself, like an adventurer on an undiscovered island. The fire blazed up, he put on the kettle. How happy he felt! How still and secluded the house was! There were only he and she in the world.

But when he unbolted the door, and, half-dressed, looked out, he felt furtive and guilty. The world was there, after all. And he had felt so secure, as though this house were the Ark in the flood, and all the rest was drowned. The world was there: and it was afternoon. The morning had vanished and gone by, the day was growing old. Where was the bright, fresh morning? He was accused. Was the morning gone, and he had lain with blinds drawn, let it pass by unnoticed?

He looked again round the chill, grey afternoon. And he himself so soft and warm and glowing! There were two sprigs of yellow jasmine in the saucer that covered the milk-jug. He wondered who had been and left the sign. Taking the jug, he hastily shut the door. Let the day and the daylight drop out, let it go by unseen. He did not care. What did one day more or less matter to him. It could fall into oblivion unspent if it liked, this one course of daylight.

"Somebody has been and found the door locked," he said when he went upstairs with the tray. He gave her the two sprigs of jasmine. She laughed as she sat up in bed, childishly threading the flowers in the breast of her nightdress. Her brown hair stuck out like a nimbus, all fierce, round her softly glowing face. Her dark eyes watched the tray eagerly.

"How good!" she cried, sniffing the cold air. "I'm glad you did a lot." And she stretched out her hands eagerly for her plate-"Come back to bed, quick-it's cold." She rubbed her hands together sharply.

He put off what little clothing he had on, and sat beside her in the bed.

"You look like a lion, with your mane sticking out, and your nose pushed over your food," he said.

She tinkled with laughter, and gladly ate her breakfast.

The morning was sunk away unseen, the afternoon was steadily going too, and he was letting it go. One bright transit of daylight gone by unacknowledged! There was something unmanly, recusant in it. He could not quite reconcile himself to the fact. He felt he ought to get up, go out quickly into the daylight, and work or spend himself energetically in the open air of the afternoon, retrieving what was left to him of the day.

But he did not go. Well, one might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb. If he had lost this day of his life, he had lost it. He gave it up. He was not going to count his losses. She didn't care. She didn't care in the least. Then why should he? Should he be behind her in recklessness and independence? She was superb in her indifference. He wanted to be like her.

She took her responsibilities lightly. When she spilled her tea on the pillow, she rubbed it carelessly with a handkerchief, and turned over the pillow. He would have felt guilty. She did not. And it pleased him. It pleased him very much to see how these things did not matter to her.

When the meal was over, she wiped her mouth on her handkerchief quickly, satisfied and happy, and settled down on the pillow again, with her fingers in his close, strange, fur-like hair.

The evening began to fall, the light was half alive, livid. He hid his face against her.

"I don't like the twilight," he said.

"I love it," she answered.

He hid his face against her, who was warm and like sunlight. She seemed to have sunlight inside her. Her heart beating seemed like sunlight upon him. In her was a more real day than the day could give: so warm and steady and restoring. He hid his face against her whilst the twilight fell, whilst she lay staring out with her unseeing dark eyes, as if she wandered forth untrammelled in the vagueness. The vagueness gave her scope and set her free.

To him, turned towards her heart-pulse, all was very still and very warm and very close, like noon-tide. He was glad to know this warm, full noon. It ripened him and took away his responsibility, some of his conscience.

They got up when it was quite dark. She hastily twisted her hair into a knot, and was dressed in a twinkling. Then they went downstairs, drew to the fire, and sat in silence, saying a few words now and then.

Her father was coming. She bundled the dishes away, flew round and tidied the room, assumed another character, and again seated herself. He sat thinking of his carving of Eve. He loved to go over his carving in his mind, dwelling on every stroke, every line. How he loved it now! When he went back to his Creation-panel again, he would finish his Eve, tender and sparkling. It did not satisfy him yet. The Lord should labour over her in a silent passion of Creation, and Adam should be tense as if in a dream of immortality, and Eve should take form glimmeringly, shadowily, as if the Lord must wrestle with His own soul for her, yet she was a radiance.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked.

He found it difficult to say. His soul became shy when he tried to communicate it.

"I was thinking my Eve was too hard and lively."

"Why?"

"I don't know. She should be more----," he made a gesture of infinite tenderness.

There was a stillness with a little joy. He could not tell her any more. Why could he not tell her any more? She felt a pang of disconsolate sadness. But it was nothing. She went to him.

Her father came, and found them both very glowing, like an open flower. He loved to sit with them. Where there was a perfume of love, anyone who came must breathe it. They were both very quick and alive, lit up from the other-world, so that it was quite an experience for them, that anyone else could exist.

But still it troubled Will Brangwen a little, in his orderly, conventional mind, that the established rule of things had gone so utterly. One ought to get up in the morning and wash oneself and be a decent social being. Instead, the two of them stayed in bed till nightfall, and then got up, she never washed her face, but sat there talking to her father as bright and shameless as a daisy opened out of the dew. Or she got up at ten o'clock, and quite blithely went to bed again at three, or at half-past four, stripping him naked in the daylight, and all so gladly and perfectly, oblivious quite of his qualms. He let her do as she liked with him, and shone with strange pleasure. She was to dispose of him as she would. He was translated with gladness to be in her hands. And down went his qualms, his maxims, his rules, his smaller beliefs, she scattered them like an expert skittle-player. He was very much astonished and delighted to see them scatter.

He stood and gazed and grinned with wonder whilst his Tablets of Stone went bounding and bumping and splintering down the hill, dislodged for ever. Indeed, it was true as they said, that a man wasn't born before he was married. What a change indeed!

He surveyed the rind of the world: houses, factories, trams, the discarded rind; people scurrying about, work going on, all on the discarded surface. An earthquake had burst it all from inside. It was as if the surface of the world had been broken away entire: Ilkeston, streets, church, people, work, rule-of-the-day, all intact; and yet peeled away into unreality, leaving here exposed the inside, the reality: one's own being, strange feelings and passions and yearnings and beliefs and aspirations, suddenly become present, revealed, the permanent bedrock, knitted one rock with the woman one loved. It was confounding. Things are not what they seem! When he was a child, he had thought a woman was a woman merely by virtue of her skirts and petticoats. And now, lo, the whole world could be divested of its garment, the garment could lie there shed away intact, and one could stand in a new world, a new earth, naked in a new, naked universe. It was too astounding and miraculous.

This then was marriage! The old things didn't matter any more. One got up at four o'clock, and had broth at tea-time and made toffee in the middle of the night. One didn't put on one's clothes or one did put on one's clothes. He still was not quite sure it was not criminal. But it was a discovery to find one might be so supremely absolved. All that mattered was that he should love her and she should love him and they should live kindled to one another, like the Lord in two burning bushes that were not consumed. And so they lived for the time.

She was less hampered than he, so she came more quickly to her fulness, and was sooner ready to enjoy again a return to the outside world. She was going to give a tea-party. His heart sank. He wanted to go on, to go on as they were. He wanted to have done with the outside world, to declare it finished for ever. He was anxious with a deep desire and anxiety that she should stay with him where they were in the timeless universe of free, perfect limbs and immortal breast, affirming that the old outward order was finished. The new order was begun to last for ever, the living life, palpitating from the gleaming core, to action, without crust or cover or outward lie. But no, he could not keep her. She wanted the dead world again-she wanted to walk on the outside once more. She was going to give a tea-party. It made him frightened and furious and miserable. He was afraid all would be lost that he had so newly come into: like the youth in the fairy tale, who was king for one day in the year, and for the rest a beaten herd: like Cinderella also, at the feast. He was sullen. But she blithely began to make preparations for her tea-party. His fear was too strong, he was troubled, he hated her shallow anticipation and joy. Was she not forfeiting the reality, the one reality, for all that was shallow and worthless? Wasn't she carelessly taking off her crown to be an artificial figure having other artificial women to tea: when she might have been perfect with him, and kept him perfect, in the land of intimate connection? Now he must be deposed, his joy must be destroyed, he must put on the vulgar, shallow death of an outward existence.

He ground his soul in uneasiness and fear. But she rose to a real outburst of house-work, turning him away as she shoved the furniture aside to her broom. He stood hanging miserable near. He wanted her back. Dread, and desire for her to stay with him, and shame at his own dependence on her drove him to anger. He began to lose his head. The wonder was going to pass away again. All the love, the magnificent new order was going to be lost, she would forfeit it all for the outside things. She would admit the outside world again, she would throw away the living fruit for the ostensible rind. He began to hate this in her. Driven by fear of her departure into a state of helplessness, almost of imbecility, he wandered about the house.

And she, with her skirts kilted up, flew round at her work, absorbed.

"Shake the rug then, if you must hang round," she said.

And fretting with resentment, he went to shake the rug. She was blithely unconscious of him. He came back, hanging near to her.

"Can't you do anything?" she said, as if to a child, impatiently. "Can't you do your wood-work?"

"Where shall I do it?" he asked, harsh with pain.

"Anywhere."

How furious that made him.

"Or go for a walk," she continued. "Go down to the Marsh. Don't hang about as if you were only half there."

He winced and hated it. He went away to read. Never had his soul felt so flayed and uncreated.

And soon he must come down again to her. His hovering near her, wanting her to be with him, the futility of him, the way his hands hung, irritated her beyond bearing. She turned on him blindly and destructively, he became a mad creature, black and electric with fury. The dark storms rose in him, his eyes glowed black and evil, he was fiendish in his thwarted soul.

There followed two black and ghastly days, when she was set in anguish against him, and he felt as if he were in a black, violent underworld, and his wrists quivered murderously. And she resisted him. He seemed a dark, almost evil thing, pursuing her, hanging on to her, burdening her. She would give anything to have him removed.

"You need some work to do," she said. "You ought to be at work. Can't you do something?"

His soul only grew the blacker. His condition now became complete, the darkness of his soul was thorough. Everything had gone: he remained complete in his own tense, black will. He was now unaware of her. She did not exist. His dark, passionate soul had recoiled upon itself, and now, clinched and coiled round a centre of hatred, existed in its own power. There was a curiously ugly pallor, an expressionlessness in his face. She shuddered from him. She was afraid of him. His will seemed grappled upon her.

She retreated before him. She went down to the Marsh, she entered again the immunity of her parents' love for her. He remained at Yew Cottage, black and clinched, his mind dead. He was unable to work at his wood-carving. He went on working monotonously at the garden, blindly, like a mole.

As she came home, up the hill, looking away at the town dim and blue on the hill, her heart relaxed and became yearning. She did not want to fight him any more. She wanted love-oh, love. Her feet began to hurry. She wanted to get back to him. Her heart became tight with yearning for him.

He had been making the garden in order, cutting the edges of the turf, laying the path with stones. He was a good, capable workman.

"How nice you've made it," she said, approaching tentatively down the path.

But he did not heed, he did not hear. His brain was solid and dead.

"Haven't you made it nice?" she repeated, rather plaintively.

He looked up at her, with that fixed, expressionless face and unseeing eyes which shocked her, made her go dazed and blind. Then he turned away. She saw his slender, stooping figure groping. A revulsion came over her. She went indoors.

As she took off her hat in the bedroom, she found herself weeping bitterly, with some of the old, anguished, childish desolation. She sat still and cried on. She did not want him to know. She was afraid of his hard, evil moments, the head dropped a little, rigidly, in a crouching, cruel way. She was afraid of him. He seemed to lacerate her sensitive femaleness. He seemed to hurt her womb, to take pleasure in torturing her.

He came into the house. The sound of his footsteps in his heavy boots filled her with horror: a hard, cruel, malignant sound. She was afraid he would come upstairs. But he did not. She waited apprehensively. He went out.

Where she was most vulnerable, he hurt her. Oh, where she was delivered over to him, in her very soft femaleness, he seemed to lacerate her and desecrate her. She pressed her hands over her womb in anguish, whilst the tears ran down her face. And why, and why? Why was he like this?

Suddenly she dried her tears. She must get the tea ready. She went downstairs and set the table. When the meal was ready, she called to him.

"I've mashed the tea, Will, are you coming?"

She herself could hear the sound of tears in her own voice, and she began to cry again. He did not answer, but went on with his work. She waited a few minutes, in anguish. Fear came over her, she was panic-stricken with terror, like a child; and she could not go home again to her father; she was held by the power in this man who had taken her.

She turned indoors so that he should not see her tears. She sat down to table. Presently he came into the scullery. His movements jarred on her, as she heard them. How horrible was the way he pumped, exacerbating, so cruel! How she hated to hear him! How he hated her! How his hatred was like blows upon her! The tears were coming again.

He came in, his face wooden and lifeless, fixed, persistent. He sat down to tea, his head dropped over his cup, uglily. His hands were red from the cold water, and there were rims of earth in his nails. He went on with his tea.

It was his negative insensitiveness to her that she could not bear, something clayey and ugly. His intelligence was self-absorbed. How unnatural it was to sit with a self-absorbed creature, like something negative ensconced opposite one. Nothing could touch him-he could only absorb things into his own self.

The tears were running down her face. Something startled him, and he was looking up at her with his hateful, hard, bright eyes, hard and unchanging as a bird of prey.

"What are you crying for?" came the grating voice.

She winced through her womb. She could not stop crying.

"What are you crying for?" came the question again, in just the same tone. And still there was silence, with only the sniff of her tears.

His eyes glittered, and as if with malignant desire. She shrank and became blind. She was like a bird being beaten down. A sort of swoon of helplessness came over her. She was of another order than he, she had no defence against him. Against such an influence, she was only vulnerable, she was given up.

He rose and went out of the house, possessed by the evil spirit. It tortured him and wracked him, and fought in him. And whilst he worked, in the deepening twilight, it left him. Suddenly he saw that she was hurt. He had only seen her triumphant before. Suddenly his heart was torn with compassion for her. He became alive again, in an anguish of compassion. He could not bear to think of her tears-he could not bear it. He wanted to go to her and pour out his heart's blood to her. He wanted to give everything to her, all his blood, his life, to the last dregs, pour everything away to her. He yearned with passionate desire to offer himself to her, utterly.

The evening star came, and the night. She had not lighted the lamp. His heart burned with pain and with grief. He trembled to go to her.

And at last he went, hesitating, burdened with a great offering. The hardness had gone out of him, his body was sensitive, slightly trembling. His hand was curiously sensitive, shrinking, as he shut the door. He fixed the latch almost tenderly.

In the kitchen was only the fireglow, he could not see her. He quivered with dread lest she had gone-he knew not where. In shrinking dread, he went through to the parlour, to the foot of the stairs.

"Anna," he called.

There was no answer. He went up the stairs, in dread of the empty house-the horrible emptiness that made his heart ring with insanity. He opened the bedroom door, and his heart flashed with certainty that she had gone, that he was alone.

But he saw her on the bed, lying very still and scarcely noticeable, with her back to him. He went and put his hand on her shoulder, very gently, hesitating, in a great fear and self-offering. She did not move.

He waited. The hand that touched her shoulder hurt him, as if she were sending it away. He stood dim with pain.

"Anna," he said.

But still she was motionless, like a curled up, oblivious creature. His heart beat with strange throes of pain. Then, by a motion under his hand, he knew she was crying, holding herself hard so that her tears should not be known. He waited. The tension continued-perhaps she was not crying-then suddenly relapsed with a sharp catch of a sob. His heart flamed with love and suffering for her. Kneeling carefully on the bed, so that his earthy boots should not touch it, he took her in his arms to comfort her. The sobs gathered in her, she was sobbing bitterly. But not to him. She was still away from him.

He held her against his breast, whilst she sobbed, withheld from him, and all his body vibrated against her.

"Don't cry-don't cry," he said, with an odd simplicity. His heart was calm and numb with a sort of innocence of love, now.

She still sobbed, ignoring him, ignoring that he held her. His lips were dry.

"Don't cry, my love," he said, in the same abstract way. In his breast his heart burned like a torch, with suffering. He could not bear the desolateness of her crying. He would have soothed her with his blood. He heard the church clock chime, as if it touched him, and he waited in suspense for it to have gone by. It was quiet again.

"My love," he said to her, bending to touch her wet face with his mouth. He was afraid to touch her. How wet her face was! His body trembled as he held her. He loved her till he felt his heart and all his veins would burst and flood her with his hot, healing blood. He knew his blood would heal and restore her.

She was becoming quieter. He thanked the God of mercy that at last she was becoming quieter. His head felt so strange and blazed. Still he held her close, with trembling arms. His blood seemed very strong, enveloping her.

And at last she began to draw near to him, she nestled to him. His limbs, his body, took fire and beat up in flames. She clung to him, she cleaved to his body. The flames swept him, he held her in sinews of fire. If she would kiss him! He bent his mouth down. And her mouth, soft and moist, received him. He felt his veins would burst with anguish of thankfulness, his heart was mad with gratefulness, he could pour himself out upon her for ever.

When they came to themselves, the night was very dark. Two hours had gone by. They lay still and warm and weak, like the new-born, together. And there was a silence almost of the unborn. Only his heart was weeping happily, after the pain. He did not understand, he had yielded, given way. There was no understanding. There could be only acquiescence and submission, and tremulous wonder of consummation.

The next morning, when they woke up, it had snowed. He wondered what was the strange pallor in the air, and the unusual tang. Snow was on the grass and the window-sill, it weighed down the black, ragged branches of the yews, and smoothed the graves in the churchyard.

Soon, it began to snow again, and they were shut in. He was glad, for then they were immune in a shadowy silence, there was no world, no time.

The snow lasted for some days. On the Sunday they went to church. They made a line of footprints across the garden, he left a flat snowprint of his hand on the wall as he vaulted over, they traced the snow across the churchyard. For three days they had been immune in a perfect love.

There were very few people in church, and she was glad. She did not care much for church. She had never questioned any beliefs, and she was, from habit and custom, a regular attendant at morning service. But she had ceased to come with any anticipation. To-day, however, in the strangeness of snow, after such consummation of love, she felt expectant again, and delighted. She was still in the eternal world.

She used, after she went to the High School, and wanted to be a lady, wanted to fulfil some mysterious ideal, always to listen to the sermon and to try to gather suggestions. That was all very well for a while. The vicar told her to be good in this way and in that. She went away feeling it was her highest aim to fulfil these injunctions.

But quickly this palled. After a short time, she was not very much interested in being good. Her soul was in quest of something, which was not just being good, and doing one's best. No, she wanted something else: something that was not her ready-made duty. Everything seemed to be merely a matter of social duty, and never of her self. They talked about her soul, but somehow never managed to rouse or to implicate her soul. As yet her soul was not brought in at all.

So that whilst she had an affection for Mr. Loverseed, the vicar, and a protective sort of feeling for Cossethay church, wanting always to help it and defend it, it counted very small in her life.

Not but that she was conscious of some unsatisfaction. When her husband was roused by the thought of the churches, then she became hostile to the ostensible church, she hated it for not fulfilling anything in her. The Church told her to be good: very well, she had no idea of contradicting what it said. The Church talked about her soul, about the welfare of mankind, as if the saving of her soul lay in her performing certain acts conducive to the welfare of mankind. Well and good-it was so, then.

Nevertheless, as she sat in church her face had a pathos and poignancy. Was this what she had come to hear: how by doing this thing and by not doing that, she could save her soul? She did not contradict it. But the pathos of her face gave the lie. There was something else she wanted to hear, it was something else she asked for from the Church.

But who was she to affirm it? And what was she doing with unsatisfied desires? She was ashamed. She ignored them and left them out of count as much as possible, her underneath yearnings. They angered her. She wanted to be like other people, decently satisfied.

He angered her more than ever. Church had an irresistible attraction for him. And he paid no more attention to that part of the service which was Church to her, than if he had been an angel or a fabulous beast sitting there. He simply paid no heed to the sermon or to the meaning of the service. There was something thick, dark, dense, powerful about him that irritated her too deeply for her to speak of it. The Church teaching in itself meant nothing to him. "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us"-it simply did not touch him. It might have been more sounds, and it would have acted upon him in the same way. He did not want things to be intelligible. And he did not care about his trespasses, neither about the trespasses of his neighbour, when he was in church. Leave that care for weekdays. When he was in church, he took no more notice of his daily life. It was weekday stuff. As for the welfare of mankind-he merely did not realise that there was any such thing: except on weekdays, when he was good-natured enough. In church, he wanted a dark, nameless emotion, the emotion of all the great mysteries of passion.

He was not interested in the thought of himself or of her: oh, and how that irritated her! He ignored the sermon, he ignored the greatness of mankind, he did not admit the immediate importance of mankind. He did not care about himself as a human being. He did not attach any vital importance to his life in the drafting office, or his life among men. That was just merely the margin to the text. The verity was his connection with Anna and his connection with the Church, his real being lay in his dark emotional experience of the Infinite, of the Absolute. And the great mysterious, illuminated capitals to the text, were his feelings with the Church.

It exasperated her beyond measure. She could not get out of the Church the satisfaction he got. The thought of her soul was intimately mixed up with the thought of her own self. Indeed, her soul and her own self were one and the same in her. Whereas he seemed simply to ignore the fact of his own self, almost to refute it. He had a soul-a dark, inhuman thing caring nothing for humanity. So she conceived it. And in the gloom and the mystery of the Church his soul lived and ran free, like some strange, underground thing, abstract.

He was very strange to her, and, in this church spirit, in conceiving himself as a soul, he seemed to escape and run free of her. In a way, she envied it him, this dark freedom and jubilation of the soul, some strange entity in him. It fascinated her. Again she hated it. And again, she despised him, wanted to destroy it in him.

This snowy morning, he sat with a dark-bright face beside her, not aware of her, and somehow, she felt he was conveying to strange, secret places the love that sprang in him for her. He sat with a dark-rapt, half-delighted face, looking at a little stained window. She saw the ruby-coloured glass, with the shadow heaped along the bottom from the snow outside, and the familiar yellow figure of the lamb holding the banner, a little darkened now, but in the murky interior strangely luminous, pregnant.

She had always liked the little red and yellow window. The lamb, looking very silly and self-conscious, was holding up a forepaw, in the cleft of which was dangerously perched a little flag with a red cross. Very pale yellow, the lamb, with greenish shadows. Since she was a child she had liked this creature, with the same feeling she felt for the little woolly lambs on green legs that children carried home from the fair every year. She had always liked these toys, and she had the same amused, childish liking for this church lamb. Yet she had always been uneasy about it. She was never sure that this lamb with a flag did not want to be more than it appeared. So she half mistrusted it, there was a mixture of dislike in her attitude to it.

Now, by a curious gathering, knitting of his eyes, the faintest tension of ecstasy on his face, he gave her the uncomfortable feeling that he was in correspondence with the creature, the lamb in the window. A cold wonder came over her-her soul was perplexed. There he sat, motionless, timeless, with the faint, bright tension on his face. What was he doing? What connection was there between him and the lamb in the glass?

Suddenly it gleamed to her dominant, this lamb with the flag. Suddenly she had a powerful mystic experience, the power of the tradition seized on her, she was transported to another world. And she hated it, resisted it.

Instantly, it was only a silly lamb in the glass again. And dark, violent hatred of her husband swept up in her.

What was he doing, sitting there gleaming, carried away, soulful?

She shifted sharply, she knocked him as she pretended to pick up her glove, she groped among his feet.

He came to, rather bewildered, exposed. Anybody but her would have pitied him. She wanted to rend him. He did not know what was amiss, what he had been doing.

As they sat at dinner, in their cottage, he was dazed by the chill of antagonism from her. She did not know why she was so angry. But she was incensed.

"Why do you never listen to the sermon?" she asked, seething with hostility and violation.

"I do," he said.

"You don't-you don't hear a single word."

He retired into himself, to enjoy his own sensation. There was something subterranean about him, as if he had an underworld refuge. The young girl hated to be in the house with him when he was like this.

After dinner, he retired into the parlour, continuing in the same state of abstraction, which was a burden intolerable to her. Then he went to the book-shelf and took down books to look at, that she had scarcely glanced over.

He sat absorbed over a book on the illuminations in old missals, and then over a book on paintings in churches: Italian, English, French and German. He had, when he was sixteen, discovered a Roman Catholic bookshop where he could find such things.

He turned the leaves in absorption, absorbed in looking, not thinking. He was like a man whose eyes were in his chest, she said of him later.

She came to look at the things with him. Half they fascinated her. She was puzzled, interested, and antagonistic.

It was when she came to pictures of the Pieta that she burst out.

"I do think they're loathsome," she cried.

"What?" he said, surprised, abstracted.

"Those bodies with slits in them, posing to be worshipped."

"You see, it means the Sacraments, the Bread," he said slowly.

"Does it," she cried. "Then it's worse. I don't want to see your chest slit, nor to eat your dead body, even if you offer it to me. Can't you see it's horrible?"

"It isn't me, it's Christ."

"What if it is, it's you! And it's horrible, you wallowing in your own dead body, and thinking of eating it in the Sacrament."

"You've to take it for what it means."

"It means your human body put up to be slit and killed and then worshipped-what else?"

They lapsed into silence. His soul grew angry and aloof.

"And I think that lamb in Church," she said, "is the biggest joke in the parish----"

She burst into a "Pouf" of ridiculing laughter.

"It might be, to those that see nothing in it," he said. "You know it's the symbol of Christ, of His innocence and sacrifice."

"Whatever it means, it's a lamb," she said. "And I like lambs too much to treat them as if they had to mean something. As for the Christmas-tree flag-no----"

And again she poufed with mockery.

"It's because you don't know anything," he said violently, harshly. "Laugh at what you know, not at what you don't know."

"What don't I know?"

"What things mean."

"And what does it mean?"

He was reluctant to answer her. He found it difficult.

"What does it mean?" she insisted.

"It means the triumph of the Resurrection."

She hesitated, baffled, a fear came upon her. What were these things? Something dark and powerful seemed to extend before her. Was it wonderful after all?

But no-she refused it.

"Whatever it may pretend to mean, what it is is a silly absurd toy-lamb with a Christmas-tree flag ledged on its paw--and if it wants to mean anything else, it must look different from that."

He was in a state of violent irritation against her. Partly he was ashamed of his love for these things; he hid his passion for them. He was ashamed of the ecstasy into which he could throw himself with these symbols. And for a few moments he hated the lamb and the mystic pictures of the Eucharist, with a violent, ashy hatred. His fire was put out, she had thrown cold water on it. The whole thing was distasteful to him, his mouth was full of ashes. He went out cold with corpse-like anger, leaving her alone. He hated her. He walked through the white snow, under a sky of lead.

And she wept again, in bitter recurrence of the previous gloom. But her heart was easy-oh, much more easy.

She was quite willing to make it up with him when he came home again. He was black and surly, but abated. She had broken a little of something in him. And at length he was glad to forfeit from his soul all his symbols, to have her making love to him. He loved it when she put her head on his knee, and he had not asked her to or wanted her to, he loved her when she put her arms round him and made bold love to him, and he did not make love to her. He felt a strong blood in his limbs again.

And she loved the intent, far look of his eyes when they rested on her: intent, yet far, not near, not with her. And she wanted to bring them near. She wanted his eyes to come to hers, to know her. And they would not. They remained intent, and far, and proud, like a hawk's naive and inhuman as a hawk's. So she loved him and caressed him and roused him like a hawk, till he was keen and instant, but without tenderness. He came to her fierce and hard, like a hawk striking and taking her. He was no mystic any more, she was his aim and object, his prey. And she was carried off, and he was satisfied, or satiated at last.

Then immediately she began to retaliate on him. She too was a hawk. If she imitated the pathetic plover running plaintive to him, that was part of the game. When he, satisfied, moved with a proud, insolent slouch of the body and a half-contemptuous drop of the head, unaware of her, ignoring her very existence, after taking his fill of her and getting his satisfaction of her, her soul roused, its pinions became like steel, and she struck at him. When he sat on his perch glancing sharply round with solitary pride, pride eminent and fierce, she dashed at him and threw him from his station savagely, she goaded him from his keen dignity of a male, she harassed him from his unperturbed pride, till he was mad with rage, his light brown eyes burned with fury, they saw her now, like flames of anger they flared at her and recognised her as the enemy.

Very good, she was the enemy, very good. As he prowled round her, she watched him. As he struck at her, she struck back.

He was angry because she had carelessly pushed away his tools so that they got rusty.

"Don't leave them littering in my way, then," she said.

"I shall leave them where I like," he cried.

"Then I shall throw them where I like."

They glowered at each other, he with rage in his hands, she with her soul fierce with victory. They were very well matched. They would fight it out.

She turned to her sewing. Immediately the tea-things were cleared away, she fetched out the stuff, and his soul rose in rage. He hated beyond measure to hear the shriek of calico as she tore the web sharply, as if with pleasure. And the run of the sewing-machine gathered a frenzy in him at last.

"Aren't you going to stop that row?" he shouted. "Can't you do it in the daytime?"

She looked up sharply, hostile from her work.

"No, I can't do it in the daytime. I have other things to do. Besides, I like sewing, and you're not going to stop me doing it."

Whereupon she turned back to her arranging, fixing, stitching, his nerves jumped with anger as the sewing-machine started and stuttered and buzzed.

But she was enjoying herself, she was triumphant and happy as the darting needle danced ecstatically down a hem, drawing the stuff along under its vivid stabbing, irresistibly. She made the machine hum. She stopped it imperiously, her fingers were deft and swift and mistress.

If he sat behind her stiff with impotent rage it only made a trembling vividness come into her energy. On she worked. At last he went to bed in a rage, and lay stiff, away from her. And she turned her back on him. And in the morning they did not speak, except in mere cold civilities.

And when he came home at night, his heart relenting and growing hot for love of her, when he was just ready to feel he had been wrong, and when he was expecting her to feel the same, there she sat at the sewing-machine, the whole house was covered with clipped calico, the kettle was not even on the fire.

She started up, affecting concern.

"Is it so late?" she cried.

But his face had gone stiff with rage. He walked through to the parlour, then he walked back and out of the house again. Her heart sank. Very swiftly she began to make his tea.

He went black-hearted down the road to Ilkeston. When he was in this state he never thought. A bolt shot across the doors of his mind and shut him in, a prisoner. He went back to Ilkeston, and drank a glass of beer. What was he going to do? He did not want to see anybody.

He would go to Nottingham, to his own town. He went to the station and took a train. When he got to Nottingham, still he had nowhere to go. However, it was more agreeable to walk familiar streets. He paced them with a mad restlessness, as if he were running amok. Then he turned to a book-shop and found a book on Bamberg Cathedral. Here was a discovery! here was something for him! He went into a quiet restaurant to look at his treasure. He lit up with thrills of bliss as he turned from picture to picture. He had found something at last, in these carvings. His soul had great satisfaction. Had he not come out to seek, and had he not found! He was in a passion of fulfilment. These were the finest carvings, statues, he had ever seen. The book lay in his hands like a doorway. The world around was only an enclosure, a room. But he was going away. He lingered over the lovely statues of women. A marvellous, finely-wrought universe crystallised out around him as he looked again, at the crowns, the twining hair, the woman-faces. He liked all the better the unintelligible text of the German. He preferred things he could not understand with the mind. He loved the undiscovered and the undiscoverable. He pored over the pictures intensely. And these were wooden statues, "Holz"-he believed that meant wood. Wooden statues so shapen to his soul! He was a million times gladdened. How undiscovered the world was, how it revealed itself to his soul! What a fine, exciting thing his life was, at his hand! Did not Bamberg Cathedral make the world his own? He celebrated his triumphant strength and life and verity, and embraced the vast riches he was inheriting.

But it was about time to go home. He had better catch a train. All the time there was a steady bruise at the bottom of his soul, but so steady as to be forgettable. He caught a train for Ilkeston.

It was ten o'clock as he was mounting the hill to Cossethay, carrying his limp book on Bamberg Cathedral. He had not yet thought of Anna, not definitely. The dark finger pressing a bruise controlled him thoughtlessly.

Anna had started guiltily when he left the house. She had hastened preparing the tea, hoping he would come back. She had made some toast, and got all ready. Then he didn't come. She cried with vexation and disappointment. Why had he gone? Why couldn't he come back now? Why was it such a battle between them? She loved him-she did love him-why couldn't he be kinder to her, nicer to her?

She waited in distress-then her mood grew harder. He passed out of her thoughts. She had considered indignantly, what right he had to interfere with her sewing? She had indignantly refuted his right to interfere with her at all. She was not to be interfered with. Was she not herself, and he the outsider.

Yet a quiver of fear went through her. If he should leave her? She sat conjuring fears and sufferings, till she wept with very self-pity. She did not know what she would do if he left her, or if he turned against her. The thought of it chilled her, made her desolate and hard. And against him, the stranger, the outsider, the being who wanted to arrogate authority, she remained steadily fortified. Was she not herself? How could one who was not of her own kind presume with authority? She knew she was immutable, unchangeable, she was not afraid for her own being. She was only afraid of all that was not herself. It pressed round her, it came to her and took part in her, in form of her man, this vast, resounding, alien world which was not herself. And he had so many weapons, he might strike from so many sides.

When he came in at the door, his heart was blazed with pity and tenderness, she looked so lost and forlorn and young. She glanced up, afraid. And she was surprised to see him, shining-faced, clear and beautiful in his movements, as if he were clarified. And a startled pang of fear, and shame of herself went through her.

They waited for each other to speak.

"Do you want to eat anything?" she said.

"I'll get it myself," he answered, not wanting her to serve him. But she brought out food. And it pleased him she did it for him. He was again a bright lord.

"I went to Nottingham," he said mildly.

"To your mother?" she asked, in a flash of contempt.

"No-I didn't go home."

"Who did you go to see?"

"I went to see nobody."

"Then why did you go to Nottingham?"

"I went because I wanted to go."

He was getting angry that she again rebuffed him when he was so clear and shining.

"And who did you see?"

"I saw nobody."

"Nobody?"

"No-who should I see?"

"You saw nobody you knew?"

"No, I didn't," he replied irritably.

She believed him, and her mood became cold.

"I bought a book," he said, handing her the propitiatory volume.

She idly looked at the pictures. Beautiful, the pure women, with their clear-dropping gowns. Her heart became colder. What did they mean to him?

He sat and waited for her. She bent over the book.

"Aren't they nice?" he said, his voice roused and glad. Her blood flushed, but she did not lift her head.

"Yes," she said. In spite of herself, she was compelled by him. He was strange, attractive, exerting some power over her.

He came over to her, and touched her delicately. Her heart beat with wild passion, wild raging passion. But she resisted as yet. It was always the unknown, always the unknown, and she clung fiercely to her known self. But the rising flood carried her away.

They loved each other to transport again, passionately and fully.

"Isn't it more wonderful than ever?" she asked him, radiant like a newly opened flower, with tears like dew.

He held her closer. He was strange and abstracted.

"It is always more wonderful," she asseverated, in a glad, child's voice, remembering her fear, and not quite cleared of it yet.

So it went on continually, the recurrence of love and conflict between them. One day it seemed as if everything was shattered, all life spoiled, ruined, desolate and laid waste. The next day it was all marvellous again, just marvellous. One day she thought she would go mad from his very presence, the sound of his drinking was detestable to her. The next day she loved and rejoiced in the way he crossed the floor, he was sun, moon and stars in one.

She fretted, however, at last, over the lack of stability. When the perfect hours came back, her heart did not forget that they would pass away again. She was uneasy. The surety, the surety, the inner surety, the confidence in the abidingness of love: that was what she wanted. And that she did not get. She knew also that he had not got it.

Nevertheless it was a marvellous world, she was for the most part lost in the marvellousness of it. Even her great woes were marvellous to her.

She could be very happy. And she wanted to be happy. She resented it when he made her unhappy. Then she could kill him, cast him out. Many days, she waited for the hour when he would be gone to work. Then the flow of her life, which he seemed to damn up, was let loose, and she was free. She was free, she was full of delight. Everything delighted her. She took up the rug and went to shake it in the garden. Patches of snow were on the fields, the air was light. She heard the ducks shouting on the pond, she saw them charge and sail across the water as if they were setting off on an invasion of the world. She watched the rough horses, one of which was clipped smooth on the belly, so that he wore a jacket and long stockings of brown fur, stand kissing each other in the wintry morning by the church-yard wall. Everything delighted her, now he was gone, the insulator, the obstruction removed, the world was all hers, in connection with her.

She was joyfully active. Nothing pleased her more than to hang out the washing in a high wind that came full-butt over the round of the hill, tearing the wet garments out of her hands, making flap-flap-flap of the waving stuff. She laughed and struggled and grew angry. But she loved her solitary days.

Then he came home at night, and she knitted her brows because of some endless contest between them. As he stood in the doorway her heart changed. It steeled itself. The laughter and zest of the day disappeared from her. She was stiffened.

They fought an unknown battle, unconsciously. Still they were in love with each other, the passion was there. But the passion was consumed in a battle. And the deep, fierce unnamed battle went on. Everything glowed intensely about them, the world had put off its clothes and was awful, with new, primal nakedness.

Sunday came when the strange spell was cast over her by him. Half she loved it. She was becoming more like him. All the week-days, there was a glint of sky and fields, the little church seemed to babble away to the cottages the morning through. But on Sundays, when he stayed at home, a deeply-coloured, intense gloom seemed to gather on the face of the earth, the church seemed to fill itself with shadow, to become big, a universe to her, there was a burning of blue and ruby, a sound of worship about her. And when the doors were opened, and she came out into the world, it was a world new-created, she stepped into the resurrection of the world, her heart beating to the memory of the darkness and the Passion.

If, as very often, they went to the Marsh for tea on Sundays, then she regained another, lighter world, that had never known the gloom and the stained glass and the ecstasy of chanting. Her husband was obliterated, she was with her father again, who was so fresh and free and all daylight. Her husband, with his intensity and his darkness, was obliterated. She left him, she forgot him, she accepted her father.

Yet, as she went home again with the young man, she put her hand on his arm tentatively, a little bit ashamed, her hand pleaded that he would not hold it against her, her recusancy. But he was obscured. He seemed to become blind, as if he were not there with her.

Then she was afraid. She wanted him. When he was oblivious of her, she almost went mad with fear. For she had become so vulnerable, so exposed. She was in touch so intimately. All things about her had become intimate, she had known them near and lovely, like presences hovering upon her. What if they should all go hard and separate again, standing back from her terrible and distinct, and she, having known them, should be at their mercy?

This frightened her. Always, her husband was to her the unknown to which she was delivered up. She was a flower that has been tempted forth into blossom, and has no retreat. He had her nakedness in his power. And who was he, what was he? A blind thing, a dark force, without knowledge. She wanted to preserve herself.

Then she gathered him to herself again and was satisfied for a moment. But as time went on, she began to realise more and more that he did not alter, that he was something dark, alien to herself. She had thought him just the bright reflex of herself. As the weeks and months went by she realised that he was a dark opposite to her, that they were opposites, not complements.

He did not alter, he remained separately himself, and he seemed to expect her to be part of himself, the extension of his will. She felt him trying to gain power over her, without knowing her. What did he want? Was he going to bully her?

What did she want herself? She answered herself, that she wanted to be happy, to be natural, like the sunlight and the busy daytime. And, at the bottom of her soul, she felt he wanted her to be dark, unnatural. Sometimes, when he seemed like the darkness covering and smothering her, she revolted almost in horror, and struck at him. She struck at him, and made him bleed, and he became wicked. Because she dreaded him and held him in horror, he became wicked, he wanted to destroy. And then the fight between them was cruel.

She began to tremble. He wanted to impose himself on her. And he began to shudder. She wanted to desert him, to leave him a prey to the open, with the unclean dogs of the darkness setting on to devour him. He must beat her, and make her stay with him. Whereas she fought to keep herself free of him.

They went their ways now shadowed and stained with blood, feeling the world far off, unable to give help. Till she began to get tired. After a certain point, she became impassive, detached utterly from him. He was always ready to burst out murderously against her. Her soul got up and left him, she went her way. Nevertheless in her apparent blitheness, that made his soul black with opposition, she trembled as if she bled.

And ever and again, the pure love came in sunbeams between them, when she was like a flower in the sun to him, so beautiful, so shining, so intensely dear that he could scarcely bear it. Then as if his soul had six wings of bliss he stood absorbed in praise, feeling the radiance from the Almighty beat through him like a pulse, as he stood in the upright flame of praise, transmitting the pulse of Creation.

And ever and again he appeared to her as the dread flame of power. Sometimes, when he stood in the doorway, his face lit up, he seemed like an Annunciation to her, her heart beat fast. And she watched him, suspended. He had a dark, burning being that she dreaded and resisted. She was subject to him as to the Angel of the Presence. She waited upon him and heard his will, and she trembled in his service.

Then all this passed away. Then he loved her for her childishness and for her strangeness to him, for the wonder of her soul which was different from his soul, and which made him genuine when he would be false. And she loved him for the way he sat loosely in a chair, or for the way he came through a door with his face open and eager. She loved his ringing, eager voice, and the touch of the unknown about him, his absolute simplicity.

Yet neither of them was quite satisfied. He felt, somewhere, that she did not respect him. She only respected him as far as he was related to herself. For what he was, beyond her, she had no care. She did not care for what he represented in himself. It is true, he did not know himself what he represented. But whatever it was she did not really honour it. She did no service to his work as a lace-designer, nor to himself as bread-winner. Because he went down to the office and worked every day-that entitled him to no respect or regard from her, he knew. Rather she despised him for it. And he almost loved her for this, though at first it maddened him like an insult.

What was much deeper, she soon came to combat his deepest feelings. What he thought about life and about society and mankind did not matter very much to her: he was right enough to be insignificant. This was again galling to him. She would judge beyond him on these things. But at length he came to accept her judgments, discovering them as if they were his own. It was not here the deep trouble lay. The deep root of his enmity lay in the fact that she jeered at his soul. He was inarticulate and stupid in thought. But to some things he clung passionately. He loved the Church. If she tried to get out of him, what he believed, then they were both soon in a white rage.

Did he believe the water turned to wine at Cana? She would drive him to the thing as a historical fact: so much rain-water-look at it-can it become grape-juice, wine? For an instant, he saw with the clear eyes of the mind and said no, his clear mind, answering her for a moment, rejected the idea. And immediately his whole soul was crying in a mad, inchoate hatred against this violation of himself. It was true for him. His mind was extinguished again at once, his blood was up. In his blood and bones, he wanted the scene, the wedding, the water brought forward from the firkins as red wine: and Christ saying to His mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?-mine hour is not yet come."

And then:

"His mother saith unto the servants, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.'"

Brangwen loved it, with his bones and blood he loved it, he could not let it go. Yet she forced him to let it go. She hated his blind attachments.

Water, natural water, could it suddenly and unnaturally turn into wine, depart from its being and at haphazard take on another being? Ah no, he knew it was wrong.

She became again the palpitating, hostile child, hateful, putting things to destruction. He became mute and dead. His own being gave him the lie. He knew it was so: wine was wine, water was water, for ever: the water had not become wine. The miracle was not a real fact. She seemed to be destroying him. He went out, dark and destroyed, his soul running its blood. And he tasted of death. Because his life was formed in these unquestioned concepts.

She, desolate again as she had been when she was a child, went away and sobbed. She did not care, she did not care whether the water had turned to wine or not. Let him believe it if he wanted to. But she knew she had won. And an ashy desolation came over her.

They were ashenly miserable for some time. Then the life began to come back. He was nothing if not dogged. He thought again of the chapter of St. John. There was a great biting pang. "But thou hast kept the good wine until now." "The best wine!" The young man's heart responded in a craving, in a triumph, although the knowledge that it was not true in fact bit at him like a weasel in his heart. Which was stronger, the pain of the denial, or the desire for affirmation? He was stubborn in spirit, and abode by his desire. But he would not any more affirm the miracles as true.

Very well, it was not true, the water had not turned into wine. The water had not turned into wine. But for all that he would live in his soul as if the water had turned into wine. For truth of fact, it had not. But for his soul, it had.

"Whether it turned into wine or whether it didn't," he said, "it doesn't bother me. I take it for what it is."

"And what is it?" she asked, quickly, hopefully.

"It's the Bible," he said.

That answer enraged her, and she despised him. She did not actively question the Bible herself. But he drove her to contempt.

And yet he did not care about the Bible, the written letter. Although he could not satisfy her, yet she knew of herself that he had something real. He was not a dogmatist. He did not believe in fact that the water turned into wine. He did not want to make a fact out of it. Indeed, his attitude was without criticism. It was purely individual. He took that which was of value to him from the Written Word, he added to his spirit. His mind he let sleep.

And she was bitter against him, that he let his mind sleep. That which was human, belonged to mankind, he would not exert. He cared only for himself. He was no Christian. Above all, Christ had asserted the brotherhood of man.

She, almost against herself, clung to the worship of the human knowledge. Man must die in the body, but in his knowledge he was immortal. Such, somewhere, was her belief, quite obscure and unformulated. She believed in the omnipotence of the human mind.

He, on the other hand, blind as a subterranean thing, just ignored the human mind and ran after his own dark-souled desires, following his own tunnelling nose. She felt often she must suffocate. And she fought him off.

Then he, knowing he was blind, fought madly back again, frantic in sensual fear. He did foolish things. He asserted himself on his rights, he arrogated the old position of master of the house.

"You've a right to do as I want," he cried.

"Fool!" she answered. "Fool!"

"I'll let you know who's master," he cried.

"Fool!" she answered. "Fool! I've known my own father, who could put a dozen of you in his pipe and push them down with his finger-end. Don't I know what a fool you are!"

He knew himself what a fool he was, and was flayed by the knowledge. Yet he went on trying to steer the ship of their dual life. He asserted his position as the captain of the ship. And captain and ship bored her. He wanted to loom important as master of one of the innumerable domestic craft that make up the great fleet of society. It seemed to her a ridiculous armada of tubs jostling in futility. She felt no belief in it. She jeered at him as master of the house, master of their dual life. And he was black with shame and rage. He knew, with shame, how her father had been a man without arrogating any authority.

He had gone on the wrong tack, and he felt it hard to give up the expedition. There was great surging and shame. Then he yielded. He had given up the master-of-the-house idea.

There was something he wanted, nevertheless, some from of mastery. Ever and anon, after his collapses into the petty and the shameful, he rose up again, and, stubborn in spirit, strong in his power to start afresh, set out once more in his male pride of being to fulfil the hidden passion of his spirit.

It began well, but it ended always in war between them, till they were both driven almost to madness. He said, she did not respect him. She laughed in hollow scorn of this. For her it was enough that she loved him.

"Respect what?" she asked.

But he always answered the wrong thing. And though she cudgelled her brains, she could not come at it.

"Why don't you go on with your wood-carving?" she said. "Why don't you finish your Adam and Eve?"

But she did not care for the Adam and Eve, and he never put another stroke to it. She jeered at the Eve, saying, "She is like a little marionette. Why is she so small? You've made Adam as big as God, and Eve like a doll."

"It is impudence to say that Woman was made out of Man's body," she continued, "when every man is born of woman. What impudence men have, what arrogance!"

In a rage one day, after trying to work on the board, and failing, so that his belly was a flame of nausea, he chopped up the whole panel and put it on the fire. She did not know. He went about for some days very quiet and subdued after it.

"Where is the Adam and Eve board?" she asked him.

"Burnt."

She looked at him.

"But your carving?"

"I burned it."

"When?"

She did not believe him.

"On Friday night."

"When I was at the Marsh?"

"Yes."

She said no more.

Then, when he had gone to work, she wept for a whole day, and was much chastened in spirit. So that a new, fragile flame of love came out of the ashes of this last pain.

Directly, it occurred to her that she was with child. There was a great trembling of wonder and anticipation through her soul. She wanted a child. Not that she loved babies so much, though she was touched by all young things. But she wanted to bear children. And a certain hunger in her heart wanted to unite her husband with herself, in a child.

She wanted a son. She felt, a son would be everything. She wanted to tell her husband. But it was such a trembling, intimate thing to tell him, and he was at this time hard and unresponsive. So that she went away and wept. It was such a waste of a beautiful opportunity, such a frost that nipped in the bud one of the beautiful moments of her life. She went about heavy and tremulous with her secret, wanting to touch him, oh, most delicately, and see his face, dark and sensitive, attend to her news. She waited and waited for him to become gentle and still towards her. But he was always harsh and he bullied her.

So that the buds shrivelled from her confidence, she was chilled. She went down to the Marsh.

"Well," said her father, looking at her and seeing her at the first glance, "what's amiss wi' you now?"

The tears came at the touch of his careful love.

"Nothing," she said.

"Can't you hit it off, you two?" he said.

"He's so obstinate," she quivered; but her soul was obdurate itself.

"Ay, an' I know another who's all that," said her father.

She was silent.

"You don't want to make yourselves miserable," said her father; "all about nowt."

"He isn't miserable," she said.

"I'll back my life, if you can do nowt else, you can make him as miserable as a dog. You'd be a dab hand at that, my lass."

"I do nothing to make him miserable," she retorted.

"Oh no-oh no! A packet o' butterscotch, you are."

She laughed a little.

"You mustn't think I want him to be miserable," she cried. "I don't."

"We quite readily believe it," retorted Brangwen. "Neither do you intend him to be hopping for joy like a fish in a pond."

This made her think. She was rather surprised to find that she did not intend her husband to be hopping for joy like a fish in a pond.

Her mother came, and they all sat down to tea, talking casually.

"Remember, child," said her mother, "that everything is not waiting for your hand just to take or leave. You mustn't expect it. Between two people, the love itself is the important thing, and that is neither you nor him. It is a third thing you must create. You mustn't expect it to be just your way."

"Ha-nor do I. If I did I should soon find my mistake out. If I put my hand out to take anything, my hand is very soon bitten, I can tell you."

"Then you must mind where you put your hand," said her father.

Anna was rather indignant that they took the tragedy of her young married life with such equanimity.

"You love the man right enough," said her father, wrinkling his forehead in distress. "That's all as counts."

"I do love him, more shame to him," she cried. "I want to tell him-I've been waiting for four days now to tell him----" her face began to quiver, the tears came. Her parents watched her in silence. She did not go on.

"Tell him what?" said her father.

"That we're going to have an infant," she sobbed, "and he's never, never let me, not once, every time I've come to him, he's been horrid to me, and I wanted to tell him, I did. And he won't let me-he's cruel to me."

She sobbed as if her heart would break. Her mother went and comforted her, put her arms round her, and held her close. Her father sat with a queer, wrinkled brow, and was rather paler than usual. His heart went tense with hatred of his son-in-law.

So that, when the tale was sobbed out, and comfort administered and tea sipped, and something like calm restored to the little circle, the thought of Will Brangwen's entry was not pleasantly entertained.

Tilly was set to watch out for him as he passed by on his way home. The little party at table heard the woman's servant's shrill call:

"You've got to come in, Will. Anna's here."

After a few moments, the youth entered.

"Are you stopping?" he asked in his hard, harsh voice.

He seemed like a blade of destruction standing there. She quivered to tears.

"Sit you down," said Tom Brangwen, "an' take a bit off your length."

Will Brangwen sat down. He felt something strange in the atmosphere. He was dark browed, but his eyes had the keen, intent, sharp look, as if he could only see in the distance; which was a beauty in him, and which made Anna so angry.

"Why does he always deny me?" she said to herself. "Why is it nothing to him, what I am?"

And Tom Brangwen, blue-eyed and warm, sat in opposition to the youth.

"How long are you stopping?" the young husband asked his wife.

"Not very long," she said.

"Get your tea, lad," said Tom Brangwen. "Are you itchin' to be off the moment you enter?"

They talked of trivial things. Through the open door the level rays of sunset poured in, shining on the floor. A grey hen appeared stepping swiftly in the doorway, pecking, and the light through her comb and her wattles made an oriflamme tossed here and there, as she went, her grey body was like a ghost.

Anna, watching, threw scraps of bread, and she felt the child flame within her. She seemed to remember again forgotten, burning, far-off things.

"Where was I born, mother?" she asked.

"In London."

"And was my father"-she spoke of him as if he were merely a strange name: she could never connect herself with him-"was he dark?"

"He had dark-brown hair and dark eyes and a fresh colouring. He went bald, rather bald, when he was quite young," replied her mother, also as if telling a tale which was just old imagination.

"Was he good-looking?"

"Yes-he was very good-looking-rather small. I have never seen an Englishman who looked like him."

"Why?"

"He was"-the mother made a quick, running movement with her hands-"his figure was alive and changing-it was never fixed. He was not in the least steady-like a running stream."

It flashed over the youth-Anna too was like a running stream. Instantly he was in love with her again.

Tom Brangwen was frightened. His heart always filled with fear, fear of the unknown, when he heard his women speak of their bygone men as of strangers they had known in passing and had taken leave of again.

In the room, there came a silence and a singleness over all their hearts. They were separate people with separate destinies. Why should they seek each to lay violent hands of claim on the other?

The young people went home as a sharp little moon was setting in the dusk of spring. Tufts of trees hovered in the upper air, the little church pricked up shadowily at the top of the hill, the earth was a dark blue shadow.

She put her hand lightly on his arm, out of her far distance. And out of the distance, he felt her touch him.

They walked on, hand in hand, along opposite horizons, touching across the dusk. There was a sound of thrushes calling in the dark blue twilight.

"I think we are going to have an infant, Bill," she said, from far off.

He trembled, and his fingers tightened on hers.

"Why?" he asked, his heart beating. "You don't know?"

"I do," she said.

They continued without saying any more, walking along opposite horizons, hand in hand across the intervening space, two separate people. And he trembled as if a wind blew on to him in strong gusts, out of the unseen. He was afraid. He was afraid to know he was alone. For she seemed fulfilled and separate and sufficient in her half of the world. He could not bear to know that he was cut off. Why could he not be always one with her? It was he who had given her the child. Why could she not be with him, one with him? Why must he be set in this separateness, why could she not be with him, close, close, as one with him? She must be one with him.

He held her fingers tightly in his own. She did not know what he was thinking. The blaze of light on her heart was too beautiful and dazzling, from the conception in her womb. She walked glorified, and the sound of the thrushes, of the trains in the valley, of the far-off, faint noises of the town, were her "Magnificat".

But he was struggling in silence. It seemed as though there were before him a solid wall of darkness that impeded him and suffocated him and made him mad. He wanted her to come to him, to complete him, to stand before him so that his eyes did not, should not meet the naked darkness. Nothing mattered to him but that she should come and complete him. For he was ridden by the awful sense of his own limitation. It was as if he ended uncompleted, as yet uncreated on the darkness, and he wanted her to come and liberate him into the whole.

But she was complete in herself, and he was ashamed of his need, his helpless need of her. His need, and his shame of need, weighed on him like a madness. Yet still he was quiet and gentle, in reverence of her conception, and because she was with child by him.

And she was happy in showers of sunshine. She loved her husband, as a presence, as a grateful condition. But for the moment her need was fulfilled, and now she wanted only to hold her husband by the hand in sheer happiness, without taking thought, only being glad.

He had various folios of reproductions, and among them a cheap print from Fra Angelico's "Entry of the Blessed into Paradise". This filled Anna with bliss. The beautiful, innocent way in which the Blessed held each other by the hand as they moved towards the radiance, the real, real, angelic melody, made her weep with happiness. The floweriness, the beams of light, the linking of hands, was almost too much for her, too innocent.

Day after day came shining through the door of Paradise, day after day she entered into the brightness. The child in her shone till she herself was a beam of sunshine; and how lovely was the sunshine that loitered and wandered out of doors, where the catkins on the big hazel bushes at the end of the garden hung in their shaken, floating aureole, where little fumes like fire burst out from the black yew trees as a bird settled clinging to the branches. One day bluebells were along the hedge-bottoms, then cowslips twinkled like manna, golden and evanescent on the meadows. She was full of a rich drowsiness and loneliness. How happy she was, how gorgeous it was to live: to have known herself, her husband, the passion of love and begetting; and to know that all this lived and waited and burned on around her, a terrible purifying fire, through which she had passed for once to come to this peace of golden radiance, when she was with child, and innocent, and in love with her husband and with all the many angels hand in hand. She lifted her throat to the breeze that came across the fields, and she felt it handling her like sisters fondling her, she drank it in perfume of cowslips and of apple-blossoms.

And in all the happiness a black shadow, shy, wild, a beast of prey, roamed and vanished from sight, and like strands of gossamer blown across her eyes, there was a dread for her.

She was afraid when he came home at night. As yet, her fear never spoke, the shadow never rushed upon her. He was gentle, humble, he kept himself withheld. His hands were delicate upon her, and she loved them. But there ran through her the thrill, crisp as pain, for she felt the darkness and other-world still in his soft, sheathed hands.

But the summer drifted in with the silence of a miracle, she was almost always alone. All the while, went on the long, lovely drowsiness, the maidenblush roses in the garden were all shed, washed away in a pouring rain, summer drifted into autumn, and the long, vague, golden days began to close. Crimson clouds fumed about the west, and as night came on, all the sky was fuming and steaming, and the moon, far above the swiftness of vapours, was white, bleared, the night was uneasy. Suddenly the moon would appear at a clear window in the sky, looking down from far above, like a captive. And Anna did not sleep. There was a strange, dark tension about her husband.

She became aware that he was trying to force his will upon her, something, there was something he wanted, as he lay there dark and tense. And her soul sighed in weariness.

Everything was so vague and lovely, and he wanted to wake her up to the hard, hostile reality. She drew back in resistance. Still he said nothing. But she felt his power persisting on her, till she became aware of the strain, she cried out against the exhaustion. He was forcing her, he was forcing her. And she wanted so much the joy and the vagueness and the innocence of her pregnancy. She did not want his bitter-corrosive love, she did not want it poured into her, to burn her. Why must she have it? Why, oh, why was he not content, contained?

She sat many hours by the window, in those days when he drove her most with the black constraint of his will, and she watched the rain falling on the yew trees. She was not sad, only wistful, blanched. The child under her heart was a perpetual warmth. And she was sure. The pressure was only upon her from the outside, her soul had no stripes.

Yet in her heart itself was always this same strain, tense, anxious. She was not safe, she was always exposed, she was always attacked. There was a yearning in her for a fulness of peace and blessedness. What a heavy yearning it was-so heavy.

She knew, vaguely, that all the time he was not satisfied, all the time he was trying to force something from her. Ah, how she wished she could succeed with him, in her own way! He was there, so inevitable. She lived in him also. And how she wanted to be at peace with him, at peace. She loved him. She would give him love, pure love. With a strange, rapt look in her face, she awaited his homecoming that night.

Then, when he came, she rose with her hands full of love, as of flowers, radiant, innocent. A dark spasm crossed his face. As she watched, her face shining and flower-like with innocent love, his face grew dark and tense, the cruelty gathered in his brows, his eyes turned aside, she saw the whites of his eyes as he looked aside from her. She waited, touching him with her hands. But from his body through her hands came the bitter-corrosive shock of his passion upon her, destroying her in blossom. She shrank. She rose from her knees and went away from him, to preserve herself. And it was great pain to her.

To him also it was agony. He saw the glistening, flower-like love in her face, and his heart was black because he did not want it. Not this-not this. He did not want flowery innocence. He was unsatisfied. The rage and storm of unsatisfaction tormented him ceaselessly. Why had she not satisfied him? He had satisfied her. She was satisfied, at peace, innocent round the doors of her own paradise.

And he was unsatisfied, unfulfilled, he raged in torment, wanting, wanting. It was for her to satisfy him: then let her do it. Let her not come with flowery handfuls of innocent love. He would throw these aside and trample the flowers to nothing. He would destroy her flowery, innocent bliss. Was he not entitled to satisfaction from her, and was not his heart all raging desire, his soul a black torment of unfulfilment. Let it be fulfilled in him, then, as it was fulfilled in her. He had given her her fulfilment. Let her rise up and do her part.

He was cruel to her. But all the time he was ashamed. And being ashamed, he was more cruel. For he was ashamed that he could not come to fulfilment without her. And he could not. And she would not heed him. He was shackled and in darkness of torment.

She beseeched him to work again, to do his wood-carving. But his soul was too black. He had destroyed his panel of Adam and Eve. He could not begin again, least of all now, whilst he was in this condition.

For her there was no final release, since he could not be liberated from himself. Strange and amorphous, she must go yearning on through the trouble, like a warm, glowing cloud blown in the middle of a storm. She felt so rich, in her warm vagueness, that her soul cried out on him, because he harried her and wanted to destroy her.

She had her moments of exaltation still, re-births of old exaltations. As she sat by her bedroom window, watching the steady rain, her spirit was somewhere far off.

She sat in pride and curious pleasure. When there was no one to exult with, and the unsatisfied soul must dance and play, then one danced before the Unknown.

Suddenly she realised that this was what she wanted to do. Big with child as she was, she danced there in the bedroom by herself, lifting her hands and her body to the Unseen, to the unseen Creator who had chosen her, to Whom she belonged.

She would not have had anyone know. She danced in secret, and her soul rose in bliss. She danced in secret before the Creator, she took off her clothes and danced in the pride of her bigness.

It surprised her, when it was over. She was shrinking and afraid. To what was she now exposed? She half wanted to tell her husband. Yet she shrank from him.

All the time she ran on by herself. She liked the story of David, who danced before the Lord, and uncovered himself exultingly. Why should he uncover himself to Michal, a common woman? He uncovered himself to the Lord.

"Thou comest to me with a sword and a spear and a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord:-for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

Her heart rang to the words. She walked in her pride. And her battle was her own Lord's, her husband was delivered over.

In these days she was oblivious of him. Who was he, to come against her? No, he was not even the Philistine, the Giant. He was like Saul proclaiming his own kingship. She laughed in her heart. Who was he, proclaiming his kingship? She laughed in her heart with pride.

And she had to dance in exultation beyond him. Because he was in the house, she had to dance before her Creator in exemption from the man. On a Saturday afternoon, when she had a fire in the bedroom, again she took off her things and danced, lifting her knees and her hands in a slow, rhythmic exulting. He was in the house, so her pride was fiercer. She would dance his nullification, she would dance to her unseen Lord. She was exalted over him, before the Lord.

She heard him coming up the stairs, and she flinched. She stood with the firelight on her ankles and feet, naked in the shadowy, late afternoon, fastening up her hair. He was startled. He stood in the doorway, his brows black and lowering.

"What are you doing?" he said, gratingly. "You'll catch a cold."

And she lifted her hands and danced again, to annul him, the light glanced on her knees as she made her slow, fine movements down the far side of the room, across the firelight. He stood away near the door in blackness of shadow, watching, transfixed. And with slow, heavy movements she swayed backwards and forwards, like a full ear of corn, pale in the dusky afternoon, threading before the firelight, dancing his non-existence, dancing herself to the Lord, to exultation.

He watched, and his soul burned in him. He turned aside, he could not look, it hurt his eyes. Her fine limbs lifted and lifted, her hair was sticking out all fierce, and her belly, big, strange, terrifying, uplifted to the Lord. Her face was rapt and beautiful, she danced exulting before her Lord, and knew no man.

It hurt him as he watched as if he were at the stake. He felt he was being burned alive. The strangeness, the power of her in her dancing consumed him, he was burned, he could not grasp, he could not understand. He waited obliterated. Then his eyes became blind to her, he saw her no more. And through the unseeing veil between them he called to her, in his jarring voice:

"What are you doing that for?"

"Go away," she said. "Let me dance by myself."

"That isn't dancing," he said harshly. "What do you want to do that for?"

"I don't do it for you," she said. "You go away."

Her strange, lifted belly, big with his child! Had he no right to be there? He felt his presence a violation. Yet he had his right to be there. He went and sat on the bed.

She stopped dancing, and confronted him, again lifting her slim arms and twisting at her hair. Her nakedness hurt her, opposed to him.

"I can do as I like in my bedroom," she cried. "Why do you interfere with me?"

And she slipped on a dressing-gown and crouched before the fire. He was more at ease now she was covered up. The vision of her tormented him all the days of his life, as she had been then, a strange, exalted thing having no relation to himself.

After this day, the door seemed to shut on his mind. His brow shut and became impervious. His eyes ceased to see, his hands were suspended. Within himself his will was coiled like a beast, hidden under the darkness, but always potent, working.

At first she went on blithely enough with him shut down beside her. But then his spell began to take hold of her. The dark, seething potency of him, the power of a creature that lies hidden and exerts its will to the destruction of the free-running creature, as the tiger lying in the darkness of the leaves steadily enforces the fall and death of the light creatures that drink by the waterside in the morning, gradually began to take effect on her. Though he lay there in his darkness and did not move, yet she knew he lay waiting for her. She felt his will fastening on her and pulling her down, even whilst he was silent and obscure.

She found that, in all her outgoings and her incomings, he prevented her. Gradually she realised that she was being borne down by him, borne down by the clinging, heavy weight of him, that he was pulling her down as a leopard clings to a wild cow and exhausts her and pulls her down.

Gradually she realised that her life, her freedom, was sinking under the silent grip of his physical will. He wanted her in his power. He wanted to devour her at leisure, to have her. At length she realised that her sleep was a long ache and a weariness and exhaustion, because of his will fastened upon her, as he lay there beside her, during the night.

She realised it all, and there came a momentous pause, a pause in her swift running, a moment's suspension in her life, when she was lost.

Then she turned fiercely on him, and fought him. He was not to do this to her, it was monstrous. What horrible hold did he want to have over her body? Why did he want to drag her down, and kill her spirit? Why did he want to deny her spirit? Why did he deny her spirituality, hold her for a body only? And was he to claim her carcase?

Some vast, hideous darkness he seemed to represent to her.

"What do you do to me?" she cried. "What beastly thing do you do to me? You put a horrible pressure on my head, you don't let me sleep, you don't let me live. Every moment of your life you are doing something to me, something horrible, that destroys me. There is something horrible in you, something dark and beastly in your will. What do you want of me? What do you want to do to me?"

All the blood in his body went black and powerful and corrosive as he heard her. Black and blind with hatred of her he was. He was in a very black hell, and could not escape.

He hated her for what she said. Did he not give her everything, was she not everything to him? And the shame was a bitter fire in him, that she was everything to him, that he had nothing but her. And then that she should taunt him with it, that he could not escape! The fire went black in his veins. For try as he might, he could not escape. She was everything to him, she was his life and his derivation. He depended on her. If she were taken away, he would collapse as a house from which the central pillar is removed.

And she hated him, because he depended on her so utterly. He was horrible to her. She wanted to thrust him off, to set him apart. It was horrible that he should cleave to her, so close, so close, like leopard that had leapt on her, and fastened.

He went on from day to day in a blackness of rage and shame and frustration. How he tortured himself, to be able to get away from her. But he could not. She was as the rock on which he stood, with deep, heaving water all round, and he was unable to swim. He must take his stand on her, he must depend on her.

What had he in life, save her? Nothing. The rest was a great heaving flood. The terror of the night of heaving, overwhelming flood, which was his vision of life without her, was too much for him. He clung to her fiercely and abjectly.

And she beat him off, she beat him off. Where could he turn, like a swimmer in a dark sea, beaten off from his hold, whither could he turn? He wanted to leave her, he wanted to be able to leave her. For his soul's sake, for his manhood's sake, he must be able to leave her.

But for what? She was the ark, and the rest of the world was flood. The only tangible, secure thing was the woman. He could leave her only for another woman. And where was the other woman, and who was the other woman? Besides, he would be just in the same state. Another woman would be woman, the case would be the same.

Why was she the all, the everything, why must he live only through her, why must he sink if he were detached from her? Why must he cleave to her in a frenzy as for his very life?

The only other way to leave her was to die. The only straight way to leave her was to die. His dark, raging soul knew that. But he had no desire for death.

Why could he not leave her? Why could he not throw himself into the hidden water to live or die, as might be? He could not, he could not. But supposing he went away, right away, and found work, and had a lodging again. He could be again as he had been before.

But he knew he could not. A woman, he must have a woman. And having a woman, he must be free of her. It would be the same position. For he could not be free of her.

For how can a man stand, unless he have something sure under his feet. Can a man tread the unstable water all his life, and call that standing? Better give in and drown at once.

And upon what could he stand, save upon a woman? Was he then like the old man of the seas, impotent to move save upon the back of another life? Was he impotent, or a cripple, or a defective, or a fragment?

It was black, mad, shameful torture, the frenzy of fear, the frenzy of desire, and the horrible, grasping back-wash of shame.

What was he afraid of? Why did life, without Anna, seem to him just a horrible welter, everything jostling in a meaningless, dark, fathomless flood? Why, if Anna left him even for a week, did he seem to be clinging like a madman to the edge of reality, and slipping surely, surely into the flood of unreality that would drown him. This horrible slipping into unreality drove him mad, his soul screamed with fear and agony.

Yet she was pushing him off from her, pushing him away, breaking his fingers from their hold on her, persistently, ruthlessly. He wanted her to have pity. And sometimes for a moment she had pity. But she always began again, thrusting him off, into the deep water, into the frenzy and agony of uncertainty.

She became like a fury to him, without any sense of him. Her eyes were bright with a cold, unmoving hatred. Then his heart seemed to die in its last fear. She might push him off into the deeps.

She would not sleep with him any more. She said he destroyed her sleep. Up started all his frenzy and madness of fear and suffering. She drove him away. Like a cowed, lurking devil he was driven off, his mind working cunningly against her, devising evil for her. But she drove him off. In his moments of intense suffering, she seemed to him inconceivable, a monster, the principle of cruelty.

However her pity might give way for moments, she was hard and cold as a jewel. He must be put off from her, she must sleep alone. She made him a bed in the small room.

And he lay there whipped, his soul whipped almost to death, yet unchanged. He lay in agony of suffering, thrown back into unreality, like a man thrown overboard into a sea, to swim till he sinks, because there is no hold, only a wide, weltering sea.

He did not sleep, save for the white sleep when a thin veil is drawn over the mind. It was not sleep. He was awake, and he was not awake. He could not be alone. He needed to be able to put his arms round her. He could not bear the empty space against his breast, where she used to be. He could not bear it. He felt as if he were suspended in space, held there by the grip of his will. If he relaxed his will would fall, fall through endless space, into the bottomless pit, always falling, will-less, helpless, non-existent, just dropping to extinction, falling till the fire of friction had burned out, like a falling star, then nothing, nothing, complete nothing.

He rose in the morning grey and unreal. And she seemed fond of him again, she seemed to make up to him a little.

"I slept well," she said, with her slightly false brightness. "Did you?"

"All right," he answered.

He would never tell her.

For three or four nights he lay alone through the white sleep, his will unchanged, unchanged, still tense, fixed in its grip. Then, as if she were revived and free to be fond of him again, deluded by his silence and seeming acquiescence, moved also by pity, she took him back again.

Each night, in spite of all the shame, he had waited with agony for bedtime, to see if she would shut him out. And each night, as, in her false brightness, she said Good night, he felt he must kill her or himself. But she asked for her kiss, so pathetically, so prettily. So he kissed her, whilst his heart was ice.

And sometimes he went out. Once he sat for a long time in the church porch, before going in to bed. It was dark with a wind blowing. He sat in the church porch and felt some shelter, some security. But it grew cold, and he must go in to bed.

Then came the night when she said, putting her arms round him and kissing him fondly:

"Stay with me to-night, will you?"

And he had stayed without demur. But his will had not altered. He would have her fixed to him.

So that soon she told him again she must be alone.

"I don't want to send you away. I want to sleep with you. But I can't sleep, you don't let me sleep."

His blood turned black in his veins.

"What do you mean by such a thing? It's an arrant lie. I don't let you sleep----"

"But you don't. I sleep so well when I'm alone. And I can't sleep when you're there. You do something to me, you put a pressure on my head. And I must sleep, now the child is coming."

"It's something in yourself," he replied, "something wrong in you."

Horrible in the extreme were these nocturnal combats, when all the world was asleep, and they two were alone, alone in the world, and repelling each other. It was hardly to be borne.

He went and lay down alone. And at length, after a grey and livid and ghastly period, he relaxed, something gave way in him. He let go, he did not care what became of him. Strange and dim he became to himself, to her, to everybody. A vagueness had come over everything, like a drowning. And it was an infinite relief to drown, a relief, a great, great relief.

He would insist no more, he would force her no more. He would force himself upon her no more. He would let go, relax, lapse, and what would be, should be.

Yet he wanted her still, he always, always wanted her. In his soul, he was desolate as a child, he was so helpless. Like a child on its mother, he depended on her for his living. He knew it, and he knew he could hardly help it.

Yet he must be able to be alone. He must be able to lie down alongside the empty space, and let be. He must be able to leave himself to the flood, to sink or live as might be. For he recognised at length his own limitation, and the limitation of his power. He had to give in.

There was a stillness, a wanness between them. Half at least of the battle was over. Sometimes she wept as she went about, her heart was very heavy. But the child was always warm in her womb.

They were friends again, new, subdued friends. But there was a wanness between them. They slept together once more, very quietly, and distinct, not one together as before. And she was intimate with him as at first. But he was very quiet, and not intimate. He was glad in his soul, but for the time being he was not alive.

He could sleep with her, and let her be. He could be alone now. He had just learned what it was to be able to be alone. It was right and peaceful. She had given him a new, deeper freedom. The world might be a welter of uncertainty, but he was himself now. He had come into his own existence. He was born for a second time, born at last unto himself, out of the vast body of humanity. Now at last he had a separate identity, he existed alone, even if he were not quite alone. Before he had only existed in so far as he had relations with another being. Now he had an absolute self-as well as a relative self.

But it was a very dumb, weak, helpless self, a crawling nursling. He went about very quiet, and in a way, submissive. He had an unalterable self at last, free, separate, independent.

She was relieved, she was free of him. She had given him to himself. She wept sometimes with tiredness and helplessness. But he was a husband. And she seemed, in the child that was coming, to forget. It seemed to make her warm and drowsy. She lapsed into a long muse, indistinct, warm, vague, unwilling to be taken out of her vagueness. And she rested on him also.

Sometimes she came to him with a strange light in her eyes, poignant, pathetic, as if she were asking for something. He looked and he could not understand. She was so beautiful, so visionary, the rays seemed to go out of his breast to her, like a shining. He was there for her, all for her. And she would hold his breast, and kiss it, and kiss it, kneeling beside him, she who was waiting for the hour of her delivery. And he would lie looking down at his breast, till it seemed that his breast was not himself, that he had left it lying there. Yet it was himself also, and beautiful and bright with her kisses. He was glad with a strange, radiant pain. Whilst she kneeled beside him, and kissed his breast with a slow, rapt, half-devotional movement.

He knew she wanted something, his heart yearned to give it her. His heart yearned over her. And as she lifted her face, that was radiant and rosy as a little cloud, his heart still yearned over her, and, now from the distance, adored her. She had a flower-like presence which he adored as he stood far off, a stranger.

The weeks passed on, the time drew near, they were very gentle, and delicately happy. The insistent, passionate, dark soul, the powerful unsatisfaction in him seemed stilled and tamed, the lion lay down with the lamb in him.

She loved him very much indeed, and he waited near her. She was a precious, remote thing to him at this time, as she waited for her child. Her soul was glad with an ecstasy because of the coming infant. She wanted a boy: oh, very much she wanted a boy.

But she seemed so young and so frail. She was indeed only a girl. As she stood by the fire washing herself-she was proud to wash herself at this time-and he looked at her, his heart was full of extreme tenderness for her. Such fine, fine limbs, her slim, round arms like chasing lights, and her legs so simple and childish, yet so very proud. Oh, she stood on proud legs, with a lovely reckless balance of her full belly, and the adorable little roundnesses, and the breasts becoming important. Above it all, her face was like a rosy cloud shining.

How proud she was, what a lovely proud thing her young body! And she loved him to put his hand on her ripe fullness, so that he should thrill also with the stir and the quickening there. He was afraid and silent, but she flung her arms round his neck with proud, impudent joy.

The pains came on, and Oh-how she cried! She would have him stay with her. And after her long cries she would look at him, with tears in her eyes and a sobbing laugh on her face, saying:

"I don't mind it really."

It was bad enough. But to her it was never deathly. Even the fierce, tearing pain was exhilarating. She screamed and suffered, but was all the time curiously alive and vital. She felt so powerfully alive and in the hands of such a masterly force of life, that her bottom-most feeling was one of exhilaration. She knew she was winning, winning, she was always winning, with each onset of pain she was nearer to victory.

Probably he suffered more than she did. He was not shocked or horrified. But he was screwed very tight in the vise of suffering.

It was a girl. The second of silence on her face when they said so showed him she was disappointed. And a great blazing passion of resentment and protest sprang up in his heart. In that moment he claimed the child.

But when the milk came, and the infant sucked her breast, she seemed to be leaping with extravagant bliss.

"It sucks me, it sucks me, it likes me-oh, it loves it!" she cried, holding the child to her breast with her two hands covering it, passionately.

And in a few moments, as she became used to her bliss, she looked at the youth with glowing, unseeing eyes, and said:

"Anna Victrix."

He went away, trembling, and slept. To her, her pains were the wound-smart of a victor, she was the prouder.

When she was well again she was very happy. She called the baby Ursula. Both Anna and her husband felt they must have a name that gave them private satisfaction. The baby was tawny skinned, it had a curious downy skin, and wisps of bronze hair, and the yellow grey eyes that wavered, and then became golden-brown like the father's. So they called her Ursula because of the picture of the saint.

It was a rather delicate baby at first, but soon it became stronger, and was restless as a young eel. Anna was worn out with the day-long wrestling with its young vigour.

As a little animal, she loved and adored it and was happy. She loved her husband, she kissed his eyes and nose and mouth, and made much of him, she said his limbs were beautiful, she was fascinated by the physical form of him.

And she was indeed Anna Victrix. He could not combat her any more. He was out in the wilderness, alone with her. Having occasion to go to London, he marvelled, as he returned, thinking of naked, lurking savages on an island, how these had built up and created the great mass of Oxford Street or Piccadilly. How had helpless savages, running with their spears on the riverside, after fish, how had they come to rear up this great London, the ponderous, massive, ugly superstructure of a world of man upon a world of nature! It frightened and awed him. Man was terrible, awful in his works. The works of man were more terrible than man himself, almost monstrous.

And yet, for his own part, for his private being, Brangwen felt that the whole of the man's world was exterior and extraneous to his own real life with Anna. Sweep away the whole monstrous superstructure of the world of to-day, cities and industries and civilisation, leave only the bare earth with plants growing and waters running, and he would not mind, so long as he were whole, had Anna and the child and the new, strange certainty in his soul. Then, if he were naked, he would find clothing somewhere, he would make a shelter and bring food to his wife.

And what more? What more would be necessary? The great mass of activity in which mankind was engaged meant nothing to him. By nature, he had no part in it. What did he live for, then? For Anna only, and for the sake of living? What did he want on this earth? Anna only, and his children, and his life with his children and her? Was there no more?

He was attended by a sense of something more, something further, which gave him absolute being. It was as if now he existed in Eternity, let Time be what it might. What was there outside? The fabricated world, that he did not believe in? What should he bring to her, from outside? Nothing? Was it enough, as it was? He was troubled in his acquiescence. She was not with him. Yet he scarcely believed in himself, apart from her, though the whole Infinite was with him. Let the whole world slide down and over the edge of oblivion, he would stand alone. But he was unsure of her. And he existed also in her. So he was unsure.

He hovered near to her, never quite able to forget the vague, haunting uncertainty, that seemed to challenge him, and which he would not hear. A pang of dread, almost guilt, as of insufficiency, would go over him as he heard her talking to the baby. She stood before the window, with the month-old child in her arms, talking in a musical, young sing-song that he had not heard before, and which rang on his heart like a claim from the distance, or the voice of another world sounding its claim on him. He stood near, listening, and his heart surged, surged to rise and submit. Then it shrank back and stayed aloof. He could not move, a denial was upon him, as if he could not deny himself. He must, he must be himself.

"Look at the silly blue-caps, my beauty," she crooned, holding up the infant to the window, where shone the white garden, and the blue-tits scuffling in the snow: "Look at the silly blue-caps, my darling, having a fight in the snow! Look at them, my bird-beating the snow about with their wings, and shaking their heads. Oh, aren't they wicked things, wicked things! Look at their yellow feathers on the snow there! They'll miss them, won't they, when they're cold later on.

"Must we tell them to stop, must we say 'stop it' to them, my bird? But they are naughty, naughty! Look at them!" Suddenly her voice broke loud and fierce, she rapped the pane sharply.

"Stop it," she cried, "stop it, you little nuisances. Stop it!" She called louder, and rapped the pane more sharply. Her voice was fierce and imperative.

"Have more sense," she cried.

"There, now they're gone. Where have they gone, the silly things? What will they say to each other? What will they say, my lambkin? They'll forget, won't they, they'll forget all about it, out of their silly little heads, and their blue caps."

After a moment, she turned her bright face to her husband.

"They were really fighting, they were really fierce with each other!" she said, her voice keen with excitement and wonder, as if she belonged to the birds' world, were identified with the race of birds.

"Ay, they'll fight, will blue-caps," he said, glad when she turned to him with her glow from elsewhere. He came and stood beside her and looked out at the marks on the snow where the birds had scuffled, and at the yew trees' burdened, white and black branches. What was the appeal it made to him, what was the question of her bright face, what was the challenge he was called to answer? He did not know. But as he stood there he felt some responsibility which made him glad, but uneasy, as if he must put out his own light. And he could not move as yet.

Anna loved the child very much, oh, very much. Yet still she was not quite fulfilled. She had a slight expectant feeling, as of a door half opened. Here she was, safe and still in Cossethay. But she felt as if she were not in Cossethay at all. She was straining her eyes to something beyond. And from her Pisgah mount, which she had attained, what could she see? A faint, gleaming horizon, a long way off, and a rainbow like an archway, a shadow-door with faintly coloured coping above it. Must she be moving thither?

Something she had not, something she did not grasp, could not arrive at. There was something beyond her. But why must she start on the journey? She stood so safely on the Pisgah mountain.

In the winter, when she rose with the sunrise, and out of the back windows saw the east flaming yellow and orange above the green, glowing grass, while the great pear tree in between stood dark and magnificent as an idol, and under the dark pear tree, the little sheet of water spread smooth in burnished, yellow light, she said, "It is here". And when, at evening, the sunset came in a red glare through the big opening in the clouds, she said again, "It is beyond".

Dawn and sunset were the feet of the rainbow that spanned the day, and she saw the hope, the promise. Why should she travel any further?

Yet she always asked the question. As the sun went down in his fiery winter haste, she faced the blazing close of the affair, in which she had not played her fullest part, and she made her demand still: "What are you doing, making this big shining commotion? What is it that you keep so busy about, that you will not let us alone?"

She did not turn to her husband, for him to lead her. He was apart from her, with her, according to her different conceptions of him. The child she might hold up, she might toss the child forward into the furnace, the child might walk there, amid the burning coals and the incandescent roar of heat, as the three witnesses walked with the angel in the fire.

Soon, she felt sure of her husband. She knew his dark face and the extent of its passion. She knew his slim, vigorous body, she said it was hers. Then there was no denying her. She was a rich woman enjoying her riches.

And soon again she was with child. Which made her satisfied and took away her discontent. She forgot that she had watched the sun climb up and pass his way, a magnificent traveller surging forward. She forgot that the moon had looked through a window of the high, dark night, and nodded like a magic recognition, signalled to her to follow. Sun and moon travelled on, and left her, passed her by, a rich woman enjoying her riches. She should go also. But she could not go, when they called, because she must stay at home now. With satisfaction she relinquished the adventure to the unknown. She was bearing her children.

There was another child coming, and Anna lapsed into vague content. If she were not the wayfarer to the unknown, if she were arrived now, settled in her builded house, a rich woman, still her doors opened under the arch of the rainbow, her threshold reflected the passing of the sun and moon, the great travellers, her house was full of the echo of journeying.

She was a door and a threshold, she herself. Through her another soul was coming, to stand upon her as upon the threshold, looking out, shading its eyes for the direction to take.

Chapter 7

The Cathedral

During the first year of her marriage, before Ursula was born, Anna Brangwen and her husband went to visit her mother's friend, the Baron Skrebensky. The latter had kept a slight connection with Anna's mother, and had always preserved some officious interest in the young girl, because she was a pure Pole.

When Baron Skrebensky was about forty years old, his wife died, and left him raving, disconsolate. Lydia had visited him then, taking Anna with her. It was when the girl was fourteen years old. Since then she had not seen him. She remembered him as a small sharp clergyman who cried and talked and terrified her, whilst her mother was most strangely consoling, in a foreign language.

The little Baron never quite approved of Anna, because she spoke no Polish. Still, he considered himself in some way her guardian, on Lensky's behalf, and he presented her with some old, heavy Russian jewellery, the least valuable of his wife's relics. Then he lapsed out of the Brangwen's life again, though he lived only about thirty miles away.

Three years later came the startling news that he had married a young English girl of good family. Everybody marvelled. Then came a copy of "The History of the Parish of Briswell, by Rudolph, Baron Skrebensky, Vicar of Briswell." It was a curious book, incoherent, full of interesting exhumations. It was dedicated: "To my wife, Millicent Maud Pearse, in whom I embrace the generous spirit of England."

"If he embraces no more than the spirit of England," said Tom Brangwen, "it's a bad look-out for him."

But paying a formal visit with his wife, he found the new Baroness a little, creamy-skinned, insidious thing with red-brown hair and a mouth that one must always watch, because it curved back continually in an incomprehensible, strange laugh that exposed her rather prominent teeth. She was not beautiful, yet Tom Brangwen was immediately under her spell. She seemed to snuggle like a kitten within his warmth, whilst she was at the same time elusive and ironical, suggesting the fine steel of her claws.

The Baron was almost dotingly courteous and attentive to her. She, almost mockingly, yet quite happy, let him dote. Curious little thing she was, she had the soft, creamy, elusive beauty of a ferret. Tom Brangwen was quite at a loss, at her mercy, and she laughed, a little breathlessly, as if tempted to cruelty. She did put fine torments on the elderly Baron.

When some months later she bore a son, the Baron Skrebensky was loud with delight.

Gradually she gathered a circle of acquaintances in the county. For she was of good family, half Venetian, educated in Dresden. The little foreign vicar attained to a social status which almost satisfied his maddened pride.

Therefore the Brangwens were surprised when the invitation came for Anna and her young husband to pay a visit to Briswell vicarage. For the Skrebenskys were now moderately well off, Millicent Skrebensky having some fortune of her own.

Anna took her best clothes, recovered her best high-school manner, and arrived with her husband. Will Brangwen, ruddy, bright, with long limbs and a small head, like some uncouth bird, was not changed in the least. The little Baroness was smiling, showing her teeth. She had a real charm, a kind of joyous coldness, laughing, delighted, like some weasel. Anna at once respected her, and was on her guard before her, instinctively attracted by the strange, childlike surety of the Baroness, yet mistrusting it, fascinated. The little baron was now quite white-haired, very brittle. He was wizened and wrinkled, yet fiery, unsubdued. Anna looked at his lean body, at his small, fine lean legs and lean hands as he sat talking, and she flushed. She recognised the quality of the male in him, his lean, concentrated age, his informed fire, his faculty for sharp, deliberate response. He was so detached, so purely objective. A woman was thoroughly outside him. There was no confusion. So he could give that fine, deliberate response.

He was something separate and interesting; his hard, intrinsic being, whittled down by age to an essentiality and a directness almost death-like, cruel, was yet so unswervingly sure in its action, so distinct in its surety, that she was attracted to him. She watched his cool, hard, separate fire, fascinated by it. Would she rather have it than her husband's diffuse heat, than his blind, hot youth?

She seemed to be breathing high, sharp air, as if she had just come out of a hot room. These strange Skrebenskys made her aware of another, freer element, in which each person was detached and isolated. Was not this her natural element? Was not the close Brangwen life stifling her?

Meanwhile the little baroness, with always a subtle light stirring of her full, lustrous, hazel eyes, was playing with Will Brangwen. He was not quick enough to see all her movements. Yet he watched her steadily, with unchanging, lit-up eyes. She was a strange creature to him. But she had no power over him. She flushed, and was irritated. Yet she glanced again and again at his dark, living face, curiously, as if she despised him. She despised his uncritical, unironical nature, it had nothing for her. Yet it angered her as if she were jealous. He watched her with deferential interest as he would watch a stoat playing. But he himself was not implicated. He was different in kind. She was all lambent, biting flames, he was a red fire glowing steadily. She could get nothing out of him. So she made him flush darkly by assuming a biting, subtle class-superiority. He flushed, but still he did not object. He was too different.

Her little boy came in with the nurse. He was a quick, slight child, with fine preceptiveness, and a cool transitoriness in his interest. At once he treated Will Brangwen as an outsider. He stayed by Anna for a moment, acknowledged her, then was gone again, quick, observant, restless, with a glance of interest at everything.

The father adored him, and spoke to him in Polish. It was queer, the stiff, aristocratic manner of the father with the child, the distance in the relationship, the classic fatherhood on the one hand, the filial subordination on the other. They played together, in their different degrees very separate, two different beings, differing as it were in rank rather than in relationship. And the baroness smiled, smiled, smiled, always smiled, showing her rather protruding teeth, having always a mysterious attraction and charm.

Anna realised how different her own life might have been, how different her own living. Her soul stirred, she became as another person. Her intimacy with her husband passed away, the curious enveloping Brangwen intimacy, so warm, so close, so stifling, when one seemed always to be in contact with the other person, like a blood-relation, was annulled. She denied it, this close relationship with her young husband. He and she were not one. His heat was not always to suffuse her, suffuse her, through her mind and her individuality, till she was of one heat with him, till she had not her own self apart. She wanted her own life. He seemed to lap her and suffuse her with his being, his hot life, till she did not know whether she were herself, or whether she were another creature, united with him in a world of close blood-intimacy that closed over her and excluded her from all the cool outside.

She wanted her own, old, sharp self, detached, detached, active but not absorbed, active for her own part, taking and giving, but never absorbed. Whereas he wanted this strange absorption with her, which still she resisted. But she was partly helpless against it. She had lived so long in Tom Brangwen's love, beforehand.

From the Skrebensky's, they went to Will Brangwen's beloved Lincoln Cathedral, because it was not far off. He had promised her, that one by one, they should visit all the cathedrals of England. They began with Lincoln, which he knew well.

He began to get excited as the time drew near to set off. What was it that changed him so much? She was almost angry, coming as she did from the Skrebensky's. But now he ran on alone. His very breast seemed to open its doors to watch for the great church brooding over the town. His soul ran ahead.

When he saw the cathedral in the distance, dark blue lifted watchful in the sky, his heart leapt. It was the sign in heaven, it was the Spirit hovering like a dove, like an eagle over the earth. He turned his glowing, ecstatic face to her, his mouth opened with a strange, ecstatic grin.

"There she is," he said.

The "she" irritated her. Why "she"? It was "it". What was the cathedral, a big building, a thing of the past, obsolete, to excite him to such a pitch? She began to stir herself to readiness.

They passed up the steep hill, he eager as a pilgrim arriving at the shrine. As they came near the precincts, with castle on one side and cathedral on the other, his veins seemed to break into fiery blossom, he was transported.

They had passed through the gate, and the great west front was before them, with all its breadth and ornament.

"It is a false front," he said, looking at the golden stone and the twin towers, and loving them just the same. In a little ecstasy he found himself in the porch, on the brink of the unrevealed. He looked up to the lovely unfolding of the stone. He was to pass within to the perfect womb.

Then he pushed open the door, and the great, pillared gloom was before him, in which his soul shuddered and rose from her nest. His soul leapt, soared up into the great church. His body stood still, absorbed by the height. His soul leapt up into the gloom, into possession, it reeled, it swooned with a great escape, it quivered in the womb, in the hush and the gloom of fecundity, like seed of procreation in ecstasy.

She too was overcome with wonder and awe. She followed him in his progress. Here, the twilight was the very essence of life, the coloured darkness was the embryo of all light, and the day. Here, the very first dawn was breaking, the very last sunset sinking, and the immemorial darkness, whereof life's day would blossom and fall away again, re-echoed peace and profound immemorial silence.

Away from time, always outside of time! Between east and west, between dawn and sunset, the church lay like a seed in silence, dark before germination, silenced after death. Containing birth and death, potential with all the noise and transition of life, the cathedral remained hushed, a great, involved seed, whereof the flower would be radiant life inconceivable, but whose beginning and whose end were the circle of silence. Spanned round with the rainbow, the jewelled gloom folded music upon silence, light upon darkness, fecundity upon death, as a seed folds leaf upon leaf and silence upon the root and the flower, hushing up the secret of all between its parts, the death out of which it fell, the life into which it has dropped, the immortality it involves, and the death it will embrace again.

Here in the church, "before" and "after" were folded together, all was contained in oneness. Brangwen came to his consummation. Out of the doors of the womb he had come, putting aside the wings of the womb, and proceeding into the light. Through daylight and day-after-day he had come, knowledge after knowledge, and experience after experience, remembering the darkness of the womb, having prescience of the darkness after death. Then between-while he had pushed open the doors of the cathedral, and entered the twilight of both darkness, the hush of the two-fold silence where dawn was sunset, and the beginning and the end were one.

Here the stone leapt up from the plain of earth, leapt up in a manifold, clustered desire each time, up, away from the horizontal earth, through twilight and dusk and the whole range of desire, through the swerving, the declination, ah, to the ecstasy, the touch, to the meeting and the consummation, the meeting, the clasp, the close embrace, the neutrality, the perfect, swooning consummation, the timeless ecstasy. There his soul remained, at the apex of the arch, clinched in the timeless ecstasy, consummated.

And there was no time nor life nor death, but only this, this timeless consummation, where the thrust from earth met the thrust from earth and the arch was locked on the keystone of ecstasy. This was all, this was everything. Till he came to himself in the world below. Then again he gathered himself together, in transit, every jet of him strained and leaped, leaped clear into the darkness above, to the fecundity and the unique mystery, to the touch, the clasp, the consummation, the climax of eternity, the apex of the arch.

She too was overcome, but silenced rather than tuned to the place. She loved it as a world not quite her own, she resented his transports and ecstasies. His passion in the cathedral at first awed her, then made her angry. After all, there was the sky outside, and in here, in this mysterious half-night, when his soul leapt with the pillars upwards, it was not to the stars and the crystalline dark space, but to meet and clasp with the answering impulse of leaping stone, there in the dusk and secrecy of the roof. The far-off clinching and mating of the arches, the leap and thrust of the stone, carrying a great roof overhead, awed and silenced her.

But yet-yet she remembered that the open sky was no blue vault, no dark dome hung with many twinkling lamps, but a space where stars were wheeling in freedom, with freedom above them always higher.

The cathedral roused her too. But she would never consent to the knitting of all the leaping stone in a great roof that closed her in, and beyond which was nothing, nothing, it was the ultimate confine. His soul would have liked it to be so: here, here is all, complete, eternal: motion, meeting, ecstasy, and no illusion of time, of night and day passing by, but only perfectly proportioned space and movement clinching and renewing, and passion surging its way into great waves to the altar, recurrence of ecstasy.

Her soul too was carried forward to the altar, to the threshold of Eternity, in reverence and fear and joy. But ever she hung back in the transit, mistrusting the culmination of the altar. She was not to be flung forward on the lift and lift of passionate flights, to be cast at last upon the altar steps as upon the shore of the unknown. There was a great joy and a verity in it. But even in the dazed swoon of the cathedral, she claimed another right. The altar was barren, its lights gone out. God burned no more in that bush. It was dead matter lying there. She claimed the right to freedom above her, higher than the roof. She had always a sense of being roofed in.

So that she caught at little things, which saved her from being swept forward headlong in the tide of passion that leaps on into the Infinite in a great mass, triumphant and flinging its own course. She wanted to get out of this fixed, leaping, forward-travelling movement, to rise from it as a bird rises with wet, limp feet from the sea, to lift herself as a bird lifts its breast and thrusts its body from the pulse and heave of a sea that bears it forward to an unwilling conclusion, tear herself away like a bird on wings, and in open space where there is clarity, rise up above the fixed, surcharged motion, a separate speck that hangs suspended, moves this way and that, seeing and answering before it sinks again, having chosen or found the direction in which it shall be carried forward.

And it was as if she must grasp at something, as if her wings were too weak to lift her straight off the heaving motion. So she caught sight of the wicked, odd little faces carved in stone, and she stood before them arrested.

These sly little faces peeped out of the grand tide of the cathedral like something that knew better. They knew quite well, these little imps that retorted on man's own illusion, that the cathedral was not absolute. They winked and leered, giving suggestion of the many things that had been left out of the great concept of the church. "However much there is inside here, there's a good deal they haven't got in," the little faces mocked.

Apart from the lift and spring of the great impulse towards the altar, these little faces had separate wills, separate motions, separate knowledge, which rippled back in defiance of the tide, and laughed in triumph of their own very littleness.

"Oh, look!" cried Anna. "Oh, look how adorable, the faces! Look at her."

Brangwen looked unwillingly. This was the voice of the serpent in his Eden. She pointed him to a plump, sly, malicious little face carved in stone.

"He knew her, the man who carved her," said Anna. "I'm sure she was his wife."

"It isn't a woman at all, it's a man," said Brangwen curtly.

"Do you think so?-No! That isn't a man. That is no man's face."

Her voice sounded rather jeering. He laughed shortly, and went on. But she would not go forward with him. She loitered about the carvings. And he could not go forward without her. He waited impatient of this counteraction. She was spoiling his passionate intercourse with the cathedral. His brows began to gather.

"Oh, this is good!" she cried again. "Here is the same woman-look!-only he's made her cross! Isn't it lovely! Hasn't he made her hideous to a degree?" She laughed with pleasure. "Didn't he hate her? He must have been a nice man! Look at her-isn't it awfully good-just like a shrewish woman. He must have enjoyed putting her in like that. He got his own back on her, didn't he?"

"It's a man's face, no woman's at all-a monk's-clean shaven," he said.

She laughed with a pouf! of laughter.

"You hate to think he put his wife in your cathedral, don't you?" she mocked, with a tinkle of profane laughter. And she laughed with malicious triumph.

She had got free from the cathedral, she had even destroyed the passion he had. She was glad. He was bitterly angry. Strive as he would, he could not keep the cathedral wonderful to him. He was disillusioned. That which had been his absolute, containing all heaven and earth, was become to him as to her, a shapely heap of dead matter-but dead, dead.

His mouth was full of ash, his soul was furious. He hated her for having destroyed another of his vital illusions. Soon he would be stark, stark, without one place wherein to stand, without one belief in which to rest.

Yet somewhere in him he responded more deeply to the sly little face that knew better, than he had done before to the perfect surge of his cathedral.

Nevertheless for the time being his soul was wretched and homeless, and he could not bear to think of Anna's ousting him from his beloved realities. He wanted his cathedral; he wanted to satisfy his blind passion. And he could not any more. Something intervened.

They went home again, both of them altered. She had some new reverence for that which he wanted, he felt that his cathedrals would never again be to him as they had been. Before, he had thought them absolute. But now he saw them crouching under the sky, with still the dark, mysterious world of reality inside, but as a world within a world, a sort of side show, whereas before they had been as a world to him within a chaos: a reality, an order, an absolute, within a meaningless confusion.

He had felt, before, that could he but go through the great door and look down the gloom towards the far-off, concluding wonder of the altar, that then, with the windows suspended around like tablets of jewels, emanating their own glory, then he had arrived. Here the satisfaction he had yearned after came near, towards this, the porch of the great Unknown, all reality gathered, and there, the altar was the mystic door, through which all and everything must move on to eternity.

But now, somehow, sadly and disillusioned, he realised that the doorway was no doorway. It was too narrow, it was false. Outside the cathedral were many flying spirits that could never be sifted through the jewelled gloom. He had lost his absolute.

He listened to the thrushes in the gardens and heard a note which the cathedrals did not include: something free and careless and joyous. He crossed a field that was all yellow with dandelions, on his way to work, and the bath of yellow glowing was something at once so sumptuous and so fresh, that he was glad he was away from his shadowy cathedral.

There was life outside the Church. There was much that the Church did not include. He thought of God, and of the whole blue rotunda of the day. That was something great and free. He thought of the ruins of the Grecian worship, and it seemed, a temple was never perfectly a temple, till it was ruined and mixed up with the winds and the sky and the herbs.

Still he loved the Church. As a symbol, he loved it. He tended it for what it tried to represent, rather than for that which it did represent. Still he loved it. The little church across his garden-wall drew him, he gave it loving attention. But he went to take charge of it, to preserve it. It was as an old, sacred thing to him. He looked after the stone and woodwork, mending the organ and restoring a piece of broken carving, repairing the church furniture. Later, he became choir-master also.

His life was shifting its centre, becoming more superficial. He had failed to become really articulate, failed to find real expression. He had to continue in the old form. But in spirit, he was uncreated.

Anna was absorbed in the child now, she left her husband to take his own way. She was willing now to postpone all adventure into unknown realities. She had the child, her palpable and immediate future was the child. If her soul had found no utterance, her womb had.

The church that neighboured with his house became very intimate and dear to him. He cherished it, he had it entirely in his charge. If he could find no new activity, he would be happy cherishing the old, dear form of worship. He knew this little, whitewashed church. In its shadowy atmosphere he sank back into being. He liked to sink himself in its hush as a stone sinks into water.

He went across his garden, mounted the wall by the little steps, and entered the hush and peace of the church. As the heavy door clanged to behind him, his feet re-echoed in the aisle, his heart re-echoed with a little passion of tenderness and mystic peace. He was also slightly ashamed, like a man who has failed, who lapses back for his fulfilment.

He loved to light the candles at the organ, and sitting there alone in the little glow, practise the hymns and chants for the service. The whitewashed arches retreated into darkness, the sound of the organ and the organ-pedals died away upon the unalterable stillness of the church, there were faint, ghostly noises in the tower, and then the music swelled out again, loudly, triumphantly.

He ceased to fret about his life. He relaxed his will, and let everything go. What was between him and his wife was a great thing, if it was not everything. She had conquered, really. Let him wait, and abide, wait and abide. She and the baby and himself, they were one. The organ rang out his protestation. His soul lay in the darkness as he pressed the keys of the organ.

To Anna, the baby was a complete bliss and fulfilment. Her desires sank into abeyance, her soul was in bliss over the baby. It was rather a delicate child, she had trouble to rear it. She never for a moment thought it would die. It was a delicate infant, therefore it behoved her to make it strong. She threw herself into the labour, the child was everything. Her imagination was all occupied here. She was a mother. It was enough to handle the new little limbs, the new little body, hear the new little voice crying in the stillness. All the future rang to her out of the sound of the baby's crying and cooing, she balanced the coming years of life in her hands, as she nursed the child. The passionate sense of fulfilment, of the future germinated in her, made her vivid and powerful. All the future was in her hands, in the hands of the woman. And before this baby was ten months old, she was again with child. She seemed to be in the fecund of storm life, every moment was full and busy with productiveness to her. She felt like the earth, the mother of everything.

Brangwen occupied himself with the church, he played the organ, he trained the choir-boys, he taught a Sunday-school class of youths. He was happy enough. There was an eager, yearning kind of happiness in him as he taught the boys on Sundays. He was all the time exciting himself with the proximity of some secret that he had not yet fathomed.

In the house, he served his wife and the little matriarchy. She loved him because he was the father of her children. And she always had a physical passion for him. So he gave up trying to have the spiritual superiority and control, or even her respect for his conscious or public life. He lived simply by her physical love for him. And he served the little matriarchy, nursing the child and helping with the housework, indifferent any more of his own dignity and importance. But his abandoning of claims, his living isolated upon his own interest, made him seem unreal, unimportant.

Anna was not publicly proud of him. But very soon she learned to be indifferent to public life. He was not what is called a manly man: he did not drink or smoke or arrogate importance. But he was her man, and his very indifference to all claims of manliness set her supreme in her own world with him. Physically, she loved him and he satisfied her. He went alone and subsidiary always. At first it had irritated her, the outer world existed so little to him. Looking at him with outside eyes, she was inclined to sneer at him. But her sneer changed to a sort of respect. She respected him, that he could serve her so simply and completely. Above all, she loved to bear his children. She loved to be the source of children.

She could not understand him, his strange, dark rages and his devotion to the church. It was the church building he cared for; and yet his soul was passionate for something. He laboured cleaning the stonework, repairing the woodwork, restoring the organ, and making the singing as perfect as possible. To keep the church fabric and the church-ritual intact was his business; to have the intimate sacred building utterly in his own hands, and to make the form of service complete. There was a little bright anguish and tension on his face, and in his intent movements. He was like a lover who knows he is betrayed, but who still loves, whose love is only the more intense. The church was false, but he served it the more attentively.

During the day, at his work in the office, he kept himself suspended. He did not exist. He worked automatically till it was time to go home.

He loved with a hot heart the dark-haired little Ursula, and he waited for the child to come to consciousness. Now the mother monopolised the baby. But his heart waited in its darkness. His hour would come.

In the long run, he learned to submit to Anna. She forced him to the spirit of her laws, whilst leaving him the letter of his own. She combated in him his devils. She suffered very much from his inexplicable and incalculable dark rages, when a blackness filled him, and a black wind seemed to sweep out of existence everything that had to do with him. She could feel herself, everything, being annihilated by him.

At first she fought him. At night, in this state, he would kneel down to say his prayers. She looked at his crouching figure.

"Why are you kneeling there, pretending to pray?" she said, harshly. "Do you think anybody can pray, when they are in the vile temper you are in?"

He remained crouching by the beside, motionless.

"It's horrible," she continued, "and such a pretence! What do you pretend you are saying? Who do you pretend you are praying to?"

He still remained motionless, seething with inchoate rage, when his whole nature seemed to disintegrate. He seemed to live with a strain upon himself, and occasionally came these dark, chaotic rages, the lust for destruction. She then fought with him, and their fights were horrible, murderous. And then the passion between them came just as black and awful.

But little by little, as she learned to love him better, she would put herself aside, and when she felt one of his fits upon him, would ignore him, successfully leave him in his world, whilst she remained in her own. He had a black struggle with himself, to come back to her. For at last he learned that he would be in hell until he came back to her. So he struggled to submit to her, and she was afraid of the ugly strain in his eyes. She made love to him, and took him. Then he was grateful to her love, humble.

He made himself a woodwork shed, in which to restore things which were destroyed in the church. So he had plenty to do: his wife, his child, the church, the woodwork, and his wage-earning, all occupying him. If only there were not some limit to him, some darkness across his eyes! He had to give in to it at last himself. He must submit to his own inadequacy, aware of some limit to himself, of something unformed in his own black, violent temper, and to reckon with it. But as she was more gentle with him, it became quieter.

As he sat sometimes very still, with a bright, vacant face, Anna could see the suffering among the brightness. He was aware of some limit to himself, of something unformed in his very being, of some buds which were not ripe in him, some folded centres of darkness which would never develop and unfold whilst he was alive in the body. He was unready for fulfilment. Something undeveloped in him limited him, there was a darkness in him which he could not unfold, which would never unfold in him.

Chapter 8

The Child

From the first, the baby stirred in the young father a deep, strong emotion he dared scarcely acknowledge, it was so strong and came out of the dark of him. When he heard the child cry, a terror possessed him, because of the answering echo from the unfathomed distances in himself. Must he know in himself such distances, perilous and imminent?

He had the infant in his arms, he walked backwards and forwards troubled by the crying of his own flesh and blood. This was his own flesh and blood crying! His soul rose against the voice suddenly breaking out from him, from the distances in him.

Sometimes in the night, the child cried and cried, when the night was heavy and sleep oppressed him. And half asleep, he stretched out his hand to put it over the baby's face to stop the crying. But something arrested his hand: the very inhumanness of the intolerable, continuous crying arrested him. It was so impersonal, without cause or object. Yet he echoed to it directly, his soul answered its madness. It filled him with terror, almost with frenzy.

He learned to acquiesce to this, to submit to the awful, obliterated sources which were the origin of his living tissue. He was not what he conceived himself to be! Then he was what he was, unknown, potent, dark.

He became accustomed to the child, he knew how to lift and balance the little body. The baby had a beautiful, rounded head that moved him passionately. He would have fought to the last drop to defend that exquisite, perfect round head.

He learned to know the little hands and feet, the strange, unseeing, golden-brown eyes, the mouth that opened only to cry, or to suck, or to show a queer, toothless laugh. He could almost understand even the dangling legs, which at first had created in him a feeling of aversion. They could kick in their queer little way, they had their own softness.

One evening, suddenly, he saw the tiny, living thing rolling naked in the mother's lap, and he was sick, it was so utterly helpless and vulnerable and extraneous; in a world of hard surfaces and varying altitudes, it lay vulnerable and naked at every point. Yet it was quite blithe. And yet, in its blind, awful crying, was there not the blind, far-off terror of its own vulnerable nakedness, the terror of being so utterly delivered over, helpless at every point. He could not bear to hear it crying. His heart strained and stood on guard against the whole universe.

But he waited for the dread of these days to pass; he saw the joy coming. He saw the lovely, creamy, cool little ear of the baby, a bit of dark hair rubbed to a bronze floss, like bronze-dust. And he waited, for the child to become his, to look at him and answer him.

It had a separate being, but it was his own child. His flesh and blood vibrated to it. He caught the baby to his breast with his passionate, clapping laugh. And the infant knew him.

As the newly-opened, newly-dawned eyes looked at him, he wanted them to perceive him, to recognise him. Then he was verified. The child knew him, a queer contortion of laughter came on its face for him. He caught it to his breast, clapping with a triumphant laugh.

The golden-brown eyes of the child gradually lit up and dilated at the sight of the dark-glowing face of the youth. It knew its mother better, it wanted its mother more. But the brightest, sharpest little ecstasy was for the father.

It began to be strong, to move vigorously and freely, to make sounds like words. It was a baby girl now. Already it knew his strong hands, it exulted in his strong clasp, it laughed and crowed when he played with it.

And his heart grew red-hot with passionate feeling for the child. She was not much more than a year old when the second baby was born. Then he took Ursula for his own. She his first little girl. He had set his heart on her.

The second had dark blue eyes and a fair skin: it was more a Brangwen, people said. The hair was fair. But they forgot Anna's stiff blonde fleece of childhood. They called the newcomer Gudrun.

This time, Anna was stronger, and not so eager. She did not mind that the baby was not a boy. It was enough that she had milk and could suckle her child: Oh, oh, the bliss of the little life sucking the milk of her body! Oh, oh, oh the bliss, as the infant grew stronger, of the two tiny hands clutching, catching blindly yet passionately at her breast, of the tiny mouth seeking her in blind, sure, vital knowledge, of the sudden consummate peace as the little body sank, the mouth and throat sucking, sucking, sucking, drinking life from her to make a new life, almost sobbing with passionate joy of receiving its own existence, the tiny hands clutching frantically as the nipple was drawn back, not to be gainsaid. This was enough for Anna. She seemed to pass off into a kind of rapture of motherhood, her rapture of motherhood was everything.

So that the father had the elder baby, the weaned child, the golden-brown, wondering vivid eyes of the little Ursula were for him, who had waited behind the mother till the need was for him. The mother felt a sharp stab of jealousy. But she was still more absorbed in the tiny baby. It was entirely hers, its need was direct upon her.

So Ursula became the child of her father's heart. She was the little blossom, he was the sun. He was patient, energetic, inventive for her. He taught her all the funny little things, he filled her and roused her to her fullest tiny measure. She answered him with her extravagant infant's laughter and her call of delight.

Now there were two babies, a woman came in to do the housework. Anna was wholly nurse. Two babies were not too much for her. But she hated any form of work, now her children had come, except the charge of them.

When Ursula toddled about, she was an absorbed, busy child, always amusing herself, needing not much attention from other people. At evening, towards six o'clock, Anna very often went across the lane to the stile, lifted Ursula over into the field, with a: "Go and meet Daddy." Then Brangwen, coming up the steep round of the hill, would see before him on the brow of the path a tiny, tottering, windblown little mite with a dark head, who, as soon as she saw him, would come running in tiny, wild, windmill fashion, lifting her arms up and down to him, down the steep hill. His heart leapt up, he ran his fastest to her, to catch her, because he knew she would fall. She came fluttering on, wildly, with her little limbs flying. And he was glad when he caught her up in his arms. Once she fell as she came flying to him, he saw her pitch forward suddenly as she was running with her hands lifted to him; and when he picked her up, her mouth was bleeding. He could never bear to think of it, he always wanted to cry, even when he was an old man and she had become a stranger to him. How he loved that little Ursula!-his heart had been sharply seared for her, when he was a youth, first married.

When she was a little older, he would see her recklessly climbing over the bars of the stile, in her red pinafore, swinging in peril and tumbling over, picking herself up and flitting towards him. Sometimes she liked to ride on his shoulder, sometimes she preferred to walk with his hand, sometimes she would fling her arms round his legs for a moment, then race free again, whilst he went shouting and calling to her, a child along with her. He was still only a tall, thin, unsettled lad of twenty-two.

It was he who had made her her cradle, her little chair, her little stool, her high chair. It was he who would swing her up to table or who would make for her a doll out of an old table-leg, whilst she watched him, saying:

"Make her eyes, Daddy, make her eyes!"

And he made her eyes with his knife.

She was very fond of adorning herself, so he would tie a piece of cotton round her ear, and hang a blue bead on it underneath for an ear-ring. The ear-rings varied with a red bead, and a golden bead, and a little pearl bead. And as he came home at night, seeing her bridling and looking very self-conscious, he took notice and said:

"So you're wearing your best golden and pearl ear-rings, to-day?"

"Yes."

"I suppose you've been to see the queen?"

"Yes, I have."

"Oh, and what had she to say?"

"She said-she said-'You won't dirty your nice white frock.'"

He gave her the nicest bits from his plate, putting them into her red, moist mouth. And he would make on a piece of bread-and-butter a bird, out of jam: which she ate with extraordinary relish.

After the tea-things were washed up, the woman went away, leaving the family free. Usually Brangwen helped in the bathing of the children. He held long discussions with his child as she sat on his knee and he unfastened her clothes. And he seemed to be talking really of momentous things, deep moralities. Then suddenly she ceased to hear, having caught sight of a glassie rolled into a corner. She slipped away, and was in no hurry to return.

"Come back here," he said, waiting. She became absorbed, taking no notice.

"Come on," he repeated, with a touch of command.

An excited little chuckle came from her, but she pretended to be absorbed.

"Do you hear, Milady?"

She turned with a fleeting, exulting laugh. He rushed on her, and swept her up.

"Who was it that didn't come!" he said, rolling her between his strong hands, tickling her. And she laughed heartily, heartily. She loved him that he compelled her with his strength and decision. He was all-powerful, the tower of strength which rose out of her sight.

When the children were in bed, sometimes Anna and he sat and talked, desultorily, both of them idle. He read very little. Anything he was drawn to read became a burning reality to him, another scene outside his window. Whereas Anna skimmed through a book to see what happened, then she had enough.

Therefore they would often sit together, talking desultorily. What was really between them they could not utter. Their words were only accidents in the mutual silence. When they talked, they gossiped. She did not care for sewing.

She had a beautiful way of sitting musing, gratefully, as if her heart were lit up. Sometimes she would turn to him, laughing, to tell him some little thing that had happened during the day. Then he would laugh, they would talk awhile, before the vital, physical silence was between them again.

She was thin but full of colour and life. She was perfectly happy to do just nothing, only to sit with a curious, languid dignity, so careless as to be almost regal, so utterly indifferent, so confident. The bond between them was undefinable, but very strong. It kept everyone else at a distance.

His face never changed whilst she knew him, it only became more intense. It was ruddy and dark in its abstraction, not very human, it had a strong, intent brightness. Sometimes, when his eyes met hers, a yellow flash from them caused a darkness to swoon over her consciousness, electric, and a slight strange laugh came on his face. Her eyes would turn languidly, then close, as if hypnotised. And they lapsed into the same potent darkness. He had the quality of a young black cat, intent, unnoticeable, and yet his presence gradually made itself felt, stealthily and powerfully took hold of her. He called, not to her, but to something in her, which responded subtly, out of her unconscious darkness.

So they were together in a darkness, passionate, electric, for ever haunting the back of the common day, never in the light. In the light, he seemed to sleep, unknowing. Only she knew him when the darkness set him free, and he could see with his gold-glowing eyes his intention and his desires in the dark. Then she was in a spell, then she answered his harsh, penetrating call with a soft leap of her soul, the darkness woke up, electric, bristling with an unknown, overwhelming insinuation.

By now they knew each other; she was the daytime, the daylight, he was the shadow, put aside, but in the darkness potent with an overwhelming voluptuousness.

She learned not to dread and to hate him, but to fill herself with him, to give herself to his black, sensual power, that was hidden all the daytime. And the curious rolling of the eyes, as if she were lapsing in a trance away from her ordinary consciousness became habitual with her, when something threatened and opposed her in life, the conscious life.

So they remained as separate in the light, and in the thick darkness, married. He supported her daytime authority, kept it inviolable at last. And she, in all the darkness, belonged to him, to his close, insinuating, hypnotic familiarity.

All his daytime activity, all his public life, was a kind of sleep. She wanted to be free, to belong to the day. And he ran avoiding the day in work. After tea, he went to the shed to his carpentry or his wood- carving. He was restoring the patched, degraded pulpit to its original form.

But he loved to have the child near him, playing by his feet. She was a piece of light that really belonged to him, that played within his darkness. He left the shed door on the latch. And when, with his second sense of another presence, he knew she was coming, he was satisfied, he was at rest. When he was alone with her, he did not want to take notice, to talk. He wanted to live unthinking, with her presence flickering upon him.

He always went in silence. The child would push open the shed door, and see him working by lamplight, his sleeves rolled back. His clothes hung about him, carelessly, like mere wrapping. Inside, his body was concentrated with a flexible, charged power all of its own, isolated. From when she was a tiny child Ursula could remember his forearm, with its fine black hairs and its electric flexibility, working at the bench through swift, unnoticeable movements, always ambushed in a sort of silence.

She hung a moment in the door of the shed, waiting for him to notice her. He turned, his black, curved eyebrows arching slightly.

"Hullo, Twittermiss!"

And he closed the door behind her. Then the child was happy in the shed that smelled of sweet wood and resounded to the noise of the plane or the hammer or the saw, yet was charged with the silence of the worker. She played on, intent and absorbed, among the shavings and the little nogs of wood. She never touched him: his feet and legs were near, she did not approach them.

She liked to flit out after him when he was going to church at night. If he were going to be alone, he swung her over the wall, and let her come.

Again she was transported when the door was shut behind them, and they two inherited the big, pale, void place. She would watch him as he lit the organ candles, wait whilst he began his practising his tunes, then she ran foraging here and there, like a kitten playing by herself in the darkness with eyes dilated. The ropes hung vaguely, twining on the floor, from the bells in the tower, and Ursula always wanted the fluffy, red-and-white, or blue-and-white rope-grips. But they were above her.

Sometimes her mother came to claim her. Then the child was seized with resentment. She passionately resented her mother's superficial authority. She wanted to assert her own detachment.

He, however, also gave her occasional cruel shocks. He let her play about in the church, she rifled foot-stools and hymn-books and cushions, like a bee among flowers, whilst the organ echoed away. This continued for some weeks. Then the charwoman worked herself up into a frenzy of rage, to dare to attack Brangwen, and one day descended on him like a harpy. He wilted away, and wanted to break the old beast's neck.

Instead he came glowering in fury to the house, and turned on Ursula.

"Why, you tiresome little monkey, can't you even come to church without pulling the place to bits?"

His voice was harsh and cat-like, he was blind to the child. She shrank away in childish anguish and dread. What was it, what awful thing was it?

The mother turned with her calm, almost superb manner.

"What has she done, then?"

"Done? She shall go in the church no more, pulling and littering and destroying."

The wife slowly rolled her eyes and lowered her eyelids.

"What has she destroyed, then?"

He did not know.

"I've just had Mrs. Wilkinson at me," he cried, "with a list of things she's done."

Ursula withered under the contempt and anger of the "she", as he spoke of her.

"Send Mrs. Wilkinson here to me with a list of the things she's done," said Anna. "I am the one to hear that."

"It's not the things the child has done," continued the mother, "that have put you out so much, it's because you can't bear being spoken to by that old woman. But you haven't the courage to turn on her when she attacks you, you bring your rage here."

He relapsed into silence. Ursula knew that he was wrong. In the outside, upper world, he was wrong. Already came over the child the cold sense of the impersonal world. There she knew her mother was right. But still her heart clamoured after her father, for him to be right, in his dark, sensuous underworld. But he was angry, and went his way in blackness and brutal silence again.

The child ran about absorbed in life, quiet, full of amusement. She did not notice things, nor changes nor alterations. One day she would find daisies in the grass, another day, apple-blossoms would be sprinkled white on the ground, and she would run among it, for pleasure because it was there. Yet again birds would be pecking at the cherries, her father would throw cherries down from the tree all round her on the garden. Then the fields were full of hay.

She did not remember what had been nor what would be, the outside things were there each day. She was always herself, the world outside was accidental. Even her mother was accidental to her: a condition that happened to endure.

Only her father occupied any permanent position in the childish consciousness. When he came back she remembered vaguely how he had gone away, when he went away she knew vaguely that she must wait for his coming back. Whereas her mother, returning from an outing, merely became present, there was no reason for connecting her with some previous departure.

The return or the departure of the father was the one event which the child remembered. When he came, something woke up in her, some yearning. She knew when he was out of joint or irritable or tired: then she was uneasy, she could not rest.

When he was in the house, the child felt full and warm, rich like a creature in the sunshine. When he was gone, she was vague, forgetful. When he scolded her even, she was often more aware of him than of herself. He was her strength and her greater self.

Ursula was three years old when another baby girl was born. Then the two small sisters were much together, Gudrun and Ursula. Gudrun was a quiet child who played for hours alone, absorbed in her fancies. She was brown-haired, fair-skinned, strangely placid, almost passive. Yet her will was indomitable, once set. From the first she followed Ursula's lead. Yet she was a thing to herself, so that to watch the two together was strange. They were like two young animals playing together but not taking real notice of each other. Gudrun was the mother's favourite-except that Anna always lived in her latest baby.

The burden of so many lives depending on him wore the youth down. He had his work in the office, which was done purely by effort of will: he had his barren passion for the church; he had three young children. Also at this time his health was not good. So he was haggard and irritable, often a pest in the house. Then he was told to go to his woodwork, or to the church.

Between him and the little Ursula there came into being a strange alliance. They were aware of each other. He knew the child was always on his side. But in his consciousness he counted it for nothing. She was always for him. He took it for granted. Yet his life was based on her, even whilst she was a tiny child, on her support and her accord.

Anna continued in her violent trance of motherhood, always busy, often harassed, but always contained in her trance of motherhood. She seemed to exist in her own violent fruitfulness, and it was as if the sun shone tropically on her. Her colour was bright, her eyes full of a fecund gloom, her brown hair tumbled loosely over her ears. She had a look of richness. No responsibility, no sense of duty troubled her. The outside, public life was less than nothing to her, really.

Whereas when, at twenty-six, he found himself father of four children, with a wife who lived intrinsically like the ruddiest lilies of the field, he let the weight of responsibility press on him and drag him. It was then that his child Ursula strove to be with him. She was with him, even as a baby of four, when he was irritable and shouted and made the household unhappy. She suffered from his shouting, but somehow it was not really him. She wanted it to be over, she wanted to resume her normal connection with him. When he was disagreeable, the child echoed to the crying of some need in him, and she responded blindly. Her heart followed him as if he had some tie with her, and some love which he could not deliver. Her heart followed him persistently, in its love.

But there was the dim, childish sense of her own smallness and inadequacy, a fatal sense of worthlessness. She could not do anything, she was not enough. She could not be important to him. This knowledge deadened her from the first.

Still she set towards him like a quivering needle. All her life was directed by her awareness of him, her wakefulness to his being. And she was against her mother.

Her father was the dawn wherein her consciousness woke up. But for him, she might have gone on like the other children, Gudrun and Theresa and Catherine, one with the flowers and insects and playthings, having no existence apart from the concrete object of her attention. But her father came too near to her. The clasp of his hands and the power of his breast woke her up almost in pain from the transient unconsciousness of childhood. Wide-eyed, unseeing, she was awake before she knew how to see. She was wakened too soon. Too soon the call had come to her, when she was a small baby, and her father held her close to his breast, her sleep-living heart was beaten into wakefulness by the striving of his bigger heart, by his clasping her to his body for love and for fulfilment, asking as a magnet must always ask. From her the response had struggled dimly, vaguely into being.

The children were dressed roughly for the country. When she was little, Ursula pattered about in little wooden clogs, a blue overall over her thick red dress, a red shawl crossed on her breast and tied behind again. So she ran with her father to the garden.

The household rose early. He was out digging by six o'clock in the morning, he went to his work at half-past eight. And Ursula was usually in the garden with him, though not near at hand.

At Eastertime one year, she helped him to set potatoes. It was the first time she had ever helped him. The occasion remained as a picture, one of her earliest memories. They had gone out soon after dawn. A cold wind was blowing. He had his old trousers tucked into his boots, he wore no coat nor waistcoat, his shirt-sleeves fluttered in the wind, his face was ruddy and intent, in a kind of sleep. When he was at work he neither heard nor saw. A long, thin man, looking still a youth, with a line of black moustache above his thick mouth, and his fine hair blown on his forehead, he worked away at the earth in the grey first light, alone. His solitariness drew the child like a spell.

The wind came chill over the dark-green fields. Ursula ran up and watched him push the setting-peg in at one side of his ready earth, stride across, and push it in the other side, pulling the line taut and clear upon the clods intervening. Then with a sharp cutting noise the bright spade came towards her, cutting a grip into the new, soft earth.

He struck his spade upright and straightened himself.

"Do you want to help me?" he said.

She looked up at him from out of her little woollen bonnet.

"Ay," he said, "you can put some taters in for me. Look-like that-these little sprits standing up-so much apart, you see."

And stooping down he quickly, surely placed the spritted potatoes in the soft grip, where they rested separate and pathetic on the heavy cold earth.

He gave her a little basket of potatoes, and strode himself to the other end of the line. She saw him stooping, working towards her. She was excited, and unused. She put in one potato, then rearranged it, to make it sit nicely. Some of the sprits were broken, and she was afraid. The responsibility excited her like a string tying her up. She could not help looking with dread at the string buried under the heaped-back soil. Her father was working nearer, stooping, working nearer. She was overcome by her responsibility. She put potatoes quickly into the cold earth.

He came near.

"Not so close," he said, stooping over her potatoes, taking some out and rearranging the others. She stood by with the painful terrified helplessness of childhood. He was so unseeing and confident, she wanted to do the thing and yet she could not. She stood by looking on, her little blue overall fluttering in the wind, the red woollen ends of her shawl blowing gustily. Then he went down the row, relentlessly, turning the potatoes in with his sharp spade-cuts. He took no notice of her, only worked on. He had another world from hers.

She stood helplessly stranded on his world. He continued his work. She knew she could not help him. A little bit forlorn, at last she turned away, and ran down the garden, away from him, as fast as she could go away from him, to forget him and his work.

He missed her presence, her face in her red woollen bonnet, her blue overall fluttering. She ran to where a little water ran trickling between grass and stones. That she loved.

When he came by he said to her:

"You didn't help me much."

The child looked at him dumbly. Already her heart was heavy because of her own disappointment. Her mouth was dumb and pathetic. But he did not notice, he went his way.

And she played on, because of her disappointment persisting even the more in her play. She dreaded work, because she could not do it as he did it. She was conscious of the great breach between them. She knew she had no power. The grown-up power to work deliberately was a mystery to her.

He would smash into her sensitive child's world destructively. Her mother was lenient, careless The children played about as they would all day. Ursula was thoughtless-why should she remember things? If across the garden she saw the hedge had budded, and if she wanted these greeny-pink, tiny buds for bread-and-cheese, to play at teaparty with, over she went for them.

Then suddenly, perhaps the next day, her soul would almost start out of her body as her father turned on her, shouting:

"Who's been tramplin' an' dancin' across where I've just sowed seed? I know it's you, nuisance! Can you find nowhere else to walk, but just over my seed beds? But it's like you, that is-no heed but to follow your own greedy nose."

It had shocked him in his intent world to see the zigzagging lines of deep little footprints across his work. The child was infinitely more shocked. Her vulnerable little soul was flayed and trampled. Why were the footprints there? She had not wanted to make them. She stood dazzled with pain and shame and unreality.

Her soul, her consciousness seemed to die away. She became shut off and senseless, a little fixed creature whose soul had gone hard and unresponsive. The sense of her own unreality hardened her like a frost. She cared no longer.

And the sight of her face, shut and superior with self-asserting indifference, made a flame of rage go over him. He wanted to break her.

"I'll break your obstinate little face," he said, through shut teeth, lifting his hand.

The child did not alter in the least. The look of indifference, complete glancing indifference, as if nothing but herself existed to her, remained fixed.

Yet far away in her, the sobs were tearing her soul. And when he had gone, she would go and creep under the parlour sofa, and lie clinched in the silent, hidden misery of childhood.

When she crawled out, after an hour or so, she went rather stiffly to play. She willed to forget. She cut off her childish soul from memory, so that the pain, and the insult should not be real. She asserted herself only. There was not nothing in the world but her own self. So very soon, she came to believe in the outward malevolence that was against her. And very early, she learned that even her adored father was part of this malevolence. And very early she learned to harden her soul in resistance and denial of all that was outside her, harden herself upon her own being.

She never felt sorry for what she had done, she never forgave those who had made her guilty. If he had said to her, "Why, Ursula, did you trample my carefully-made bed?" that would have hurt her to the quick, and she would have done anything for him. But she was always tormented by the unreality of outside things. The earth was to walk on. Why must she avoid a certain patch, just because it was called a seed-bed? It was the earth to walk on. This was her instinctive assumption. And when he bullied her, she became hard, cut herself off from all connection, lived in the little separate world of her own violent will.

As she grew older, five, six, seven, the connection between her and her father was even stronger. Yet it was always straining to break. She was always relapsing on her own violent will into her own separate world of herself. This made him grind his teeth with bitterness, for he still wanted her. But she could harden herself into her own self's universe, impregnable.

He was very fond of swimming, and in warm weather would take her down to the canal, to a silent place, or to a big pond or reservoir, to bathe. He would take her on his back as he went swimming, and she clung close, feeling his strong movement under her, so strong, as if it would uphold all the world. Then he taught her to swim.

She was a fearless little thing, when he dared her. And he had a curious craving to frighten her, to see what she would do with him. He said, would she ride on his back whilst he jumped off the canal bridge down into the water beneath.

She would. He loved to feel the naked child clinging on to his shoulders. There was a curious fight between their two wills. He mounted the parapet of the canal bridge. The water was a long way down. But the child had a deliberate will set upon his. She held herself fixed to him.

He leapt, and down they went. The crash of the water as they went under struck through the child's small body, with a sort of unconsciousness. But she remained fixed. And when they came up again, and when they went to the bank, and when they sat on the grass side by side, he laughed, and said it was fine. And the dark-dilated eyes of the child looked at him wonderingly, darkly, wondering from the shock, yet reserved and unfathomable, so he laughed almost with a sob.

In a moment she was clinging safely on his back again, and he was swimming in deep water. She was used to his nakedness, and to her mother's nakedness, ever since she was born. They were clinging to each other, and making up to each other for the strange blow that had been struck at them. Yet still, on other days, he would leap again with her from the bridge, daringly, almost wickedly. Till at length, as he leapt, once, she dropped forward on to his head, and nearly broke his neck, so that they fell into the water in a heap, and fought for a few moments with death. He saved her, and sat on the bank, quivering. But his eyes were full of the blackness of death. It was as if death had cut between their two lives, and separated them.

Still they were not separate. There was this curious taunting intimacy between them. When the fair came, she wanted to go in the swing-boats. He took her, and, standing up in the boat, holding on to the irons, began to drive higher, perilously higher. The child clung fast on her seat.

"Do you want to go any higher?" he said to her, and she laughed with her mouth, her eyes wide and dilated. They were rushing through the air.

"Yes," she said, feeling as if she would turn into vapour, lose hold of everything, and melt away. The boat swung far up, then down like a stone, only to be caught sickeningly up again.

"Any higher?" he called, looking at her over his shoulder, his face evil and beautiful to her.

She laughed with white lips.

He sent the swingboat sweeping through the air in a great semi-circle, till it jerked and swayed at the high horizontal. The child clung on, pale, her eyes fixed on him. People below were calling. The jerk at the top had almost shaken them both out. He had done what he could-and he was attracting censure. He sat down, and let the swingboat swing itself out.

People in the crowd cried shame on him as he came out of the swingboat. He laughed. The child clung to his hand, pale and mute. In a while she was violently sick. He gave her lemonade, and she gulped a little.

"Don't tell your mother you've been sick," he said. There was no need to ask that. When she got home, the child crept away under the parlour sofa, like a sick little animal, and was a long time before she crawled out.

But Anna got to know of this escapade, and was passionately angry and contemptuous of him. His golden-brown eyes glittered, he had a strange, cruel little smile. And as the child watched him, for the first time in her life a disillusion came over her, something cold and isolating. She went over to her mother. Her soul was dead towards him. It made her sick.

Still she forgot and continued to love him, but ever more coldly. He was at this time, when he was about twenty-eight years old, strange and violent in his being, sensual. He acquired some power over Anna, over everybody he came into contact with.

After a long bout of hostility, Anna at last closed with him. She had now four children, all girls. For seven years she had been absorbed in wifehood and motherhood. For years he had gone on beside her, never really encroaching upon her. Then gradually another self seemed to assert its being within him. He was still silent and separate. But she could feel him all the while coming near upon her, as if his breast and his body were threatening her, and he was always coming closer. Gradually he became indifferent of responsibility. He would do what pleased him, and no more.

He began to go away from home. He went to Nottingham on Saturdays, always alone, to the football match and to the music-hall, and all the time he was watching, in readiness. He never cared to drink. But with his hard, golden-brown eyes, so keen seeing with their tiny black pupils, he watched all the people, everything that happened, and he waited.

In the Empire one evening he sat next to two girls. He was aware of the one beside him. She was rather small, common, with a fresh complexion and an upper lip that lifted from her teeth, so that, when she was not conscious, her mouth was slightly open and her lips pressed outwards in a kind of blind appeal. She was strongly aware of the man next to her, so that all her body was still, very still. Her face watched the stage. Her arms went down into her lap, very self-conscious and still.

A gleam lit up in him: should he begin with her? Should he begin with her to live the other, the unadmitted life of his desire? Why not? He had always been so good. Save for his wife, he was a virgin. And why, when all women were different? Why, when he would only live once? He wanted the other life. His own life was barren, not enough. He wanted the other.

Her open mouth, showing the small, irregular, white teeth, appealed to him. It was open and ready. It was so vulnerable. Why should he not go in and enjoy what was there? The slim arm that went down so still and motionless to the lap, it was pretty. She would be small, he would be able almost to hold her in his two hands. She would be small, almost like a child, and pretty. Her childishness whetted him keenly. She would he helpless between his hands.

"That was the best turn we've had," he said to her, leaning over as he clapped his hands. He felt strong and unshakeable in himself, set over against all the world. His soul was keen and watchful, glittering with a kind of amusement. He was perfectly self-contained. He was himself, the absolute, the rest of the world was the object that should contribute to his being.

The girl started, turned round, her eyes lit up with an almost painful flash of a smile, the colour came deeply in her cheeks.

"Yes, it was," she said, quite meaninglessly, and she covered her rather prominent teeth with her lips. Then she sat looking straight before her, seeing nothing, only conscious of the colour burning in her cheeks.

It pricked him with a pleasant sensation. His veins and his nerves attended to her, she was so young and palpitating.

"It's not such a good programme as last week's," he said.

Again she half turned her face to him, and her clear, bright eyes, bright like shallow water, filled with light, frightened, yet involuntarily lighting and shaking with response.

"Oh, isn't it! I wasn't able to come last week."

He noted the common accent. It pleased him. He knew what class she came of. Probably she was a warehouse-lass. He was glad she was a common girl.

He proceeded to tell her about the last week's programme. She answered at random, very confusedly. The colour burned in her cheek. Yet she always answered him. The girl on the other side sat remotely, obviously silent. He ignored her. All his address was for his own girl, with her bright, shallow eyes and her vulnerably opened mouth.

The talk went on, meaningless and random on her part, quite deliberate and purposive on his. It was a pleasure to him to make this conversation, an activity pleasant as a fine game of chance and skill. He was very quiet and pleasant-humoured, but so full of strength. She fluttered beside his steady pressure of warmth and his surety.

He saw the performance drawing to a close. His senses were alert and wilful. He would press his advantages. He followed her and her plain friend down the stairs to the street. It was raining.

"It's a nasty night," he said. "Shall you come and have a drink of something-a cup of coffee-it's early yet."

"Oh, I don't think so," she said, looking away into the night.

"I wish you would," he said, putting himself as it were at her mercy. There was a moment's pause.

"Come to Rollins?" he said.

"No-not there."

"To Carson's, then?"

There was a silence. The other girl hung on. The man was the centre of positive force.

"Will your friend come as well?"

There was another moment of silence, while the other girl felt her ground.

"No, thanks," she said. "I've promised to meet a friend."

"Another time, then?" he said.

"Oh, thanks," she replied, very awkward.

"Good night," he said.

"See you later," said his girl to her friend.

"Where?" said the friend.

"You know, Gertie," replied his girl.

"All right, Jennie."

The friend was gone into the darkness. He turned with his girl to the tea-shop. They talked all the time. He made his sentences in sheer, almost muscular pleasure of exercising himself with her. He was looking at her all the time, perceiving her, appreciating her, finding her out, gratifying himself with her. He could see distinct attractions in her; her eyebrows, with their particular curve, gave him keen aesthetic pleasure. Later on he would see her bright, pellucid eyes, like shallow water, and know those. And there remained the open, exposed mouth, red and vulnerable. That he reserved as yet. And all the while his eyes were on the girl, estimating and handling with pleasure her young softness. About the girl herself, who or what she was, he cared nothing, he was quite unaware that she was anybody. She was just the sensual object of his attention.

"Shall we go, then?" he said.

She rose in silence, as if acting without a mind, merely physically. He seemed to hold her in his will. Outside it was still raining.

"Let's have a walk," he said. "I don't mind the rain, do you?"

"No, I don't mind it," she said.

He was alert in every sense and fibre, and yet quite sure and steady, and lit up, as if transfused. He had a free sensation of walking in his own darkness, not in anybody else's world at all. He was purely a world to himself, he had nothing to do with any general consciousness. Just his own senses were supreme. All the rest was external, insignificant, leaving him alone with this girl whom he wanted to absorb, whose properties he wanted to absorb into his own senses. He did not care about her, except that he wanted to overcome her resistance, to have her in his power, fully and exhaustively to enjoy her.

They turned into the dark streets. He held her umbrella over her, and put his arm round her. She walked as if she were unaware. But gradually, as he walked, he drew her a little closer, into the movement of his side and hip. She fitted in there very well. It was a real good fit, to walk with her like this. It made him exquisitely aware of his own muscular self. And his hand that grasped her side felt one curve of her, and it seemed like a new creation to him, a reality, an absolute, an existing tangible beauty of the absolute. It was like a star. Everything in him was absorbed in the sensual delight of this one small, firm curve in her body, that his hand, and his whole being, had lighted upon.

He led her into the Park, where it was almost dark. He noticed a corner between two walls, under a great overhanging bush of ivy.

"Let us stand here a minute," he said.

He put down the umbrella, and followed her into the corner, retreating out of the rain. He needed no eyes to see. All he wanted was to know through touch. She was like a piece of palpable darkness. He found her in the darkness, put his arms round her and his hands upon her. She was silent and inscrutable. But he did not want to know anything about her, he only wanted to discover her. And through her clothing, what absolute beauty he touched.

"Take your hat off," he said.

Silently, obediently, she shook off her hat and gave herself to his arms again. He liked her-he liked the feel of her-he wanted to know her more closely. He let his fingers subtly seek out her cheek and neck. What amazing beauty and pleasure, in the dark! His fingers had often touched Anna on the face and neck like that. What matter! It was one man who touched Anna, another who now touched this girl. He liked best his new self. He was given over altogether to the sensuous knowledge of this woman, and every moment he seemed to be touching absolute beauty, something beyond knowledge.

Very close, marvelling and exceedingly joyful in their discoveries, his hands pressed upon her, so subtly, so seekingly, so finely and desirously searching her out, that she too was almost swooning in the absolute of sensual knowledge. In utter sensual delight she clenched her knees, her thighs, her loins together! It was an added beauty to him.

But he was patiently working for her relaxation, patiently, his whole being fixed in the smile of latent gratification, his whole body electric with a subtle, powerful, reducing force upon her. So he came at length to kiss her, and she was almost betrayed by his insidious kiss. Her open mouth was too helpless and unguarded. He knew this, and his first kiss was very gentle, and soft, and assuring, so assuring. So that her soft, defenceless mouth became assured, even bold, seeking upon his mouth. And he answered her gradually,

gradually, his soft kiss sinking in softly, softly, but ever more heavily, more heavily yet, till it was too heavy for her to meet, and she began to sink under it. She was sinking, sinking, his smile of latent gratification was becoming more tense, he was sure of her. He let the whole force of his will sink upon her to sweep her away. But it was too great a shock for her. With a sudden horrible movement she ruptured the state that contained them both.

"Don't-don't!"

It was a rather horrible cry that seemed to come out of her, not to belong to her. It was some strange agony of terror crying out the words. There was something vibrating and beside herself in the noise. His nerves ripped like silk.

"What's the matter?" he said, as if calmly. "What's the matter?"

She came back to him, but trembling, reservedly this time.

Her cry had given him gratification. But he knew he had been too sudden for her. He was now careful. For a while he merely sheltered her. Also there had broken a flaw into his perfect will. He wanted to persist, to begin again, to lead up to the point where he had let himself go on her, and then manage more carefully, successfully. So far she had won. And the battle was not over yet. But another voice woke in him and prompted him to let her go-let her go in contempt.

He sheltered her, and soothed her, and caressed her, and kissed her, and again began to come nearer, nearer. He gathered himself together. Even if he did not take her, he would make her relax, he would fuse away her resistance. So softly, softly, with infinite caressiveness he kissed her, and the whole of his being seemed to fondle her. Till, at the verge, swooning at the breaking point, there came from her a beaten, inarticulate, moaning cry:

"Don't-oh, don't!"

His veins fused with extreme voluptuousness. For a moment he almost lost control of himself, and continued automatically. But there was a moment of inaction, of cold suspension. He was not going to take her. He drew her to him and soothed her, and caressed her. But the pure zest had gone. She struggled to herself and realised he was not going to take her. And then, at the very last moment, when his fondling had come near again, his hot living desire despising her, against his cold sensual desire, she broke violently away from him.

"Don't," she cried, harsh now with hatred, and she flung her hand across and hit him violently. "Keep off of me."

His blood stood still for a moment. Then the smile came again within him, steady, cruel.

"Why, what's the matter?" he said, with suave irony. "Nobody's going to hurt you."

"I know what you want," she said.

"I know what I want," he said. "What's the odds?"

"Well, you're not going to have it off me."

"Aren't I? Well, then I'm not. It's no use crying about it, is it?"

"No, it isn't," said the girl, rather disconcerted by his irony.

"But there's no need to have a row about it. We can kiss good night just the same, can't we?"

She was silent in the darkness.

"Or do you want your hat and umbrella to go home this minute?"

Still she was silent. He watched her dark figure as she stood there on the edge of the faint darkness, and he waited.

"Come and say good night nicely, if we're going to say it," he said.

Still she did not stir. He put his hand out and drew her into the darkness again.

"It's warmer in here," he said; "a lot cosier."

His will had not yet relaxed from her. The moment of hatred exhilarated him.

"I'm going now," she muttered, as he closed his hand over her.

"See how well you fit your place," he said, as he drew her to her previous position, close upon him. "What do you want to leave it for?"

And gradually the intoxication invaded him again, the zest came back. After all, why should he not take her?

But she did not yield to him entirely.

"Are you a married man?" she asked at length.

"What if I am?" he said.

She did not answer.

"I don't ask you whether you're married or not," he said.

"You know jolly well I'm not," she answered hotly. Oh, if she could only break away from him, if only she need not yield to him.

At length her will became cold against him. She had escaped. But she hated him for her escape more than for her danger. Did he despise her so coldly? And she was in torture of adherence to him still.

"Shall I see you next week-next Saturday?" he said, as they returned to the town. She did not answer.

"Come to the Empire with me-you and Gertie," he said.

"I should look well, going with a married man," she said.

"I'm no less of a man for being married, am I?" he said.

"Oh, it's a different matter altogether with a married man," she said, in a ready-made speech that showed her chagrin.

"How's that?" he asked.

But she would not enlighten him. Yet she promised, without promising, to be at the meeting-place next Saturday evening.

So he left her. He did not know her name. He caught a train and went home.

It was the last train, he was very late. He was not home till midnight. But he was quite indifferent. He had no real relation with his home, not this man which he now was. Anna was sitting up for him. She saw the queer, absolved look on his face, a sort of latent, almost sinister smile, as if he were absolved from his "good" ties.

"Where have you been?" she asked, puzzled, interested.

"To the Empire."

"Who with?"

"By myself. I came home with Tom Cooper."

She looked at him, and wondered what he had been doing She was indifferent as to whether he lied or not.

"You have come home very strange," she said. And there was an appreciative inflexion in the speech.

He was not affected. As for his humble, good self, he was absolved from it. He sat down and ate heartily. He was not tired. He seemed to take no notice of her.

For Anna the moment was critical. She kept herself aloof, and watched him. He talked to her, but with a little indifference, since he was scarcely aware of her. So, then she did not affect him. Here was a new turn of affairs! He was rather attractive, nevertheless. She liked him better than the ordinary mute, half-effaced, half-subdued man she usually knew him to be. So, he was blossoming out into his real self! It piqued her. Very good, let him blossom! She liked a new turn of affairs. He was a strange man come home to her. Glancing at him, she saw she could not reduce him to what he had been before. In an instant she gave it up. Yet not without a pang of rage, which would insist on their old, beloved love, their old, accustomed intimacy and her old, established supremacy. She almost rose up to fight for them. And looking at him, and remembering his father, she was wary. This was the new turn of affairs!

Very good, if she could not influence him in the old way, she would be level with him in the new. Her old defiant hostility came up. Very good, she too was out on her own adventure. Her voice, her manner changed, she was ready for the game. Something was liberated in her. She liked him. She liked this strange man come home to her. He was very welcome, indeed! She was very glad to welcome a stranger. She had been bored by the old husband. To his latent, cruel smile she replied with brilliant challenge. He expected her to keep the moral fortress. Not she! It was much too dull a part. She challenged him back with a sort of radiance, very bright and free, opposite to him. He looked at her, and his eyes glinted. She too was out in the field.

His senses pricked up and keenly attended to her. She laughed, perfectly indifferent and loose as he was. He came towards her. She neither rejected him nor responded to him. In a kind of radiance, superb in her inscrutability, she laughed before him. She too could throw everything overboard, love, intimacy, responsibility. What were her four children to her now? What did it matter that this man was the father of her four children?

He was the sensual male seeking his pleasure, she was the female ready to take hers: but in her own way. A man could turn into a free lance: so then could a woman. She adhered as little as he to the moral world. All that had gone before was nothing to her. She was another woman, under the instance of a strange man. He was a stranger to her, seeking his own ends. Very good. She wanted to see what this stranger would do now, what he was.

She laughed, and kept him at arm's length, whilst apparently ignoring him. She watched him undress as if he were a stranger. Indeed he was a stranger to her.

And she roused him profoundly, violently, even before he touched her. The little creature in Nottingham had but been leading up to this. They abandoned in one motion the moral position, each was seeking gratification pure and simple.

Strange his wife was to him. It was as if he were a perfect stranger, as if she were infinitely and essentially strange to him, the other half of the world, the dark half of the moon. She waited for his touch as if he were a marauder who had come in, infinitely unknown and desirable to her. And he began to discover her. He had an inkling of the vastness of the unknown sensual store of delights she was. With a passion of voluptuousness that made him dwell on each tiny beauty, in a kind of frenzy of enjoyment, he lit upon her: her beauty, the beauties, the separate, several beauties of her body.

He was quite ousted from himself, and sensually transported by that which he discovered in her. He was another man revelling over her. There was no tenderness, no love between them any more, only the maddening, sensuous lust for discovery and the insatiable, exorbitant gratification in the sensual beauties of her body. And she was a store, a store of absolute beauties that it drove him to contemplate. There was such a feast to enjoy, and he with only one man's capacity.

He lived in a passion of sensual discovery with her for some time-it was a duel: no love, no words, no kisses even, only the maddening perception of beauty consummate, absolute through touch. He wanted to touch her, to discover her, maddeningly he wanted to know her. Yet he must not hurry, or he missed everything. He must enjoy one beauty at a time. And the multitudinous beauties of her body, the many little rapturous places, sent him mad with delight, and with desire to be able to know more, to have strength to know more. For all was there.

He would say during the daytime:

"To-night I shall know the little hollow under her ankle, where the blue vein crosses." And the thought of it, and the desire for it, made a thick darkness of anticipation.

He would go all the day waiting for the night to come, when he could give himself to the enjoyment of some luxurious absolute of beauty in her. The thought of the hidden resources of her, the undiscovered beauties and ecstatic places of delight in her body, waiting, only waiting for him to discover them, sent him slightly insane. He was obsessed. If he did not discover and make known to himself these delights, they might be lost for ever. He wished he had a hundred men's energies, with which to enjoy her. He wished he were a cat, to lick her with a rough, grating, lascivious tongue. He wanted to wallow in her, bury himself in her flesh, cover himself over with her flesh.

And she, separate, with a strange, dangerous, glistening look in her eyes received all his activities upon her as if they were expected by her, and provoked him when he was quiet to more, till sometimes he was ready to perish for sheer inability to be satisfied of her, inability to have had enough of her.

Their children became mere offspring to them, they lived in the darkness and death of their own sensual activities. Sometimes he felt he was going mad with a sense of Absolute Beauty, perceived by him in her through his senses. It was something too much for him. And in everything, was this same, almost sinister, terrifying beauty. But in the revelations of her body through contact with his body, was the ultimate beauty, to know which was almost death in itself, and yet for the knowledge of which he would have undergone endless torture. He would have forfeited anything, anything, rather than forego his right even to the instep of her foot, and the place from which the toes radiated out, the little, miraculous white plain from which ran the little hillocks of the toes, and the folded, dimpling hollows between the toes. He felt he would have died rather than forfeit this.

This was what their love had become, a sensuality violent and extreme as death. They had no conscious intimacy, no tenderness of love. It was all the lust and the infinite, maddening intoxication of the sense, a passion of death.

He had always, all his life, had a secret dread of Absolute Beauty. It had always been like a fetish to him, something to fear, really. For it was immoral and against mankind. So he had turned to the Gothic form, which always asserted the broken desire of mankind in its pointed arches, escaping the rolling, absolute beauty of the round arch.

But now he had given way, and with infinite sensual violence gave himself to the realisation of this supreme, immoral, Absolute Beauty, in the body of woman. It seemed to him, that it came to being in the body of woman, under his touch. Under his touch, even under his sight, it was there. But when he neither saw nor touched the perfect place, it was not perfect, it was not there. And he must make it exist.

But still the thing terrified him. Awful and threatening it was, dangerous to a degree, even whilst he gave himself to it. It was pure darkness, also. All the shameful things of the body revealed themselves to him now with a sort of sinister, tropical beauty. All the shameful, natural and unnatural acts of sensual voluptuousness which he and the woman partook of together, created together, they had their heavy beauty and their delight. Shame, what was it? It was part of extreme delight. It was that part of delight of which man is usually afraid. Why afraid? The secret, shameful things are most terribly beautiful.

They accepted shame, and were one with it in their most unlicensed pleasures. It was incorporated. It was a bud that blossomed into beauty and heavy, fundamental gratification.

Their outward life went on much the same, but the inward life was revolutionised. The children became less important, the parents were absorbed in their own living.

And gradually, Brangwen began to find himself free to attend to the outside life as well. His intimate life was so violently active, that it set another man in him free. And this new man turned with interest to public life, to see what part he could take in it. This would give him scope for new activity, activity of a kind for which he was now created and released. He wanted to be unanimous with the whole of purposive mankind.

At this time Education was in the forefront as a subject of interest. There was the talk of new Swedish methods, of handwork instruction, and so on. Brangwen embraced sincerely the idea of handwork in schools. For the first time, he began to take real interest in a public affair. He had at length, from his profound sensual activity, developed a real purposive self.

There was talk of night-schools, and of handicraft classes. He wanted to start a woodwork class in Cossethay, to teach carpentry and joinery and wood-carving to the village boys, two nights a week. This seemed to him a supremely desirable thing to be doing. His pay would be very little-and when he had it, he spent it all on extra wood and tools. But he was very happy and keen in his new public spirit.

He started his night-classes in woodwork when he was thirty years old. By this time he had five children, the last a boy. But boy or girl mattered very little to him. He had a natural blood-affection for his children, and he liked them as they turned up: boys or girls. Only he was fondest of Ursula. Somehow, she seemed to be at the back of his new night-school venture.

The house by the yew trees was in connection with the great human endeavour at last. It gained a new vigour thereby.

To Ursula, a child of eight, the increase in magic was considerable. She heard all the talk, she saw the parish room fitted up as a workshop. The parish room was a high, stone, barn-like, ecclesiastical building standing away by itself in the Brangwens' second garden, across the lane. She was always attracted by its age and its stranded obsoleteness. Now she watched preparations made, she sat on the flight of stone steps that came down from the porch to the garden, and heard her father and the vicar talking and planning and working. Then an inspector came, a very strange man, and stayed talking with her father all one evening. Everything was settled, and twelve boys enrolled their names. It was very exciting.

But to Ursula, everything her father did was magic. Whether he came from Ilkeston with news of the town, whether he went across to the church with his music or his tools on a sunny evening, whether he sat in his white surplice at the organ on Sundays, leading the singing with his strong tenor voice, or whether he were in the workshop with the boys, he was always a centre of magic and fascination to her, his voice, sounding out in command, cheerful, laconic, had always a twang in it that sent a thrill over her blood, and hypnotised her. She seemed to run in the shadow of some dark, potent secret of which she would not, of whose existence even she dared not become conscious, it cast such a spell over her, and so darkened her mind.

Chapter 9

The Marsh and the Flood

There was always regular connection between the Yew Cottage and the Marsh, yet the two households remained separate, distinct.

After Anna's marriage, the Marsh became the home of the two boys, Tom and Fred. Tom was a rather short, good-looking youth, with crisp black hair and long black eyelashes and soft, dark, possessed eyes. He had a quick intelligence. From the High School he went to London to study. He had an instinct for attracting people of character and energy. He gave place entirely to the other person, and at the same time kept himself independent. He scarcely existed except through other people. When he was alone he was unresolved. When he was with another man, he seemed to add himself to the other, make the other bigger than life size. So that a few people loved him and attained a sort of fulfilment in him. He carefully chose these few.

He had a subtle, quick, critical intelligence, a mind that was like a scale or balance. There was something of a woman in all this.

In London he had been the favourite pupil of an engineer, a clever man, who became well-known at the time when Tom Brangwen had just finished his studies. Through this master the youth kept acquaintance with various individual, outstanding characters. He never asserted himself. He seemed to be there to estimate and establish the rest. He was like a presence that makes us aware of our own being. So that he was while still young connected with some of the most energetic scientific and mathematical people in London. They took him as an equal. Quiet and perceptive and impersonal as he was, he kept his place and learned how to value others in just degree. He was there like a judgment. Besides, he was very good-looking, of medium stature, but beautifully proportioned, dark, with fine colouring, always perfectly healthy.

His father allowed him a liberal pocket-money, besides which he had a sort of post as assistant to his chief. Then from time to time the young man appeared at the Marsh, curiously attractive, well-dressed, reserved, having by nature a subtle, refined manner. And he set the change in the farm.

Fred, the younger brother, was a Brangwen, large-boned, blue-eyed, English. He was his father's very son, the two men, father and son, were supremely at ease with one another. Fred was succeeding to the farm.

Between the elder brother and the younger existed an almost passionate love. Tom watched over Fred with a woman's poignant attention and self-less care. Fred looked up to Tom as to something miraculous, that which he himself would aspire to be, were he great also.

So that after Anna's departure, the Marsh began to take on a new tone. The boys were gentlemen; Tom had a rare nature and had risen high. Fred was sensitive and fond of reading, he pondered Ruskin and then the Agnostic writings. Like all the Brangwens, he was very much a thing to himself, though fond of people, and indulgent to them, having an exaggerated respect for them.

There was a rather uneasy friendship between him and one of the young Hardys at the Hall. The two households were different, yet the young men met on shy terms of equality.

It was young Tom Brangwen, with his dark lashes and beautiful colouring, his soft, inscrutable nature, his strange repose and his informed air, added to his position in London, who seemed to emphasise the superior foreign element in the Marsh. When he appeared, perfectly dressed, as if soft and affable, and yet quite removed from everybody, he created an uneasiness in people, he was reserved in the minds of the Cossethay and Ilkeston acquaintances to a different, remote world.

He and his mother had a kind of affinity. The affection between them was of a mute, distant character, but radical. His father was always uneasy and slightly deferential to his eldest son. Tom also formed the link that kept the Marsh in real connection with the Skrebenskys, now quite important people in their own district.

So a change in tone came over the Marsh. Tom Brangwen the father, as he grew older, seemed to mature into a gentleman-farmer. His figure lent itself: burly and handsome. His face remained fresh and his blue eyes as full of light, his thick hair and beard had turned gradually to a silky whiteness. It was his custom to laugh a great deal, in his acquiescent, wilful manner. Things had puzzled him very much, so he had taken the line of easy, good-humoured acceptance. He was not responsible for the frame of things. Yet he was afraid of the unknown in life.

He was fairly well-off. His wife was there with him, a different being from himself, yet somewhere vitally connected with him:-who was he to understand where and how? His two sons were gentlemen. They were men distinct from himself, they had separate beings of their own, yet they were connected with himself. It was all adventurous and puzzling. Yet one remained vital within one's own existence, whatever the off-shoots.

So, handsome and puzzled, he laughed and stuck to himself as the only thing he could stick to. His youngness and the wonder remained almost the same in him. He became indolent, he developed a luxuriant ease. Fred did most of the farm-work, the father saw to the more important transactions. He drove a good mare, and sometimes he rode his cob. He drank in the hotels and the inns with better-class farmers and proprietors, he had well-to-do acquaintances among men. But one class suited him no better than another.

His wife, as ever, had no acquaintances. Her hair was threaded now with grey, her face grew older in form without changing in expression. She seemed the same as when she had come to the Marsh twenty-five years ago, save that her health was more fragile. She seemed always to haunt the Marsh rather than to live there. She was never part of the life. Something she represented was alien there, she remained a stranger within the gates, in some ways fixed and impervious, in some ways curiously refining. She caused the separateness and individuality of all the Marsh inmates, the friability of the household.

When young Tom Brangwen was twenty-three years old there was some breach between him and his chief which was never explained, and he went away to Italy, then to America. He came home for a while, then went to Germany; always the same good-looking, carefully-dressed, attractive young man, in perfect health, yet somehow outside of everything. In his dark eyes was a deep misery which he wore with the same ease and pleasantness as he wore his close-sitting clothes.

To Ursula he was a romantic, alluring figure. He had a grace of bringing beautiful presents: a box of expensive sweets, such as Cossethay had never seen; or he gave her a hair-brush and a long slim mirror of mother-of-pearl, all pale and glimmering and exquisite; or he sent her a little necklace of rough stones, amethyst and opal and brilliants and garnet. He spoke other languages easily and fluently, his nature was curiously gracious and insinuating. With all that, he was undefinably an outsider. He belonged to nowhere, to no society.

Anna Brangwen had left her intimacy with her father undeveloped since the time of her marriage. At her marriage it had been abandoned. He and she had drawn a reserve between them. Anna went more to her mother.

Then suddenly the father died.

It happened one springtime when Ursula was about eight years old, he, Tom Brangwen, drove off on a Saturday morning to the market in Nottingham, saying he might not be back till late, as there was a special show and then a meeting he had to attend. His family understood that he would enjoy himself.

The season had been rainy and dreary. In the evening it was pouring with rain. Fred Brangwen, unsettled, uneasy, did not go out, as was his wont. He smoked and read and fidgeted, hearing always the trickling of water outside. This wet, black night seemed to cut him off and make him unsettled, aware of himself, aware that he wanted something else, aware that he was scarcely living. There seemed to him to be no root to his life, no place for him to get satisfied in. He dreamed of going abroad. But his instinct knew that change of place would not solve his problem. He wanted change, deep, vital change of living. And he did not know how to get it.

Tilly, an old woman now, came in saying that the labourers who had been suppering up said the yard and everywhere was just a slew of water. He heard in indifference. But he hated a desolate, raw wetness in the world. He would leave the Marsh.

His mother was in bed. At last he shut his book, his mind was blank, he walked upstairs intoxicated with depression and anger, and, intoxicated with depression and anger, locked himself into sleep.

Tilly set slippers before the kitchen fire, and she also went to bed, leaving the door unlocked. Then the farm was in darkness, in the rain.

At eleven o'clock it was still raining. Tom Brangwen stood in the yard of the "Angel", Nottingham, and buttoned his coat.

"Oh, well," he said cheerfully, "it's rained on me before. Put 'er in, Jack, my lad, put her in-Tha'rt a rare old cock, Jacky-boy, wi' a belly on thee as does credit to thy drink, if not to thy corn. Co' up lass, let's get off ter th' old homestead. Oh, my heart, what a wetness in the night! There'll be no volcanoes after this. Hey, Jack, my beautiful young slender feller, which of us is Noah? It seems as though the water-works is bursted. Ducks and ayquatic fowl 'll be king o' the castle at this rate-dove an' olive branch an' all. Stand up then, gel, stand up, we're not stoppin' here all night, even if you thought we was. I'm dashed if the jumping rain wouldn't make anybody think they was drunk. Hey, Jack-does rain-water wash the sense in, or does it wash it out?" And he laughed to himself at the joke.

He was always ashamed when he had to drive after he had been drinking, always apologetic to the horse. His apologetic frame made him facetious. He was aware of his inability to walk quite straight. Nevertheless his will kept stiff and attentive, in all his fuddleness.

He mounted and bowled off through the gates of the innyard. The mare went well, he sat fixed, the rain beating on his face. His heavy body rode motionless in a kind of sleep, one centre of attention was kept fitfully burning, the rest was dark. He concentrated his last attention on the fact of driving along the road he knew so well. He knew it so well, he watched for it attentively, with an effort of will.

He talked aloud to himself, sententious in his anxiety, as if he were perfectly sober, whilst the mare bowled along and the rain beat on him. He watched the rain before the gig-lamps, the faint gleaming of the shadowy horse's body, the passing of the dark hedges.

"It's not a fit night to turn a dog out," he said to himself, aloud. "It's high time as it did a bit of clearing up, I'll be damned if it isn't. It was a lot of use putting those ten loads of cinders on th' road. They'll be washed to kingdom-come if it doesn't alter. Well, it's our Fred's look-out, if they are. He's top-sawyer as far as those things go. I don't see why I should concern myself. They can wash to kingdom-come and back again for what I care. I suppose they would be washed back again some day. That's how things are. Th' rain tumbles down just to mount up in clouds again. So they say. There's no more water on the earth than there was in the year naught. That's the story, my boy, if you understand it. There's no more to-day than there was a thousand years ago-nor no less either. You can't wear water out. No, my boy: it'll give you the go-by. Try to wear it out, and it takes its hook into vapour, it has its fingers at its nose to you. It turns into cloud and falleth as rain on the just and unjust. I wonder if I'm the just or the unjust."

He started awake as the trap lurched deep into a rut. And he wakened to the point in his journey. He had travelled some distance since he was last conscious.

But at length he reached the gate, and stumbled heavily down, reeling, gripping fast to the trap. He descended into several inches of water.

"Be damned!" he said angrily. "Be damned to the miserable slop."

And he led the horse washing through the gate. He was quite drunk now, moving blindly, in habit. Everywhere there was water underfoot.

The raised causeway of the house and the farm-stead was dry, however. But there was a curious roar in the night which seemed to be made in the darkness of his own intoxication. Reeling, blinded, almost without consciousness he carried his parcels and the rug and cushions into the house, dropped them, and went out to put up the horse.

Now he was at home, he was a sleep-walker, waiting only for the moment of activity to stop. Very deliberately and carefully, he led the horse down the slope to the cart-shed. She shied and backed.

"Why, wha's amiss?" he hiccupped, plodding steadily on. And he was again in a wash of water, the horse splashed up water as he went. It was thickly dark, save for the gig-lamps, and they lit on a rippling surface of water.

"Well, that's a knock-out," he said, as he came to the cart-shed, and was wading in six inches of water. But everything seemed to him amusing. He laughed to think of six inches of water being in the cart- shed.

He backed in the mare. She was restive. He laughed at the fun of untackling the mare with a lot of water washing round his feet. He laughed because it upset her. "What's amiss, what's amiss, a drop o' water won't hurt you!" As soon as he had undone the traces, she walked quickly away.

He hung up the shafts and took the gig-lamp. As he came out of the familiar jumble of shafts and wheels in the shed, the water, in little waves, came washing strongly against his legs. He staggered and almost fell.

"Well, what the deuce!" he said, staring round at the running water in the black, watery night.

He went to meet the running flood, sinking deeper and deeper. His soul was full of great astonishment. He had to go and look where it came from, though the ground was going from under his feet. He went on, down towards the pond, shakily. He rather enjoyed it. He was knee-deep, and the water was pulling heavily. He stumbled, reeled sickeningly.

Fear took hold of him. Gripping tightly to the lamp, he reeled, and looked round. The water was carrying his feet away, he was dizzy. He did not know which way to turn. The water was whirling, whirling, the whole black night was swooping in rings. He swayed uncertainly at the centre of all the attack, reeling in dismay. In his soul, he knew he would fall.

As he staggered something in the water struck his legs, and he fell. Instantly he was in the turmoil of suffocation. He fought in a black horror of suffocation, fighting, wrestling, but always borne down, borne inevitably down. Still he wrestled and fought to get himself free, in the unutterable struggle of suffocation, but he always fell again deeper. Something struck his head, a great wonder of anguish went over him, then the blackness covered him entirely.

In the utter darkness, the unconscious, drowning body was rolled along, the waters pouring, washing, filling in the place. The cattle woke up and rose to their feet, the dog began to yelp. And the unconscious, drowning body was washed along in the black, swirling darkness, passively.

Mrs. Brangwen woke up and listened. With preternaturally sharp senses she heard the movement of all the darkness that swirled outside. For a moment she lay still. Then she went to the window. She heard the sharp rain, and the deep running of water. She knew her husband was outside.

"Fred," she called, "Fred!"

Away in the night was a hoarse, brutal roar of a mass of water rushing downwards.

She went downstairs. She could not understand the multiplied running of water. Stepping down the step into the kitchen, she put her foot into water. The kitchen was flooded. Where did it come from? She could not understand.

Water was running in out of the scullery. She paddled through barefoot, to see. Water was bubbling fiercely under the outer door. She was afraid. Then something washed against her, something twined under her foot. It was the riding whip. On the table were the rug and the cushion and the parcel from the gig.

He had come home.

"Tom!" she called, afraid of her own voice.

She opened the door. Water ran in with a horrid sound. Everywhere was moving water, a sound of waters.

"Tom!" she cried, standing in her nightdress with the candle, calling into the darkness and the flood out of the doorway.

"Tom! Tom!"

And she listened. Fred appeared behind her, in trousers and shirt.

"Where is he?" he asked.

He looked at the flood, then at his mother. She seemed small and uncanny, elvish, in her nightdress.

"Go upstairs," he said. "He'll be in th' stable."

"To-om! To-om!" cried the elderly woman, with a long, unnatural, penetrating call that chilled her son to the marrow. He quickly pulled on his boots and his coat.

"Go upstairs, mother," he said; "I'll go an' see where he is."

"To-om! To-o-om!" rang out the shrill, unearthly cry of the small woman. There was only the noise of water and the mooing of uneasy cattle, and the long yelping of the dog, clamouring in the darkness.

Fred Brangwen splashed out into the flood with a lantern. His mother stood on a chair in the doorway, watching him go. It was all water, water, running, flashing under the lantern.

"Tom! Tom! To-o-om!" came her long, unnatural cry, ringing over the night. It made her son feel cold in his soul.

And the unconscious, drowning body of the father rolled on below the house, driven by the black water towards the high-road.

Tilly appeared, a skirt over her nightdress. She saw her mistress clinging on the top of a chair in the open doorway, a candle burning on the table.

"God's sake!" cried the old serving-woman. "The cut's burst. That embankment's broke down. Whativer are we goin' to do!"

Mrs. Brangwen watched her son, and the lantern, go along the upper causeway to the stable. Then she saw the dark figure of a horse: then her son hung the lamp in the stable, and the light shone out faintly on him as he untackled the mare. The mother saw the soft blazed face of the horse thrust forward into the stable-door. The stables were still above the flood. But the water flowed strongly into the house.

"It's getting higher," said Tilly. "Hasn't master come in?"

Mrs. Brangwen did not hear.

"Isn't he the-ere?" she called, in her far-reaching, terrifying voice.

"No," came the short answer out of the night.

"Go and loo-ok for him."

His mother's voice nearly drove the youth mad.

He put the halter on the horse and shut the stable door. He came splashing back through the water, the lantern swinging.

The unconscious, drowning body was pushed past the house in the deepest current. Fred Brangwen came to his mother.

"I'll go to th' cart-shed," he said.

"To-om, To-o-om!" rang out the strong, inhuman cry. Fred Brangwen's blood froze, his heart was very angry. He gripped his veins in a frenzy. Why was she yelling like this? He could not bear the sight of her, perched on a chair in her white nightdress in the doorway, elvish and horrible.

"He's taken the mare out of the trap, so he's all right," he said, growling, pretending to be normal.

But as he descended to the cart-shed, he sank into a foot of water. He heard the rushing in the distance, he knew the canal had broken down. The water was running deeper.

The trap was there all right, but no signs of his father. The young man waded down to the pond. The water rose above his knees, it swirled and forced him. He drew back.

"Is he the-e-ere?" came the maddening cry of the mother.

"No," was the sharp answer.

"To-om-To-o-om!" came the piercing, free, unearthly call. It seemed high and supernatural, almost pure. Fred Brangwen hated it. It nearly drove him mad. So awfully it sang out, almost like a song.

The water was flowing fuller into the house.

"You'd better go up to Beeby's and bring him and Arthur down, and tell Mrs. Beeby to fetch Wilkinson," said Fred to Tilly. He forced his mother to go upstairs.

"I know your father is drowned," she said, in a curious dismay.

The flood rose through the night, till it washed the kettle off the hob in the kitchen. Mrs. Brangwen sat alone at a window upstairs. She called no more. The men were busy with the pigs and the cattle. They were coming with a boat for her.

Towards morning the rain ceased, the stars came out over the noise and the terrifying clucking and trickling of the water. Then there was a pallor in the east, the light began to come. In the ruddy light of the dawn she saw the waters spreading out, moving sluggishly, the buildings rising out of a waste of water. Birds began to sing, drowsily, and as if slightly hoarse with the dawn. It grew brighter. Up the second field was the great, raw gap in the canal embankment.

Mrs. Brangwen went from window to window, watching the flood. Somebody had brought a little boat. The light grew stronger, the red gleam was gone off the flood-waters, day took place. Mrs. Brangwen went from the front of the house to the back, looking out, intent and unrelaxing, on the pallid morning of spring.

She saw a glimpse of her husband's buff coat in the floods, as the water rolled the body against the garden hedge. She called to the men in the boat. She was glad he was found. They dragged him out of the hedge. They could not lift him into the boat. Fred Brangwen jumped into the water, up to his waist, and half carried the body of his father through the flood to the road. Hay and twigs and dirt were in the beard and hair. The youth pushed through the water crying loudly without tears, like a stricken animal. The mother at the window cried, making no trouble.

The doctor came. But the body was dead. They carried it up to Cossethay, to Anna's house.

When Anna Brangwen heard the news, she pressed back her head and rolled her eyes, as if something were reaching forward to bite at her throat. She pressed back her head, her mind was driven back to sleep. Since she had married and become a mother, the girl she had been was forgotten. Now, the shock threatened to break in upon her and sweep away all her intervening life, make her as a girl of eighteen again, loving her father. So she pressed back, away from the shock, she clung to her present life.

It was when they brought him to her house dead and in his wet clothes, his wet, sodden clothes, fully dressed as he came from market, yet all sodden and inert, that the shock really broke into her, and she was terrified. A big, soaked, inert heap, he was, who had been to her the image of power and strong life.

Almost in horror, she began to take the wet things from him, to pull off him the incongruous market-clothes of a well-to-do farmer. The children were sent away to the Vicarage, the dead body lay on the parlour floor, Anna quickly began to undress him, laid his fob and seals in a wet heap on the table. Her husband and the woman helped her. They cleared and washed the body, and laid it on the bed.

There, it looked still and grand. He was perfectly calm in death, and, now he was laid in line, inviolable, unapproachable. To Anna, he was the majesty of the inaccessible male, the majesty of death. It made her still and awe-stricken, almost glad.

Lydia Brangwen, the mother, also came and saw the impressive, inviolable body of the dead man. She went pale, seeing death. He was beyond change or knowledge, absolute, laid in line with the infinite. What had she to do with him? He was a majestic Abstraction, made visible now for a moment, inviolate, absolute. And who could lay claim to him, who could speak of him, of the him who was revealed in the stripped moment of transit from life into death? Neither the living nor the dead could claim him, he was both the one and the other, inviolable, inaccessibly himself.

"I shared life with you, I belong in my own way to eternity," said Lydia Brangwen, her heart cold, knowing her own singleness.

"I did not know you in life. You are beyond me, supreme now in death," said Anna Brangwen, awe-stricken, almost glad.

It was the sons who could not bear it. Fred Brangwen went about with a set, blanched face and shut hands, his heart full of hatred and rage for what had been done to his father, bleeding also with desire to have his father again, to see him, to hear him again. He could not bear it.

Tom Brangwen only arrived on the day of the funeral. He was quiet and controlled as ever. He kissed his mother, who was still dark-faced, inscrutable, he shook hands with his brother without looking at him, he saw the great coffin with its black handles. He even read the name-plate, "Tom Brangwen, of the Marsh Farm. Born ----. Died ----."

The good-looking, still face of the young man crinkled up for a moment in a terrible grimace, then resumed its stillness. The coffin was carried round to the church, the funeral bell tanged at intervals, the mourners carried their wreaths of white flowers. The mother, the Polish woman, went with dark, abstract face, on her son's arm. He was good-looking as ever, his face perfectly motionless and somehow pleasant. Fred walked with Anna, she strange and winsome, he with a face like wood, stiff, unyielding.

Only afterwards Ursula, flitting between the currant bushes down the garden, saw her Uncle Tom standing in his black clothes, erect and fashionable, but his fists lifted, and his face distorted, his lips curled back from his teeth in a horrible grin, like an animal which grimaces with torment, whilst his body panted quick, like a panting dog's. He was facing the open distance, panting, and holding still, then panting rapidly again, but his face never changing from its almost bestial look of torture, the teeth all showing, the nose wrinkled up, the eyes, unseeing, fixed.

Terrified, Ursula slipped away. And when her Uncle Tom was in the house again, grave and very quiet, so that he seemed almost to affect gravity, to pretend grief, she watched his still, handsome face, imagining it again in its distortion. But she saw the nose was rather thick, rather Russian, under its transparent skin, she remembered the teeth under the carefully cut moustache were small and sharp and spaced. She could see him, in all his elegant demeanour, bestial, almost corrupt. And she was frightened. She never forgot to look for the bestial, frightening side of him, after this.

He said "Good-bye" to his mother and went away at once. Ursula almost shrank from his kiss, now. She wanted it, nevertheless, and the little revulsion as well.

At the funeral, and after the funeral, Will Brangwen was madly in love with his wife. The death had shaken him. But death and all seemed to gather in him into a mad, over-whelming passion for his wife. She seemed so strange and winsome. He was almost beside himself with desire for her.

And she took him, she seemed ready for him, she wanted him.

The grandmother stayed a while at the Yew Cottage, till the Marsh was restored. Then she returned to her own rooms, quiet, and it seemed, wanting nothing. Fred threw himself into the work of restoring the farm. That his father was killed there, seemed to make it only the more intimate and the more inevitably his own place.

There was a saying that the Brangwens always died a violent death. To them all, except perhaps Tom, it seemed almost natural. Yet Fred went about obstinate, his heart fixed. He could never forgive the Unknown this murder of his father.

After the death of the father, the Marsh was very quiet. Mrs. Brangwen was unsettled. She could not sit all the evening peacefully, as she could before, and during the day she was always rising to her feet and hesitating, as if she must go somewhere, and were not quite sure whither.

She was seen loitering about the garden, in her little woollen jacket. She was often driven out in the gig, sitting beside her son and watching the countryside or the streets of the town, with a childish, candid, uncanny face, as if it all were strange to her.

The children, Ursula and Gudrun and Theresa went by the garden gate on their way to school. The grandmother would have them call in each time they passed, she would have them come to the Marsh for dinner. She wanted children about her.

Of her sons, she was almost afraid. She could see the sombre passion and desire and dissatisfaction in them, and she wanted not to see it any more. Even Fred, with his blue eyes and his heavy jaw, troubled her. There was no peace. He wanted something, he wanted love, passion, and he could not find them. But why must he trouble her? Why must he come to her with his seething and suffering and dissatisfactions? She was too old.

Tom was more restrained, reserved. He kept his body very still. But he troubled her even more. She could not but see the black depths of disintegration in his eyes, the sudden glance upon her, as if she could save him, as if he would reveal himself.

And how could age save youth? Youth must go to youth. Always the storm! Could she not lie in peace, these years, in the quiet, apart from life? No, always the swell must heave upon her and break against the barriers. Always she must be embroiled in the seethe and rage and passion, endless, endless, going on for ever. And she wanted to draw away. She wanted at last her own innocence and peace. She did not want her sons to force upon her any more the old brutal story of desire and offerings and deep, deep-hidden rage of unsatisfied men against women. She wanted to be beyond it all, to know the peace and innocence of age.

She had never been a woman to work much. So that now she would stand often at the garden-gate, watching the scant world go by. And the sight of children pleased her, made her happy. She had usually an apple or a few sweets in her pocket. She liked children to smile at her.

She never went to her husband's grave. She spoke of him simply, as if he were alive. Sometimes the tears would run down her face, in helpless sadness. Then she recovered, and was herself again, happy.

On wet days, she stayed in bed. Her bedroom was her city of refuge, where she could lie down and muse and muse. Sometimes Fred would read to her. But that did not mean much. She had so many dreams to dream over, such an unsifted store. She wanted time.

Her chief friend at this period was Ursula. The little girl and the musing, fragile woman of sixty seemed to understand the same language. At Cossethay all was activity and passion, everything moved upon poles of passion. Then there were four children younger than Ursula, a throng of babies, all the time many lives beating against each other.

So that for the eldest child, the peace of the grandmother's bedroom was exquisite. Here Ursula came as to a hushed, paradisal land, here her own existence became simple and exquisite to her as if she were a flower.

Always on Saturdays she came down to the Marsh, and always clutching a little offering, either a little mat made of strips of coloured, woven paper, or a tiny basket made in the kindergarten lesson, or a little crayon drawing of a bird.

When she appeared in the doorway, Tilly, ancient but still in authority, would crane her skinny neck to see who it was.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" she said. "I thought we should be seein' you. My word, that's a bobby-dazzlin' posy you've brought!"

It was curious how Tilly preserved the spirit of Tom Brangwen, who was dead, in the Marsh. Ursula always connected her with her grandfather.

This day the child had brought a tight little nosegay of pinks, white ones, with a rim of pink ones. She was very proud of it, and very shy because of her pride.

"Your gran'mother's in her bed. Wipe your shoes well if you're goin' up, and don't go burstin' in on her like a skyrocket. My word, but that's a fine posy! Did you do it all by yourself, an' all?"

Tilly stealthily ushered her into the bedroom. The child entered with a strange, dragging hesitation characteristic of her when she was moved. Her grandmother was sitting up in bed, wearing a little grey woollen jacket.

The child hesitated in silence near the bed, clutching the nosegay in front of her. Her childish eyes were shining. The grandmother's grey eyes shone with a similar light.

"How pretty!" she said. "How pretty you have made them! What a darling little bunch."

Ursula, glowing, thrust them into her grandmother's hand, saying, "I made them you."

"That is how the peasants tied them at home," said the grandmother, pushing the pinks with her fingers, and smelling them. "Just such tight little bunches! And they make wreaths for their hair-they weave the stalks. Then they go round with wreaths in their hair, and wearing their best aprons."

Ursula immediately imagined herself in this story-land.

"Did you used to have a wreath in your hair, grandmother?"

"When I was a little girl, I had golden hair, something like Katie's. Then I used to have a wreath of little blue flowers, oh, so blue, that come when the snow is gone. Andrey, the coachman, used to bring me the very first."

They talked, and then Tilly brought the tea-tray, set for two. Ursula had a special green and gold cup kept for herself at the Marsh. There was thin bread and butter, and cress for tea. It was all special and wonderful. She ate very daintily, with little fastidious bites.

"Why do you have two wedding-rings, grandmother?-Must you?" asked the child, noticing her grandmother's ivory coloured hand with blue veins, above the tray.

"If I had two husbands, child."

Ursula pondered a moment.

"Then you must wear both rings together?"

"Yes."

"Which was my grandfather's ring?"

The woman hesitated.

"This grandfather whom you knew? This was his ring, the red one. The yellow one was your other grandfather's whom you never knew."

Ursula looked interestedly at the two rings on the proffered finger.

"Where did he buy it you?" she asked.

"This one? In Warsaw, I think."

"You didn't know my own grandfather then?"

"Not this grandfather."

Ursula pondered this fascinating intelligence.

"Did he have white whiskers as well?"

"No, his beard was dark. You have his brows, I think."

Ursula ceased and became self-conscious. She at once identified herself with her Polish grandfather.

"And did he have brown eyes?"

"Yes, dark eyes. He was a clever man, as quick as a lion. He was never still."

Lydia still resented Lensky. When she thought of him, she was always younger than he, she was always twenty, or twenty-five, and under his domination. He incorporated her in his ideas as if she were not a person herself, as if she were just his aide-de-camp, or part of his baggage, or one among his surgical appliances. She still resented it. And he was always only thirty: he had died when he was thirty-four. She did not feel sorry for him. He was older than she. Yet she still ached in the thought of those days.

"Did you like my first grandfather best?" asked Ursula.

"I liked them both," said the grandmother.

And, thinking, she became again Lensky's girl-bride. He was of good family, of better family even than her own, for she was half German. She was a young girl in a house of insecure fortune. And he, an intellectual, a clever surgeon and physician, had loved her. How she had looked up to him! She remembered her first transports when he talked to her, the important young man with the severe black beard. He had seemed so wonderful, such an authority. After her own lax household, his gravity and confident, hard authority seemed almost God-like to her. For she had never known it in her life, all her surroundings had been loose, lax, disordered, a welter.

"Miss Lydia, will you marry me?" he had said to her in German, in his grave, yet tremulous voice. She had been afraid of his dark eyes upon her. They did not see her, they were fixed upon her. And he was hard, confident. She thrilled with the excitement of it, and accepted. During the courtship, his kisses were a wonder to her. She always thought about them, and wondered over them. She never wanted to kiss him back. In her idea, the man kissed, and the woman examined in her soul the kisses she had received.

She had never quite recovered from her prostration of the first days, or nights, of marriage. He had taken her to Vienna, and she was utterly alone with him, utterly alone in another world, everything, everything foreign, even he foreign to her. Then came the real marriage, passion came to her, and she became his slave, he was her lord, her lord. She was the girl-bride, the slave, she kissed his feet, she had thought it an honour to touch his body, to unfasten his boots. For two years, she had gone on as his slave, crouching at his feet, embracing his knees.

Children had come, he had followed his ideas. She was there for him, just to keep him in condition. She was to him one of the baser or material conditions necessary for his welfare in prosecuting his ideas, of nationalism, of liberty, of science.

But gradually, at twenty-three, twenty-four, she began to realise that she too might consider these ideas. By his acceptance of her self-subordination, he exhausted the feeling in her. There were those of his associates who would discuss the ideas with her, though he did not wish to do so himself. She adventured into the minds of other men. His, then, was not the only male mind! She did not exist, then, just as his attribute! She began to perceive the attention of other men. An excitement came over her. She remembered now the men who had paid her court, when she was married, in Warsaw.

Then the rebellion broke out, and she was inspired too. She would go as a nurse at her husband's side. He worked like a lion, he wore his life out. And she followed him helplessly. But she disbelieved in him. He was so separate, he ignored so much. He counted too much on himself. His work, his ideas,-did nothing else matter?

Then the children were dead, and for her, everything became remote. He became remote. She saw him, she saw him go white when he heard the news, then frown, as if he thought, "Why have they died now, when I have no time to grieve?"

"He has no time to grieve," she had said, in her remote, awful soul. "He has no time. It is so important, what he does! He is then so self-important, this half-frenzied man! Nothing matters, but this work of rebellion! He has not time to grieve, nor to think of his children! He had not time even to beget them, really."

She had let him go on alone. But, in the chaos, she had worked by his side again. And out of the chaos, she had fled with him to London.

He was a broken, cold man. He had no affection for her, nor for anyone. He had failed in his work, so everything had failed. He stiffened, and died.

She could not subscribe. He had failed, everything had failed, yet behind the failure was the unyielding passion of life. The individual effort might fail, but not the human joy. She belonged to the human joy.

He died and went his way, but not before there was another child. And this little Ursula was his grandchild. She was glad of it. For she still honoured him, though he had been mistaken.

She, Lydia Brangwen, was sorry for him now. He was dead-he had scarcely lived. He had never known her. He had lain with her, but he had never known her. He had never received what she could give him. He had gone away from her empty. So, he had never lived. So, he had died and passed away. Yet there had been strength and power in him.

She could scarcely forgive him that he had never lived. If it were not for Anna, and for this little Ursula, who had his brows, there would be no more left of him than of a broken vessel thrown away, and just remembered.

Tom Brangwen had served her. He had come to her, and taken from her. He had died and gone his way into death. But he had made himself immortal in his knowledge with her. So she had her place here, in life, and in immortality. For he had taken his knowledge of her into death, so that she had her place in death. "In my father's house are many mansions."

She loved both her husbands. To one she had been a naked little girl-bride, running to serve him. The other she loved out of fulfilment, because he was good and had given her being, because he had served her honourably, and become her man, one with her.

She was established in this stretch of life, she had come to herself. During her first marriage, she had not existed, except through him, he was the substance and she the shadow running at his feet. She was very glad she had come to her own self. She was grateful to Brangwen. She reached out to him in gratitude, into death.

In her heart she felt a vague tenderness and pity for her first husband, who had been her lord. He was so wrong when he died. She could not bear it, that he had never lived, never really become himself. And he had been her lord! Strange, it all had been! Why had he been her lord? He seemed now so far off, so without bearing on her.

"Which did you, grandmother?"

"What?"

"Like best."

"I liked them both. I married the first when I was quite a girl. Then I loved your grandfather when I was a woman. There is a difference."

They were silent for a time.

"Did you cry when my first grandfather died?" the child asked.

Lydia Brangwen rocked herself on the bed, thinking aloud.

"When we came to England, he hardly ever spoke, he was too much concerned to take any notice of anybody. He grew thinner and thinner, till his cheeks were hollow and his mouth stuck out. He wasn't handsome any more. I knew he couldn't bear being beaten, I thought everything was lost in the world. Only I had your mother a baby, it was no use my dying.

"He looked at me with his black eyes, almost as if he hated me, when he was ill, and said, 'It only wanted this. It only wanted that I should leave you and a young child to starve in this London.' I told him we should not starve. But I was young, and foolish, and frightened, which he knew.

"He was bitter, and he never gave way. He lay beating his brains, to see what he could do. 'I don't know what you will do,' he said. 'I am no good, I am a failure from beginning to end. I cannot even provide for my wife and child!'

"But you see, it was not for him to provide for us. My life went on, though his stopped, and I married your grandfather.

"I ought to have known, I ought to have been able to say to him: 'Don't be so bitter, don't die because this has failed. You are not the beginning and the end.' But I was too young, he had never let me become myself, I thought he was truly the beginning and the end. So I let him take all upon himself. Yet all did not depend on him. Life must go on, and I must marry your grandfather, and have your Uncle Tom, and your Uncle Fred. We cannot take so much upon ourselves."

The child's heart beat fast as she listened to these things. She could not understand, but she seemed to feel far-off things. It gave her a deep, joyous thrill, to know she hailed from far off, from Poland, and that dark-bearded impressive man. Strange, her antecedents were, and she felt fate on either side of her terrible.

Almost every day, Ursula saw her grandmother, and every time, they talked together. Till the grandmother's sayings and stories, told in the complete hush of the Marsh bedroom, accumulated with mystic significance, and became a sort of Bible to the child.

And Ursula asked her deepest childish questions of her grandmother.

"Will somebody love me, grandmother?"

"Many people love you, child. We all love you."

"But when I am grown up, will somebody love me?"

"Yes, some man will love you, child, because it's your nature. And I hope it will be somebody who will love you for what you are, and not for what he wants of you. But we have a right to what we want."

Ursula was frightened, hearing these things. Her heart sank, she felt she had no ground under her feet. She clung to her grandmother. Here was peace and security. Here, from her grandmother's peaceful room, the door opened on to the greater space, the past, which was so big, that all it contained seemed tiny, loves and births and deaths, tiny units and features within a vast horizon. That was a great relief, to know the tiny importance of the individual, within the great past.

Chapter 10

The Widening Circle

It was very burdensome to Ursula, that she was the eldest of the family. By the time she was eleven, she had to take to school Gudrun and Theresa and Catherine. The boy, William, always called Billy, so that he should not be confused with his father, was a lovable, rather delicate child of three, so he stayed at home as yet. There was another baby girl, called Cassandra.

The children went for a time to the little church school just near the Marsh. It was the only place within reach, and being so small, Mrs. Brangwen felt safe in sending her children there, though the village boys did nickname Ursula "Urtler", and Gudrun "Good-runner", and Theresa "Tea-pot".

Gudrun and Ursula were co-mates. The second child, with her long, sleepy body and her endless chain of fancies, would have nothing to do with realities. She was not for them, she was for her own fancies. Ursula was the one for realities. So Gudrun left all such to her elder sister, and trusted in her implicitly, indifferently. Ursula had a great tenderness for her co-mate sister.

It was no good trying to make Gudrun responsible. She floated along like a fish in the sea, perfect within the medium of her own difference and being. Other existence did not trouble her. Only she believed in Ursula, and trusted to Ursula.

The eldest child was very much fretted by her responsibility for the other young ones. Especially Theresa, a sturdy, bold-eyed thing, had a faculty for warfare.

"Our Ursula, Billy Pillins has lugged my hair."

"What did you say to him?"

"I said nothing."

Then the Brangwen girls were in for a feud with the Pillinses, or Phillipses.

"You won't pull my hair again, Billy Pillins," said Theresa, walking with her sisters, and looking superbly at the freckled, red-haired boy.

"Why shan't I?" retorted Billy Pillins.

"You won't because you dursn't," said the tiresome Theresa.

"You come here, then, Tea-pot, an' see if I dursna."

Up marched Tea-pot, and immediately Billy Pillins lugged her black, snaky locks. In a rage she flew at him. Immediately in rushed Ursula and Gudrun, and little Katie, in clashed the other Phillipses, Clem and Walter, and Eddie Anthony. Then there was a fray. The Brangwen girls were well-grown and stronger than many boys. But for pinafores and long hair, they would have carried easy victories. They went home, however, with hair lugged and pinafores torn. It was a joy to the Phillips boys to rip the pinafores of the Brangwen girls.

Then there was an outcry. Mrs. Brangwen would not have it; no, she would not. All her innate dignity and standoffishness rose up. Then there was the vicar lecturing the school. "It was a sad thing that the boys of Cossethay could not behave more like gentlemen to the girls of Cossethay. Indeed, what kind of boy was it that should set upon a girl, and kick her, and beat her, and tear her pinafore? That boy deserved severe castigation, and the name of coward, for no boy who was not a coward-etc., etc."

Meanwhile much hang-dog fury in the Pillinses' hearts, much virtue in the Brangwen girls', particularly in Theresa's. And the feud continued, with periods of extraordinary amity, when Ursula was Clem Phillips's sweetheart, and Gudrun was Walter's, and Theresa was Billy's, and even the tiny Katie had to be Eddie Ant'ny's sweetheart. There was the closest union. At every possible moment the little gang of Brangwens and Phillipses flew together. Yet neither Ursula nor Gudrun would have any real intimacy with the Phillips boys. It was a sort of fiction to them, this alliance and this dubbing of sweethearts.

Again Mrs. Brangwen rose up.

"Ursula, I will not have you raking the roads with lads, so I tell you. Now stop it, and the rest will stop it."

How Ursula hated always to represent the little Brangwen club. She could never be herself, no, she was always Ursula-Gudrun-Theresa-Catherine-and later even Billy was added on to her. Moreover, she did not want the Phillipses either. She was out of taste with them.

However, the Brangwen-Pillins coalition readily broke down, owing to the unfair superiority of the Brangwens. The Brangwens were rich. They had free access to the Marsh Farm. The school teachers were almost respectful to the girls, the vicar spoke to them on equal terms. The Brangwen girls presumed, they tossed their heads.

"You're not ivrybody, Urtler Brangwin, ugly-mug," said Clem Phillips, his face going very red.

"I'm better than you, for all that," retorted Urtler.

"You think you are-wi' a face like that-Ugly Mug,-Urtler Brangwin," he began to jeer, trying to set all the others in cry against her. Then there was hostility again. How she hated their jeering. She became cold against the Phillipses. Ursula was very proud in her family. The Brangwen girls had all a curious blind dignity, even a kind of nobility in their bearing. By some result of breed and upbringing, they seemed to rush along their own lives without caring that they existed to other people. Never from the start did it occur to Ursula that other people might hold a low opinion of her. She thought that whosoever knew her, knew she was enough and accepted her as such. She thought it was a world of people like herself. She suffered bitterly if she were forced to have a low opinion of any person, and she never forgave that person.

This was maddening to many little people. All their lives, the Brangwens were meeting folk who tried to pull them down to make them seem little. Curiously, the mother was aware of what would happen, and was always ready to give her children the advantage of the move.

When Ursula was twelve, and the common school and the companionship of the village children, niggardly and begrudging, was beginning to affect her, Anna sent her with Gudrun to the Grammar School in Nottingham. This was a great release for Ursula. She had a passionate craving to escape from the belittling circumstances of life, the little jealousies, the little differences, the little meannesses. It was a torture to her that the Phillipses were poorer and meaner than herself, that they used mean little reservations, took petty little advantages. She wanted to be with her equals: but not by diminishing herself. She did want Clem Phillips to be her equal. But by some puzzling, painful fate or other, when he was really there with her, he produced in her a tight feeling in the head. She wanted to beat her forehead, to escape.

Then she found that the way to escape was easy. One departed from the whole circumstance. One went away to the Grammar School, and left the little school, the meagre teachers, the Phillipses whom she had tried to love but who had made her fail, and whom she could not forgive. She had an instinctive fear of petty people, as a deer is afraid of dogs. Because she was blind, she could not calculate nor estimate people. She must think that everybody was just like herself.

She measured by the standard of her own people: her father and mother, her grandmother, her uncles. Her beloved father, so utterly simple in his demeanour, yet with his strong, dark soul fixed like a root in unexpressed depths that fascinated and terrified her: her mother, so strangely free of all money and convention and fear, entirely indifferent to the world, standing by herself, without connection: her grandmother, who had come from so far and was centred in so wide an horizon: people must come up to these standards before they could be Ursula's people.

So even as a girl of twelve she was glad to burst the narrow boundary of Cossethay, where only limited people lived. Outside, was all vastness, and a throng of real, proud people whom she would love.

Going to school by train, she must leave home at a quarter to eight in the morning, and she did not arrive again till half-past five at evening. Of this she was glad, for the house was small and overful. It was a storm of movement, whence there had been no escape. She hated so much being in charge.

The house was a storm of movement. The children were healthy and turbulent, the mother only wanted their animal well-being. To Ursula, as she grew a little older, it became a nightmare. When she saw, later, a Rubens picture with storms of naked babies, and found this was called "Fecundity", she shuddered, and the world became abhorrent to her. She knew as a child what it was to live amidst storms of babies, in the heat and swelter of fecundity. And as a child, she was against her mother, passionately against her mother, she craved for some spirituality and stateliness.

In bad weather, home was a bedlam. Children dashed in and out of the rain, to the puddles under the dismal yew trees, across the wet flagstones of the kitchen, whilst the cleaning-woman grumbled and scolded; children were swarming on the sofa, children were kicking the piano in the parlour, to make it sound like a beehive, children were rolling on the hearthrug, legs in air, pulling a book in two between them, children, fiendish, ubiquitous, were stealing upstairs to find out where our Ursula was, whispering at bedroom doors, hanging on the latch, calling mysteriously, "Ursula! Ursula!" to the girl who had locked herself in to read. And it was hopeless. The locked door excited their sense of mystery, she had to open to dispel the lure. These children hung on to her with round-eyed excited questions.

The mother flourished amid all this.

"Better have them noisy than ill," she said.

But the growing girls, in turn, suffered bitterly. Ursula was just coming to the stage when Andersen and Grimm were being left behind for the "Idylls of the King" and romantic love-stories.

"Elaine the fair Elaine the lovable, Elaine the lily maid of Astolat, High in her chamber in a tower to the east Guarded the sacred shield of Launcelot."

How she loved it! How she leaned in her bedroom window with her black, rough hair on her shoulders, and her warm face all rapt, and gazed across at the churchyard and the little church, which was a turreted castle, whence Launcelot would ride just now, would wave to her as he rode by, his scarlet cloak passing behind the dark yew trees and between the open space: whilst she, ah, she, would remain the lonely maid high up and isolated in the tower, polishing the terrible shield, weaving it a covering with a true device, and waiting, waiting, always remote and high.

At which point there would be a faint scuffle on the stairs, a light-pitched whispering outside the door, and a creaking of the latch: then Billy, excited, whispering:

"It's locked-it's locked."

Then the knocking, kicking at the door with childish knees, and the urgent, childish:

"Ursula-our Ursula? Ursula? Eh, our Ursula?"

No reply.

"Ursula! Eh-our Ursula?" the name was shouted now Still no answer.

"Mother, she won't answer," came the yell. "She's dead."

"Go away-I'm not dead. What do you want?" came the angry voice of the girl.

"Open the door, our Ursula," came the complaining cry. It was all over. She must open the door. She heard the screech of the bucket downstairs dragged across the flagstones as the woman washed the kitchen floor. And the children were prowling in the bedroom, asking:

"What were you doing? What had you locked the door for?" Then she discovered the key of the parish room, and betook herself there, and sat on some sacks with her books. There began another dream.

She was the only daughter of the old lord, she was gifted with magic. Day followed day of rapt silence, whilst she wandered ghost-like in the hushed, ancient mansion, or flitted along the sleeping terraces.

Here a grave grief attacked her: that her hair was dark. She must have fair hair and a white skin. She was rather bitter about her black mane.

Never mind, she would dye it when she grew up, or bleach it in the sun, till it was bleached fair. Meanwhile she wore a fair white coif of pure Venetian lace.

She flitted silently along the terraces, where jewelled lizards basked upon the stone, and did not move when her shadow fell upon them. In the utter stillness she heard the tinkle of the fountain, and smelled the roses whose blossoms hung rich and motionless. So she drifted, drifted on the wistful feet of beauty, past the water and the swans, to the noble park, where, underneath a great oak, a doe all dappled lay with her four fine feet together, her fawn nestling sun-coloured beside her.

Oh, and this doe was her familiar. It would talk to her, because she was a magician, it would tell her stories as if the sunshine spoke.

Then one day, she left the door of the parish room unlocked, careless and unheeding as she always was; the children found their way in, Katie cut her finger and howled, Billy hacked notches in the fine chisels, and did much damage. There was a great commotion.

The crossness of the mother was soon finished. Ursula locked up the room again, and considered all was over. Then her father came in with the notched tools, his forehead knotted.

"Who the deuce opened the door?" he cried in anger.

"It was Ursula who opened the door," said her mother. He had a duster in his hand. He turned and flapped the cloth hard across the girl's face. The cloth stung, for a moment the girl was as if stunned. Then she remained motionless, her face closed and stubborn. But her heart was blazing. In spite of herself the tears surged higher, in spite of her they surged higher.

In spite of her, her face broke, she made a curious gulping grimace, and the tears were falling. So she went away, desolate. But her blazing heart was fierce and unyielding. He watched her go, and a pleasurable pain filled him, a sense of triumph and easy power, followed immediately by acute pity.

"I'm sure that was unnecessary-to hit the girl across the face," said the mother coldly.

"A flip with the duster won't hurt her," he said.

"Nor will it do her any good."

For days, for weeks, Ursula's heart burned from this rebuff. She felt so cruelly vulnerable. Did he not know how vulnerable she was, how exposed and wincing? He, of all people, knew. And he wanted to do this to her. He wanted to hurt her right through her closest sensitiveness, he wanted to treat her with shame, to maim her with insult.

Her heart burnt in isolation, like a watchfire lighted. She did not forget, she did not forget, she never forgot. When she returned to her love for her father, the seed of mistrust and defiance burned unquenched, though covered up far from sight. She no longer belonged to him unquestioned. Slowly, slowly, the fire of mistrust and defiance burned in her, burned away her connection with him.

She ran a good deal alone, having a passion for all moving, active things. She loved the little brooks. Wherever she found a little running water, she was happy. It seemed to make her run and sing in spirit along with it. She could sit for hours by a brook or stream, on the roots of the alders, and watch the water hasten dancing over the stones, or among the twigs of a fallen branch. Sometimes, little fish vanished before they had become real, like hallucinations, sometimes wagtails ran by the water's brink, sometimes other little birds came to drink. She saw a kingfisher darting blue-and then she was very happy. The kingfisher was the key to the magic world: he was witness of the border of enchantment.

But she must move out of the intricately woven illusion of her life: the illusion of a father whose life was an Odyssey in an outer world; the illusion of her grandmother, of realities so shadowy and far-off that they became as mystic symbols:-peasant-girls with wreaths of blue flowers in their hair, the sledges and the depths of winter; the dark-bearded young grandfather, marriage and war and death; then the multitude of illusions concerning herself, how she was truly a princess of Poland, how in England she was under a spell, she was not really this Ursula Brangwen; then the mirage of her reading: out of the multicoloured illusion of this her life, she must move on, to the Grammar School in Nottingham.

She was shy, and she suffered. For one thing, she bit her nails, and had a cruel consciousness in her finger-tips, a shame, an exposure. Out of all proportion, this shame haunted her. She spent hours of torture, conjuring how she might keep her gloves on: if she might say her hands were scalded, if she might seem to forget to take off her gloves.

For she was going to inherit her own estate, when she went to the High School. There, each girl was a lady. There, she was going to walk among free souls, her co-mates and her equals, and all petty things would be put away. Ah, if only she did not bite her nails! If only she had not this blemish! She wanted so much to be perfect-without spot or blemish, living the high, noble life.

It was a grief to her that her father made such a poor introduction. He was brief as ever, like a boy saying his errand, and his clothes looked ill-fitting and casual. Whereas Ursula would have liked robes and a ceremonial of introduction to this, her new estate.

She made a new illusion of school. Miss Grey, the headmistress, had a certain silvery, school-mistressy beauty of character. The school itself had been a gentleman's house. Dark, sombre lawns separated it from the dark, select avenue. But its rooms were large and of good appearance, and from the back, one looked over lawns and shrubbery, over the trees and the grassy slope of the Arboretum, to the town which heaped the hollow with its roofs and cupolas and its shadows.

So Ursula seated herself upon the hill of learning, looking down on the smoke and confusion and the manufacturing, engrossed activity of the town. She was happy. Up here, in the Grammar School, she fancied the air was finer, beyond the factory smoke. She wanted to learn Latin and Greek and French and mathematics. She trembled like a postulant when she wrote the Greek alphabet for the first time.

She was upon another hill-slope, whose summit she had not scaled. There was always the marvellous eagerness in her heart, to climb and to see beyond. A Latin verb was virgin soil to her: she sniffed a new odour in it; it meant something, though she did not know what it meant. But she gathered it up: it was significant. When she knew that:

$$x2-y2 = (x + y)(x-y)$$

then she felt that she had grasped something, that she was liberated into an intoxicating air, rare and unconditioned. And she was very glad as she wrote her French exercise:

"J'AI DONNE LE PAIN A MON PETIT FRERE."

In all these things there was the sound of a bugle to her heart, exhilarating, summoning her to perfect places. She never forgot her brown "Longman's First French Grammar", nor her "Via Latina" with its red edges, nor her little grey Algebra book. There was always a magic in them.

At learning she was quick, intelligent, instinctive, but she was not "thorough". If a thing did not come to her instinctively, she could not learn it. And then, her mad rage of loathing for all lessons, her bitter contempt of all teachers and schoolmistresses, her recoil to a fierce, animal arrogance made her detestable.

She was a free, unabateable animal, she declared in her revolts: there was no law for her, nor any rule. She existed for herself alone. Then ensued a long struggle with everybody, in which she broke down at last, when she had run the full length of her resistance, and sobbed her heart out, desolate; and afterwards, in a chastened, washed-out, bodiless state, she received the understanding that would not come before, and went her way sadder and wiser.

Ursula and Gudrun went to school together. Gudrun was a shy, quiet, wild creature, a thin slip of a thing hanging back from notice or twisting past to disappear into her own world again. She seemed to avoid all contact, instinctively, and pursued her own intent way, pursuing half-formed fancies that had no relation to anyone else.

She was not clever at all. She thought Ursula clever enough for two. Ursula understood, so why should she, Gudrun, bother herself? The younger girl lived her religious, responsible life in her sister, by proxy. For herself, she was indifferent and intent as a wild animal, and as irresponsible.

When she found herself at the bottom of the class, she laughed, lazily, and was content, saying she was safe now. She did not mind her father's chagrin nor her mother's tinge of mortification.

"What do I pay for you to go to Nottingham for?" her father asked, exasperated.

"Well, Dad, you know you needn't pay for me," she replied, nonchalant. "I'm ready to stop at home."

She was happy at home, Ursula was not. Slim and unwilling abroad, Gudrun was easy in her own house as a wild thing in its lair. Whereas Ursula, attentive and keen abroad, at home was reluctant, uneasy, unwilling to be herself, or unable.

Nevertheless Sunday remained the maximum day of the week for both. Ursula turned passionately to it, to the sense of eternal security it gave. She suffered anguish of fears during the week-days, for she felt strong powers that would not recognise her. There was upon her always a fear and a dislike of authority. She felt she could always do as she wanted if she managed to avoid a battle with Authority and the authorised Powers. But if she gave herself away, she would be lost, destroyed. There was always the menace against her.

This strange sense of cruelty and ugliness always imminent, ready to seize hold upon her this feeling of the grudging power of the mob lying in wait for her, who was the exception, formed one of the deepest influences of her life. Wherever she was, at school, among friends, in the street, in the train, she instinctively abated herself, made herself smaller, feigned to be less than she was, for fear that her undiscovered self should be seen, pounced upon, attacked by brutish resentment of the commonplace, the average Self.

She was fairly safe at school, now. She knew how to take her place there, and how much of herself to reserve. But she was free only on Sundays. When she was but a girl of fourteen, she began to feel a resentment growing against her in her own home. She knew she was the disturbing influence there. But as yet, on Sundays, she was free, really free, free to be herself, without fear or misgiving.

Even at its stormiest, Sunday was a blessed day. Ursula woke to it with a feeling of immense relief. She wondered why her heart was so light. Then she remembered it was Sunday. A gladness seemed to burst out around her, a feeling of great freedom. The whole world was for twenty-four hours revoked, put back. Only the Sunday world existed.

She loved the very confusion of the household. It was lucky if the children slept till seven o'clock. Usually, soon after six, a chirp was heard, a voice, an excited chirrup began, announcing the creation of a new day, there was a thudding of quick little feet, and the children were up and about, scampering in their shirts, with pink legs and glistening, flossy hair all clean from the Saturday's night bathing, their souls excited by their bodies' cleanliness.

As the house began to teem with rushing, half-naked clean children, one of the parents rose, either the mother, easy and slatternly, with her thick, dark hair loosely coiled and slipping over one ear, or the father, warm and comfortable, with ruffled black hair and shirt unbuttoned at the neck.

Then the girls upstairs heard the continual:

"Now then, Billy, what are you up to?" in the father's strong, vibrating voice: or the mother's dignified:

"I have said, Cassie, I will not have it."

It was amazing how the father's voice could ring out like a gong, without his being in the least moved, and how the mother could speak like a queen holding an audience, though her blouse was sticking out all round and her hair was not fastened up and the children were yelling a pandemonium.

Gradually breakfast was produced, and the elder girls came down into the babel, whilst half-naked children flitted round like the wrong ends of cherubs, as Gudrun said, watching the bare little legs and the chubby tails appearing and disappearing.

Gradually the young ones were captured, and nightdresses finally removed, ready for the clean Sunday shirt. But before the Sunday shirt was slipped over the fleecy head, away darted the naked body, to wallow in the sheepskin which formed the parlour rug, whilst the mother walked after, protesting sharply, holding the shirt like a noose, and the father's bronze voice rang out, and the naked child wallowing on its back in the deep sheepskin announced gleefully:

"I'm bading in the sea, mother."

"Why should I walk after you with your shirt?" said the mother. "Get up now."

"I'm bading in the sea, mother," repeated the wallowing, naked figure.

"We say bathing, not bading," said the mother, with her strange, indifferent dignity. "I am waiting here with your shirt."

At length shirts were on, and stockings were paired, and little trousers buttoned and little petticoats tied behind. The besetting cowardice of the family was its shirking of the garter question.

"Where are your garters, Cassie?"

"I don't know."

"Well, look for them."

But not one of the elder Brangwens would really face the situation. After Cassie had grovelled under all the furniture and blacked up all her Sunday cleanliness, to the infinite grief of everybody, the garter was forgotten in the new washing of the young face and hands.

Later, Ursula would be indignant to see Miss Cassie marching into church from Sunday school with her stocking sluthered down to her ankle, and a grubby knee showing.

"It's disgraceful!" cried Ursula at dinner. "People will think we're pigs, and the children are never washed."

"Never mind what people think," said the mother superbly. "I see that the child is bathed properly, and if I satisfy myself I satisfy everybody. She can't keep her stocking up and no garter, and it isn't the child's fault she was let to go without one."

The garter trouble continued in varying degrees, but till each child wore long skirts or long trousers, it was not removed.

On this day of decorum, the Brangwen family went to church by the high-road, making a detour outside all the garden-hedge, rather than climb the wall into the churchyard. There was no law of this, from the parents. The children themselves were the wardens of the Sabbath decency, very jealous and instant with each other.

It came to be, gradually, that after church on Sundays the house was really something of a sanctuary, with peace breathing like a strange bird alighted in the rooms. Indoors, only reading and tale-telling and quiet pursuits, such as drawing, were allowed. Out of doors, all playing was to be carried on unobtrusively. If there were noise, yelling or shouting, then some fierce spirit woke up in the father and the elder children, so that the younger were subdued, afraid of being excommunicated.

The children themselves preserved the Sabbath. If Ursula in her vanity sang:

"Il &Egrave;tait un' berg&Euml;re Et ron-ron-ron petit patapon,"

Theresa was sure to cry:

"That's not a Sunday song, our Ursula."

"You don't know," replied Ursula, superior. Nevertheless, she wavered. And her song faded down before she came to the end.

Because, though she did not know it, her Sunday was very precious to her. She found herself in a strange, undefined place, where her spirit could wander in dreams, unassailed.

The white-robed spirit of Christ passed between olive trees. It was a vision, not a reality. And she herself partook of the visionary being. There was the voice in the night calling, "Samuel, Samuel!" And still the voice called in the night. But not this night, nor last night, but in the unfathomed night of Sunday, of the Sabbath silence.

There was Sin, the serpent, in whom was also wisdom. There was Judas with the money and the kiss.

But there was no actual Sin. If Ursula slapped Theresa across the face, even on a Sunday, that was not Sin, the everlasting. It was misbehaviour. If Billy played truant from Sunday school, he was bad, he was wicked, but he was not a Sinner.

Sin was absolute and everlasting: wickedness and badness were temporary and relative. When Billy, catching up the local jargon, called Cassie a "sinner", everybody detested him. Yet when there came to the Marsh a flippetty-floppetty foxhound puppy, he was mischievously christened "Sinner".

The Brangwens shrank from applying their religion to their own immediate actions. They wanted the sense of the eternal and immortal, not a list of rules for everyday conduct. Therefore they were badly- behaved children, headstrong and arrogant, though their feelings were generous. They had, moreover-intolerable to their ordinary neighbours-a proud gesture, that did not fit with the jealous idea of the democratic Christian. So that they were always extraordinary, outside of the ordinary.

How bitterly Ursula resented her first acquaintance with evangelical teachings. She got a peculiar thrill from the application of salvation to her own personal case. "Jesus died for me, He suffered for me." There was a pride and a thrill in it, followed almost immediately by a sense of dreariness. Jesus with holes in His hands and feet: it was distasteful to her. The shadowy Jesus with the Stigmata: that was her own vision. But Jesus the actual man, talking with teeth and lips, telling one to put one's finger into His wounds, like a villager gloating in his sores, repelled her. She was enemy of those who insisted on the humanity of Christ. If He were just a man, living in ordinary human life, then she was indifferent.

But it was the jealousy of vulgar people which must insist on the humanity of Christ. It was the vulgar mind which would allow nothing extra-human, nothing beyond itself to exist. It was the dirty, desecrating hands of the revivalists which wanted to drag Jesus into this everyday life, to dress Jesus up in trousers and frock-coat, to compel Him to a vulgar equality of footing. It was the impudent suburban soul which would ask, "What would Jesus do, if he were in my shoes?"

Against all this, the Brangwens stood at bay. If any one, it was the mother who was caught by, or who was most careless of the vulgar clamour. She would have nothing extra-human. She never really subscribed, all her life, to Brangwen's mystical passion.

But Ursula was with her father. As she became adolescent, thirteen, fourteen, she set more and more against her mother's practical indifference. To Ursula, there was something callous, almost wicked in her mother's attitude. What did Anna Brangwen, in these years, care for God or Jesus or Angels? She was the immediate life of to-day. Children were still being born to her, she was throng with all the little activities of her family. And almost instinctively she resented her husband's slavish service to the Church, his dark, subject hankering to worship an unseen God. What did the unrevealed God matter, when a man had a young family that needed fettling for? Let him attend to the immediate concerns of his life, not go projecting himself towards the ultimate.

But Ursula was all for the ultimate. She was always in revolt against babies and muddled domesticity. To her Jesus was another world, He was not of this world. He did not thrust His hands under her face and, pointing to His wounds, say:

"Look, Ursula Brangwen, I got these for your sake. Now do as you're told."

To her, Jesus was beautifully remote, shining in the distance, like a white moon at sunset, a crescent moon beckoning as it follows the sun, out of our ken. Sometimes dark clouds standing very far off, pricking up into a clear yellow band of sunset, of a winter evening, reminded her of Calvary, sometimes the full moon rising blood-red upon the hill terrified her with the knowledge that Christ was now dead, hanging heavy and dead upon the Cross.

On Sundays, this visionary world came to pass. She heard the long hush, she knew the marriage of dark and light was taking place. In church, the Voice sounded, re-echoing not from this world, as if the Church itself were a shell that still spoke the language of creation.

"The Sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair: and they took them wives of all which they chose.

"And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

"There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children unto them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Over this Ursula was stirred as by a call from far off. In those days, would not the Sons of God have found her fair, would she not have been taken to wife by one of the Sons of God? It was a dream that frightened her, for she could not understand it.

Who were the sons of God? Was not Jesus the only begotten Son? Was not Adam the only man created from God? Yet there were men not begotten by Adam. Who were these, and whence did they come? They too must derive from God. Had God many offspring, besides Adam and besides Jesus, children whose origin the children of Adam cannot recognise? And perhaps these children, these sons of God, had known no expulsion, no ignominy of the fall.

These came on free feet to the daughters of men, and saw they were fair, and took them to wife, so that the women conceived and brought forth men of renown. This was a genuine fate. She moved about in the essential days, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men.

Nor would any comparison of myths destroy her passion in the knowledge. Jove had become a bull, or a man, in order to love a mortal woman. He had begotten in her a giant, a hero.

Very good, so he had, in Greece. For herself, she was no Grecian woman. Not Jove nor Pan nor any of those gods, not even Bacchus nor Apollo, could come to her. But the Sons of God who took to wife the daughters of men, these were such as should take her to wife.

She clung to the secret hope, the aspiration. She lived a dual life, one where the facts of daily life encompassed everything, being legion, and the other wherein the facts of daily life were superseded by the eternal truth. So utterly did she desire the Sons of God should come to the daughters of men; and she believed more in her desire and its fulfilment than in the obvious facts of life. The fact that a man was a man, did not state his descent from Adam, did not exclude that he was also one of the unhistoried, unaccountable Sons of God. As yet, she was confused, but not denied.

Again she heard the Voice:

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into heaven."

But it was explained, the needle's eye was a little gateway for foot passengers, through which the great, humped camel with his load could not possibly squeeze himself: or perhaps. at a great risk, if he were a little camel, he might get through. For one could not absolutely exclude the rich man from heaven, said the Sunday school teachers.

It pleased her also to know, that in the East one must use hyperbole, or else remain unheard; because the Eastern man must see a thing swelling to fill all heaven, or dwindled to a mere nothing, before he is suitably impressed. She immediately sympathised with this Eastern mind.

Yet the words continued to have a meaning that was untouched either by the knowledge of gateways or hyperboles. The historical, or local, or psychological interest in the words was another thing. There remained unaltered the inexplicable value of the saying. What was this relation between a needle's eye, a rich man, and heaven? What sort of a needle's eye, what sort of a rich man, what sort of heaven? Who knows? It means the Absolute World, and can never be more than half interpreted in terms of the relative world.

But must one apply the speech literally? Was her father a rich man? Couldn't he get to heaven? Or was he only a half-rich man? Or was he merely a poor man? At any rate, unless he gave everything away to the poor, he would find it much harder to get to heaven. The needle's eye would be too tight for him. She almost wished he were penniless poor. If one were coming to the base of it, any man was rich who was not as poor as the poorest.

She had her qualms, when in imagination she saw her father giving away their piano and the two cows, and the capital at the bank, to the labourers of the district, so that they, the Brangwens, should be as poor as the Wherrys. And she did not want it. She was impatient.

"Very well," she thought, "we'll forego that heaven, that's all-at any rate the needle's eye sort." And she dismissed the problem. She was not going to be as poor as the Wherrys, not for all the sayings on earth-the miserable squalid Wherrys.

So she reverted to the non-literal application of the scriptures. Her father very rarely read, but he had collected many books of reproductions, and he would sit and look at these, curiously intent, like a child, yet with a passion that was not childish. He loved the early Italian painters, but particularly Giotto and Fra Angelico and Filippo Lippi. The great compositions cast a spell over him. How many times had he turned to Raphael's "Dispute of the Sacrament" or Fra Angelico's "Last Judgment" or the beautiful, complicated renderings of the Adoration of the Magi, and always, each time, he received the same gradual fulfilment of delight. It had to do with the establishment of a whole mystical, architectural conception which used the human figure as a unit. Sometimes he had to hurry home, and go to the Fra Angelico "Last Judgment". The pathway of open graves, the huddled earth on either side, the seemly heaven arranged above, the singing process to paradise on the one hand, the stuttering descent to hell on the other, completed and satisfied him. He did not care whether or not he believed in devils or angels. The whole conception gave him the deepest satisfaction, and he wanted nothing more.

Ursula, accustomed to these pictures from her childhood, hunted out their detail. She adored Fra Angelico's flowers and light and angels, she liked the demons and enjoyed the hell. But the representation of the encircled God, surrounded by all the angels on high, suddenly bored her. The figure of the Most High bored her, and roused her resentment. Was this the culmination and the meaning of it all, this draped, null figure? The angels were so lovely, and the light so beautiful. And only for this, to surround such a banality for God!

She was dissatisfied, but not fit as yet to criticise. There was yet so much to wonder over. Winter came, pine branches were torn down in the snow, the green pine needles looked rich upon the ground. There was the wonderful, starry, straight track of a pheasant's footsteps across the snow imprinted so clear; there was the lobbing mark of the rabbit, two holes abreast, two holes following behind; the hare shoved deeper shafts, slanting, and his two hind feet came down together and made one large pit; the cat podded little holes, and birds made a lacy pattern.

Gradually there gathered the feeling of expectation. Christmas was coming. In the shed, at nights, a secret candle was burning, a sound of veiled voices was heard. The boys were learning the old mystery play of St. George and Beelzebub. Twice a week, by lamplight, there was choir practice in the church, for the learning of old carols Brangwen wanted to hear. The girls went to these practices. Everywhere was a sense of mystery and rousedness. Everybody was preparing for something.

The time came near, the girls were decorating the church, with cold fingers binding holly and fir and yew about the pillars, till a new spirit was in the church, the stone broke out into dark, rich leaf, the arches put forth their buds, and cold flowers rose to blossom in the dim, mystic atmosphere. Ursula must weave mistletoe over the door, and over the screen, and hang a silver dove from a sprig of yew, till dusk came down, and the church was like a grove.

In the cow-shed the boys were blacking their faces for a dress-rehearsal; the turkey hung dead, with opened, speckled wings, in the dairy. The time was come to make pies, in readiness.

The expectation grew more tense. The star was risen into the sky, the songs, the carols were ready to hail it. The star was the sign in the sky. Earth too should give a sign. As evening drew on, hearts beat fast with anticipation, hands were full of ready gifts. There were the tremulously expectant words of the church service, the night was past and the morning was come, the gifts were given and received, joy and peace made a flapping of wings in each heart, there was a great burst of carols, the Peace of the World had dawned, strife had passed away, every hand was linked in hand, every heart was singing.

It was bitter, though, that Christmas Day, as it drew on to evening, and night, became a sort of bank holiday, flat and stale. The morning was so wonderful, but in the afternoon and evening the ecstasy perished like a nipped thing, like a bud in a false spring. Alas, that Christmas was only a domestic feast, a feast of sweetmeats and toys! Why did not the grown-ups also change their everyday hearts, and give way to ecstasy? Where was the ecstasy?

How passionately the Brangwens craved for it, the ecstasy. The father was troubled, dark-faced and disconsolate, on Christmas night, because the passion was not there, because the day was become as every day, and hearts were not aflame. Upon the mother was a kind of absentness, as ever, as if she were exiled for all her life. Where was the fiery heart of joy, now the coming was fulfilled; where was the star, the Magi's transport, the thrill of new being that shook the earth?

Still it was there, even if it were faint and inadequate. The cycle of creation still wheeled in the Church year. After Christmas, the ecstasy slowly sank and changed. Sunday followed Sunday, trailing a fine movement, a finely developed transformation over the heart of the family. The heart that was big with joy, that had seen the star and had followed to the inner walls of the Nativity, that there had swooned in the great light, must now feel the light slowly withdrawing, a shadow falling, darkening. The chill crept in, silence came over the earth, and then all was darkness. The veil of the temple was rent, each heart gave up the ghost, and sank dead.

They moved quietly, a little wanness on the lips of the children, at Good Friday, feeling the shadow upon their hearts. Then, pale with a deathly scent, came the lilies of resurrection, that shone coldly till the Comforter was given.

But why the memory of the wounds and the death? Surely Christ rose with healed hands and feet, sound and strong and glad? Surely the passage of the cross and the tomb was forgotten? But no-always the memory of the wounds, always the smell of grave-clothes? A small thing was Resurrection, compared with the Cross and the death, in this cycle.

So the children lived the year of christianity, the epic of the soul of mankind. Year by year the inner, unknown drama went on in them, their hearts were born and came to fulness, suffered on the cross, gave up the ghost, and rose again to unnumbered days, untired, having at least this rhythm of eternity in a ragged, inconsequential life.

But it was becoming a mechanical action now, this drama: birth at Christmas for death at Good Friday. On Easter Sunday the life-drama was as good as finished. For the Resurrection was shadowy and overcome by the shadow of death, the Ascension was scarce noticed, a mere confirmation of death.

What was the hope and the fulfilment? Nay, was it all only a useless after-death, a wan, bodiless after-death? Alas, and alas for the passion of the human heart, that must die so long before the body was dead.

For from the grave, after the passion and the trial of anguish, the body rose torn and chill and colourless. Did not Christ say, "Mary!" and when she turned with outstretched hands to him, did he not hasten to add, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my father."

Then how could the hands rejoice, or the heart be glad, seeing themselves repulsed. Alas, for the resurrection of the dead body! Alas, for the wavering, glimmering appearance of the risen Christ. Alas, for the Ascension into heaven, which is a shadow within death, a complete passing away.

Alas, that so soon the drama is over; that life is ended at thirty-three; that the half of the year of the soul is cold and historiless! Alas, that a risen Christ has no place with us! Alas, that the memory of the passion of Sorrow and Death and the Grave holds triumph over the pale fact of Resurrection!

But why? Why shall I not rise with my body whole and perfect, shining with strong life? Why, when Mary says: Rabboni, shall I not take her in my arms and kiss her and hold her to my breast? Why is the risen body deadly, and abhorrent with wounds?

The Resurrection is to life, not to death. Shall I not see those who have risen again walk here among men perfect in body and spirit, whole and glad in the flesh, living in the flesh, loving in the flesh, begetting children in the flesh, arrived at last to wholeness, perfect without scar or blemish, healthy without fear of ill health? Is this not the period of manhood and of joy and fulfilment, after the Resurrection? Who shall be shadowed by Death and the Cross, being risen, and who shall fear the mystic, perfect flesh that belongs to heaven?

Can I not, then, walk this earth in gladness, being risen from sorrow? Can I not eat with my brother happily, and with joy kiss my beloved, after my resurrection, celebrate my marriage in the flesh with feastings, go about my business eagerly, in the joy of my fellows? Is heaven impatient for me, and bitter against this earth, that I should hurry off, or that I should linger pale and untouched? Is the flesh which was crucified become as poison to the crowds in the street, or is it as a strong gladness and hope to them, as the first flower blossoming out of the earth's humus?

Chapter 11

First Love

As Ursula passed from girlhood towards womanhood, gradually the cloud of self-responsibility gathered upon her. She became aware of herself, that she was a separate entity in the midst of an unseparated obscurity, that she must go somewhere, she must become something. And she was afraid, troubled. Why, oh why must one grow up, why must one inherit this heavy, numbing responsibility of living an undiscovered life? Out of the nothingness and the undifferentiated mass, to make something of herself! But what? In the obscurity and pathlessness to take a direction! But whither? How take even one step? And yet, how stand still? This was torment indeed, to inherit the responsibility of one's own life.

The religion which had been another world for her, a glorious sort of play-world, where she lived, climbing the tree with the short-statured man, walking shakily on the sea like the disciple, breaking the bread into five thousand portions, like the Lord, giving a great picnic to five thousand people, now fell away from reality, and became a tale, a myth, an illusion, which, however much one might assert it to be true an historical fact, one knew was not true-at least, for this present-day life of ours. There could, within the limits of this life we know, be no Feeding of the Five Thousand. And the girl had come to the point where she held that that which one cannot experience in daily life is not true for oneself.

So, the old duality of life, wherein there had been a weekday world of people and trains and duties and reports, and besides that a Sunday world of absolute truth and living mystery, of walking upon the waters and being blinded by the face of the Lord, of following the pillar of cloud across the desert and watching the bush that crackled yet did not burn away, this old, unquestioned duality suddenly was found to be broken apart. The weekday world had triumphed over the Sunday world. The Sunday world was not real, or at least, not actual. And one lived by action.

Only the weekday world mattered. She herself, Ursula Brangwen, must know how to take the weekday life. Her body must be a weekday body, held in the world's estimate. Her soul must have a weekday value, known according to the world's knowledge.

Well, then, there was a weekday life to live, of action and deeds. And so there was a necessity to choose one's action and one's deeds. One was responsible to the world for what one did.

Nay, one was more than responsible to the world. One was responsible to oneself. There was some puzzling, tormenting residue of the Sunday world within her, some persistent Sunday self, which insisted upon a relationship with the now shed-away vision world. How could one keep up a relationship with that which one denied? Her task was now to learn the week-day life.

How to act, that was the question? Whither to go, how to become oneself? One was not oneself, one was merely a half-stated question. How to become oneself, how to know the question and the answer of oneself, when one was merely an unfixed something-nothing, blowing about like the winds of heaven, undefined, unstated.

She turned to the visions, which had spoken far-off words that ran along the blood like ripples of an unseen wind, she heard the words again, she denied the vision, for she must be a weekday person, to whom visions were not true, and she demanded only the weekday meaning of the words.

There were words spoken by the vision: and words must have a weekday meaning, since words were weekday stuff. Let them speak now: let them bespeak themselves in weekday terms. The vision should translate itself into weekday terms.

"Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor," she heard on Sunday morning. That was plain enough, plain enough for Monday morning too. As she went down the hill to the station, going to school, she took the saying with her.

"Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor."

Did she want to do that? Did she want to sell her pearl-backed brush and mirror, her silver candlestick, her pendant, her lovely little necklace, and go dressed in drab like the Wherrys: the unlovely uncombed Wherrys, who were the "poor" to her? She did not.

She walked this Monday morning on the verge of misery. For she did want to do what was right. And she didn't want to do what the gospels said. She didn't want to be poor-really poor. The thought was a horror to her: to live like the Wherrys, so ugly, to be at the mercy of everybody.

"Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor."

One could not do it in real life. How dreary and hopeless it made her!

Nor could one turn the other cheek. Theresa slapped Ursula on the face. Ursula, in a mood of Christian humility, silently presented the other side of her face. Which Theresa, in exasperation at the challenge, also hit. Whereupon Ursula, with boiling heart, went meekly away.

But anger, and deep, writhing shame tortured her, so she was not easy till she had again quarrelled with Theresa and had almost shaken her sister's head off.

"That'll teach you," she said, grimly.

And she went away, unchristian but clean.

There was something unclean and degrading about this humble side of Christianity. Ursula suddenly revolted to the other extreme.

"I hate the Wherrys, and I wish they were dead. Why does my father leave us in the lurch like this, making us be poor and insignificant? Why is he not more? If we had a father as he ought to be, he would be Earl William Brangwen, and I should be the Lady Ursula? What right have I to be poor? crawling along the lane like vermin? If I had my rights I should be seated on horseback in a green riding-habit, and my groom would be behind me. And I should stop at the gates of the cottages, and enquire of the cottage woman who came out with a child in her arms, how did her husband, who had hurt his foot. And I would pat the flaxen head of the child, stooping from my horse, and I would give her a shilling from my purse, and order nourishing food to be sent from the hall to the cottage."

So she rode in her pride. And sometimes, she dashed into flames to rescue a forgotten child; or she dived into the canal locks and supported a boy who was seized with cramp; or she swept up a toddling infant from the feet of a runaway horse: always imaginatively, of course.

But in the end there returned the poignant yearning from the Sunday world. As she went down in the morning from Cossethay and saw Ilkeston smoking blue and tender upon its hill, then her heart surged with far-off words:

"Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem-how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not--"

The passion rose in her for Christ, for the gathering under the wings of security and warmth. But how did it apply to the weekday world? What could it mean, but that Christ should clasp her to his breast, as a mother clasps her child? And oh, for Christ, for him who could hold her to his breast and lose her there. Oh, for the breast of man, where she should have refuge and bliss for ever! All her senses quivered with passionate yearning.

Vaguely she knew that Christ meant something else: that in the vision-world He spoke of Jerusalem, something that did not exist in the everyday world. It was not houses and factories He would hold in His bosom: nor householders nor factory-workers nor poor people: but something that had no part in the weekday world, nor seen nor touched with weekday hands and eyes.

Yet she must have it in weekday terms-she must. For all her life was a weekday life, now, this was the whole. So he must gather her body to his breast, that was strong with a broad bone, and which sounded with the beating of the heart, and which was warm with the life of which she partook, the life of the running blood.

So she craved for the breast of the Son of Man, to lie there. And she was ashamed in her soul, ashamed. For whereas Christ spoke for the Vision to answer, she answered from the weekday fact. It was a betrayal, a transference of meaning, from the vision world, to the matter-of-fact world. So she was ashamed of her religious ecstasy, and dreaded lest any one should see it.

Early in the year, when the lambs came, and shelters were built of straw, and on her uncle's farm the men sat at night with a lantern and a dog, then again there swept over her this passionate confusion between the vision world and the weekday world. Again she felt Jesus in the countryside. Ah, he would lift up the lambs in his arms! Ah, and she was the lamb. Again, in the morning, going down the lane, she heard the ewe call, and the lambs came running, shaking and twinkling with new-born bliss. And she saw them stooping, nuzzling, groping to the udder, to find the teats, whilst the mother turned her head gravely and sniffed her own. And they were sucking, vibrating with bliss on their little, long legs, their throats stretched up, their new bodies quivering to the stream of blood-warm, loving milk.

Oh, and the bliss, the bliss! She could scarcely tear herself away to go to school. The little noses nuzzling at the udder, the little bodies so glad and sure, the little black legs, crooked, the mother standing still, yielding herself to their quivering attraction-then the mother walked calmly away.

Jesus-the vision world-the everyday world-all mixed inextricably in a confusion of pain and bliss. It was almost agony, the confusion, the inextricability. Jesus, the vision, speaking to her, who was non- visionary! And she would take his words of the spirit and make them to pander to her own carnality.

This was a shame to her. The confusing of the spirit world with the material world, in her own soul, degraded her. She answered the call of the spirit in terms of immediate, everyday desire.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

It was the temporal answer she gave. She leapt with sensuous yearning to respond to Christ. If she could go to him really, and lay her head on his breast, to have comfort, to be made much of, caressed like a child!

All the time she walked in a confused heat of religious yearning. She wanted Jesus to love her deliciously, to take her sensuous offering, to give her sensuous response. For weeks she went in a muse of enjoyment.

And all the time she knew underneath that she was playing false, accepting the passion of Jesus for her own physical satisfaction. But she was in such a daze, such a tangle. How could she get free?

She hated herself, she wanted to trample on herself, destroy herself. How could one become free? She hated religion, because it lent itself to her confusion. She abused everything. She wanted to become hard, indifferent, brutally callous to everything but just the immediate need, the immediate satisfaction. To have a yearning towards Jesus, only that she might use him to pander to her own soft sensation, use him as a means of reacting upon herself, maddened her in the end. There was then no Jesus, no sentimentality. With all the bitter hatred of helplessness she hated sentimentality.

At this period came the young Skrebensky. She was nearly sixteen years old, a slim, smouldering girl, deeply reticent, yet lapsing into unreserved expansiveness now and then, when she seemed to give away her whole soul, but when in fact she only made another counterfeit of her soul for outward presentation. She was sensitive in the extreme, always tortured, always affecting a callous indifference to screen herself.

She was at this time a nuisance on the face of the earth, with her spasmodic passion and her slumberous torment. She seemed to go with all her soul in her hands, yearning, to the other person. Yet all the while, deep at the bottom of her was a childish antagonism of distrust. She thought she loved everybody and believed in everybody. But because she could not love herself nor believe in herself, she mistrusted everybody with the mistrust of a serpent or a captured bird. Her starts of revulsion and hatred were more inevitable than her impulses of love.

So she wrestled through her dark days of confusion, soulless, uncreated, unformed.

One evening, as she was studying in the parlour, her head buried in her hands, she heard new voices in the kitchen speaking. At once, from its apathy, her excitable spirit started and strained to listen. It seemed to crouch, to lurk under cover, tense, glaring forth unwilling to be seen.

There were two strange men's voices, one soft and candid, veiled with soft candour, the other veiled with easy mobility, running quickly. Ursula sat quite tense, shocked out of her studies, lost. She listened all the time to the sound of the voices, scarcely heeding the words.

The first speaker was her Uncle Tom. She knew the naive candour covering the girding and savage misery of his soul. Who was the other speaker? Whose voice ran on so easy, yet with an inflamed pulse? It seemed to hasten and urge her forward, that other voice.

"I remember you," the young man's voice was saying. "I remember you from the first time I saw you, because of your dark eyes and fair face."

Mrs. Brangwen laughed, shy and pleased.

"You were a curly-headed little lad," she said.

"Was I? Yes, I know. They were very proud of my curls."

And a laugh ran to silence.

"You were a very well-mannered lad, I remember," said her father.

"Oh! did I ask you to stay the night? I always used to ask people to stay the night. I believe it was rather trying for my mother."

There was a general laugh. Ursula rose. She had to go.

At the click of the latch everybody looked round. The girl hung in the doorway, seized with a moment's fierce confusion. She was going to be good-looking. Now she had an attractive gawkiness, as she hung a moment, not knowing how to carry her shoulders. Her dark hair was tied behind, her yellow-brown eyes shone without direction. Behind her, in the parlour, was the soft light of a lamp upon open books.

A superficial readiness took her to her Uncle Tom, who kissed her, greeting her with warmth, making a show of intimate possession of her, and at the same time leaving evident his own complete detachment.

But she wanted to turn to the stranger. He was standing back a little, waiting. He was a young man with very clear greyish eyes that waited until they were called upon, before they took expression.

Something in his self-possessed waiting moved her, and she broke into a confused, rather beautiful laugh as she gave him her hand, catching her breath like an excited child. His hand closed over hers very close, very near, he bowed, and his eyes were watching her with some attention. She felt proud-her spirit leapt to life.

"You don't know Mr. Skrebensky, Ursula," came her Uncle Tom's intimate voice. She lifted her face with an impulsive flash to the stranger, as if to declare a knowledge, laughing her palpitating, excited laugh.

His eyes became confused with roused lights, his detached attention changed to a readiness for her. He was a young man of twenty-one, with a slender figure and soft brown hair brushed up on the German fashion straight from his brow.

"Are you staying long?" she asked.

"I've got a month's leave," he said, glancing at Tom Brangwen. "But I've various places I must go to-put in some time here and there."

He brought her a strong sense of the outer world. It was as if she were set on a hill and could feel vaguely the whole world lying spread before her.

"What have you a month's leave from?" she asked.

"I'm in the Engineers-in the Army."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, glad.

"We're taking you away from your studies," said her Uncle Tom.

"Oh, no," she replied quickly.

Skrebensky laughed, young and inflammable.

"She won't wait to be taken away," said her father. But that seemed clumsy. She wished he would leave her to say her own things.

"Don't you like study?" asked Skrebensky, turning to her, putting the question from his own case.

"I like some things," said Ursula. "I like Latin and French-and grammar."

He watched her, and all his being seemed attentive to her, then he shook his head.

"I don't," he said. "They say all the brains of the army are in the Engineers. I think that's why I joined them-to get the credit of other people's brains."

He said this quizzically and with chagrin. And she became alert to him. It interested her. Whether he had brains or not, he was interesting. His directness attracted her, his independent motion. She was aware of the movement of his life over against hers.

"I don't think brains matter," she said.

"What does matter then?" came her Uncle Tom's intimate, caressing, half-jeering voice.

She turned to him.

"It matters whether people have courage or not," she said.

"Courage for what?" asked her uncle.

"For everything."

Tom Brangwen gave a sharp little laugh. The mother and father sat silent, with listening faces. Skrebensky waited. She was speaking for him.

"Everything's nothing," laughed her uncle.

She disliked him at that moment.

"She doesn't practise what she preaches," said her father, stirring in his chair and crossing one leg over the other. "She has courage for mighty little."

But she would not answer. Skrebensky sat still, waiting. His face was irregular, almost ugly, flattish, with a rather thick nose. But his eyes were pellucid, strangely clear, his brown hair was soft and thick as silk, he had a slight moustache. His skin was fine, his figure slight, beautiful. Beside him, her Uncle Tom looked full-blown, her father seemed uncouth. Yet he reminded her of her father, only he was finer, and he seemed to be shining. And his face was almost ugly.

He seemed simply acquiescent in the fact of his own being, as if he were beyond any change or question. He was himself. There was a sense of fatality about him that fascinated her. He made no effort to prove himself to other people. Let it be accepted for what it was, his own being. In its isolation it made no excuse or explanation for itself.

So he seemed perfectly, even fatally established, he did not asked to be rendered before he could exist, before he could have relationship with another person.

This attracted Ursula very much. She was so used to unsure people who took on a new being with every new influence. Her Uncle Tom was always more or less what the other person would have him. In consequence, one never knew the real Uncle Tom, only a fluid, unsatisfactory flux with a more or less consistent appearance.

But, let Skrebensky do what he would, betray himself entirely, he betrayed himself always upon his own responsibility. He permitted no question about himself. He was irrevocable in his isolation.

So Ursula thought him wonderful, he was so finely constituted, and so distinct, self-contained, self-supporting. This, she said to herself, was a gentleman, he had a nature like fate, the nature of an aristocrat.

She laid hold of him at once for her dreams. Here was one such as those Sons of God who saw the daughters of men, that they were fair. He was no son of Adam. Adam was servile. Had not Adam been driven cringing out of his native place, had not the human race been a beggar ever since, seeking its own being? But Anton Skrebensky could not beg. He was in possession of himself, of that, and no more. Other people could not really give him anything nor take anything from him. His soul stood alone.

She knew that her mother and father acknowledged him. The house was changed. There had been a visit paid to the house. Once three angels stood in Abraham's doorway, and greeted him, and stayed and ate with him, leaving his household enriched for ever when they went.

The next day she went down to the Marsh according to invitation. The two men were not come home. Then, looking through the window, she saw the dogcart drive up, and Skrebensky leapt down. She saw him draw himself together, jump, laugh to her uncle, who was driving, then come towards her to the house. He was so spontaneous and revealed in his movements. He was isolated within his own clear, fine atmosphere, and as still as if fated.

His resting in his own fate gave him an appearance of indolence, almost of languor: he made no exuberant movement. When he sat down, he seemed to go loose, languid.

"We are a little late," he said.

"Where have you been?"

"We went to Derby to see a friend of my father's."

"Who?"

It was an adventure to her to put direct questions and get plain answers. She knew she might do it with this man.

"Why, he is a clergyman too-he is my guardian-one of them."

Ursula knew that Skrebensky was an orphan.

"Where is really your home now?" she asked.

"My home?-I wonder. I am very fond of my colonel-Colonel Hepburn: then there are my aunts: but my real home, I suppose, is the army."

"Do you like being on your own?"

His clear, greenish-grey eyes rested on her a moment, and, as he considered, he did not see her.

"I suppose so," he said. "You see my father-well, he was never acclimatised here. He wanted-I don't know what he wanted-but it was a strain. And my mother-I always knew she was too good to me. I could feel her being too good to me-my mother! Then I went away to school so early. And I must say, the outside world was always more naturally a home to me than the vicarage-I don't know why."

"Do you feel like a bird blown out of its own latitude?" she asked, using a phrase she had met.

"No, no. I find everything very much as I like it."

He seemed more and more to give her a sense of the vast world, a sense of distances and large masses of humanity. It drew her as a scent draws a bee from afar. But also it hurt her.

It was summer, and she wore cotton frocks. The third time he saw her she had on a dress with fine blue-and-white stripes, with a white collar, and a large white hat. It suited her golden, warm complexion.

"I like you best in that dress," he said, standing with his head slightly on one side, and appreciating her in a perceiving, critical fashion.

She was thrilled with a new life. For the first time she was in love with a vision of herself: she saw as it were a fine little reflection of herself in his eyes. And she must act up to this: she must be beautiful. Her thoughts turned swiftly to clothes, her passion was to make a beautiful appearance. Her family looked on in amazement at the sudden transformation of Ursula. She became elegant, really elegant, in figured cotton frocks she made for herself, and hats she bent to her fancy. An inspiration was upon her.

He sat with a sort of languor in her grandmother's rockingchair, rocking slowly, languidly, backward and forward, as Ursula talked to him.

"You are not poor, are you?" she said.

"Poor in money? I have about a hundred and fifty a year of my own-so I am poor or rich, as you like. I am poor enough, in fact."

"But you will earn money?"

"I shall have my pay-I have my pay now. I've got my commission. That is another hundred and fifty."

"You will have more, though?"

"I shan't have more than 200 pounds a year for ten years to come. I shall always be poor, if I have to live on my pay."

"Do you mind it?"

"Being poor? Not now-not very much. I may later. People-the officers, are good to me. Colonel Hepburn has a sort of fancy for me-he is a rich man, I suppose."

A chill went over Ursula. Was he going to sell himself in some way?

"Is Colonel Hepburn married?"

"Yes-with two daughters."

But she was too proud at once to care whether Colonel Hepburn's daughter wanted to marry him or not.

There came a silence. Gudrun entered, and Skrebensky still rocked languidly on the chair.

"You look very lazy," said Gudrun.

"I am lazy," he answered.

"You look really floppy," she said.

"I am floppy," he answered.

"Can't you stop?" asked Gudrun.

"No-it's the perpetuum mobile."

"You look as if you hadn't a bone in your body."

"That's how I like to feel."

"I don't admire your taste."

"That's my misfortune."

And he rocked on.

Gudrun seated herself behind him, and as he rocked back, she caught his hair between her finger and thumb, so that it tugged him as he swung forward again. He took no notice. There was only the sound of the rockers on the floor. In silence, like a crab, Gudrun caught a strand of his hair each time he rocked back. Ursula flushed, and sat in some pain. She saw the irritation gathering on his brow.

At last he leapt up, suddenly, like a steel spring going off, and stood on the hearthrug.

"Damn it, why can't I rock?" he asked petulantly, fiercely.

Ursula loved him for his sudden, steel-like start out of the languor. He stood on the hearthrug fuming, his eyes gleaming with anger.

Gudrun laughed in her deep, mellow fashion.

"Men don't rock themselves," she said.

"Girls don't pull men's hair," he said.

Gudrun laughed again.

Ursula sat amused, but waiting. And he knew Ursula was waiting for him. It roused his blood. He had to go to her, to follow her call.

Once he drove her to Derby in the dog-cart. He belonged to the horsey set of the sappers. They had lunch in an inn, and went through the market, pleased with everything. He bought her a copy of Wuthering Heights from a bookstall. Then they found a little fair in progress and she said:

"My father used to take me in the swingboats."

"Did you like it?" he asked.

"Oh, it was fine," she said.

"Would you like to go now?"

"Love it," she said, though she was afraid. But the prospect of doing an unusual, exciting thing was attractive to her.

He went straight to the stand, paid the money, and helped her to mount. He seemed to ignore everything but just what he was doing. Other people were mere objects of indifference to him. She would have liked to hang back, but she was more ashamed to retreat from him than to expose herself to the crowd or to dare the swingboat. His eyes laughed, and standing before her with his sharp, sudden figure, he set the boat swinging. She was not afraid, she was thrilled. His colour flushed, his eyes shone with a roused light, and she looked up at him, her face like a flower in the sun, so bright and attractive. So they rushed through the bright air, up at the sky as if flung from a catapult, then falling terribly back. She loved it. The motion seemed to fan their blood to fire, they laughed, feeling the flames.

After the swingboats, they went on the roundabouts to calm down, he twisting astride on his jerky wooden steed towards her, and always seeming at his ease, enjoying himself. A zest of antagonism to the convention made him fully himself. As they sat on the whirling carousal, with the music grinding out, she was aware of the people on the earth outside, and it seemed that he and she were riding carelessly over the faces of the crowd, riding for ever buoyantly, proudly, gallantly over the upturned faces of the crowd, moving on a high level, spurning the common mass.

When they must descend and walk away, she was unhappy, feeling like a giant suddenly cut down to ordinary level, at the mercy of the mob.

They left the fair, to return for the dog-cart. Passing the large church, Ursula must look in. But the whole interior was filled with scaffolding, fallen stone and rubbish were heaped on the floor, bits of plaster crunched underfoot, and the place re-echoed to the calling of secular voices and to blows of the hammer.

She had come to plunge in the utter gloom and peace for a moment, bringing all her yearning, that had returned on her uncontrolled after the reckless riding over the face of the crowd, in the fair. After pride, she wanted comfort, solace, for pride and scorn seemed to hurt her most of all.

And she found the immemorial gloom full of bits of falling plaster, and dust of floating plaster, smelling of old lime, having scaffolding and rubbish heaped about, dust cloths over the altar.

"Let us sit down a minute," she said.

They sat unnoticed in the back pew, in the gloom, and she watched the dirty, disorderly work of bricklayers and plasterers. Workmen in heavy boots walking grinding down the aisles, calling out in a vulgar accent:

"Hi, mate, has them corner mouldin's come?"

There were shouts of coarse answer from the roof of the church. The place echoed desolate.

Skrebensky sat close to her. Everything seemed wonderful, if dreadful to her, the world tumbling into ruins, and she and he clambering unhurt, lawless over the face of it all. He sat close to her, touching her, and she was aware of his influence upon her. But she was glad. It excited her to feel the press of him upon her, as if his being were urging her to something.

As they drove home, he sat near to her. And when he swayed to the cart, he swayed in a voluptuous, lingering way, against her, lingering as he swung away to recover balance. Without speaking, he took her hand across, under the wrap, and with his unseeing face lifted to the road, his soul intent, he began with his one hand to unfasten the buttons of her glove, to push back her glove from her hand, carefully laying bare her hand. And the close-working, instinctive subtlety of his fingers upon her hand sent the young girl mad with voluptuous delight. His hand was so wonderful, intent as a living creature skilfully pushing and manipulating in the dark underworld, removing her glove and laying bare her palm, her fingers. Then his hand closed over hers, so firm, so close, as if the flesh knitted to one thing his hand and hers. Meanwhile his face watched the road and the ears of the horse, he drove with steady attention through the villages, and she sat beside him, rapt, glowing, blinded with a new light. Neither of them spoke. In outward attention they were entirely separate. But between them was the compact of his flesh with hers, in the hand-clasp.

Then, in a strange voice, affecting nonchalance and superficiality he said to her:

"Sitting in the church there reminded me of Ingram."

"Who is Ingram?" she asked.

She also affected calm superficiality. But she knew that something forbidden was coming.

"He is one of the other men with me down at Chatham-a subaltern-but a year older than I am."

"And why did the church remind you of him?"

"Well, he had a girl in Rochester, and they always sat in a particular corner in the cathedral for their love-making."

"How nice!" she cried, impulsively.

They misunderstood each other.

"It had its disadvantages though. The verger made a row about it."

"What a shame! Why shouldn't they sit in a cathedral?"

"I suppose they all think it a profanity-except you and Ingram and the girl."

"I don't think it a profanity-I think it's right, to make love in a cathedral."

She said this almost defiantly, in despite of her own soul.

He was silent.

"And was she nice?"

"Who? Emily? Yes, she was rather nice. She was a milliner, and she wouldn't be seen in the streets with Ingram. It was rather sad, really, because the verger spied on them, and got to know their names and then made a regular row. It was a common tale afterwards."

"What did she do?"

"She went to London, into a big shop. Ingram still goes up to see her."

"Does he love her?"

"It's a year and a half he's been with her now."

"What was she like?"

"Emily? Little, shy-violet sort of girl with nice eyebrows."

Ursula meditated this. It seemed like real romance of the outer world.

"Do all men have lovers?" she asked, amazed at her own temerity. But her hand was still fastened with his, and his face still had the same unchanging fixity of outward calm.

"They're always mentioning some amazing fine woman or other, and getting drunk to talk about her. Most of them dash up to London the moment they are free."

"What for?"

"To some amazing fine woman or other."

"What sort of woman?"

"Various. Her name changes pretty frequently, as a rule. One of the fellows is a perfect maniac. He keeps a suit-case always ready, and the instant he is at liberty, he bolts with it to the station, and changes in the train. No matter who is in the carriage, off he whips his tunic, and performs at least the top half of his toilet."

Ursula quivered and wondered.

"Why is he in such a hurry?" she asked.

Her throat was becoming hard and difficult.

"He's got a woman in his mind, I suppose."

She was chilled, hardened. And yet this world of passions and lawlessness was fascinating to her. It seemed to her a splendid recklessness. Her adventure in life was beginning. It seemed very splendid.

That evening she stayed at the Marsh till after dark, and Skrebensky escorted her home. For she could not go away from him. And she was waiting, waiting for something more.

In the warm of the early night, with the shadows new about them, she felt in another, harder, more beautiful, less personal world. Now a new state should come to pass.

He walked near to her, and with the same, silent, intent approach put his arm round her waist, and softly, very softly, drew her to him, till his arm was hard and pressed in upon her; she seemed to be carried along, floating, her feet scarce touching the ground, borne upon the firm, moving surface of his body, upon whose side she seemed to lie, in a delicious swoon of motion. And whilst she swooned, his face bent nearer to her, her head was leaned on his shoulder, she felt his warm breath on her face. Then softly, oh softly, so softly that she seemed to faint away, his lips touched her cheek, and she drifted through strands of heat and darkness.

Still she waited, in her swoon and her drifting, waited, like the Sleeping Beauty in the story. She waited, and again his face was bent to hers, his lips came warm to her face, their footsteps lingered and ceased, they stood still under the trees, whilst his lips waited on her face, waited like a butterfly that does not move on a flower. She pressed her breast a little nearer to him, he moved, put both his arms round her, and drew her close.

And then, in the darkness, he bent to her mouth, softly, and touched her mouth with his mouth. She was afraid, she lay still on his arm, feeling his lips on her lips. She kept still, helpless. Then his mouth drew near, pressing open her mouth, a hot, drenching surge rose within her, she opened her lips to him, in pained, poignant eddies she drew him nearer, she let him come farther, his lips came and surging, surging, soft, oh soft, yet oh, like the powerful surge of water, irresistible, till with a little blind cry, she broke away.

She heard him breathing heavily, strangely, beside her. A terrible and magnificent sense of his strangeness possessed her. But she shrank a little now, within herself. Hesitating, they continued to walk on, quivering like shadows under the ash trees of the hill, where her grandfather had walked with his daffodils to make his proposal, and where her mother had gone with her young husband, walking close upon him as Ursula was now walking upon Skrebensky.

Ursula was aware of the dark limbs of the trees stretching overhead, clothed with leaves, and of fine ash leaves tressing the summer night.

They walked with their bodies moving in complex unity, close together. He held her hand, and they went the long way round by the road, to be farther. Always she felt as if she were supported off her feet, as if her feet were light as little breezes in motion.

He would kiss her again-but not again that night with the same deep-reaching kiss. She was aware now, aware of what a kiss might be. And so, it was more difficult to come to him.

She went to bed feeling all warm with electric warmth, as if the gush of dawn were within her, upholding her. And she slept deeply, sweetly, oh, so sweetly. In the morning she felt sound as an ear of wheat, fragrant and firm and full.

They continued to be lovers, in the first wondering state of unrealisation. Ursula told nobody; she was entirely lost in her own world.

Yet some strange affectation made her seek for a spurious confidence. She had at school a quiet, meditative, serioussouled friend called Ethel, and to Ethel must Ursula confide the story. Ethel listened absorbedly, with bowed, unbetraying head, whilst Ursula told her secret. Oh, it was so lovely, his gentle, delicate way of making love! Ursula talked like a practised lover.

"Do you think," asked Ursula, "it is wicked to let a man kiss you-real kisses, not flirting?"

"I should think," said Ethel, "it depends."

"He kissed me under the ash trees on Cossethay hill-do you think it was wrong?"

"When?"

"On Thursday night when he was seeing me home-but real kisses-real--. He is an officer in the army."

"What time was it?" asked the deliberate Ethel.

"I don't know-about half-past nine."

There was a pause.

"I think it's wrong," said Ethel, lifting her head with impatience. "You don't know him."

She spoke with some contempt.

"Yes, I do. He is half a Pole, and a Baron too. In England he is equivalent to a Lord. My grandmother was his father's friend."

But the two friends were hostile. It was as if Ursula wanted to divide herself from her acquaintances, in asserting her connection with Anton, as she now called him.

He came a good deal to Cossethay, because her mother was fond of him. Anna Brangwen became something of a grande dame with Skrebensky, very calm, taking things for granted.

"Aren't the children in bed?" cried Ursula petulantly, as she came in with the young man.

"They will be in bed in half an hour," said the mother.

"There is no peace," cried Ursula.

"The children must live, Ursula," said her mother.

And Skrebensky was against Ursula in this. Why should she be so insistent?

But then, as Ursula knew, he did not have the perpetual tyranny of young children about him. He treated her mother with great courtliness, to which Mrs. Brangwen returned an easy, friendly hospitality. Something pleased the girl in her mother's calm assumption of state. It seemed impossible to abate Mrs. Brangwen's position. She could never be beneath anyone in public relation. Between Brangwen and Skrebensky there was an unbridgeable silence. Sometimes the two men made a slight conversation, but there was no interchange. Ursula rejoiced to see her father retreating into himself against the young man.

She was proud of Skrebensky in the house. His lounging, languorous indifference irritated her and yet cast a spell over her. She knew it was the outcome of a spirit of laissez-aller combined with profound young vitality. Yet it irritated her deeply.

Notwithstanding, she was proud of him as he lounged in his lambent fashion in her home, he was so attentive and courteous to her mother and to herself all the time. It was wonderful to have his awareness in the room. She felt rich and augmented by it, as if she were the positive attraction and he the flow towards her. And his courtesy and his agreement might be all her mother's, but the lambent flicker of his body was for herself. She held it.

She must ever prove her power.

"I meant to show you my little wood-carving," she said.

"I'm sure it's not worth showing, that," said her father.

"Would you like to see it?" she asked, leaning towards the door.

And his body had risen from the chair, though his face seemed to want to agree with her parents.

"It is in the shed," she said.

And he followed her out of the door, whatever his feelings might be.

In the shed they played at kisses, really played at kisses. It was a delicious, exciting game. She turned to him, her face all laughing, like a challenge. And he accepted the challenge at once. He twined his hand full of her hair, and gently, with his hand wrapped round with hair behind her head, gradually brought her face nearer to his, whilst she laughed breathless with challenge, and his eyes gleamed with answer, with enjoyment of the game. And he kissed her, asserting his will over her, and she kissed him back, asserting her deliberate enjoyment of him. Daring and reckless and dangerous they knew it was, their game, each playing with fire, not with love. A sort of defiance of all the world possessed her in it-she would kiss him just because she wanted to. And a dare-devilry in him, like a cynicism, a cut at everything he pretended to serve, retaliated in him.

She was very beautiful then, so wide opened, so radiant, so palpitating, exquisitely vulnerable and poignantly, wrongly, throwing herself to risk. It roused a sort of madness in him. Like a flower shaking and wide-opened in the sun, she tempted him and challenged him, and he accepted the challenge, something went fixed in him. And under all her laughing, poignant recklessness was the quiver of tears. That almost sent him mad, mad with desire, with pain, whose only issue was through possession of her body.

So, shaken, afraid, they went back to her parents in the kitchen, and dissimulated. But something was roused in both of them that they could not now allay. It intensified and heightened their senses, they were more vivid, and powerful in their being. But under it all was a poignant sense of transience. It was a magnificent self-assertion on the part of both of them, he asserted himself before her, he felt himself infinitely male and infinitely irresistible, she asserted herself before him, she knew herself infinitely desirable, and hence infinitely strong. And after all, what could either of them get from such a passion but a sense of his or of her own maximum self, in contradistinction to all the rest of life? Wherein was something finite and sad, for the human soul at its maximum wants a sense of the infinite.

Nevertheless, it was begun now, this passion, and must go on, the passion of Ursula to know her own maximum self, limited and so defined against him. She could limit and define herself against him, the male, she could be her maximum self, female, oh female, triumphant for one moment in exquisite assertion against the male, in supreme contradistinction to the male.

The next afternoon, when he came, prowling, she went with him across to the church. Her father was gradually gathering in anger against him, her mother was hardening in anger against her. But the parents were naturally tolerant in action.

They went together across the churchyard, Ursula and Skrebensky, and ran to hiding in the church. It was dimmer in there than the sunny afternoon outside, but the mellow glow among the bowed stone was very sweet. The windows burned in ruby and in blue, they made magnificent arras to their bower of secret stone.

"What a perfect place for a rendezvous," he said, in a hushed voice, glancing round.

She too glanced round the familiar interior. The dimness and stillness chilled her. But her eyes lit up with daring. Here, here she would assert her indomitable gorgeous female self, here. Here she would open her female flower like a flame, in this dimness that was more passionate than light.

They hung apart a moment, then wilfully turned to each other for the desired contact. She put her arms round him, she cleaved her body to his, and with her hands pressed upon his shoulders, on his back, she seemed to feel right through him, to know his young, tense body right through. And it was so fine, so hard, yet so exquisitely subject and under her control. She reached him her mouth and drank his full kiss, drank it fuller and fuller.

And it was so good, it was very, very good. She seemed to be filled with his kiss, filled as if she had drunk strong, glowing sunshine. She glowed all inside, the sunshine seemed to beat upon her heart underneath, she had drunk so beautifully.

She drew away, and looked at him radiant, exquisitely, glowingly beautiful, and satisfied, but radiant as an illumined cloud.

To him this was bitter, that she was so radiant and satisfied. She laughed upon him, blind to him, so full of her own bliss, never doubting but that he was the same as she was. And radiant as an angel she went with him out of the church, as if her feet were beams of light that walked on flowers for footsteps.

He went beside her, his soul clenched, his body unsatisfied. Was she going to make this easy triumph over him? For him, there was now no self-bliss, only pain and confused anger.

It was high summer, and the hay-harvest was almost over. It would be finished on Saturday. On Saturday, however, Skrebensky was going away. He could not stay any longer.

Having decided to go he became very tender and loving to her, kissing her gently, with such soft, sweet, insidious closeness that they were both of them intoxicated.

The very last Friday of his stay he met her coming out of school, and took her to tea in the town. Then he had a motor-car to drive her home.

Her excitement at riding in a motor-car was greatest of all. He too was very proud of this last coup. He saw Ursula kindle and flare up to the romance of the situation. She raised her head like a young horse snuffing with wild delight.

The car swerved round a corner, and Ursula was swung against Skrebensky. The contact made her aware of him. With a swift, foraging impulse she sought for his hand and clasped it in her own, so close, so combined, as if they were two children.

The wind blew in on Ursula's face, the mud flew in a soft, wild rush from the wheels, the country was blackish green, with the silver of new hay here and there, and masses of trees under a silver-gleaming sky.

Her hand tightened on his with a new consciousness, troubled. They did not speak for some time, but sat, hand-fast, with averted, shining faces.

And every now and then the car swung her against him. And they waited for the motion to bring them together. Yet they stared out of the windows, mute.

She saw the familiar country racing by. But now, it was no familiar country, it was wonderland. There was the Hemlock Stone standing on its grassy hill. Strange it looked on this wet, early summer evening, remote, in a magic land. Some rooks were flying out of the trees.

Ah, if only she and Skrebensky could get out, dismount into this enchanted land where nobody had ever been before! Then they would be enchanted people, they would put off the dull, customary self. If she were wandering there, on that hill-slope under a silvery, changing sky, in which many rooks melted like hurrying showers of blots! If they could walk past the wetted hay-swaths, smelling the early evening, and pass in to the wood where the honeysuckle scent was sweet on the cold tang in the air, and showers of drops fell when one brushed a bough, cold and lovely on the face!

But she was here with him in the car, close to him, and the wind was rushing on her lifted, eager face, blowing back the hair. He turned and looked at her, at her face clean as a chiselled thing, her hair chiselled back by the wind, her fine nose keen and lifted.

It was agony to him, seeing her swift and clean-cut and virgin. He wanted to kill himself, and throw his detested carcase at her feet. His desire to turn round on himself and rend himself was an agony to him.

Suddenly she glanced at him. He seemed to be crouching towards her, reaching, he seemed to wince between the brows. But instantly, seeing her lighted eyes and radiant face, his expression changed, his old reckless laugh shone to her. She pressed his hand in utter delight, and he abided. And suddenly she stooped and kissed his hand, bent her head and caught it to her mouth, in generous homage. And the blood burned in him. Yet he remained still, he made no move.

She started. They were swinging into Cossethay. Skrebensky was going to leave her. But it was all so magic, her cup was so full of bright wine, her eyes could only shine.

He tapped and spoke to the man. The car swung up by the yew trees. She gave him her hand and said good-bye, naive and brief as a schoolgirl. And she stood watching him go, her face shining. The fact of his driving on meant nothing to her, she was so filled by her own bright ecstacy. She did not see him go, for she was filled with light, which was of him. Bright with an amazing light as she was, how could she miss him.

In her bedroom she threw her arms in the air in clear pain of magnificence. Oh, it was her transfiguration, she was beyond herself. She wanted to fling herself into all the hidden brightness of the air. It was there, it was there, if she could but meet it.

But the next day she knew he had gone. Her glory had partly died down-but never from her memory. It was too real. Yet it was gone by, leaving a wistfulness. A deeper yearning came into her soul, a new reserve.

She shrank from touch and question. She was very proud, but very new, and very sensitive. Oh, that no one should lay hands on her!

She was happier running on by herself. Oh, it was a joy to run along the lanes without seeing things, yet being with them. It was such a joy to be alone with all one's riches.

The holidays came, when she was free. She spent most of her time running on by herself, curled up in a squirrel-place in the garden, lying in a hammock in the coppice, while the birds came near-near-so near. Oh, in rainy weather, she flitted to the Marsh, and lay hidden with her book in a hay-loft.

All the time, she dreamed of him, sometimes definitely, but when she was happiest, only vaguely. He was the warm colouring of her dreams, he was the hot blood beating within them.

When she was less happy, out of sorts, she pondered over his appearance, his clothes, the buttons with his regimental badge, which he had given her. Or she tried to imagine his life in barracks. Or she conjured up a vision of herself as she appeared in his eyes.

His birthday was in August, and she spent some pains on making him a cake. She felt that it would not be in good taste for her to give him a present.

Their correspondence was brief, mostly an exchange of post-cards, not at all frequent. But with her cake she must send him a letter.

"DEAR ANTON. THE SUNSHINE HAS COME BACK SPECIALLY FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY, I THINK.

"I MADE THE CAKE MYSELF, AND WISH YOU MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY. DON'T EAT IT IF IT IS NOT GOOD. MOTHER HOPES YOU WILL COME AND SEE US WHEN YOU ARE NEAR ENOUGH.

"I AM

"YOUR SINCERE FRIEND,

"URSULA BRANGWEN."

It bored her to write a letter even to him. After all, writing words on paper had nothing to do with him and her.

The fine weather had set in, the cutting machine went on from dawn till sunset, chattering round the fields. She heard from Skrebensky; he too was on duty in the country, on Salisbury Plain. He was now a second lieutenant in a Field Troop. He would have a few days off shortly, and would come to the Marsh for the wedding.

Fred Brangwen was going to marry a schoolmistress out of Ilkeston as soon as corn-harvest was at an end.

The dim blue-and-gold of a hot, sweet autumn saw the close of the corn-harvest. To Ursula, it was as if the world had opened its softest purest flower, its chicory flower, its meadow saffron. The sky was blue and sweet, the yellow leaves down the lane seemed like free, wandering flowers as they chittered round the feet, making a keen, poignant, almost unbearable music to her heart. And the scents of autumn were like a summer madness to her. She fled away from the little, purple-red button-chrysanthemums like a frightened dryad, the bright yellow little chrysanthemums smelled so strong, her feet seemed to dither in a drunken dance.

Then her Uncle Tom appeared, always like the cynical Bacchus in the picture. He would have a jolly wedding, a harvest supper and a wedding feast in one: a tent in the home close, and a band for dancing, and a great feast out of doors.

Fred demurred, but Tom must be satisfied. Also Laura, a handsome, clever girl, the bride, she also must have a great and jolly feast. It appealed to her educated sense. She had been to Salisbury Training College, knew folk-songs and morris-dancing.

So the preparations were begun, directed by Tom Brangwen. A marquee was set up on the home close, two large bonfires were prepared. Musicians were hired, feast made ready.

Skrebensky was to come, arriving in the morning. Ursula had a new white dress of soft crepe, and a white hat. She liked to wear white. With her black hair and clear golden skin, she looked southern, or rather tropical, like a Creole. She wore no colour whatsoever.

She trembled that day as she appeared to go down to the wedding. She was to be a bridesmaid. Skrebensky would not arrive till afternoon. The wedding was at two o'clock.

As the wedding-party returned home, Skrebensky stood in the parlour at the Marsh. Through the window he saw Tom Brangwen, who was best man, coming up the garden path most elegant in cut-away coat and white slip and spats, with Ursula laughing on his arm. Tom Brangwen was handsome, with his womanish colouring and dark eyes and black close-cut moustache. But there was something subtly coarse and suggestive about him for all his beauty; his strange, bestial nostrils opened so hard and wide, and his well-shaped head almost disquieting in its nakedness, rather bald from the front, and all its soft fulness betrayed.

Skrebensky saw the man rather than the woman. She saw only the slender, unchangeable youth waiting there inscrutable, like her fate. He was beyond her, with his loose, slightly horsey appearance, that made him seem very manly and foreign. Yet his face was smooth and soft and impressionable. She shook hands with him, and her voice was like the rousing of a bird startled by the dawn.

"Isn't it nice," she cried, "to have a wedding?"

There were bits of coloured confetti lodged on her dark hair.

Again the confusion came over him, as if he were losing himself and becoming all vague, undefined, inchoate. Yet he wanted to be hard, manly, horsey. And he followed her.

There was a light tea, and the guests scattered. The real feast was for the evening. Ursula walked out with Skrebensky through the stackyard to the fields, and up the embankment to the canal-side.

The new corn-stacks were big and golden as they went by, an army of white geese marched aside in braggart protest. Ursula was light as a white ball of down. Skrebensky drifted beside her, indefinite, his old from loosened, and another self, grey, vague, drifting out as from a bud. They talked lightly, of nothing.

The blue way of the canal wound softly between the autumn hedges, on towards the greenness of a small hill. On the left was the whole black agitation of colliery and railway and the town which rose on its hill, the church tower topping all. The round white dot of the clock on the tower was distinct in the evening light.

That way, Ursula felt, was the way to London, through the grim, alluring seethe of the town. On the other hand was the evening, mellow over the green water-meadows and the winding alder trees beside the river, and the pale stretches of stubble beyond. There the evening glowed softly, and even a pee-wit was flapping in solitude and peace.

Ursula and Anton Skrebensky walked along the ridge of the canal between. The berries on the hedges were crimson and bright red, above the leaves. The glow of evening and the wheeling of the solitary pee-wit and the faint cry of the birds came to meet the shuffling noise of the pits, the dark, fuming stress of the town opposite, and they two walked the blue strip of water-way, the ribbon of sky between.

He was looking, Ursula thought, very beautiful, because of a flush of sunburn on his hands and face. He was telling her how he had learned to shoe horses and select cattle fit for killing.

"Do you like to be a soldier?" she asked.

"I am not exactly a soldier," he replied.

"But you only do things for wars," she said.

"Yes."

"Would you like to go to war?"

"I? Well, it would be exciting. If there were a war I would want to go."

A strange, distracted feeling came over her, a sense of potent unrealities.

"Why would you want to go?"

"I should be doing something, it would be genuine. It's a sort of toy-life as it is."

"But what would you be doing if you went to war?"

"I would be making railways or bridges, working like a nigger."

"But you'd only make them to be pulled down again when the armies had done with them. It seems just as much a game."

"If you call war a game."

"What is it?"

"It's about the most serious business there is, fighting."

A sense of hard separateness came over her.

"Why is fighting more serious than anything else?" she asked.

"You either kill or get killed-and I suppose it is serious enough, killing."

"But when you're dead you don't matter any more," she said.

He was silenced for a moment.

"But the result matters," he said. "It matters whether we settle the Mahdi or not."

"Not to you-nor me-we don't care about Khartoum."

"You want to have room to live in: and somebody has to make room."

"But I don't want to live in the desert of Sahara-do you?" she replied, laughing with antagonism.

"I don't-but we've got to back up those who do.

"Why have we?"

"Where is the nation if we don't?"

"But we aren't the nation. There are heaps of other people who are the nation."

"They might say they weren't either."

"Well, if everybody said it, there wouldn't be a nation. But I should still be myself," she asserted brilliantly.

"You wouldn't be yourself if there were no nation."

"Why not?"

"Because you'd just be a prey to everybody and anybody."

"How a prey?"

"They'd come and take everything you'd got."

"Well, they couldn't take much even then. I don't care what they take. I'd rather have a robber who carried me off than a millionaire who gave me everything you can buy."

"That's because you are a romanticist."

"Yes, I am. I want to be romantic. I hate houses that never go away, and people just living in the houses. It's all so stiff and stupid. I hate soldiers, they are stiff and wooden. What do you fight for, really?"

"I would fight for the nation."

"For all that, you aren't the nation. What would you do for yourself?"

"I belong to the nation and must do my duty by the nation."

"But when it didn't need your services in particular-when there is no fighting? What would you do then?"

He was irritated.

"I would do what everybody else does."

"What?"

"Nothing. I would be in readiness for when I was needed."

The answer came in exasperation.

"It seems to me," she answered, "as if you weren't anybody-as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me."

They had walked till they had reached a wharf, just above a lock. There an empty barge, painted with a red and yellow cabin hood, but with a long, coal-black hold, was lying moored. A man, lean and grimy, was sitting on a box against the cabin-side by the door, smoking, and nursing a baby that was wrapped in a drab shawl, and looking into the glow of evening. A woman bustled out, sent a pail dashing into the canal, drew her water, and bustled in again. Children's voices were heard. A thin blue smoke ascended from the cabin chimney, there was a smell of cooking.

Ursula, white as a moth, lingered to look. Skrebensky lingered by her. The man glanced up.

"Good evening," he called, half impudent, half attracted. He had blue eyes which glanced impudently from his grimy face.

"Good evening," said Ursula, delighted. "Isn't it nice. now?"

"Ay," said the man, "very nice."

His mouth was red under his ragged, sandy moustache. His teeth were white as he laughed.

"Oh, but--" stammered Ursula, laughing, "it is. Why do you say it as if it weren't?"

"'Appen for them as is childt-nursin' it's none so rosy."

"May I look inside your barge?" asked Ursula.

"There's nobody'll stop you; you come if you like."

The barge lay at the opposite bank, at the wharf. It was the Annabel, belonging to J. Ruth of Loughborough. The man watched Ursula closely from his keen, twinkling eyes. His fair hair was wispy on his grimed forehead. Two dirty children appeared to see who was talking.

Ursula glanced at the great lock gates. They were shut, and the water was sounding, spurting and trickling down in the gloom beyond. On this side the bright water was almost to the top of the gate. She went boldly across, and round to the wharf.

Stooping from the bank, she peeped into the cabin, where was a red glow of fire and the shadowy figure of a woman. She did want to go down.

"You'll mess your frock," said the man, warningly.

"I'll be careful," she answered. "May I come?"

"Ay, come if you like."

She gathered her skirts, lowered her foot to the side of the boat, and leapt down, laughing. Coal-dust flew up.

The woman came to the door. She was plump and sandy-haired, young, with an odd, stubby nose.

"Oh, you will make a mess of yourself," she cried, surprised and laughing with a little wonder.

"I did want to see. Isn't it lovely living on a barge?" asked Ursula.

"I don't live on one altogether," said the woman cheerfully.

"She's got her parlour an' her plush suite in Loughborough," said her husband with just pride.

Ursula peeped into the cabin, where saucepans were boiling and some dishes were on the table. It was very hot. Then she came out again. The man was talking to the baby. It was a blue-eyed, fresh-faced thing with floss of red-gold hair.

"Is it a boy or a girl?" she asked.

"It's a girl-aren't you a girl, eh?" he shouted at the infant, shaking his head. Its little face wrinkled up into the oddest, funniest smile.

"Oh!" cried Ursula. "Oh, the dear! Oh, how nice when she laughs!"

"She'll laugh hard enough," said the father.

"What is her name?" asked Ursula.

"She hasn't got a name, she's not worth one," said the man. "Are you, you fag-end o' nothing?" he shouted to the baby. The baby laughed.

"No we've been that busy, we've never took her to th' registry office," came the woman's voice. "She was born on th' boat here."

"But you know what you're going to call her?" asked Ursula.

"We did think of Gladys Em'ly," said the mother.

"We thought of nowt o' th' sort," said the father.

"Hark at him! What do you want?' cried the mother in exasperation.

"She'll be called Annabel after th' boat she was born on."

"She's not, so there," said the mother, viciously defiant

The father sat in humorous malice, grinning.

"Well, you'll see," he said.

And Ursula could tell, by the woman's vibrating exasperation, that he would never give way.

"They're all nice names," she said. "Call her Gladys Annabel Emily."

"Nay, that's heavy-laden, if you like," he answered.

"You see!" cried the woman. "He's that pig-headed!"

"And she's so nice, and she laughs, and she hasn't even got a name," crooned Ursula to the child.

"Let me hold her," she added.

He yielded her the child, that smelt of babies. But it had such blue, wide, china blue eyes, and it laughed so oddly, with such a taking grimace, Ursula loved it. She cooed and talked to it. It was such an odd, exciting child.

"What's your name?" the man suddenly asked of her.

"My name is Ursula-Ursula Brangwen," she replied.

"Ursula!" he exclaimed, dumbfounded.

"There was a Saint Ursula. It's a very old name," she added hastily, in justification.

"Hey, mother!" he called.

There was no answer.

"Pem!" he called, "can't y'hear?"

"What?" came the short answer.

"What about 'Ursula'?" he grinned.

"What about what?" came the answer, and the woman appeared in the doorway, ready for combat.

"Ursula-it's the lass's name there," he said, gently.

The woman looked the young girl up and down. Evidently she was attracted by her slim, graceful, new beauty, her effect of white elgegance, and her tender way of holding the child.

"Why, how do you write it?" the mother asked, awkward now she was touched. Ursula spelled out her name. The man looked at the woman. A bright, confused flush came over the mother's face, a sort of luminous shyness.

"It's not a common name, is it!" she exclaimed, excited as by an adventure.

"Are you goin' to have it then?" he asked.

"I'd rather have it than Annabel," she said, decisively.

"An' I'd rather have it than Gladys Em'ler," he replied.

There was a silence, Ursula looked up.

"Will you really call her Ursula?" she asked.

"Ursula Ruth," replied the man, laughing vainly, as pleased as if he had found something.

It was now Ursula's turn to be confused.

"It does sound awfully nice," she said. "I must give her something. And I haven't got anything at all."

She stood in her white dress, wondering, down there in the barge. The lean man sitting near to her watched her as if she were a strange being, as if she lit up his face. His eyes smiled on her, boldly, and yet with exceeding admiration underneath.

"Could I give her my necklace?" she said.

It was the little necklace made of pieces of amethyst and topaz and pearl and crystal, strung at intervals on a little golden chain, which her Uncle Tom had given her. She was very fond of it. She looked at it lovingly, when she had taken it from her neck.

"Is it valuable?" the man asked her, curiously.

"I think so," she replied.

"The stones and pearl are real; it is worth three or four pounds," said Skrebensky from the wharf above. Ursula could tell he disapproved of her.

"I must give it to your baby-may I?" she said to the bargee.

He flushed, and looked away into the evening.

"Nay," he said, "it's not for me to say."

"What would your father and mother say?" cried the woman curiously, from the door.

"It is my own," said Ursula, and she dangled the little glittering string before the baby. The infant spread its little fingers. But it could not grasp. Ursula closed the tiny hand over the jewel. The baby waved the bright ends of the string. Ursula had given her necklace away. She felt sad. But she did not want it back.

The jewel swung from the baby's hand and fell in a little heap on the coal-dusty bottom of the barge. The man groped for it, with a kind of careful reverence. Ursula noticed the coarsened, blunted fingers groping at the little jewelled heap. The skin was red on the back of the hand, the fair hairs glistened stiffly. It was a thin, sinewy, capable hand nevertheless, and Ursula liked it. He took up the necklace carefully, and blew the coal-dust from it, as it lay in the hollow of his hand. He seemed still and attentive. He held out his hand with the necklace shining small in its hard, black hollow.

"Take it back," he said.

Ursula hardened with a kind of radiance.

"No," she said. "It belongs to little Ursula."

And she went to the infant and fastened the necklace round its warm, soft, weak little neck.

There was a moment of confusion, then the father bent over his child:

"What do you say?" he said. "Do you say thank you? Do you say thank you, Ursula?"

"Her name's Ursula now," said the mother, smiling a little bit ingratiatingly from the door. And she came out to examine the jewel on the child's neck.

"It is Ursula, isn't it?" said Ursula Brangwen.

The father looked up at her, with an intimate, half-gallant, half-impudent, but wistful look. His captive soul loved her: but his soul was captive, he knew, always.

She wanted to go. He set a little ladder for her to climb up to the wharf. She kissed the child, which was in its mother's arms, then she turned away. The mother was effusive. The man stood silent by the ladder.

Ursula joined Skrebensky. The two young figures crossed the lock, above the shining yellow water. The barge-man watched them go.

"I loved them," she was saying. "He was so gentle-oh, so gentle! And the baby was such a dear!"

"Was he gentle?" said Skrebensky. "The woman had been a servant, I'm sure of that."

Ursula winced.

"But I loved his impudence-it was so gentle underneath."

She went hastening on, gladdened by having met the grimy, lean man with the ragged moustache. He gave her a pleasant warm feeling. He made her feel the richness of her own life. Skrebensky, somehow, had created a deadness round her, a sterility, as if the world were ashes.

They said very little as they hastened home to the big supper. He was envying the lean father of three children, for his impudent directness and his worship of the woman in Ursula, a worship of body and soul together, the man's body and soul wistful and worshipping the body and spirit of the girl, with a desire that knew the inaccessibility of its object, but was only glad to know that the perfect thing existed, glad to have had a moment of communion.

Why could not he himself desire a woman so? Why did he never really want a woman, not with the whole of him: never loved, never worshipped, only just physically wanted her.

But he would want her with his body, let his soul do as it would. A kind of flame of physical desire was gradually beating up in the Marsh, kindled by Tom Brangwen, and by the fact of the wedding of Fred, the shy, fair, stiff-set farmer with the handsome, half-educated girl. Tom Brangwen, with all his secret power, seemed to fan the flame that was rising. The bride was strongly attracted by him, and he was exerting his influence on another beautiful, fair girl, chill and burning as the sea, who said witty things which he appreciated, making her glint with more, like phosphorescence. And her greenish eyes seemed to rock a secret, and her hands like mother-of-pearl seemed luminous, transparent, as if the secret were burning visible in them.

At the end of supper, during dessert, the music began to play, violins, and flutes. Everybody's face was lit up. A glow of excitement prevailed. When the little speeches were over, and the port remained unreached for any more, those who wished were invited out to the open for coffee. The night was warm.

Bright stars were shining, the moon was not yet up. And under the stars burned two great, red, flameless fires, and round these lights and lanterns hung, the marquee stood open before a fire, with its lights inside.

The young people flocked out into the mysterious night. There was sound of laughter and voices, and a scent of coffee. The farm-buildings loomed dark in the background. Figures, pale and dark, flitted about, intermingling. The red fire glinted on a white or a silken skirt, the lanterns gleamed on the transient heads of the wedding guests.

To Ursula it was wonderful. She felt she was a new being. The darkness seemed to breathe like the sides of some great beast, the haystacks loomed half-revealed, a crowd of them, a dark, fecund lair just behind. Waves of delirious darkness ran through her soul. She wanted to let go. She wanted to reach and be amongst the flashing stars, she wanted to race with her feet and be beyond the confines of this earth. She was mad to be gone. It was as if a hound were straining on the leash, ready to hurl itself after a nameless quarry into the dark. And she was the quarry, and she was also the hound. The darkness was passionate and breathing with immense, unperceived heaving. It was waiting to receive her in her flight. And how could she start-and how could she let go? She must leap from the known into the unknown. Her feet and hands beat like a madness, her breast strained as if in bonds.

The music began, and the bonds began to slip. Tom Brangwen was dancing with the bride, quick and fluid and as if in another element, inaccessible as the creatures that move in the water. Fred Brangwen went in with another partner. The music came in waves. One couple after another was washed and absorbed into the deep underwater of the dance.

"Come," said Ursula to Skrebensky, laying her hand on his arm.

At the touch of her hand on his arm, his consciousness melted away from him. He took her into his arms, as if into the sure, subtle power of his will, and they became one movement, one dual movement, dancing on the slippery grass. It would be endless, this movement, it would continue for ever. It was his will and her will locked in a trance of motion, two wills locked in one motion, yet never fusing, never yielding one to the other. It was a glaucous, intertwining, delicious flux and contest in flux.

They were both absorbed into a profound silence, into a deep, fluid underwater energy that gave them unlimited strength. All the dancers were waving intertwined in the flux of music. Shadowy couples passed and repassed before the fire, the dancing feet danced silently by into the darkness. It was a vision of the depths of the underworld, under the great flood.

There was a wonderful rocking of the darkness, slowly, a great, slow swinging of the whole night, with the music playing lightly on the surface, making the strange, ecstatic, rippling on the surface of the dance, but underneath only one great flood heaving slowly backwards to the verge of oblivion, slowly forward to the other verge, the heart sweeping along each time, and tightening with anguish as the limit was reached, and the movement, at crises, turned and swept back.

As the dance surged heavily on, Ursula was aware of some influence looking in upon her. Something was looking at her. Some powerful, glowing sight was looking right into her, not upon her, but right at her. Out of the great distance, and yet imminent, the powerful, overwhelming watch was kept upon her. And she danced on and on with Skrebensky, while the great, white watching continued, balancing all in its revelation.

"The moon has risen," said Anton, as the music ceased, and they found themselves suddenly stranded, like bits of jetsam on a shore. She turned, and saw a great white moon looking at her over the hill. And her breast opened to it, she was cleaved like a transparent jewel to its light. She stood filled with the full moon, offering herself. Her two breasts opened to make way for it, her body opened wide like a quivering anemone, a soft, dilated invitation touched by the moon. She wanted the moon to fill in to her, she wanted more, more communion with the moon, consummation. But Skrebensky put his arm round her, and led her away. He put a big, dark cloak round her, and sat holding her hand, whilst the moonlight streamed above the glowing fires.

She was not there. Patiently she sat, under the cloak, with Skrebensky holding her hand. But her naked self was away there beating upon the moonlight, dashing the moonlight with her breasts and her knees, in meeting, in communion. She half started, to go in actuality, to fling away her clothing and flee away, away from this dark confusion and chaos of people to the hill and the moon. But the people stood round her like stones, like magnetic stones, and she could not go, in actuality. Skrebensky, like a load-stone weighed on her, the weight of his presence detained her. She felt the burden of him, the blind, persistent, inert burden. He was inert, and he weighed upon her. She sighed in pain. Oh, for the coolness and entire liberty and brightness of the moon. Oh, for the cold liberty to be herself, to do entirely as she liked. She wanted to get right away. She felt like bright metal weighted down by dark, impure magnetism. He was the dross, people were the dross. If she could but get away to the clean free moonlight.

"Don't you like me to-night?" said his low voice, the voice of the shadow over her shoulder. She clenched her hands in the dewy brilliance of the moon, as if she were mad.

"Don't you like me to-night?" repeated the soft voice.

And she knew that if she turned, she would die. A strange rage filled her, a rage to tear things asunder. Her hands felt destructive, like metal blades of destruction.

"Let me alone," she said.

A darkness, an obstinacy settled on him too, in a kind of inertia. He sat inert beside her. She threw off her cloak and walked towards the moon, silver-white herself. He followed her closely.

The music began again and the dance. He appropriated her. There was a fierce, white, cold passion in her heart. But he held her close, and danced with her. Always present, like a soft weight upon her, bearing her down, was his body against her as they danced. He held her very close, so that she could feel his body, the weight of him sinking, settling upon her, overcoming her life and energy, making her inert along with him, she felt his hands pressing behind her, upon her. But still in her body was the subdued, cold, indomitable passion. She liked the dance: it eased her, put her into a sort of trance. But it was only a kind of waiting, of using up the time that intervened between her and her pure being. She left herself against him, she let him exert all his power over her, to bear her down. She received all the force of his power. She even wished he might overcome her. She was cold and unmoved as a pillar of salt.

His will was set and straining with all its tension to encompass him and compel her. If he could only compel her. He seemed to be annihilated. She was cold and hard and compact of brilliance as the moon itself, and beyond him as the moonlight was beyond him, never to be grasped or known. If he could only set a bond round her and compel her!

So they danced four or five dances, always together, always his will becoming more tense, his body more subtle, playing upon her. And still he had not got her, she was hard and bright as ever, intact. But he must weave himself round her, enclose her, enclose her in a net of shadow, of darkness, so she would be like a bright creature gleaming in a net of shadows, caught. Then he would have her, he would enjoy her. How he would enjoy her, when she was caught.

At last, when the dance was over, she would not sit down, she walked away. He came with his arm round her, keeping her upon the movement of his walking. And she seemed to agree. She was bright as a piece of moonlight, as bright as a steel blade, he seemed to be clasping a blade that hurt him. Yet he would clasp her, if it killed him.

They went towards the stackyard. There he saw, with something like terror, the great new stacks of corn glistening and gleaming transfigured, silvery and present under the night-blue sky, throwing dark, substantial shadows, but themselves majestic and dimly present. She, like glimmering gossamer, seemed to burn among them, as they rose like cold fires to the silvery-bluish air. All was intangible, a burning of cold, glimmering, whitish-steely fires. He was afraid of the great moon-conflagration of the cornstacks rising above him. His heart grew smaller, it began to fuse like a bead. He knew he would die.

She stood for some moments out in the overwhelming luminosity of the moon. She seemed a beam of gleaming power. She was afraid of what she was. Looking at him, at his shadowy, unreal, wavering presence a sudden lust seized her, to lay hold of him and tear him and make him into nothing. Her hands and wrists felt immeasurably hard and strong, like blades. He waited there beside her like a shadow which she wanted to dissipate, destroy as the moonlight destroys a darkness, annihilate, have done with. She looked at him and her face gleamed bright and inspired. She tempted him.

And an obstinacy in him made him put his arm round her and draw her to the shadow. She submitted: let him try what he could do. Let him try what he could do. He leaned against the side of the stack, holding her. The stack stung him keenly with a thousand cold, sharp flames. Still obstinately he held her.

And timorously, his hands went over her, over the salt, compact brilliance of her body. If he could but have her, how he would enjoy her! If he could but net her brilliant, cold, salt-burning body in the soft iron of his own hands, net her, capture her, hold her down, how madly he would enjoy her. He strove subtly, but with all his energy, to enclose her, to have her. And always she was burning and brilliant and hard as salt, and deadly. Yet obstinately, all his flesh burning and corroding, as if he were invaded by some consuming, scathing poison, still he persisted, thinking at last he might overcome her. Even, in his frenzy, he sought for her mouth with his mouth, though it was like putting his face into some awful death. She yielded to him, and he pressed himself upon her in extremity, his soul groaning over and over:

"Let me come-let me come."

She took him in the kiss, hard her kiss seized upon him, hard and fierce and burning corrosive as the moonlight. She seemed to be destroying him. He was reeling, summoning all his strength to keep his kiss upon her, to keep himself in the kiss.

But hard and fierce she had fastened upon him, cold as the moon and burning as a fierce salt. Till gradually his warm, soft iron yielded, yielded, and she was there fierce, corrosive, seething with his destruction, seething like some cruel, corrosive salt around the last substance of his being, destroying him, destroying him in the kiss. And her soul crystallised with triumph, and his soul was dissolved with agony and annihilation. So she held him there, the victim, consumed, annihilated. She had triumphed: he was not any more.

Gradually she began to come to herself. Gradually a sort of daytime consciousness came back to her. Suddenly the night was struck back into its old, accustomed, mild reality. Gradually she realised that the night was common and ordinary, that the great, blistering, transcendent night did not really exist. She was overcome with slow horror. Where was she? What was this nothingness she felt? The nothingness was Skrebensky. Was he really there?-who was he? He was silent, he was not there. What had happened? Had she been mad: what horrible thing had possessed her? She was filled with overpowering fear of herself, overpowering desire that it should not be, that other burning, corrosive self. She was seized with a frenzied desire that what had been should never be remembered, never be thought of, never be for one moment allowed possible. She denied it with all her might. With all her might she turned away from it. She was good, she was loving. Her heart was warm, her blood was dark and warm and soft. She laid her hand caressively on Anton's shoulder.

"Isn't it lovely?" she said, softly, coaxingly, caressingly. And she began to caress him to life again. For he was dead. And she intended that he should never know, never become aware of what had been. She would bring him back from the dead without leaving him one trace of fact to remember his annihilation by.

She exerted all her ordinary, warm self, she touched him, she did him homage of loving awareness. And gradually he came back to her, another man. She was soft and winning and caressing. She was his servant, his adoring slave. And she restored the whole shell of him. She restored the whole form and figure of him. But the core was gone. His pride was bolstered up, his blood ran once more in pride. But there was no core to him: as a distinct male he had no core. His triumphant, flaming, overweening heart of the intrinsic male would never beat again. He would be subject now, reciprocal, never the indomitable thing with a core of overweening, unabateable fire. She had abated that fire, she had broken him.

But she caressed him. She would not have him remember what had been. She would not remember herself.

"Kiss me, Anton, kiss me," she pleaded.

He kissed her, but she knew he could not touch her. His arms were round her, but they had not got her. She could feel his mouth upon her, but she was not at all compelled by it.

"Kiss me," she whispered, in acute distress, "kiss me."

And he kissed her as she bade him, but his heart was hollow. She took his kisses, outwardly. But her soul was empty and finished.

Looking away, she saw the delicate glint of oats dangling from the side of the stack, in the moonlight, something proud and royal, and quite impersonal. She had been proud with them, where they were, she had been also. But in this temporary warm world of the commonplace, she was a kind, good girl. She reached out yearningly for goodness and affection. She wanted to be kind and good.

They went home through the night that was all pale and glowing around, with shadows and glimmerings and presences. Distinctly, she saw the flowers in the hedge-bottoms, she saw the thin, raked sheaves flung white upon the thorny hedge.

How beautiful, how beautiful it was! She thought with anguish how wildly happy she was to-night, since he had kissed her. But as he walked with his arm round her waist, she turned with a great offering of herself to the night that glistened tremendous, a magnificent godly moon white and candid as a bridegroom, flowers silvery and transformed filling up the shadows.

He kissed her again, under the yew trees at home, and she left him. She ran from the intrusion of her parents at home, to her bedroom, where, looking out on the moonlit country, she stretched up her arms, hard, hard, in bliss, agony offering herself to the blond, debonair presence of the night.

But there was a wound of sorrow, she had hurt herself, as if she had bruised herself, in annihilating him. She covered up her two young breasts with her hands, covering them to herself; and covering herself with herself, she crouched in bed, to sleep.

In the morning the sun shone, she got up strong and dancing. Skrebensky was still at the Marsh. He was coming to church. How lovely, how amazing life was! On the fresh Sunday morning she went out to the garden, among the yellows and the deep-vibrating reds of autumn, she smelled the earth and felt the gossamer, the cornfields across the country were pale and unreal, everywhere was the intense silence of the Sunday morning, filled with unacquainted noises. She smelled the body of the earth, it seemed to stir its powerful flank beneath her as she stood. In the bluish air came the powerful exudation, the peace was the peace of strong, exhausted breathing, the reds and yellows and the white gleam of stubble were the quivers and motion of the last subsiding transports and clear bliss of fulfilment.

The church-bells were ringing when he came. She looked up in keen anticipation at his entry. But he was troubled and his pride was hurt. He seemed very much clothed, she was conscious of his tailored suit.

"Wasn't it lovely last night?" she whispered to him.

"Yes," he said. But his face did not open nor become free.

The service and the singing in church that morning passed unnoticed by her. She saw the coloured glow of the windows, the forms of the worshippers. Only she glanced at the book of Genesis, which was her favourite book in the Bible.

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes in the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

But Ursula was not moved by the history this morning. Multiplying and replenishing the earth bored her. Altogether it seemed merely a vulgar and stock-raising sort of business. She was left quite cold by man's stock-breeding lordship over beast and fishes.

"And you, be ye fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein."

In her soul she mocked at this multiplication, every cow becoming two cows, every turnip ten turnips.

"And God said; This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations;

"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that a bow shall be seen in the cloud;

"And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

"Destroy all flesh," why "flesh" in particular? Who was this lord of flesh? After all, how big was the Flood? Perhaps a few dryads and fauns had just run into the hills and the farther valleys and woods, frightened, but most had gone on blithely unaware of any flood at all, unless the nymphs should tell them. It pleased Ursula to think of the naiads in Asia Minor meeting the nereids at the mouth of the streams, where the sea washed against the fresh, sweet tide, and calling to their sisters the news of Noah's Flood. They would tell amusing accounts of Noah in his ark. Some nymphs would relate how they had hung on the side of the ark, peeped in, and heard Noah and Shem and Ham and Japeth, sitting in their place under the rain, saying, how they four were the only men on earth now, because the Lord had drowned all the rest, so that they four would have everything to themselves, and be masters of every thing, sub-tenants under the great Proprietor.

Ursula wished she had been a nymph. She would have laughed through the window of the ark, and flicked drops of the flood at Noah, before she drifted away to people who were less important in their Proprietor and their Flood.

What was God, after all? If maggots in a dead dog be but God kissing carrion, what then is not God? She was surfeited of this God. She was weary of the Ursula Brangwen who felt troubled about God. What ever God was, He was, and there was no need for her to trouble about Him. She felt she had now all licence.

Skrebensky sat beside her, listening to the sermon, to the voice of law and order. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." He did not believe it. He believed his own things were quite at his own disposal. You could do as you liked with your own things, so long as you left other people's alone.

Ursula caressed him and made love to him. Nevertheless he knew she wanted to react upon him and to destroy his being. She was not with him, she was against him. But her making love to him, her complete admiration of him, in open life, gratified him.

She caught him out of himself, and they were lovers, in a young, romantic, almost fantastic way. He gave her a little ring. They put it in Rhine wine, in their glass, and she drank, then he drank. They drank till the ring lay exposed at the bottom of the glass. Then she took the simple jewel, and tied it on a thread round her neck, where she wore it.

He asked her for a photograph when he was going away. She went in great excitement to the photographer, with five shillings. The result was an ugly little picture of herself with her mouth on one side. She wondered over it and admired it.

He saw only the live face of the girl. The picture hurt him. He kept it, he always remembered it, but he could scarcely bear to see it. There was a hurt to his soul in the clear, fearless face that was touched with abstraction. Its abstraction was certainly away from him.

Then war was declared with the Boers in South Africa, and everywhere was a fizz of excitement. He wrote that he might have to go. And he sent her a box of sweets.

She was slightly dazed at the thought of his going to the war, not knowing how to feel. It was a sort of romantic situation that she knew so well in fiction she hardly understood it in fact. Underneath a top elation was a sort of dreariness, deep, ashy disappointment.

However, she secreted the sweets under her bed, and ate them all herself, when she went to bed, and when she woke in the morning. All the time she felt very guilty and ashamed, but she simply did not want to share them.

That box of sweets remained stuck in her mind afterwards. Why had she secreted them and eaten them every one? Why? She did not feel guilty-she only knew she ought to feel guilty. And she could not make up her mind. Curiously monumental that box of sweets stood up, now it was empty. It was a crux for her. What was she to think of it?

The idea of war altogether made her feel uneasy, uneasy. When men began organised fighting with each other it seemed to her as if the poles of the universe were cracking, and the whole might go tumbling into the bottomless pit. A horrible bottomless feeling she had. Yet of course there was the minted superscription of romance and honour and even religion about war. She was very confused.

Skrebensky was busy, he could not come to see her. She asked for no assurance, no security. What was between them, was, and could not be altered by avowals. She knew that by instinct, she trusted to the intrinsic reality.

But she felt an agony of helplessness. She could do nothing. Vaguely she knew the huge powers of the world rolling and crashing together, darkly, clumsily, stupidly, yet colossal, so that one was brushed along almost as dust. Helpless, helpless, swirling like dust! Yet she wanted so hard to rebel, to rage, to fight. But with what?

Could she with her hands fight the face of the earth, beat the hills in their places? Yet her breast wanted to fight, to fight the whole world. And these two small hands were all she had to do it with.

The months went by, and it was Christmas-the snowdrops came. There was a little hollow in the wood near Cossethay, where snowdrops grew wild. She sent him some in a box, and he wrote her a quick little note of thanks-very grateful and wistful he seemed. Her eyes grew childlike and puzzled. Puzzled from day to day she went on, helpless, carried along by all that must happen.

He went about at his duties, giving himself up to them. At the bottom of his heart his self, the soul that aspired and had true hope of self-effectuation lay as dead, still-born, a dead weight in his womb. Who was he, to hold important his personal connection? What did a man matter personally? He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity. His personal movements were small, and entirely subsidiary. The whole form must be ensured, not ruptured, for any personal reason whatsoever, since no personal reason could justify such a breaking. What did personal intimacy matter? One had to fill one's place in the whole, the great scheme of man's elaborate civilisation, that was all. The Whole mattered-but the unit, the person, had no importance, except as he represented the Whole.

So Skrebensky left the girl out and went his way, serving what he had to serve, and enduring what he had to endure, without remark. To his own intrinsic life, he was dead. And he could not rise again from the dead. His soul lay in the tomb. His life lay in the established order of things. He had his five senses too. They were to be gratified. Apart from this, he represented the great, established, extant Idea of life, and as this he was important and beyond question.

The good of the greatest number was all that mattered. That which was the greatest good for them all, collectively, was the greatest good for the individual. And so, every man must give himself to support the state, and so labour for the greatest good of all. One might make improvements in the state, perhaps, but always with a view to preserving it intact.

No highest good of the community, however, would give him the vital fulfilment of his soul. He knew this. But he did not consider the soul of the individual sufficiently important. He believed a man was important in so far as he represented all humanity.

He could not see, it was not born in him to see, that the highest good of the community as it stands is no longer the highest good of even the average individual. He thought that, because the community represents millions of people, therefore it must be millions of times more important than any individual, forgetting that the community is an abstraction from the many, and is not the many themselves. Now when the statement of the abstract good for the community has become a formula lacking in all inspiration or value to the average intelligence, then the "common good" becomes a general nuisance, representing the vulgar, conservative materialism at a low level.

And by the highest good of the greatest number is chiefly meant the material prosperity of all classes. Skrebensky did not really care about his own material prosperity. If he had been penniless-well, he would have taken his chances. Therefore how could he find his highest good in giving up his life for the material prosperity of everybody else! What he considered an unimportant thing for himself he could not think worthy of every sacrifice on behalf of other people. And that which he would consider of the deepest importance to himself as an individual-oh, he said, you mustn't consider the community from that standpoint. No-no-we know what the community wants; it wants something solid, it wants good wages, equal opportunities, good conditions of living, that's what the community wants. It doesn't want anything subtle or difficult. Duty is very plain-keep in mind the material, the immediate welfare of every man, that's all.

So there came over Skrebensky a sort of nullity, which more and more terrified Ursula. She felt there was something hopeless which she had to submit to. She felt a great sense of disaster impending. Day after day was made inert with a sense of disaster. She became morbidly sensitive, depressed, apprehensive. It was anguish to her when she saw one rook slowly flapping in the sky. That was a sign of ill-omen. And the foreboding became so black and so powerful in her, that she was almost extinguished.

Yet what was the matter? At the worst he was only going away. Why did she mind, what was it she feared? She did not know. Only she had a black dread possessing her. When she went at night and saw the big, flashing stars they seemed terrible, by day she was always expecting some charge to be made against her.

He wrote in March to say that he was going to South Africa in a short time, but before he went, he would snatch a day at the Marsh.

As if in a painful dream, she waited suspended, unresolved. She did not know, she could not understand. Only she felt that all the threads of her fate were being held taut, in suspense. She only wept sometimes as she went about, saying blindly:

"I am so fond of him, I am so fond of him."

He came. But why did he come? She looked at him for a sign. He gave no sign. He did not even kiss her. He behaved as if he were an affable, usual acquaintance. This was superficial, but what did it hide? She waited for him, she wanted him to make some sign.

So the whole of the day they wavered and avoided contact, until evening. Then, laughing, saying he would be back in six months' time and would tell them all about it, he shook hands with her mother and took his leave.

Ursula accompanied him into the lane. The night was windy, the yew trees seethed and hissed and vibrated. The wind seemed to rush about among the chimneys and the church-tower. It was dark.

The wind blew Ursula's face, and her clothes cleaved to her limbs. But it was a surging, turgid wind, instinct with compressed vigour of life. And she seemed to have lost Skrebensky. Out there in the strong, urgent night she could not find him.

"Where are you?" she asked.

"Here," came his bodiless voice.

And groping, she touched him. A fire like lightning drenched them.

"Anton?" she said.

"What?" he answered.

She held him with her hands in the darkness, she felt his body again with hers.

"Don't leave me-come back to me," she said.

"Yes," he said, holding her in his arms.

But the male in him was scotched by the knowledge that she was not under his spell nor his influence. He wanted to go away from her. He rested in the knowledge that to-morrow he was going away, his life was really elsewhere. His life was elsewhere-his life was elsewhere-the centre of his life was not what she would have. She was different-there was a breach between them. They were hostile worlds.

"You will come back to me?" she reiterated.

"Yes," he said. And he meant it. But as one keeps an appointment, not as a man returning to his fulfilment.

So she kissed him, and went indoors, lost. He walked down to the Marsh abstracted. The contact with her hurt him, and threatened him. He shrank, he had to be free of her spirit. For she would stand before him, like the angel before Balaam, and drive him back with a sword from the way he was going, into a wilderness.

The next day she went to the station to see him go. She looked at him, she turned to him, but he was always so strange and null-so null. He was so collected. She thought it was that which made him null. Strangely nothing he was.

Ursula stood near him with a mute, pale face which he would rather not see. There seemed some shame at the very root of life, cold, dead shame for her.

The three made a noticeable group on the station; the girl in her fur cap and tippet and her olive green costume, pale, tense with youth, isolated, unyielding; the soldierly young man in a crush hat and a heavy overcoat, his face rather pale and reserved above his purple scarf, his whole figure neutral; then the elder man, a fashionable bowler hat pressed low over his dark brows, his face warm-coloured and calm, his whole figure curiously suggestive of full-blooded indifference; he was the eternal audience, the chorus, the spectator at the drama; in his own life he would have no drama.

The train was rushing up. Ursula's heart heaved, but the ice was frozen too strong upon it.

"Good-bye," she said, lifting her hand, her face laughing with her peculiar, blind, almost dazzling laugh. She wondered what he was doing, when he stooped and kissed her. He should be shaking hands and going.

"Good-bye," she said again.

He picked up his little bag and turned his back on her. There was a hurry along the train. Ah, here was his carriage. He took his seat. Tom Brangwen shut the door, and the two men shook hands as the whistle went.

"Good-bye-and good luck," said Brangwen.

"Thank you-good-bye."

The train moved off. Skrebensky stood at the carriage window, waving, but not really looking to the two figures, the girl and the warm-coloured, almost effeminately-dressed man Ursula waved her handkerchief. The train gathered speed, it grew smaller and smaller. Still it ran in a straight line. The speck of white vanished. The rear of the train was small in the distance. Still she stood on the platform, feeling a great emptiness about her. In spite of herself her mouth was quivering: she did not want to cry: her heart was dead cold.

Her Uncle Tom had gone to an automatic machine, and was getting matches.

"Would you like some sweets?" he said, turning round.

Her face was covered with tears, she made curious, downward grimaces with her mouth, to get control. Yet her heart was not crying-it was cold and earthy.

"What kind would you like-any?" persisted her uncle.

"I should love some peppermint drops," she said, in a strange, normal voice, from her distorted face. But in a few moments she had gained control of herself, and was still, detached.

"Let us go into the town," he said, and he rushed her into a train, moving to the town station. They went to a cafe to drink coffee, she sat looking at people in the street, and a great wound was in her breast, a cold imperturbability in her soul.

This cold imperturbability of spirit continued in her now. It was as if some disillusion had frozen upon her, a hard disbelief. Part of her had gone cold, apathetic. She was too young, too baffled to understand, or even to know that she suffered much. And she was too deeply hurt to submit.

She had her blind agonies, when she wanted him, she wanted him. But from the moment of his departure, he had become a visionary thing of her own. All her roused torment and passion and yearning she turned to him.

She kept a diary, in which she wrote impulsive thoughts. Seeing the moon in the sky, her own heart surcharged, she went and wrote:

"If I were the moon, I know where I would fall down."

It meant so much to her, that sentence-she put into it all the anguish of her youth and her young passion and yearning. She called to him from her heart wherever she went, her limbs vibrated with anguish towards him wherever she was, the radiating force of her soul seemed to travel to him, endlessly, endlessly, and in her soul's own creation, find him.

But who was he, and where did he exist? In her own desire only.

She received a post-card from him, and she put it in her bosom. It did not mean much to her, really. The second day, she lost it, and never even remembered she had had it, till some days afterwards.

The long weeks went by. There came the constant bad news of the war. And she felt as if all, outside there in the world, were a hurt, a hurt against her. And something in her soul remained cold, apathetic, unchanging.

Her life was always only partial at this time, never did she live completely. There was the cold, unliving part of her. Yet she was madly sensitive. She could not bear herself. When a dirty, red-eyed old woman came begging of her in the street, she started away as from an unclean thing. And then, when the old woman shouted acrid insults after her, she winced, her limbs palpitated with insane torment, she could not bear herself. Whenever she thought of the red-eyed old woman, a sort of madness ran in inflammation over her flesh and her brain, she almost wanted to kill herself.

And in this state, her sexual life flamed into a kind of disease within her. She was so overwrought and sensitive, that the mere touch of coarse wool seemed to tear her nerves.

Chapter 12

Shame

Ursula had only two more terms at school. She was studying for her matriculation examination. It was dreary work, for she had very little intelligence when she was disjointed from happiness. Stubbornness and a consciousness of impending fate kept her half-heartedly pinned to it. She knew that soon she would want to become a self-responsible person, and her dread was that she would be prevented. An all-containing will in her for complete independence, complete social independence, complete independence from any personal authority, kept her dullishly at her studies. For she knew that she had always her price of ransom--her femaleness. She was always a woman, and what she could not get because she was a human being, fellow to the rest of mankind, she would get because she was a female, other than the man. In her femaleness she felt a secret riches, a reserve, she had always the price of freedom.

However, she was sufficiently reserved about this last resource. The other things should be tried first. There was the mysterious man's world to be adventured upon, the world of daily work and duty, and existence as a working member of the community. Against this she had a subtle grudge. She wanted to make her conquest also of this man's world.

So she ground away at her work, never giving it up. Some things she liked. Her subjects were English, Latin, French, mathematics and history. Once she knew how to read French and Latin, the syntax bored her. Most tedious was the close study of English literature. Why should one remember the things one read? Something in mathematics, their cold absoluteness, fascinated her, but the actual practice was tedious. Some people in history puzzled her and made her ponder, but the political parts angered her, and she hated ministers. Only in odd streaks did she get a poignant sense of acquisition and enrichment and enlarging from her studies; one afternoon, reading As You Like It; once when, with her blood, she heard a passage of Latin, and she knew how the blood beat in a Roman's body; so that ever after she felt she knew the Romans by contact. She enjoyed the vagaries of English Grammar, because it gave her pleasure to detect the live movements of words and sentences; and mathematics, the very sight of the letters in Algebra, had a real lure for her.

She felt so much and so confusedly at this time, that her face got a queer, wondering, half-scared look, as if she were not sure what might seize upon her at any moment out of the unknown.

Odd little bits of information stirred unfathomable passion in her. When she knew that in the tiny brown buds of autumn were folded, minute and complete, the finished flowers of the summer nine months hence, tiny, folded up, and left there waiting, a flash of triumph and love went over her.

"I could never die while there was a tree," she said passionately, sententiously, standing before a great ash in worship.

It was the people who, somehow, walked as an upright menace to her. Her life at this time was unformed, palpitating, essentially shrinking from all touch. She gave something to other people, but she was never herself, since she had no self. She was not afraid nor ashamed before trees, and birds, and the sky. But she shrank violently from people, ashamed she was not as they were, fixed, emphatic, but a wavering, undefined sensibility only, without form or being.

Gudrun was at this time a great comfort and shield to her. The younger girl was a lithe, farouche animal, who mistrusted all approach, and would have none of the petty secrecies and jealousies of schoolgirl intimacy. She would have no truck with the tame cats, nice or not, because she believed that they were all only untamed cats with a nasty, untrustworthy habit of tameness.

This was a great stand-back for Ursula, who suffered agonies when she thought a person disliked her, no matter how much she despised that other person. How could anyone dislike her, Ursula Brangwen? The question terrified her and was unanswerable. She sought refuge in Gudrun's natural, proud indifference.

It had been discovered that Gudrun had a talent for drawing. This solved the problem of the girl's indifference to all study. It was said of her, "She can draw marvellously."

Suddenly Ursula found a queer awareness existed between herself and her class-mistress, Miss Inger. The latter was a rather beautiful woman of twenty-eight, a fearless-seeming, clean type of modern girl whose very independence betrays her sorrow. She was clever, and expert in what she did, accurate, quick, commanding.

To Ursula she had always given pleasure, because of her clear, decided, yet graceful appearance. She carried her head high, a little thrown back, and Ursula thought there was a look of nobility in the way she twisted her smooth brown hair upon her head. She always wore clean, attractive, well-fitting blouses, and a well-made skirt. Everything about her was so well-ordered, betraying a fine, clear spirit, that it was a pleasure to sit in her class.

Her voice was just as ringing and clear, and with unwavering, finely-touched modulation. Her eyes were blue, clear, proud, she gave one altogether the sense of a fine-mettled, scrupulously groomed person, and of an unyielding mind. Yet there was an infinite poignancy about her, a great pathos in her lonely, proudly closed mouth.

It was after Skrebensky had gone that there sprang up between the mistress and the girl that strange awareness, then the unspoken intimacy that sometimes connects two people who may never even make each other's acquaintance. Before, they had always been good friends, in the undistinguished way of the class-room, with the professional relationship of mistress and scholar always present. Now, however, another thing came to pass. When they were in the room together, they were aware of each other, almost to the exclusion of everything else. Winifred Inger felt a hot delight in the lessons when Ursula was present, Ursula felt her whole life begin when Miss Inger came into the room. Then, with the beloved, subtly-intimate teacher present, the girl sat as within the rays of some enrichening sun, whose intoxicating heat poured straight into her veins.

The state of bliss, when Miss Inger was present, was supreme in the girl, but always eager, eager. As she went home, Ursula dreamed of the schoolmistress, made infinite dreams of things she could give her, of how she might make the elder woman adore her.

Miss Inger was a Bachelor of Arts, who had studied at Newnham. She was a clergyman's daughter, of good family. But what Ursula adored so much was her fine, upright, athletic bearing, and her indomitably proud nature. She was proud and free as a man, yet exquisite as a woman.

The girl's heart burned in her breast as she set off for school in the morning. So eager was her breast, so glad her feet, to travel towards the beloved. Ah, Miss Inger, how straight and fine was her back, how strong her loins, how calm and free her limbs!

Ursula craved ceaselessly to know if Miss Inger cared for her. As yet no definite sign had been passed between the two. Yet surely, surely Miss Inger loved her too, was fond of her, liked her at least more than the rest of the scholars in the class. Yet she was never certain. It might be that Miss Inger cared nothing for her. And yet, and yet, with blazing heart, Ursula felt that if only she could speak to her, touch her, she would know.

The summer term came, and with it the swimming class. Miss Inger was to take the swimming class. Then Ursula trembled and was dazed with passion. Her hopes were soon to be realised. She would see Miss Inger in her bathing dress.

The day came. In the great bath the water was glimmering pale emerald green, a lovely, glimmering mass of colour within the whitish marble-like confines. Overhead the light fell softly and the great green body of pure water moved under it as someone dived from the side.

Ursula, trembling, hardly able to contain herself, pulled off her clothes, put on her tight bathing-suit, and opened the door of her cabin. Two girls were in the water. The mistress had not appeared. She waited. A door opened. Miss Inger came out, dressed in a rust-red tunic like a Greek girl's, tied round the waist, and a red silk handkerchief round her head. How lovely she looked! Her knees were so white and strong and proud, and she was firm-bodied as Diana. She walked simply to the side of the bath, and with a negligent movement, flung herself in. For a moment Ursula watched the white, smooth, strong shoulders, and the easy arms swimming. Then she too dived into the water.

Now, ah now, she was swimming in the same water with her dear mistress. The girl moved her limbs voluptuously, and swam by herself, deliciously, yet with a craving of unsatisfaction. She wanted to touch the other, to touch her, to feel her.

"I will race you, Ursula," came the well-modulated voice.

Ursula started violently. She turned to see the warm, unfolded face of her mistress looking at her, to her. She was acknowledged. Laughing her own beautiful, startled laugh, she began to swim. The mistress was just ahead, swimming with easy strokes. Ursula could see the head put back, the water flickering upon the white shoulders, the strong legs kicking shadowily. And she swam blinded with passion. Ah, the beauty of the firm, white, cool flesh! Ah, the wonderful firm limbs. Ah, if she did not so despise her own thin, dusky fragment of a body, if only she too were fearless and capable.

She swam on eagerly, not wanting to win, only wanting to be near her mistress, to swim in a race with her. They neared the end of the bath, the deep end. Miss Inger touched the pipe, swung herself round, and caught Ursula round the waist in the water, and held her for a moment.

"I won," said Miss Inger, laughing.

There was a moment of suspense. Ursula's heart was beating so fast, she clung to the rail, and could not move. Her dilated, warm, unfolded, glowing face turned to the mistress, as if to her very sun.

"Good-bye," said Miss Inger, and she swam away to the other pupils, taking professional interest in them.

Ursula was dazed. She could still feel the touch of the mistress's body against her own--only this, only this. The rest of the swimming time passed like a trance. When the call was given to leave the water, Miss Inger walked down the bath towards Ursula. Her rust-red, thin tunic was clinging to her, the whole body was defined, firm and magnificent, as it seemed to the girl.

"I enjoyed our race, Ursula, did you?" said Miss Inger.

The girl could only laugh with revealed, open, glowing face.

The love was now tacitly confessed. But it was some time before any further progress was made. Ursula continued in suspense, in inflamed bliss.

Then one day, when she was alone, the mistress came near to her, and touching her cheek with her fingers, said with some difficulty.

"Would you like to come to tea with me on Saturday, Ursula?"

The girl flushed all gratitude.

"We'll go to a lovely little bungalow on the Soar, shall we? I stay the week-ends there sometimes."

Ursula was beside herself. She could not endure till the Saturday came, her thoughts burned up like a fire. If only it were Saturday, if only it were Saturday.

Then Saturday came, and she set out. Miss Inger met her in Sawley, and they walked about three miles to the bungalow. It was a moist, warm cloudy day.

The bungalow was a tiny, two-roomed shanty set on a steep bank. Everything in it was exquisite. In delicious privacy, the two girls made tea, and then they talked. Ursula need not be home till about ten o'clock.

The talk was led, by a kind of spell, to love. Miss Inger was telling Ursula of a friend, how she had died in childbirth, and what she had suffered; then she told of a prostitute, and of some of her experiences with men.

As they talked thus, on the little verandah of the bungalow, the night fell, there was a little warm rain.

"It is really stifling," said Miss Inger.

They watched a train, whose lights were pale in the lingering twilight, rushing across the distance.

"It will thunder," said Ursula.

The electric suspense continued, the darkness sank, they were eclipsed.

"I think I shall go and bathe," said Miss Inger, out of the cloud-black darkness.

"At night?" said Ursula.

"It is best at night. Will you come?"

"I should like to."

"It is quite safe--the grounds are private. We had better undress in the bungalow, for fear of the rain, then run down."

Shyly, stiffly, Ursula went into the bungalow, and began to remove her clothes. The lamp was turned low, she stood in the shadow. By another chair Winifred Inger was undressing.

Soon the naked, shadowy figure of the elder girl came to the younger.

"Are you ready?" she said.

"One moment."

Ursula could hardly speak. The other naked woman stood by, stood near, silent. Ursula was ready.

They ventured out into the darkness, feeling the soft air of night upon their skins.

"I can't see the path," said Ursula.

"It is here," said the voice, and the wavering, pallid figure was beside her, a hand grasping her arm. And the elder held the younger close against her, close, as they went down, and by the side of the water, she put her arms round her, and kissed her. And she lifted her in her arms, close, saying, softly:

"I shall carry you into the water."

Ursula lay still in her mistress's arms, her forehead against the beloved, maddening breast.

"I shall put you in," said Winifred.

But Ursula twined her body about her mistress.

After awhile the rain came down on their flushed, hot limbs, startling, delicious. A sudden, ice-cold shower burst in a great weight upon them. They stood up to it with pleasure. Ursula received the stream of it upon her breasts and her limbs. It made her cold, and a deep, bottomless silence welled up in her, as if bottomless darkness were returning upon her.

So the heat vanished away, she was chilled, as if from a waking up. She ran indoors, a chill, non-existent thing, wanting to get away. She wanted the light, the presence of other people, the external connection with the many. Above all she wanted to lose herself among natural surroundings.

She took her leave of her mistress and returned home. She was glad to be on the station with a crowd of Saturday-night people, glad to sit in the lighted, crowded railway carriage. Only she did not want to meet anybody she knew. She did not want to talk. She was alone, immune.

All this stir and seethe of lights and people was but the rim, the shores of a great inner darkness and void. She wanted very much to be on the seething, partially illuminated shore, for within her was the void reality of dark space.

For a time Miss Inger, her mistress, was gone; she was only a dark void, and Ursula was free as a shade walking in an underworld of extinction, of oblivion. Ursula was glad, with a kind of motionless, lifeless gladness, that her mistress was extinct, gone out of her.

In the morning, however, the love was there again, burning, burning. She remembered yesterday, and she wanted more, always more. She wanted to be with her mistress. All separation from her mistress was a restriction from living. Why could she not go to her to-day, to-day? Why must she pace about revoked at Cossethay whilst her mistress was elsewhere? She sat down and wrote a burning, passionate love-letter: she could not help it.

The two women became intimate. Their lives seemed suddenly to fuse into one, inseparable. Ursula went to Winifred's lodging, she spent there her only living hours. Winifred was very fond of water,--of swimming, of rowing. She belonged to various athletic clubs. Many delicious afternoons the two girls spent in a light boat on the river, Winifred always rowing. Indeed, Winifred seemed to delight in having Ursula in her charge, in giving things to the girl, in filling and enrichening her life.

So that Ursula developed rapidly during the few months of her intimacy with her mistress. Winifred had had a scientific education. She had known many clever people. She wanted to bring Ursula to her own position of thought.

They took religion and rid it of its dogmas, its falsehoods. Winifred humanised it all. Gradually it dawned upon Ursula that all the religion she knew was but a particular clothing to a human aspiration. The aspiration was the real thing,--the clothing was a matter almost of national taste or need. The Greeks had a naked Apollo, the Christians a white-robed Christ, the Buddhists a royal prince, the Egyptians their Osiris. Religions were local and religion was universal. Christianity was a local branch. There was as yet no assimilation of local religions into universal religion.

In religion there were the two great motives of fear and love. The motive of fear was as great as the motive of love. Christianity accepted crucifixion to escape from fear; "Do your worst to me, that I may have no more fear of the worst." But that which was feared was not necessarily all evil, and that which was loved not necessarily all good. Fear shall become reverence, and reverence is submission in identification; love shall become triumph, and triumph is delight in identification.

So much she talked of religion, getting the gist of many writings. In philosophy she was brought to the conclusion that the human desire is the criterion of all truth and all good. Truth does not lie beyond humanity, but is one of the products of the human mind and feeling. There is really nothing to fear. The motive of fear in religion is base, and must be left to the ancient worshippers of power, worship of Moloch.

We do not worship power, in our enlightened souls. Power is degenerated to money and Napoleonic stupidity.

Ursula could not help dreaming of Moloch. Her God was not mild and gentle, neither Lamb nor Dove. He was the lion and the eagle. Not because the lion and the eagle had power, but because they were proud and strong; they were themselves, they were not passive subjects of some shepherd, or pets of some loving woman, or sacrifices of some priest. She was weary to death of mild, passive lambs and monotonous doves. If the lamb might lie down with the lion, it would be a great honour to the lamb, but the lion's powerful heart would suffer no diminishing. She loved the dignity and self-possession of lions.

She did not see how lambs could love. Lambs could only be loved. They could only be afraid, and tremblingly submit to fear, and become sacrificial; or they could submit to love, and become beloveds. In both they were passive. Raging, destructive lovers, seeking the moment when fear is greatest, and triumph is greatest, the fear not greater than the triumph, the triumph not greater than the fear, these were no lambs nor doves. She stretched her own limbs like a lion or a wild horse, her heart was relentless in its desires. It would suffer a thousand deaths, but it would still be a lion's heart when it rose from death, a fiercer lion she would be, a surer, knowing herself different from and separate from the great, conflicting universe that was not herself.

Winifred Inger was also interested in the Women's Movement.

"The men will do no more,--they have lost the capacity for doing," said the elder girl. "They fuss and talk, but they are really inane. They make everything fit into an old, inert idea. Love is a dead idea to them. They don't come to one and love one, they come to an idea, and they say 'You are my idea,' so they embrace themselves. As if I were any man's idea! As if I exist because a man has an idea of me! As if I will be betrayed by him, lend him my body as an instrument for his idea, to be a mere apparatus of his dead theory. But they are too fussy to be able to act; they are all impotent, they can't take a woman. They come to their own idea every time, and take that. They are like serpents trying to swallow themselves because they are hungry."

Ursula was introduced by her friend to various women and men, educated, unsatisfied people, who still moved within the smug provincial society as if they were nearly as tame as their outward behaviour showed, but who were inwardly raging and mad.

It was a strange world the girl was swept into, like a chaos, like the end of the world. She was too young to understand it all. Yet the inoculation passed into her, through her love for her mistress.

The examination came, and then school was over. It was the long vacation. Winifred Inger went away to

London. Ursula was left alone in Cossethay. A terrible, outcast, almost poisonous despair possessed her. It was no use doing anything, or being anything. She had no connection with other people. Her lot was isolated and deadly. There was nothing for her anywhere, but this black disintegration. Yet, within all the great attack of disintegration upon her, she remained herself. It was the terrible core of all her suffering, that she was always herself. Never could she escape that: she could not put off being herself.

She still adhered to Winifred Inger. But a sort of nausea was coming over her. She loved her mistress. But a heavy, clogged sense of deadness began to gather upon her, from the other woman's contact. And sometimes she thought Winifred was ugly, clayey. Her female hips seemed big and earthy, her ankles and her arms were too thick. She wanted some fine intensity, instead of this heavy cleaving of moist clay, that cleaves because it has no life of its own.

Winifred still loved Ursula. She had a passion for the fine flame of the girl, she served her endlessly, would have done anything for her.

"Come with me to London," she pleaded to the girl. "I will make it nice for you,--you shall do lots of things you will enjoy."

"No," said Ursula, stubbornly and dully. "No, I don't want to go to London, I want to be by myself."

Winifred knew what this meant. She knew that Ursula was beginning to reject her. The fine, unquenchable flame of the younger girl would consent no more to mingle with the perverted life of the elder woman. Winifred knew it would come. But she too was proud. At the bottom of her was a black pit of despair. She knew perfectly well that Ursula would cast her off.

And that seemed like the end of her life. But she was too hopeless to rage. Wisely, economising what was left of Ursula's love, she went away to London, leaving the beloved girl alone.

And after a fortnight, Ursula's letters became tender again, loving. Her Uncle Tom had invited her to go and stay with him. He was managing a big, new colliery in Yorkshire. Would Winifred come too?

For now Ursula was imagining marriage for Winifred. She wanted her to marry her Uncle Tom. Winifred knew this. She said she would come to Wiggiston. She would now let fate do as it liked with her, since there was nothing remaining to be done. Tom Brangwen also saw Ursula's intention. He too was at the end of his desires. He had done the things he had wanted to. They had all ended in a disintegrated lifelessness of soul, which he hid under an utterly tolerant good-humour. He no longer cared about anything on earth, neither man nor woman, nor God nor humanity. He had come to a stability of nullification. He did not care any more, neither about his body nor about his soul. Only he would preserve intact his own life. Only the simple, superficial fact of living persisted. He was still healthy. He lived. Therefore he would fill each moment. That had always been his creed. It was not instinctive easiness: it was the inevitable outcome of his nature. When he was in the absolute privacy of his own life, he did as he pleased, unscrupulous, without any ulterior thought. He believed neither in good nor evil. Each moment was like a separate little island, isolated from time, and blank, unconditioned by time.

He lived in a large new house of red brick, standing outside a mass of homogeneous red-brick dwellings, called Wiggiston. Wiggiston was only seven years old. It had been a hamlet of eleven houses on the edge of healthy, half-agricultural country. Then the great seam of coal had been opened. In a year Wiggiston appeared, a great mass of pinkish rows of thin, unreal dwellings of five rooms each. The streets were like visions of pure ugliness; a grey-black macadamised road, asphalt causeways, held in between a flat succession of wall, window, and door, a new-brick channel that began nowhere, and ended nowhere. Everything was amorphous, yet everything repeated itself endlessly. Only now and then, in one of the house-windows vegetables or small groceries were displayed for sale.

In the middle of the town was a large, open, shapeless space, or market-place, of black trodden earth, surrounded by the same flat material of dwellings, new red-brick becoming grimy, small oblong windows, and oblong doors, repeated endlessly, with just, at one corner, a great and gaudy publichouse, and somewhere lost on one of the sides of the square, a large window opaque and darkish green, which was the postoffice.

The place had the strange desolation of a ruin. Colliers hanging about in gangs and groups, or passing along the asphalt pavements heavily to work, seemed not like living people, but like spectres. The rigidity of the blank streets, the homogeneous amorphous sterility of the whole suggested death rather than life. There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic formation. There it lay, like the new foundations of a red-brick confusion rapidly spreading, like a skin-disease.

Just outside of this, on a little hill, was Tom Brangwen's big, red-brick house. It looked from the front upon the edge of the place, a meaningless squalor of ash-pits and closets and irregular rows of the backs of houses, each with its small activity made sordid by barren cohesion with the rest of the small activities. Farther off was the great colliery that went night and day. And all around was the country, green with two winding streams, ragged with gorse, and heath, the darker woods in the distance.

The whole place was just unreal, just unreal. Even now, when he had been there for two years, Tom Brangwen did not believe in the actuality of the place. It was like some gruesome dream, some ugly, dead, amorphous mood become concrete.

Ursula and Winifred were met by the motor-car at the raw little station, and drove through what seemed to them like the horrible raw beginnings of something. The place was a moment of chaos perpetuated, persisting, chaos fixed and rigid. Ursula was fascinated by the many men who were there--groups of men standing in the streets, four or five men walking in a gang together, their dogs running behind or before. They were all decently dressed, and most of them rather gaunt. The terrible gaunt repose of their bearing fascinated her. Like creatures with no more hope, but which still live and have passionate being, within some utterly unliving shell, they passed meaninglessly along, with strange, isolated dignity. It was as if a hard, horny shell enclosed them all.

Shocked and startled, Ursula was carried to her Uncle Tom's house. He was not yet at home. His house was simply, but well furnished. He had taken out a dividing wall, and made the whole front of the house into a large library, with one end devoted to his science. It was a handsome room, appointed as a laboratory and reading room, but giving the same sense of hard, mechanical activity, activity mechanical yet inchoate, and looking out on the hideous abstraction of the town, and at the green meadows and rough country beyond, and at the great, mathematical colliery on the other side.

They saw Tom Brangwen walking up the curved drive. He was getting stouter, but with his bowler hat worn well set down on his brows, he looked manly, handsome, curiously like any other man of action. His colour was as fresh, his health as perfect as ever, he walked like a man rather absorbed.

Winifred Inger was startled when he entered the library, his coat fastened and correct, his head bald to the crown, but not shiny, rather like something naked that one is accustomed to see covered, and his dark eyes liquid and formless. He seemed to stand in the shadow, like a thing ashamed. And the clasp of his hand was so soft and yet so forceful, that it chilled the heart. She was afraid of him, repelled by him, and yet attracted.

He looked at the athletic, seemingly fearless girl, and he detected in her a kinship with his own dark corruption. Immediately, he knew they were akin.

His manner was polite, almost foreign, and rather cold. He still laughed in his curious, animal fashion, suddenly wrinkling up his wide nose, and showing his sharp teeth. The fine beauty of his skin and his complexion, some almost waxen quality, hid the strange, repellent grossness of him, the slight sense of putrescence, the commonness which revealed itself in his rather fat thighs and loins.

Winifred saw at once the deferential, slightly servile, slightly cunning regard he had for Ursula, which made the girl at once so proud and so perplexed.

"But is this place as awful as it looks?" the young girl asked, a strain in her eyes.

"It is just what it looks," he said. "It hides nothing."

"Why are the men so sad?"

"Are they sad?" he replied.

"They seem unutterably, unutterably sad," said Ursula, out of a passionate throat.

"I don't think they are that. They just take it for granted."

"What do they take for granted?"

"This--the pits and the place altogether."

"Why don't they alter it?" she passionately protested.

"They believe they must alter themselves to fit the pits and the place, rather than alter the pits and the place to fit themselves. It is easier," he said.

"And you agree with them," burst out his niece, unable to bear it. "You think like they do--that living human beings must be taken and adapted to all kinds of horrors. We could easily do without the pits."

He smiled, uncomfortably, cynically. Ursula felt again the revolt of hatred from him.

"I suppose their lives are not really so bad," said Winifred Inger, superior to the Zolaesque tragedy.

He turned with his polite, distant attention.

"Yes, they are pretty bad. The pits are very deep, and hot, and in some places wet. The men die of consumption fairly often. But they earn good wages."

"How gruesome!" said Winifred Inger.

"Yes," he replied gravely. It was his grave, solid, selfcontained manner which made him so much respected as a colliery manager.

The servant came in to ask where they would have tea.

"Put it in the summer-house, Mrs. Smith," he said.

The fair-haired, good-looking young woman went out.

"Is she married and in service?" asked Ursula.

"She is a widow. Her husband died of consumption a little while ago." Brangwen gave a sinister little laugh.

"He lay there in the house-place at her mother's, and five or six other people in the house, and died very gradually. I asked her if his death wasn't a great trouble to her. 'Well,' she said, 'he was very fretful towards the last, never satisfied, never easy, always fret-fretting, an' never knowing what would satisfy him. So in one way it was a relief when it was over--for him and for everybody.' They had only been married two years, and she has one boy. I asked her if she hadn't been very happy. 'Oh, yes, sir, we was very comfortable at first, till he took bad--oh, we was very comfortable--oh, yes--but, you see, you get used to it. I've had my father and two brothers go off just the same. You get used to it'."

"It's a horrible thing to get used to," said Winifred Inger, with a shudder.

"Yes," he said, still smiling. "But that's how they are. She'll be getting married again directly. One man or another--it does not matter very much. They're all colliers."

"What do you mean?" asked Ursula. "They're all colliers?"

"It is with the women as with us," he replied. "Her husband was John Smith, loader. We reckoned him as a loader, he reckoned himself as a loader, and so she knew he represented his job. Marriage and home is a little side-show.

"The women know it right enough, and take it for what it's worth. One man or another, it doesn't matter all the world. The pit matters. Round the pit there will always be the sideshows, plenty of 'em."

He looked round at the red chaos, the rigid, amorphous confusion of Wiggiston.

"Every man his own little side-show, his home, but the pit owns every man. The women have what is left. What's left of this man, or what is left of that--it doesn't matter altogether. The pit takes all that really matters."

"It is the same everywhere," burst out Winifred. "It is the office, or the shop, or the business that gets the man, the woman gets the bit the shop can't digest. What is he at home, a man? He is a meaningless lump--a standing machine, a machine out of work."

"They know they are sold," said Tom Brangwen. "That's where it is. They know they are sold to their job. If a woman talks her throat out, what difference can it make? The man's sold to his job. So the women don't bother. They take what they can catch--and vogue la galere."

"Aren't they very strict here?" asked Miss Inger.

"Oh, no. Mrs. Smith has two sisters who have just changed husbands. They're not very particular--neither are they very interested. They go dragging along what is left from the pits. They're not interested enough to be very immoral--it all amounts to the same thing, moral or immoral--just a question of pit-wages. The most moral duke in England makes two hundred thousand a year out of these pits. He keeps the morality end up."

Ursula sat black-souled and very bitter, hearing the two of them talk. There seemed something ghoulish even in their very deploring of the state of things. They seemed to take a ghoulish satisfaction in it. The pit was the great mistress. Ursula looked out of the window and saw the proud, demonlike colliery with her wheels twinkling in the heavens, the formless, squalid mass of the town lying aside. It was the squalid heap of side-shows. The pit was the main show, the raison d'etre of all.

How terrible it was! There was a horrible fascination in it--human bodies and lives subjected in slavery to that symmetric monster of the colliery. There was a swooning, perverse satisfaction in it. For a moment she was dizzy.

Then she recovered, felt herself in a great loneliness, where-in she was sad but free. She had departed. No more would she subscribe to the great colliery, to the great machine which has taken us all captives. In her soul, she was against it, she disowned even its power. It had only to be forsaken to be inane, meaningless. And she knew it was meaningless. But it needed a great, passionate effort of will on her part, seeing the colliery, still to maintain her knowledge that it was meaningless.

But her Uncle Tom and her mistress remained there among the horde, cynically reviling the monstrous state and yet adhering to it, like a man who reviles his mistress, yet who is in love with her. She knew her Uncle Tom perceived what was going on. But she knew moreover that in spite of his criticism and condemnation, he still wanted the great machine. His only happy moments, his only moments of pure freedom were when he was serving the machine. Then, and then only, when the machine caught him up, was he free from the hatred of himself, could he act wholely, without cynicism and unreality.

His real mistress was the machine, and the real mistress of Winifred was the machine. She too, Winifred, worshipped the impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter. There, there, in the machine, in service of the machine, was she free from the clog and degradation of human feeling. There, in the monstrous mechanism that held all matter, living or dead, in its service, did she achieve her consummation and her perfect unison, her immortality.

Hatred sprang up in Ursula's heart. If she could she would smash the machine. Her soul's action should be the smashing of the great machine. If she could destroy the collliery, and make all the men of Wiggiston out of work, she would do it. Let them starve and grub in the earth for roots, rather than serve such a Moloch as this.

She hated her Uncle Tom, she hated Winifred Inger. They went down to the summer-house for tea. It was a pleasant place among a few trees, at the end of a tiny garden, on the edge of a field. Her Uncle Tom and Winifred seemed to jeer at her, to cheapen her. She was miserable and desolate. But she would never give way.

Her coldness for Winifred should never cease. She knew it was over between them. She saw gross, ugly movements in her mistress, she saw a clayey, inert, unquickened flesh, that reminded her of the great prehistoric lizards. One day her Uncle Tom came in out of the broiling sunshine heated from walking. Then the perspiration stood out upon his head and brow, his hand was wet and hot and suffocating in its clasp. He too had something marshy about him--the succulent moistness and turgidity, and the same brackish, nauseating effect of a marsh, where life and decaying are one.

He was repellent to her, who was so dry and fine in her fire. Her very bones seemed to bid him keep his distance from her.

It was in these weeks that Ursula grew up. She stayed two weeks at Wiggiston, and she hated it. All was grey, dry ash, cold and dead and ugly. But she stayed. She stayed also to get rid of Winifred. The girl's hatred and her sense of repulsiveness in her mistress and in her uncle seemed to throw the other two together. They drew together as if against her.

In hardness and bitterness of soul, Ursula knew that Winifred was become her uncle's lover. She was glad. She had loved them both. Now she wanted to be rid of them both. Their marshy, bitter-sweet corruption came sick and unwholesome in her nostrils. Anything, to get out of the foetid air. She would leave them both for ever, leave for ever their strange, soft, half-corrupt element. Anything to get away.

One night Winifred came all burning into Ursula's bed, and put her arms round the girl, holding her to herself in spite of unwillingness, and said,

"Dear, my dear--shall I marry Mr. Brangwen--shall I?"

The clinging, heavy, muddy question weighed on Ursula intolerably.

"Has he asked you?" she said, using all her might of hard resistance.

"He's asked me," said Winifred. "Do you want me to marry him, Ursula?"

"Yes," said Ursula.

The arms tightened more on her.

"I knew you did, my sweet--and I will marry him. You're fond of him, aren't you?"

"I've been awfully fond of him--ever since I was a child."

"I know--I know. I can see what you like in him. He is a man by himself, he has something apart from the rest."

"Yes," said Ursula.

"But he's not like you, my dear--ha, he's not as good as you. There's something even objectionable in him--his thick thighs--"

Ursula was silent.

"But I'll marry him, my dear--it will be best. Now say you love me."

A sort of profession was extorted out of the girl. Nevertheless her mistress went away sighing, to weep in her own chamber.

In two days' time Ursula left Wiggiston. Miss Inger went to Nottingham. There was an engagement between her and Tom Brangwen, which the uncle seemed to vaunt as if it were an assurance of his validity.

Brangwen and Winifred Inger continued engaged for another term. Then they married. Brangwen had reached the age when he wanted children. He wanted children. Neither marriage nor the domestic establishment meant anything to him. He wanted to propagate himself. He knew what he was doing. He had the instinct of a growing inertia, of a thing that chooses its place of rest in which to lapse into apathy, complete, profound indifference. He would let the machinery carry him; husband, father, pit-manager, warm clay lifted through the recurrent action of day after day by the great machine from which it derived its motion. As for Winifred, she was an educated woman, and of the same sort as himself. She would make a good companion. She was his mate.

Chapter 13

The Man's World

Ursula came back to Cossethay to fight with her mother. Her schooldays were over. She had passed the matriculation examination. Now she came home to face that empty period between school and possible marriage.

At first she thought it would be just like holidays all the time, she would feel just free. Her soul was in chaos, blinded suffering, maimed. She had no will left to think about herself. For a time she must just lapse.

But very shortly she found herself up against her mother. Her mother had, at this time, the power to irritate and madden the girl continuously. There were already seven children, yet Mrs. Brangwen was again with child, the ninth she had borne. One had died of diphtheria in infancy.

Even this fact of her mother's pregnancy enraged the eldest girl. Mrs. Brangwen was so complacent, so utterly fulfilled in her breeding. She would not have the existence at all of anything but the immediate, physical, common things. Ursula inflamed in soul, was suffering all the anguish of youth's reaching for some unknown ordeal, that it can't grasp, can't even distinguish or conceive. Maddened, she was fighting all the darkness she was up against. And part of this darkness was her mother. To limit, as her mother did, everything to the ring of physical considerations, and complacently to reject the reality of anything else, was horrible. Not a thing did Mrs. Brangwen care about, but the children, the house, and a little local gossip. And she would not be touched, she would let nothing else live near her. She went about, big with child, slovenly, easy, having a certain lax dignity, taking her own time, pleasing herself, always, always doing things for the children, and feeling that she thereby fulfilled the whole of womanhood.

This long trance of complacent child-bearing had kept her young and undeveloped. She was scarcely a day older than when Gudrun was born. All these years nothing had happened save the coming of the children, nothing had mattered but the bodies of her babies. As her children came into consciousness, as they began to suffer their own fulfilment, she cast them off. But she remained dominant in the house. Brangwen continued in a kind of rich drowse of physical heat, in connection with his wife. They were neither of them quite personal, quite defined as individuals, so much were they pervaded by the physical heat of breeding and rearing their young.

How Ursula resented it, how she fought against the close, physical, limited life of herded domesticity! Calm, placid, unshakeable as ever, Mrs. Brangwen went about in her dominance of physical maternity.

There were battles. Ursula would fight for things that mattered to her. She would have the children less rude and tyrannical, she would have a place in the house. But her mother pulled her down, pulled her down. With all the cunning instinct of a breeding animal, Mrs. Brangwen ridiculed and held cheap Ursula's passions, her ideas, her pronunciations. Ursula would try to insist, in her own home, on the right of women to take equal place with men in the field of action and work.

"Ay," said the mother, "there's a good crop of stockings lying ripe for mending. Let that be your field of action."

Ursula disliked mending stockings, and this retort maddened her. She hated her mother bitterly. After a few weeks of enforced domestic life, she had had enough of her home. The commonness, the triviality, the immediate meaninglessness of it all drove her to frenzy. She talked and stormed ideas, she corrected and nagged at the children, she turned her back in silent contempt on her breeding mother, who treated her with supercilious indifference, as if she were a pretentious child not to be taken seriously.

Brangwen was sometimes dragged into the trouble. He loved Ursula, therefore he always had a sense of shame, almost of betrayal, when he turned on her. So he turned fiercely and scathingly, and with a wholesale brutality that made Ursula go white, mute, and numb. Her feelings seemed to be becoming deadened in her, her temper hard and cold.

Brangwen himself was in one of his states or flux. After all these years, he began to see a loophole of freedom. For twenty years he had gone on at this office as a draughtsman, doing work in which he had no interest, because it seemed his allotted work. The growing up of his daughters, their developing rejection of old forms set him also free.

He was a man of ceaseless activity. Blindly, like a mole, he pushed his way out of the earth that covered him, working always away from the physical element in which his life was captured. Slowly, blindly, gropingly, with what initiative was left to him, he made his way towards individual expression and individual form.

At last, after twenty years, he came back to his woodcarving, almost to the point where he had left off his Adam and Eve panel, when he was courting. But now he had knowledge and skill without vision. He saw the puerility of his young conceptions, he saw the unreal world in which they had been conceived. He now had a new strength in his sense of reality. He felt as if he were real, as if he handled real things. He had worked for many years at Cossethay, building the organ for the church, restoring the woodwork, gradually coming to a knowledge of beauty in the plain labours. Now he wanted again to carve things that were utterances of himself.

But he could not quite hitch on--always he was too busy, too uncertain, confused. Wavering, he began to study modelling. To his surprise he found he could do it. Modelling in clay, in plaster, he produced beautiful reproductions, really beautiful. Then he set-to to make a head of Ursula, in high relief, in the Donatello manner. In his first passion, he got a beautiful suggestion of his desire. But the pitch of concentration would not come. With a little ash in his mouth he gave up. He continued to copy, or to make designs by selecting motives from classic stuff. He loved the Della Robbia and Donatello as he had loved Fra Angelico when he was a young man. His work had some of the freshness, the naive alertness of the early Italians. But it was only reproduction.

Having reached his limit in modelling, he turned to painting. But he tried water-colour painting after the manner of any other amateur. He got his results but was not much interested. After one or two drawings of his beloved church, which had the same alertness as his modelling, he seemed to be incongruous with the modern atmospheric way of painting, so that his church tower stood up, really stood and asserted its standing, but was ashamed of its own lack of meaning, he turned away again.

He took up jewellery, read Benvenuto Cellini, pored over reproductions of ornament, and began to make pendants in silver and pearl and matrix. The first things he did, in his start of discovery, were really beautiful. Those later were more imitative. But, starting with his wife, he made a pendant each for all his womenfolk. Then he made rings and bracelets.

Then he took up beaten and chiselled metal work. When Ursula left school, he was making a silver bowl of lovely shape. How he delighted in it, almost lusted after it.

All this time his only connection with the real outer world was through his winter evening classes, which brought him into contact with state education. About all the rest, he was oblivious, and entirely indifferent--even about the war. The nation did not exist to him. He was in a private retreat of his own, that had neither nationality, nor any great adherent.

Ursula watched the newspapers, vaguely, concerning the war in South Africa. They made her miserable, and she tried to have as little to do with them as possible. But Skrebensky was out there. He sent her an occasional post-card. But it was as if she were a blank wall in his direction, without windows or outgoing. She adhered to the Skrebensky of her memory.

Her love for Winifred Inger wrenched her life as it seemed from the roots and native soil where Skrebensky had belonged to it, and she was aridly transplanted. He was really only a memory. She revived his memory with strange passion, after the departure of Winifred. He was to her almost the symbol of her real life. It was as if, through him, in him, she might return to her own self, which she was before she had loved Winifred, before this deadness had come upon her, this pitiless transplanting. But even her memories were the work of her imagination.

She dreamed of him and her as they had been together. She could not dream of him progressively, of what he was doing now, of what relation he would have to her now. Only sometimes she wept to think how cruelly she had suffered when he left her--ah, how she had suffered! She remembered what she had written in her diary:

"If I were the moon, I know where I would fall down."

Ah, it was a dull agony to her to remember what she had been then. For it was remembering a dead self. All that was dead after Winifred. She knew the corpse of her young, loving self, she knew its grave. And the young living self she mourned for had scarcely existed, it was the creature of her imagination.

Deep within her a cold despair remained unchanging and unchanged. No one would ever love her now--she would love no one. The body of love was killed in her after Winifred, there was something of the corpse in her. She would live, she would go on, but she would have no lovers, no lover would want her any more. She herself would want no lover. The vividest little flame of desire was extinct in her for ever. The tiny, vivid germ that contained the bud of her real self, her real love, was killed, she would go on growing as a plant, she would do her best to produce her minor flowers, but her leading flower was dead before it was born, all her growth was the conveying of a corpse of hope.

The miserable weeks went on, in the poky house crammed with children. What was her life--a sordid, formless, disintegrated nothing; Ursula Brangwen a person without worth or importance, living in the mean village of Cossethay, within the sordid scope of Ilkeston. Ursula Brangwen, at seventeen, worthless and unvalued, neither wanted nor needed by anybody, and conscious herself of her own dead value. It would not bear thinking of.

But still her dogged pride held its own. She might be defiled, she might be a corpse that should never be loved, she might be a core-rotten stalk living upon the food that others provided; yet she would give in to nobody.

Gradually she became conscious that she could not go on living at home as she was doing, without place or meaning or worth. The very children that went to school held her uselessness in contempt. She must do something.

Her father said she had plenty to do to help her mother. From her parents she would never get more than a hit in the face. She was not a practical person. She thought of wild things, of running away and becoming a domestic servant, of asking some man to take her.

She wrote to the mistress of the High School for advice.

"I cannot see very clearly what you should do, Ursula," came the reply, "unless you are willing to become an elementary school teacher. You have matriculated, and that qualifies you to take a post as uncertificated teacher in any school, at a salary of about fifty pounds a year.

"I cannot tell you how deeply I sympathise with you in your desire to do something. You will learn that mankind is a great body of which you are one useful member, you will take your own place at the great task which humanity is trying to fulfil. That will give you a satisfaction and a self-respect which nothing else could give."

Ursula's heart sank. It was a cold, dreary satisfaction to think of. Yet her cold will acquiesced. This was what she wanted.

"You have an emotional nature," the letter went on, "a quick natural response. If only you could learn patience and self-discipline, I do not see why you should not make a good teacher. The least you could do is to try. You need only serve a year, or perhaps two years, as uncertificated teacher. Then you would go to one of the training colleges, where I hope you would take your degree. I most strongly urge and advise you to keep up your studies always with the intention of taking a degree. That will give you a qualification and a position in the world, and will give you more scope to choose your own way.

"I shall be proud to see one of my girls win her own economical independence, which means so much more than it seems. I shall be glad indeed to know that one more of my girls has provided for herself the means of freedom to choose for herself."

It all sounded grim and desperate. Ursula rather hated it. But her mother's contempt and her father's harshness had made her raw at the quick, she knew the ignominy of being a hanger-on, she felt the festering thorn of her mother's animal estimation.

At length she had to speak. Hard and shut down and silent within herself, she slipped out one evening to the workshed. She heard the tap-tap-tap of the hammer upon the metal. Her father lifted his head as the door opened. His face was ruddy and bright with instinct, as when he was a youth, his black moustache was cut close over his wide mouth, his black hair was fine and close as ever. But there was about him an abstraction, a sort of instrumental detachment from human things. He was a worker. He watched his daughter's hard, expressionless face. A hot anger came over his breast and belly.

"What now?" he said.

"Can't I," she answered, looking aside, not looking at him, "can't I go out to work?"

"Go out to work, what for?"

His voice was so strong, and ready, and vibrant. It irritated her.

"I want some other life than this."

A flash of strong rage arrested all his blood for a moment.

"Some other life?" he repeated. "Why, what other life do you want?"

She hesitated.

"Something else besides housework and hanging about. And I want to earn something."

Her curious, brutal hardness of speech, and the fierce invincibility of her youth, which ignored him, made him also harden with anger.

"And how do you think you're going to earn anything?" he asked.

"I can become a teacher--I'm qualified by my matric."

He wished her matric. in hell.

"And how much are you qualified to earn by your matric?" he asked, jeering.

"Fifty pounds a year," she said.

He was silent, his power taken out of his hand.

He had always hugged a secret pride in the fact that his daughters need not go out to work. With his wife's money and his own they had four hundred a year. They could draw on the capital if need be later on. He was not afraid for his old age. His daughters might be ladies.

Fifty pounds a year was a pound a week--which was enough for her to live on independently.

"And what sort of a teacher do you think you'd make? You haven't the patience of a Jack-gnat with your own brothers and sisters, let alone with a class of children. And I thought you didn't like dirty, board- school brats."

"They're not all dirty."

"You'd find they're not all clean."

There was silence in the workshop. The lamplight fell on the burned silver bowl that lay between him, on mallet and furnace and chisel. Brangwen stood with a queer, catlike light on his face, almost like a smile. But it was no smile.

"Can I try?" she said.

"You can do what the deuce you like, and go where you like."

Her face was fixed and expressionless and indifferent. It always sent him to a pitch of frenzy to see it like that. He kept perfectly still.

Cold, without any betrayal of feeling, she turned and left the shed. He worked on, with all his nerves jangled. Then he had to put down his tools and go into the house.

In a bitter tone of anger and contempt he told his wife. Ursula was present. There was a brief altercation, closed by Mrs. Brangwen's saying, in a tone of biting superiority and indifference:

"Let her find out what it's like. She'll soon have had enough."

The matter was left there. But Ursula considered herself free to act. For some days she made no move. She was reluctant to take the cruel step of finding work, for she shrank with extreme sensitiveness and shyness from new contact, new situations. Then at length a sort of doggedness drove her. Her soul was full of bitterness.

She went to the Free Library in Ilkeston, copied out addresses from the Schoolmistress, and wrote for application forms. After two days she rose early to meet the postman. As she expected, there were three long envelopes.

Her heart beat painfully as she went up with them to her bedroom. Her fingers trembled, she could hardly force herself to look at the long, official forms she had to fill in. The whole thing was so cruel, so impersonal. Yet it must be done.

"Name (surname first):..."

In a trembling hand she wrote, "Brangwen,--Ursula."

"Age and date of birth:..."

After a long time considering, she filled in that line.

"Qualifications, with date of Examination:..."

With a little pride she wrote:

"London Matriculation Examination."

"Previous experience and where obtained:..."

Her heart sank as she wrote:

"None."

Still there was much to answer. It took her two hours to fill in the three forms. Then she had to copy her testimonials from her head-mistress and from the clergyman.

At last, however, it was finished. She had sealed the three long envelopes. In the afternoon she went down to Ilkeston to post them. She said nothing of it all to her parents. As she stamped her long letters and put them into the box at the main post-office she felt as if already she was out of the reach of her father and mother, as if she had connected herself with the outer, greater world of activity, the man-made world.

As she returned home, she dreamed again in her own fashion her old, gorgeous dreams. One of her applications was to Gillingham, in Kent, one to Kingston-on-Thames, and one to Swanwick in Derbyshire.

Gillingham was such a lovely name, and Kent was the Garden of England. So that, in Gillingham, an old, old village by the hopfields, where the sun shone softly, she came out of school in the afternoon into the shadow of the plane trees by the gate, and turned down the sleepy road towards the cottage where cornflowers poked their blue heads through the old wooden fence, and phlox stood built up of blossom beside the path.

A delicate, silver-haired lady rose with delicate, ivory hands uplifted as Ursula entered the room, and:

"Oh, my dear, what do you think!"

"What is it, Mrs. Wetherall?"

Frederick had come home. Nay, his manly step was heard on the stair, she saw his strong boots, his blue trousers, his uniformed figure, and then his face, clean and keen as an eagle's, and his eyes lit up with the glamour of strange seas, ah, strange seas that had woven through his soul, as he descended into the kitchen.

This dream, with its amplifications, lasted her a mile of walking. Then she went to Kingston-on-Thames.

Kingston-on-Thames was an old historic place just south of London. There lived the well-born dignified souls who belonged to the metropolis, but who loved peace. There she met a wonderful family of girls living in a large old Queen Anne house, whose lawns sloped to the river, and in an atmosphere of stately peace she found herself among her soul's intimates. They loved her as sisters, they shared with her all noble thoughts.

She was happy again. In her musings she spread her poor, clipped wings, and flew into the pure empyrean.

Day followed day. She did not speak to her parents. Then came the return of her testimonials from Gillingham. She was not wanted, neither at Swanwick. The bitterness of rejection followed the sweets of hope. Her bright feathers were in the dust again.

Then, suddenly, after a fortnight, came an intimation from Kingston-on-Thames. She was to appear at the Education Office of that town on the following Thursday, for an interview with the Committee. Her heart stood still. She knew she would make the Committee accept her. Now she was afraid, now that her removal was imminent. Her heart quivered with fear and reluctance. But underneath her purpose was fixed.

She passed shadowily through the day, unwilling to tell her news to her mother, waiting for her father. Suspense and fear were strong upon her. She dreaded going to Kingston. Her easy dreams disappeared from the grasp of reality.

And yet, as the afternoon wore away, the sweetness of the dream returned again. Kingston-on-Thames--there was such sound of dignity to her. The shadow of history and the glamour of stately progress enveloped her. The palaces would be old and darkened, the place of kings obscured. Yet it was a place of kings for her--Richard and Henry and Wolsey and Queen Elizabeth. She divined great lawns with noble trees, and terraces whose steps the water washed softly, where the swans sometimes came to earth. Still she must see the stately, gorgeous barge of the Queen float down, the crimson carpet put upon the landing stairs, the gentlemen in their purple-velvet cloaks, bare-headed, standing in the sunshine grouped on either side waiting.

"Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song."

Evening came, her father returned home, sanguine and alert and detached as ever. He was less real than her fancies. She waited whilst he ate his tea. He took big mouthfuls, big bites, and ate unconsciously with the same abandon an animal gives to its food.

Immediately after tea he went over to the church. It was choir-practice, and he wanted to try the tunes on his organ.

The latch of the big door clicked loudly as she came after him, but the organ rolled more loudly still. He was unaware. He was practising the anthem. She saw his small, jet-black head and alert face between the candle-flames, his slim body sagged on the music-stool. His face was so luminous and fixed, the movements of his limbs seemed strange, apart from him. The sound of the organ seemed to belong to the very stone of the pillars, like sap running in them.

Then there was a close of music and silence.

"Father!" she said.

He looked round as if at an apparition. Ursula stood shadowily within the candle-light.

"What now?" he said, not coming to earth.

It was difficult to speak to him.

"I've got a situation," she said, forcing herself to speak.

"You've got what?" he answered, unwilling to come out of his mood of organ-playing. He closed the music before him.

"I've got a situation to go to."

Then he turned to her, still abstracted, unwilling.

"Oh, where's that?" he said.

"At Kingston-on-Thames. I must go on Thursday for an interview with the Committee."

"You must go on Thursday?"

"Yes."

And she handed him the letter. He read it by the light of the candles.

"Ursula Brangwen, Yew Tree Cottage, Cossethay, Derbyshire.

"Dear Madam, You are requested to call at the above offices on Thursday next, the 10th, at 11.30 a.m., for an interview with the committee, referring to your application for the post of assistant mistress at the Wellingborough Green Schools."

It was very difficult for Brangwen to take in this remote and official information, glowing as he was within the quiet of his church and his anthem music.

"Well, you needn't bother me with it now, need you?' he said impatiently, giving her back the letter.

"I've got to go on Thursday," she said.

He sat motionless. Then he reached more music, and there was a rushing sound of air, then a long, emphatic trumpet-note of the organ, as he laid his hands on the keys. Ursula turned and went away.

He tried to give himself again to the organ. But he could not. He could not get back. All the time a sort of string was tugging, tugging him elsewhere, miserably.

So that when he came into the house after choir-practice his face was dark and his heart black. He said nothing however, until all the younger children were in bed. Ursula, however, knew what was brewing.

At length he asked:

"Where's that letter?"

She gave it to him. He sat looking at it. "You are requested to call at the above offices on Thursday next----" It was a cold, official notice to Ursula herself and had nothing to do with him. So! She existed now as a separate social individual. It was for her to answer this note, without regard to him. He had even no right to interfere. His heart was hard and angry.

"You had to do it behind our backs, had you?" he said, with a sneer. And her heart leapt with hot pain. She knew she was free--she had broken away from him. He was beaten.

"You said, 'let her try,'" she retorted, almost apologising to him.

He did not hear. He sat looking at the letter.

"Education Office, Kingston-on-Thames"--and then the typewritten "Miss Ursula Brangwen, Yew Tree Cottage, Cossethay." It was all so complete and so final. He could not but feel the new position Ursula held, as recipient of that letter. It was an iron in his soul.

"Well," he said at length, "you're not going."

Ursula started and could find no words to clamour her revolt.

"If you think you're going dancin' off to th' other side of London, you're mistaken."

"Why not?" she cried, at once hard fixed in her will to go.

"That's why not," he said.

And there was silence till Mrs. Brangwen came downstairs.

"Look here, Anna," he said, handing her the letter.

She put back her head, seeing a typewritten letter, anticipating trouble from the outside world. There was the curious, sliding motion of her eyes, as if she shut off her sentient, maternal self, and a kind of hard trance, meaningless, took its place. Thus, meaningless, she glanced over the letter, careful not to take it in. She apprehended the contents with her callous, superficial mind. Her feeling self was shut down.

"What post is it?" she asked.

"She wants to go and be a teacher in Kingston-on-Thames, at fifty pounds a year."

"Oh, indeed."

The mother spoke as if it were a hostile fact concerning some stranger. She would have let her go, out of callousness. Mrs. Brangwen would begin to grow up again only with her youngest child. Her eldest girl was in the way now.

"She's not going all that distance," said the father.

"I have to go where they want me," cried Ursula. "And it's a good place to go to."

"What do you know about the place?" said her father harshly.

"And it doesn't matter whether they want you or not, if your father says you are not to go," said the mother calmly.

How Ursula hated her!

"You said I was to try," the girl cried. "Now I've got a place and I'm going to go."

"You're not going all that distance," said her father.

"Why don't you get a place at Ilkeston, where you can live at home?" asked Gudrun, who hated conflicts, who could not understand Ursula's uneasy way, yet who must stand by her sister.

"There aren't any places in Ilkeston," cried Ursula. "And I'd rather go right away."

"If you'd asked about it, a place could have been got for you in Ilkeston. But you had to play Miss High-an'-mighty, and go your own way," said her father.

"I've no doubt you'd rather go right away," said her mother, very caustic. "And I've no doubt you'd find other people didn't put up with you for very long either. You've too much opinion of yourself for your good."

Between the girl and her mother was a feeling of pure hatred. There came a stubborn silence. Ursula knew she must break it.

"Well, they've written to me, and I s'll have to go," she said.

"Where will you get the money from?" asked her father.

"Uncle Tom will give it me," she said.

Again there was silence. This time she was triumphant.

Then at length her father lifted his head. His face was abstracted, he seemed to be abstracting himself, to make a pure statement.

"Well, you're not going all that distance away," he said. "I'll ask Mr. Burt about a place here. I'm not going to have you by yourself at the other side of London."

"But I've got to go to Kingston," said Ursula. "They've sent for me."

"They'll do without you," he said.

There was a trembling silence when she was on the point of tears.

"Well," she said, low and tense, "you can put me off this, but I'm going to have a place. I'm not going to stop at home."

"Nobody wants you to stop at home," he suddenly shouted, going livid with rage.

She said no more. Her nature had gone hard and smiling in its own arrogance, in its own antagonistic indifference to the rest of them. This was the state in which he wanted to kill her. She went singing into the parlour.

"C'EST LA MERE MICHEL QUI A PERDU SON CHAT, QUI CRI PAR LA FENETRE QU'EST-CE QUI LE LUI RENDRA----"

During the next days Ursula went about bright and hard, singing to herself, making love to the children, but her soul hard and cold with regard to her parents. Nothing more was said. The hardness and brightness lasted for four days. Then it began to break up. So at evening she said to her father:

"Have you spoken about a place for me?"

"I spoke to Mr. Burt."

"What did he say?"

"There's a committee meeting to-morrow. He'll tell me on Friday."

So she waited till Friday. Kingston-on-Thames had been an exciting dream. Here she could feel the hard, raw reality. So she knew that this would come to pass. Because nothing was ever fulfilled, she found, except in the hard limited reality. She did not want to be a teacher in Ilkeston, because she knew Ilkeston, and hated it. But she wanted to be free, so she must take her freedom where she could.

On Friday her father said there was a place vacant in Brinsley Street school. This could most probably be secured for her, at once, without the trouble of application.

Her heart halted. Brinsley Street was a school in a poor quarter, and she had had a taste of the common children of Ilkeston. They had shouted after her and thrown stones. Still, as a teacher, she would be in authority. And it was all unknown. She was excited. The very forest of dry, sterile brick had some fascination for her. It was so hard and ugly, so relentlessly ugly, it would purge her of some of her floating sentimentality.

She dreamed how she would make the little, ugly children love her. She would be so personal. Teachers were always so hard and impersonal. There was no vivid relationship. She would make everything personal and vivid, she would give herself, she would give, give, give all her great stores of wealth to her children, she would make them so happy, and they would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth.

At Christmas she would choose such fascinating Christmas cards for them, and she would give them such a happy party in one of the class-rooms.

The headmaster, Mr. Harby, was a short, thick-set, rather common man, she thought. But she would hold before him the light of grace and refinement, he would have her in such high esteem before long. She would be the gleaming sun of the school, the children would blossom like little weeds, the teachers like tall, hard plants would burst into rare flower.

The Monday morning came. It was the end of September, and a drizzle of fine rain like veils round her, making her seem intimate, a world to herself. She walked forward to the new land. The old was blotted out. The veil would be rent that hid the new world. She was gripped hard with suspense as she went down the hill in the rain, carrying her dinner-bag.

Through the thin rain she saw the town, a black, extensive mount. She must enter in upon it. She felt at once a feeling of repugnance and of excited fulfilment. But she shrank.

She waited at the terminus for the tram. Here it was beginning. Before her was the station to Nottingham, whence Theresa had gone to school half an hour before; behind her was the little church school she had attended when she was a child, when her grandmother was alive. Her grandmother had been dead two years now. There was a strange woman at the Marsh, with her Uncle Fred, and a small baby. Behind her was Cossethay, and blackberries were ripe on the hedges.

As she waited at the tram-terminus she reverted swiftly to her childhood; her teasing grandfather, with his fair beard and blue eyes, and his big, monumental body; he had got drowned: her grandmother, whom Ursula would sometimes say she had loved more than anyone else in the world: the little church school, the Phillips boys; one was a soldier in the Life Guards now, one was a collier. With a passion she clung to the past.

But as she dreamed of it, she heard the tram-car grinding round a bend, rumbling dully, she saw it draw into sight, and hum nearer. It sidled round the loop at the terminus, and came to a standstill, looming above her. Some shadowy grey people stepped from the far end, the conductor was walking in the puddles, swinging round the pole.

She mounted into the wet, comfortless tram, whose floor was dark with wet, whose windows were all steamed, and she sat in suspense. It had begun, her new existence.

One other passenger mounted--a sort of charwoman with a drab, wet coat. Ursula could not bear the waiting of the tram. The bell clanged, there was a lurch forward. The car moved cautiously down the wet street. She was being carried forward, into her new existence. Her heart burned with pain and suspense, as if something were cutting her living tissue.

Often, oh often the tram seemed to stop, and wet, cloaked people mounted and sat mute and grey in stiff rows opposite her, their umbrellas between their knees. The windows of the tram grew more steamy; opaque. She was shut in with these unliving, spectral people. Even yet it did not occur to her that she was one of them. The conductor came down issuing tickets. Each little ring of his clipper sent a pang of dread through her. But her ticket surely was different from the rest.

They were all going to work; she also was going to work. Her ticket was the same. She sat trying to fit in with them. But fear was at her bowels, she felt an unknown, terrible grip upon her.

At Bath Street she must dismount and change trams. She looked uphill. It seemed to lead to freedom. She remembered the many Saturday afternoons she had walked up to the shops. How free and careless she had been!

Ah, her tram was sliding gingerly downhill. She dreaded every yard of her conveyance. The car halted, she mounted hastily.

She kept turning her head as the car ran on, because she was uncertain of the street. At last, her heart a flame of suspense, trembling, she rose. The conductor rang the bell brusquely.

She was walking down a small, mean, wet street, empty of people. The school squatted low within its railed, asphalt yard, that shone black with rain. The building was grimy, and horrible, dry plants were shadowily looking through the windows.

She entered the arched doorway of the porch. The whole place seemed to have a threatening expression, imitating the church's architecture, for the purpose of domineering, like a gesture of vulgar authority. She saw that one pair of feet had paddled across the flagstone floor of the porch. The place was silent, deserted, like an empty prison waiting the return of tramping feet.

Ursula went forward to the teachers' room that burrowed in a gloomy hole. She knocked timidly.

"Come in!" called a surprised man's voice, as from a prison cell. She entered the dark little room that never got any sun. The gas was lighted naked and raw. At the table a thin man in shirt-sleeves was rubbing a paper on a jellytray. He looked up at Ursula with his narrow, sharp face, said "Good morning," then turned away again, and stripped the paper off the tray, glancing at the violet-coloured writing transferred, before he dropped the curled sheet aside among a heap.

Ursula watched him fascinated. In the gaslight and gloom and the narrowness of the room, all seemed unreal.

"Isn't it a nasty morning," she said.

"Yes," he said, "it's not much of weather."

But in here it seemed that neither morning nor weather really existed. This place was timeless. He spoke in an occupied voice, like an echo. Ursula did not know what to say. She took off her waterproof.

"Am I early?" she asked.

The man looked first at a little clock, then at her. His eyes seemed to be sharpened to needle-points of vision.

"Twenty-five past," he said. "You're the second to come. I'm first this morning."

Ursula sat down gingerly on the edge of a chair, and watched his thin red hands rubbing away on the white surface of the paper, then pausing, pulling up a corner of the sheet, peering, and rubbing away again. There was a great heap of curled white-and-scribbled sheets on the table.

"Must you do so many?" asked Ursula.

Again the man glanced up sharply. He was about thirty or thirty-three years old, thin, greenish, with a long nose and a sharp face. His eyes were blue, and sharp as points of steel, rather beautiful, the girl thought.

"Sixty-three," he answered.

"So many!" she said, gently. Then she remembered.

"But they're not all for your class, are they?" she added.

"Why aren't they?" he replied, a fierceness in his voice.

Ursula was rather frightened by his mechanical ignoring of her, and his directness of statement. It was something new to her. She had never been treated like this before, as if she did not count, as if she were addressing a machine.

"It is too many," she said sympathetically.

"You'll get about the same," he said.

That was all she received. She sat rather blank, not knowing how to feel. Still she liked him. He seemed so cross. There was a queer, sharp, keen-edge feeling about him that attracted her and frightened her at the same time. It was so cold, and against his nature.

The door opened, and a short, neutral-tinted young woman of about twenty-eight appeared.

"Oh, Ursula!" the newcomer exclaimed. "You are here early! My word, I'll warrant you don't keep it up. That's Mr. Williamson's peg. This is yours. Standard Five teacher always has this. Aren't you going to take your hat off?"

Miss Violet Harby removed Ursula's waterproof from the peg on which it was hung, to one a little farther down the row. She had already snatched the pins from her own stuff hat, and jammed them through her coat. She turned to Ursula, as she pushed up her frizzed, flat, dun-coloured hair.

"Isn't it a beastly morning," she exclaimed, "beastly! And if there's one thing I hate above another it's a wet Monday morning;--pack of kids trailing in anyhow-nohow, and no holding 'em----"

She had taken a black pinafore from a newspaper package, and was tying it round her waist.

"You've brought an apron, haven't you?" she said jerkily, glancing at Ursula. "Oh--you'll want one. You've no idea what a sight you'll look before half-past four, what with chalk and ink and kids' dirty feet.--Well, I can send a boy down to mamma's for one."

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Ursula.

"Oh, yes--I can send easily," cried Miss Harby.

Ursula's heart sank. Everybody seemed so cocksure and so bossy. How was she going to get on with such jolty, jerky, bossy people? And Miss Harby had not spoken a word to the man at the table. She simply ignored him. Ursula felt the callous crude rudeness between the two teachers.

The two girls went out into the passage. A few children were already clattering in the porch.

"Jim Richards," called Miss Harby, hard and authoritative. A boy came sheepishly forward.

"Shall you go down to our house for me, eh?" said Miss Harby, in a commanding, condescending, coaxing voice. She did not wait for an answer. "Go down and ask mamma to send me one of my school pinas, for Miss Brangwen--shall you?"

The boy muttered a sheepish "Yes, miss," and was moving away.

"Hey," called Miss Harby. "Come here--now what are you going for? What shall you say to mamma?"

"A school pina----" muttered the boy.

"'Please, Mrs. Harby, Miss Harby says will you send her another school pinafore for Miss Brangwen, because she's come without one.'"

"Yes, miss," muttered the boy, head ducked, and was moving off. Miss Harby caught him back, holding him by the shoulder.

"What are you going to say?"

"Please, Mrs. Harby, Miss Harby wants a pinny for Miss Brangwin," muttered the boy very sheepishly.

"Miss Brangwen!" laughed Miss Harby, pushing him away. "Here, you'd better have my umbrella--wait a minute."

The unwilling boy was rigged up with Miss Harby's umbrella, and set off.

"Don't take long over it," called Miss Harby, after him. Then she turned to Ursula, and said brightly:

"Oh, he's a caution, that lad--but not bad, you know."

"No," Ursula agreed, weakly.

The latch of the door clicked, and they entered the big room. Ursula glanced down the place. Its rigid, long silence was official and chilling. Half-way down was a glass partition, the doors of which were open. A clock ticked re-echoing, and Miss Harby's voice sounded double as she said:

"This is the big room--Standard Five-Six-and-Seven.--Here's your place--Five----"

She stood in the near end of the great room. There was a small high teacher's desk facing a squadron of long benches, two high windows in the wall opposite.

It was fascinating and horrible to Ursula. The curious, unliving light in the room changed her character. She thought it was the rainy morning. Then she looked up again, because of the horrid feeling of being shut in a rigid, inflexible air, away from all feeling of the ordinary day; and she noticed that the windows were of ribbed, suffused glass.

The prison was round her now! She looked at the walls, colour washed, pale green and chocolate, at the large windows with frowsy geraniums against the pale glass, at the long rows of desks, arranged in a squadron, and dread filled her. This was a new world, a new life, with which she was threatened. But still excited, she climbed into her chair at her teacher's desk. It was high, and her feet could not reach the ground, but must rest on the step. Lifted up there, off the ground, she was in office. How queer, how queer it all was! How different it was from the mist of rain blowing over Cossethay. As she thought of her own village, a spasm of yearning crossed her, it seemed so far off, so lost to her.

She was here in this hard, stark reality--reality. It was queer that she should call this the reality, which she had never known till to-day, and which now so filled her with dread and dislike, that she wished she might go away. This was the reality, and Cossethay, her beloved, beautiful, wellknown Cossethay, which was as herself unto her, that was minor reality. This prison of a school was reality. Here, then, she would sit in state, the queen of scholars! Here she would realise her dream of being the beloved teacher bringing light and joy to her children! But the desks before her had an abstract angularity that bruised her sentiment and made her shrink. She winced, feeling she had been a fool in her anticipations. She had brought her feelings and her generosity to where neither generosity nor emotion were wanted. And already she felt rebuffed, troubled by the new atmosphere, out of place.

She slid down, and they returned to the teacher's room. It was queer to feel that one ought to alter one's personality. She was nobody, there was no reality in herself, the reality was all outside of her, and she must apply herself to it.

Mr. Harby was in the teachers' room, standing before a big, open cupboard, in which Ursula could see piles of pink blotting-paper, heaps of shiny new books, boxes of chalk, and bottles of coloured inks. It looked a treasure store.

The schoolmaster was a short, sturdy man, with a fine head, and a heavy jowl. Nevertheless he was good-looking, with his shapely brows and nose, and his great, hanging moustache. He seemed absorbed in his work, and took no notice of Ursula's entry. There was something insulting in the way he could be so actively unaware of another person, so occupied.

When he had a moment of absence, he looked up from the table and said good-morning to Ursula. There was a pleasant light in his brown eyes. He seemed very manly and incontrovertible, like something she wanted to push over.

"You had a wet walk," he said to Ursula.

"Oh, I don't mind, I'm used to it," she replied, with a nervous little laugh.

But already he was not listening. Her words sounded ridiculous and babbling. He was taking no notice of her.

"You will sign your name here," he said to her, as if she were some child--"and the time when you come and go."

Ursula signed her name in the time book and stood back. No one took any further notice of her. She beat her brains for something to say, but in vain.

"I'd let them in now," said Mr. Harby to the thin man, who was very hastily arranging his papers.

The assistant teacher made no sign of acquiescence, and went on with what he was doing. The atmosphere in the room grew tense. At the last moment Mr. Brunt slipped into his coat.

"You will go to the girls' lobby," said the schoolmaster to Ursula, with a fascinating, insulting geniality, purely official and domineering.

She went out and found Miss Harby, and another girl teacher, in the porch. On the asphalt yard the rain was falling. A toneless bell tang-tang-tanged drearily overhead, monotonously, insistently. It came to an end. Then Mr. Brunt was seen, bare-headed, standing at the other gate of the school yard, blowing shrill blasts on a whistle and looking down the rainy, dreary street.

Boys in gangs and streams came trotting up, running past the master and with a loud clatter of feet and voices, over the yard to the boys' porch. Girls were running and walking through the other entrance.

In the porch where Ursula stood there was a great noise of girls, who were tearing off their coats and hats, and hanging them on the racks bristling with pegs. There was a smell of wet clothing, a tossing out of wet, draggled hair, a noise of voices and feet.

The mass of girls grew greater, the rage around the pegs grew steadier, the scholars tended to fall into little noisy gangs in the porch. Then Violet Harby clapped her hands, clapped them louder, with a shrill "Quiet, girls, quiet!"

There was a pause. The hubbub died down but did not cease.

"What did I say?" cried Miss Harby, shrilly.

There was almost complete silence. Sometimes a girl, rather late, whirled into the porch and flung off her things.

"Leaders--in place," commanded Miss Harby shrilly.

Pairs of girls in pinafores and long hair stood separate in the porch.

"Standard Four, Five, and Six--fall in," cried Miss Harby.

There was a hubbub, which gradually resolved itself into three columns of girls, two and two, standing smirking in the passage. In among the peg-racks, other teachers were putting the lower classes into ranks.

Ursula stood by her own Standard Five. They were jerking their shoulders, tossing their hair, nudging, writhing, staring, grinning, whispering and twisting.

A sharp whistle was heard, and Standard Six, the biggest girls, set off, led by Miss Harby. Ursula, with her Standard Five, followed after. She stood beside a smirking, grinning row of girls, waiting in a narrow passage. What she was herself she did not know.

Suddenly the sound of a piano was heard, and Standard Six set off hollowly down the big room. The boys had entered by another door. The piano played on, a march tune, Standard Five followed to the door of the big room. Mr. Harby was seen away beyond at his desk. Mr. Brunt guarded the other door of the room. Ursula's class pushed up. She stood near them. They glanced and smirked and shoved.

"Go on," said Ursula.

They tittered.

"Go on," said Ursula, for the piano continued.

The girls broke loosely into the room. Mr. Harby, who had seemed immersed in some occupation, away at his desk, lifted his head and thundered:

"Halt!"

There was a halt, the piano stopped. The boys who were just starting through the other door, pushed back. The harsh, subdued voice of Mr. Brunt was heard, then the booming shout of Mr. Harby, from far down the room:

"Who told Standard Five girls to come in like that?"

Ursula crimsoned. Her girls were glancing up at her, smirking their accusation.

"I sent them in, Mr. Harby," she said, in a clear, struggling voice. There was a moment of silence. Then Mr. Harby roared from the distance.

"Go back to your places, Standard Five girls."

The girls glanced up at Ursula, accusing, rather jeering, fugitive. They pushed back. Ursula's heart hardened with ignominious pain.

"Forward--march," came Mr. Brunt's voice, and the girls set off, keeping time with the ranks of boys.

Ursula faced her class, some fifty-five boys and girls, who stood filling the ranks of the desks. She felt utterly nonexistent. She had no place nor being there. She faced the block of children.

Down the room she heard the rapid firing of questions. She stood before her class not knowing what to do. She waited painfully. Her block of children, fifty unknown faces, watched her, hostile, ready to jeer. She felt as if she were in torture over a fire of faces. And on every side she was naked to them. Of unutterable length and torture the seconds went by.

Then she gathered courage. She heard Mr. Brunt asking questions in mental arithmetic. She stood near to her class, so that her voice need not be raised too much, and faltering, uncertain, she said:

"Seven hats at twopence ha'penny each?"

A grin went over the faces of the class, seeing her commence. She was red and suffering. Then some hands shot up like blades, and she asked for the answer.

The day passed incredibly slowly. She never knew what to do, there came horrible gaps, when she was merely exposed to the children; and when, relying on some pert little girl for information, she had started a lesson, she did not know how to go on with it properly. The children were her masters. She deferred to them. She could always hear Mr. Brunt. Like a machine, always in the same hard, high, inhuman voice he went on with his teaching, oblivious of everything. And before this inhuman number of children she was always at bay. She could not get away from it. There it was, this class of fifty collective children, depending on her for command, for command it hated and resented. It made her feel she could not breathe: she must suffocate, it was so inhuman. They were so many, that they were not children. They were a squadron. She could not speak as she would to a child, because they were not individual children, they were a collective, inhuman thing.

Dinner-time came, and stunned, bewildered, solitary, she went into the teachers' room for dinner. Never had she felt such a stranger to life before. It seemed to her she had just disembarked from some strange horrible state where everything was as in hell, a condition of hard, malevolent system. And she was not really free. The afternoon drew at her like some bondage.

The first week passed in a blind confusion. She did not know how to teach, and she felt she never would know. Mr. Harby came down every now and then to her class, to see what she was doing. She felt so incompetent as he stood by, bullying and threatening, so unreal, that she wavered, became neutral and non-existent. But he stood there watching with the listening-genial smile of the eyes, that was really threatening; he said nothing, he made her go on teaching, she felt she had no soul in her body. Then he went away, and his going was like a derision. The class was his class. She was a wavering substitute. He thrashed and bullied, he was hated. But he was master. Though she was gentle and always considerate of her class, yet they belonged to Mr. Harby, and they did not belong to her. Like some invincible source of the mechanism he kept all power to himself. And the class owned his power. And in school it was power, and power alone that mattered.

Soon Ursula came to dread him, and at the bottom of her dread was a seed of hate, for she despised him, yet he was master of her. Then she began to get on. All the other teachers hated him, and fanned their hatred among themselves. For he was master of them and the children, he stood like a wheel to make absolute his authority over the herd. That seemed to be his one reason in life, to hold blind authority over the school. His teachers were his subjects as much as the scholars. Only, because they had some authority, his instinct was to detest them.

Ursula could not make herself a favourite with him. From the first moment she set hard against him. She set against Violet Harby also. Mr. Harby was, however, too much for her, he was something she could not come to grips with, something too strong for her. She tried to approach him as a young, bright girl usually approaches a man, expecting a little chivalrous courtesy. But the fact that she was a girl, a woman, was ignored or used as a matter for contempt against her. She did not know what she was, nor what she must be. She wanted to remain her own responsive, personal self.

So she taught on. She made friends with the Standard Three teacher, Maggie Schofield. Miss Schofield was about twenty years old, a subdued girl who held aloof from the other teachers. She was rather beautiful, meditative, and seemed to live in another, lovelier world.

Ursula took her dinner to school, and during the second week ate it in Miss Schofield's room. Standard Three classroom stood by itself and had windows on two sides, looking on to the playground. It was a passionate relief to find such a retreat in the jarring school. For there were pots of chrysanthemums and coloured leaves, and a big jar of berries: there were pretty little pictures on the wall, photogravure reproductions from Greuze, and Reynolds's "Age of Innocence", giving an air of intimacy; so that the room, with its window space, its smaller, tidier desks, its touch of pictures and flowers, made Ursula at once glad. Here at last was a little personal touch, to which she could respond.

It was Monday. She had been at school a week and was getting used to the surroundings, though she was still an entire foreigner in herself. She looked forward to having dinner with Maggie. That was the bright spot in the day. Maggie was so strong and remote, walking with slow, sure steps down a hard road, carrying the dream within her. Ursula went through the class teaching as through a meaningless daze.

Her class tumbled out at midday in haphazard fashion. She did not realise what host she was gathering against herself by her superior tolerance, her kindness and her laisseraller. They were gone, and she was rid of them, and that was all. She hurried away to the teachers' room.

Mr. Brunt was crouching at the small stove, putting a little rice pudding into the oven. He rose then, and attentively poked in a small saucepan on the hob with a fork. Then he replaced the saucepan lid.

"Aren't they done?" asked Ursula gaily, breaking in on his tense absorption.

She always kept a bright, blithe manner, and was pleasant to all the teachers. For she felt like the swan among the geese, of superior heritage and belonging. And her pride at being the swan in this ugly school was not yet abated.

"Not yet," replied Mr. Brunt, laconic.

"I wonder if my dish is hot," she said, bending down at the oven. She half expected him to look for her, but he took no notice. She was hungry and she poked her finger eagerly in the pot to see if her brussels sprouts and potatoes and meat were ready. They were not.

"Don't you think it's rather jolly bringing dinner?" she said to Mr. Brunt.

"I don't know as I do," he said, spreading a serviette on a corner of the table, and not looking at her.

"I suppose it is too far for you to go home?"

"Yes," he said. Then he rose and looked at her. He had the bluest, fiercest, most pointed eyes that she had ever met. He stared at her with growing fierceness.

"If I were you, Miss Brangwen," he said, menacingly, "I should get a bit tighter hand over my class."

Ursula shrank.

"Would you?" she asked, sweetly, yet in terror. "Aren't I strict enough?"

"Because," he repeated, taking no notice of her, "they'll get you down if you don't tackle 'em pretty quick. They'll pull you down, and worry you, till Harby gets you shifted--that's how it'll be. You won't be here another six weeks"--and he filled his mouth with food--"if you don't tackle 'em and tackle 'em quick."

"Oh, but----" Ursula said, resentfully, ruefully. The terror was deep in her.

"Harby'll not help you. This is what he'll do--he'll let you go on, getting worse and worse, till either you clear out or he clears you out. It doesn't matter to me, except that you'll leave a class behind you as I hope I shan't have to cope with."

She heard the accusation in the man's voice, and felt condemned. But still, school had not yet become a definite reality to her. She was shirking it. It was reality, but it was all outside her. And she fought against Mr. Brunt's representation. She did not want to realise.

"Will it be so terrible?" she said, quivering, rather beautiful, but with a slight touch of condescension, because she would not betray her own trepidation.

"Terrible?" said the man, turning to his potatoes again. "I dunno about terrible."

"I do feel frightened," said Ursula. "The children seem so----"

"What?" said Miss Harby, entering at that moment.

"Why," said Ursula, "Mr. Brunt says I ought to tackle my class," and she laughed uneasily.

"Oh, you have to keep order if you want to teach," said Miss Harby, hard, superior, trite.

Ursula did not answer. She felt non valid before them.

"If you want to be let to live, you have," said Mr. Brunt.

"Well, if you can't keep order, what good are you?" said Miss Harby.

"An' you've got to do it by yourself,"--his voice rose like the bitter cry of the prophets. "You'll get no help from anybody."

"Oh, indeed!" said Miss Harby. "Some people can't be helped." And she departed.

The air of hostility and disintegration, of wills working in antagonistic subordination, was hideous. Mr. Brunt, subordinate, afraid, acid with shame, frightened her. Ursula wanted to run. She only wanted to clear out, not to understand.

Then Miss Schofield came in, and with her another, more restful note. Ursula at once turned for confirmation to the newcomer. Maggie remained personal within all this unclean system of authority.

"Is the big Anderson here?" she asked of Mr. Brunt. And they spoke of some affair about two scholars, coldly, officially.

Miss Schofield took her brown dish, and Ursula followed with her own. The cloth was laid in the pleasant Standard Three room, there was a jar with two or three monthly roses on the table.

"It is so nice in here, you have made it different," said Ursula gaily. But she was afraid. The atmosphere of the school was upon her.

"The big room," said Miss Schofield, "ha, it's misery to be in it!"

She too spoke with bitterness. She too lived in the ignominious position of an upper servant hated by the master above and the class beneath. She was, she knew, liable to attack from either side at any minute, or from both at once, for the authorities would listen to the complaints of parents, and both would turn round on the mongrel authority, the teacher.

So there was a hard, bitter withholding in Maggie Schofield even as she poured out her savoury mess of big golden beans and brown gravy.

"It is vegetarian hot-pot," said Miss Schofield. "Would you like to try it?"

"I should love to," said Ursula.

Her own dinner seemed coarse and ugly beside this savoury, clean dish.

"I've never eaten vegetarian things," she said. "But I should think they can be good."

"I'm not really a vegetarian," said Maggie, "I don't like to bring meat to school."

"No," said Ursula, "I don't think I do either."

And again her soul rang an answer to a new refinement, a new liberty. If all vegetarian things were as nice as this, she would be glad to escape the slight uncleanness of meat.

"How good!" she cried.

"Yes," said Miss Schofield, and she proceeded to tell her the receipt. The two girls passed on to talk about themselves. Ursula told all about the High School, and about her matriculation, bragging a little. She felt so poor here, in this ugly place. Miss Schofield listened with brooding, handsome face, rather gloomy.

"Couldn't you have got to some better place than this?" she asked at length.

"I didn't know what it was like," said Ursula, doubtfully.

"Ah!" said Miss Schofield, and she turned aside her head with a bitter motion.

"Is it as horrid as it seems?" asked Ursula, frowning lightly, in fear.

"It is," said Miss Schofield, bitterly. "Ha!--it is hateful!"

Ursula's heart sank, seeing even Miss Schofield in the deadly bondage.

"It is Mr. Harby," said Maggie Schofield, breaking forth.

"I don't think I could live again in the big room--Mr. Brunt's voice and Mr. Harby--ah----"

She turned aside her head with a deep hurt. Some things she could not bear.

"Is Mr. Harby really horrid?" asked Ursula, venturing into her own dread.

"He!--why, he's just a bully," said Miss Schofield, raising her shamed dark eyes, that flamed with tortured contempt. "He's not bad as long as you keep in with him, and refer to him, and do everything in his way--but--it's all so mean! It's just a question of fighting on both sides--and those great louts----"

She spoke with difficulty and with increased bitterness. She had evidently suffered. Her soul was raw with ignominy. Ursula suffered in response.

"But why is it so horrid?" she asked, helplessly.

"You can't do anything," said Miss Schofield. "He's against you on one side and he sets the children against you on the other. The children are simply awful. You've got to make them do everything. Everything, everything has got to come out of you. Whatever they learn, you've got to force it into them--and that's how it is."

Ursula felt her heart fail inside her. Why must she grasp all this, why must she force learning on fifty-five reluctant children, having all the time an ugly, rude jealousy behind her, ready to throw her to the mercy of the herd of children, who would like to rend her as a weaker representative of authority. A great dread of her task possessed her. She saw Mr. Brunt, Miss Harby, Miss Schofield, all the school- teachers, drudging unwillingly at the graceless task of compelling many children into one disciplined, mechanical set, reducing the whole set to an automatic state of obedience and attention, and then of commanding their acceptance of various pieces of knowledge. The first great task was to reduce sixty children to one state of mind, or being. This state must be produced automatically, through the will of the teacher, and the will of the whole school authority, imposed upon the will of the children. The point was that the headmaster and the teachers should have one will in authority, which should bring the will of the children into accord. But the headmaster was narrow and exclusive. The will of the teachers could not agree with his, their separate wills refused to be so subordinated. So there was a state of anarchy, leaving the final judgment to the children themselves, which authority should exist.

So there existed a set of separate wills, each straining itself to the utmost to exert its own authority. Children will never naturally acquiesce to sitting in a class and submitting to knowledge. They must be compelled by a stronger, wiser will. Against which will they must always strive to revolt. So that the first great effort of every teacher of a large class must be to bring the will of the children into accordance with his own will. And this he can only do by an abnegation of his personal self, and an application of a system of laws, for the purpose of achieving a certain calculable result, the imparting of certain knowledge. Whereas Ursula thought she was going to become the first wise teacher by making the whole business personal, and using no compulsion. She believed entirely in her own personality.

So that she was in a very deep mess. In the first place she was offering to a class a relationship which only one or two of the children were sensitive enough to appreciate, so that the mass were left outsiders, therefore against her. Secondly, she was placing herself in passive antagonism to the one fixed authority of Mr. Harby, so that the scholars could more safely harry her. She did not know, but her instinct gradually warned her. She was tortured by the voice of Mr. Brunt. On it went, jarring, harsh, full of hate, but so monotonous, it nearly drove her mad: always the same set, harsh monotony. The man was become a mechanism working on and on and on. But the personal man was in subdued friction all the time. It was horrible--all hate! Must she be like this? She could feel the ghastly necessity. She must become the same--put away the personal self, become an instrument, an abstraction, working upon a certain material, the class, to achieve a set purpose of making them know so much each day. And she could not submit. Yet gradually she felt the invincible iron closing upon her. The sun was being blocked out. Often when she went out at playtime and saw a luminous blue sky with changing clouds, it seemed just a fantasy, like a piece of painted scenery. Her heart was so black and tangled in the teaching, her personal self was shut in prison, abolished, she was subjugate to a bad, destructive will. How then could the sky be shining? There was no sky, there was no luminous atmosphere of out-of-doors. Only the inside of the school was real--hard, concrete, real and vicious.

She would not yet, however, let school quite overcome her. She always said. "It is not a permanency, it will come to an end." She could always see herself beyond the place, see the time when she had left it. On Sundays and on holidays, when she was away at Cossethay or in the woods where the beech-leaves were fallen, she could think of St. Philip's Church School, and by an effort of will put it in the picture as a dirty little low-squatting building that made a very tiny mound under the sky, while the great beech-woods spread immense about her, and the afternoon was spacious and wonderful. Moreover the children, the scholars, they were insignificant little objects far away, oh, far away. And what power had they over her free soul? A fleeting thought of them, as she kicked her way through the beech-leaves, and they were gone. But her will was tense against them all the time.

All the while, they pursued her. She had never had such a passionate love of the beautiful things about her. Sitting on top of the tram-car, at evening, sometimes school was swept away as she saw a magnificent sky settling down. And her breast, her very hands, clamoured for the lovely flare of sunset. It was poignant almost to agnoy, her reaching for it. She almost cried aloud seeing the sundown so lovely.

For she was held away. It was no matter how she said to herself that school existed no more once she had left it. It existed. It was within her like a dark weight, controlling her movement. It was in vain the high-spirited, proud young girl flung off the school and its association with her. She was Miss Brangwen, she was Standard Five teacher, she had her most important being in her work now.

Constantly haunting her, like a darkness hovering over her heart and threatening to swoop down over it at every moment, was the sense that somehow, somehow she was brought down. Bitterly she denied unto herself that she was really a schoolteacher. Leave that to the Violet Harbys. She herself would stand clear of the accusation. It was in vain she denied it.

Within herself some recording hand seemed to point mechanically to a negation. She was incapable of fulfilling her task. She could never for a moment escape from the fatal weight of the knowledge.

And so she felt inferior to Violet Harby. Miss Harby was a splendid teacher. She could keep order and inflict knowledge on a class with remarkable efficiency. It was no good Ursula's protesting to herself that she was infinitely, infinitely the superior of Violet Harby. She knew that Violet Harby succeeded where she failed, and this in a task which was almost a test of her. She felt something all the time wearing upon her, wearing her down. She went about in these first weeks trying to deny it, to say she was free as ever. She tried not to feel at a disadvantage before Miss Harby, tried to keep up the effect of her own superiority. But a great weight was on her, which Violet Harby could bear, and she herself could not.

Though she did not give in, she never succeeded. Her class was getting in worse condition, she knew herself less and less secure in teaching it. Ought she to withdraw and go home again? Ought she to say she had come to the wrong place, and so retire? Her very life was at test.

She went on doggedly, blindly, waiting for a crisis. Mr. Harby had now begun to persecute her. Her dread and hatred of him grew and loomed larger and larger. She was afraid he was going to bully her and destroy her. He began to persecute her because she could not keep her class in proper condition, because her class was the weak link in the chain which made up the school.

One of the offences was that her class was noisy and disturbed Mr. Harby, as he took Standard Seven at the other end of the room. She was taking composition on a certain morning, walking in among the scholars. Some of the boys had dirty ears and necks, their clothing smelled unpleasantly, but she could ignore it. She corrected the writing as she went.

"When you say 'their fur is brown', how do you write 'their'?" she asked.

There was a little pause; the boys were always jeeringly backward in answering. They had begun to jeer at her authority altogether.

"Please, miss, t-h-e-i-r", spelled a lad, loudly, with a note of mockery.

At that moment Mr. Harby was passing.

"Stand up, Hill!" he called, in a big voice.

Everybody started. Ursula watched the boy. He was evidently poor, and rather cunning. A stiff bit of hair stood straight off his forehead, the rest fitted close to his meagre head. He was pale and colourless.

"Who told you to call out?" thundered Mr. Harby.

The boy looked up and down, with a guilty air, and a cunning, cynical reserve.

"Please, sir, I was answering," he replied, with the same humble insolence.

"Go to my desk."

The boy set off down the room, the big black jacket hanging in dejected folds about him, his thin legs, rather knocked at the knees, going already with the pauper's crawl, his feet in their big boots scarcely lifted. Ursula watched him in his crawling, slinking progress down the room. He was one of her boys! When he got to the desk, he looked round, half furtively, with a sort of cunning grin and a pathetic leer at the big boys in Standard VII. Then, pitiable, pale, in his dejected garments, he lounged under the menace of the headmaster's desk, with one thin leg crooked at the knee and the foot struck out sideways his hands in the low-hanging pockets of his man's jacket.

Ursula tried to get her attention back to the class. The boy gave her a little horror, and she was at the same time hot with pity for him. She felt she wanted to scream. She was responsible for the boy's punishment. Mr. Harby was looking at her handwriting on the board. He turned to the class.

"Pens down."

The children put down their pens and looked up.

"Fold arms."

They pushed back their books and folded arms.

Ursula, stuck among the back forms, could not extricate herself.

"What is your composition about?" asked the headmaster. Every hand shot up. "The ----" stuttered some voice in its eagerness to answer.

"I wouldn't advise you to call out," said Mr. Harby. He would have a pleasant voice, full and musical, but for the detestable menace that always tailed in it. He stood unmoved, his eyes twinkling under his bushy black eyebrows, watching the class. There was something fascinating in him, as he stood, and again she wanted to scream. She was all jarred, she did not know what she felt.

"Well, Alice?" he said.

"The rabbit," piped a girl's voice.

"A very easy subject for Standard Five."

Ursula felt a slight shame of incompetence. She was exposed before the class. And she was tormented by the contradictoriness of everything. Mr. Harby stood so strong, and so male, with his black brows and clear forehead, the heavy jaw, the big, overhanging moustache: such a man, with strength and male power, and a certain blind, native beauty. She might have liked him as a man. And here he stood in some other capacity, bullying over such a trifle as a boy's speaking out without permission. Yet he was not a little, fussy man. He seemed to have some cruel, stubborn, evil spirit, he was imprisoned in a task too small and petty for him, which yet, in a servile acquiescence, he would fulfil, because he had to earn his living. He had no finer control over himself, only this blind, dogged, wholesale will. He would keep the job going, since he must. And this job was to make the children spell the word "caution" correctly, and put a capital letter after a full-stop. So at this he hammered with his suppressed hatred, always suppressing himself, till he was beside himself. Ursula suffered, bitterly as he stood, short and handsome and powerful, teaching her class. It seemed such a miserable thing for him to be doing. He had a decent, powerful, rude soul. What did he care about the composition on "The Rabbit"? Yet his will kept him there before the class, threshing the trivial subject. It was habit with him now, to be so little and vulgar, out of place. She saw the shamefulness of his position, felt the fettered wickedness in him which would blaze out into evil rage in the long run, so that he was like a persistent, strong creature tethered. It was really intolerable. The jarring was torture to her. She looked over the silent, attentive class that seemed to have crystallised into order and rigid, neutral form. This he had it in his power to do, to crystallise the children into hard, mute fragments, fixed under his will: his brute will, which fixed them by sheer force.

She too must learn to subdue them to her will: she must. For it was her duty, since the school was such. He had crystallised the class into order. But to see him, a strong, powerful man, using all his power for such a purpose, seemed almost horrible. There was something hideous about it. The strange, genial light in his eye was really vicious, and ugly, his smile was one of torture. He could not be impersonal. He could not have a clear, pure purpose, he could only exercise his own brute will. He did not believe in the least in the education he kept inflicting year after year upon the children. So he must bully, only bully, even while it tortured his strong, wholesome nature with shame like a spur always galling. He was so blind and ugly and out of place. Ursula could not bear it as he stood there. The whole situation was wrong and ugly.

The lesson was finished, Mr. Harby went away. At the far end of the room she heard the whistle and the thud of the cane. Her heart stood still within her. She could not bear it, no, she could not bear it when the boy was beaten. It made her sick. She felt that she must go out of this school, this torture-place. And she hated the schoolmaster, thoroughly and finally. The brute, had he no shame? He should never be allowed to continue the atrocity of this bullying cruelty. Then Hill came crawling back, blubbering piteously. There was something desolate about this blubbering that nearly broke her heart. For after all, if she had kept her class in proper discipline, this would never have happened, Hill would never have called out and been caned.

She began the arithmetic lesson. But she was distracted. The boy Hill sat away on the back desk, huddled up, blubbering and sucking his hand. It was a long time. She dared not go near, nor speak to him. She felt ashamed before him. And she felt she could not forgive the boy for being the huddled, blubbering object, all wet and snivelled, which he was.

She went on correcting the sums. But there were too many children. She could not get round the class. And Hill was on her conscience. At last he had stopped crying, and sat bunched over his hands, playing quietly. Then he looked up at her. His face was dirty with tears, his eyes had a curious washed look, like the sky after rain, a sort of wanness. He bore no malice. He had already forgotten, and was waiting to be restored to the normal position.

"Go on with your work, Hill," she said.

The children were playing over their arithmetic, and, she knew, cheating thoroughly. She wrote another sum on the blackboard. She could not get round the class. She went again to the front to watch. Some were ready. Some were not. What was she to do?

At last it was time for recreation. She gave the order to cease working, and in some way or other got her class out of the room. Then she faced the disorderly litter of blotted, uncorrected books, of broken rulers and chewed pens. And her heart sank in sickness. The misery was getting deeper.

The trouble went on and on, day after day. She had always piles of books to mark, myriads of errors to correct, a heart-wearying task that she loathed. And the work got worse and worse. When she tried to flatter herself that the composition grew more alive, more interesting, she had to see that the handwriting grew more and more slovenly, the books more filthy and disgraceful. She tried what she could, but it was of no use. But she was not going to take it seriously. Why should she? Why should she say to herself, that it mattered, if she failed to teach a class to write perfectly neatly? Why should she take the blame unto herself?

Pay day came, and she received four pounds two shillings and one penny. She was very proud that day. She had never had so much money before. And she had earned it all herself. She sat on the top of the tram-car fingering the gold and fearing she might lose it. She felt so established and strong, because of it. And when she got home she said to her mother:

"It is pay day to-day, mother."

"Ay," said her mother, coolly.

Then Ursula put down fifty shillings on the table.

"That is my board," she said.

"Ay," said her mother, letting it lie.

Ursula was hurt. Yet she had paid her scot. She was free. She paid for what she had. There remained moreover thirty-two shillings of her own. She would not spend any, she who was naturally a spendthrift, because she could not bear to damage her fine gold.

She had a standing ground now apart from her parents. She was something else besides the mere daughter of William and Anna Brangwen. She was independent. She earned her own living. She was an important member of the working community. She was sure that fifty shillings a month quite paid for her keep. If her mother received fifty shillings a month for each of the children, she would have twenty pounds a month and no clothes to provide. Very well then.

Ursula was independent of her parents. She now adhered elsewhere. Now, the 'Board of Education' was a phrase that rang significant to her, and she felt Whitehall far beyond her as her ultimate home. In the government, she knew which minister had supreme control over Education, and it seemed to her that, in some way, he was connected with her, as her father was connected with her.

She had another self, another responsibility. She was no longer Ursula Brangwen, daughter of William Brangwen. She was also Standard Five teacher in St. Philip's School. And it was a case now of being Standard Five teacher, and nothing else. For she could not escape.

Neither could she succeed. That was her horror. As the weeks passed on, there was no Ursula Brangwen, free and jolly. There was only a girl of that name obsessed by the fact that she could not manage her class of children. At week-ends there came days of passionate reaction, when she went mad with the taste of liberty, when merely to be free in the morning, to sit down at her embroidery and stitch the coloured silks was a passion of delight. For the prison house was always awaiting her! This was only a respite, as her chained heart knew well. So that she seized hold of the swift hours of the week-end, and wrung the last drop of sweetness out of them, in a little, cruel frenzy.

She did not tell anybody how this state was a torture to her. She did not confide, either to Gudrun or to her parents, how horrible she found it to be a school-teacher. But when Sunday night came, and she felt the Monday morning at hand, she was strung up tight with dreadful anticipation, because the strain and the torture was near again.

She did not believe that she could ever teach that great, brutish class, in that brutal school: ever, ever. And yet, if she failed, she must in some way go under. She must admit that the man's world was too strong for her, she could not take her place in it; she must go down before Mr. Harby. And all her life henceforth, she must go on, never having freed herself of the man's world, never having achieved the freedom of the great world of responsible work. Maggie had taken her place there, she had even stood level with Mr. Harby and got free of him: and her soul was always wandering in far-off valleys and glades of poetry. Maggie was free. Yet there was something like subjection in Maggie's very freedom. Mr. Harby, the man, disliked the reserved woman, Maggie. Mr. Harby, the schoolmaster, respected his teacher, Miss Schofield.

For the present, however, Ursula only envied and admired Maggie. She herself had still to get where Maggie had got. She had still to make her footing. She had taken up a position on Mr. Harby's ground, and she must keep it. For he was now beginning a regular attack on her, to drive her away out of his school. She could not keep order. Her class was a turbulent crowd, and the weak spot in the school's work. Therefore she must go, and someone more useful must come in her place, someone who could keep discipline.

The headmaster had worked himself into an obsession of fury against her. He only wanted her gone. She had come, she had got worse as the weeks went on, she was absolutely no good. His system, which was his very life in school, the outcome of his bodily movement, was attacked and threatened at the point where Ursula was included. She was the danger that threatened his body with a blow, a fall. And blindly, thoroughly, moving from strong instinct of opposition, he set to work to expel her.

When he punished one of her children as he had punished the boy Hill, for an offence against himself, he made the punishment extra heavy with the significance that the extra stroke came in because of the weak teacher who allowed all these things to be. When he punished for an offence against her, he punished lightly, as if offences against her were not significant. Which all the children knew, and they behaved accordingly.

Every now and again Mr. Harby would swoop down to examine exercise books. For a whole hour, he would be going round the class, taking book after book, comparing page after page, whilst Ursula stood aside for all the remarks and fault-finding to be pointed at her through the scholars. It was true, since she had come, the composition books had grown more and more untidy, disorderly, filthy. Mr. Harby pointed to the pages done before her regime, and to those done after, and fell into a passion of rage. Many children he sent out to the front with their books. And after he had thoroughly gone through the silent and quivering class he caned the worst offenders well, in front of the others, thundering in real passion of anger and chagrin.

"Such a condition in a class, I can't believe it! It is simply disgraceful! I can't think how you have been let to get like it! Every Monday morning I shall come down and examine these books. So don't think that because there is nobody paying any attention to you, that you are free to unlearn everything you ever learned, and go back till you are not fit for Standard Three. I shall examine all books every Monday----"

Then in a rage, he went away with his cane, leaving Ursula to confront a pale, quivering class, whose childish faces were shut in blank resentment, fear, and bitterness, whose souls were full of anger and contempt for her rather than of the master, whose eyes looked at her with the cold, inhuman accusation of children. And she could hardly make mechanical words to speak to them. When she gave an order they obeyed with an insolent off-handedness, as if to say: "As for you, do you think we would obey you, but for the master?" She sent the blubbering, caned boys to their seats, knowing that they too jeered at her and her authority, holding her weakness responsible for what punishment had overtaken them. And she knew the whole position, so that even her horror of physical beating and suffering sank to a deeper pain, and became a moral judgment upon her, worse than any hurt.

She must, during the next week, watch over her books, and punish any fault. Her soul decided it coldly. Her personal desire was dead for that day at least. She must have nothing more of herself in school. She was to be Standard Five teacher only. That was her duty. In school, she was nothing but Standard Five teacher. Ursula Brangwen must be excluded.

So that, pale, shut, at last distant and impersonal, she saw no longer the child, how his eyes danced, or how he had a queer little soul that could not be bothered with shaping handwriting so long as he dashed down what he thought. She saw no children, only the task that was to be done. And keeping her eyes there, on the task, and not on the child, she was impersonal enough to punish where she could otherwise only have sympathised, understood, and condoned, to approve where she would have been merely uninterested before. But her interest had no place any more.

It was agony to the impulsive, bright girl of seventeen to become distant and official, having no personal relationship with the children. For a few days, after the agony of the Monday, she succeeded, and had some success with her class. But it was a state not natural to her, and she began to relax.

Then came another infliction. There were not enough pens to go round the class. She sent to Mr. Harby for more. He came in person.

"Not enough pens, Miss Brangwen?" he said, with the smile and calm of exceeding rage against her.

"No, we are six short," she said, quaking.

"Oh, how is that?" he said, menacingly. Then, looking over the class, he asked:

"How many are there here to-day?"

"Fifty-two," said Ursula, but he did not take any notice, counting for himself.

"Fifty-two," he said. "And how many pens are there, Staples?"

Ursula was now silent. He would not heed her if she answered, since he had addressed the monitor.

"That's a very curious thing," said Mr. Harby, looking over the silent class with a slight grin of fury. All the childish faces looked up at him blank and exposed.

"A few days ago there were sixty pens for this class--now there are forty-eight. What is forty-eight from sixty, Williams?" There was a sinister suspense in the question. A thin, ferret-faced boy in a sailor suit started up exaggeratedly.

"Please, sir!" he said. Then a slow, sly grin came over his face. He did not know. There was a tense silence. The boy dropped his head. Then he looked up again, a little cunning triumph in his eyes. "Twelve," he said.

"I would advise you to attend," said the headmaster dangerously. The boy sat down.

"Forty-eight from sixty is twelve: so there are twelve pens to account for. Have you looked for them, Staples?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then look again."

The scene dragged on. Two pens were found: ten were missing. Then the storm burst.

"Am I to have you thieving, besides your dirt and bad work and bad behaviour?" the headmaster began. "Not content with being the worst-behaved and dirtiest class in the school, you are thieves into the bargain, are you? It is a very funny thing! Pens don't melt into the air: pens are not in the habit of mizzling away into nothing. What has become of them then? They must be somewhere. What has become of them? For they must be found, and found by Standard Five. They were lost by Standard Five, and they must be found."

Ursula stood and listened, her heart hard and cold. She was so much upset, that she felt almost mad. Something in her tempted her to turn on the headmaster and tell him to stop, about the miserable pens. But she did not. She could not.

After every session, morning and evening, she had the pens counted. Still they were missing. And pencils and india-rubbers disappeared. She kept the class staying behind, till the things were found. But as soon as Mr. Harby had gone out of the room, the boys began to jump about and shout, and at last they bolted in a body from the school.

This was drawing near a crisis. She could not tell Mr. Harby because, while he would punish the class, he would make her the cause of the punishment, and her class would pay her back with disobedience and derision. Already there was a deadly hostility grown up between her and the children. After keeping in the class, at evening, to finish some work, she would find boys dodging behind her, calling after her: "Brangwen, Brangwen--Proud-acre."

When she went into Ilkeston of a Saturday morning with Gudrun, she heard again the voices yelling after her:

"Brangwen, Brangwen."

She pretended to take no notice, but she coloured with shame at being held up to derision in the public street. She, Ursula Brangwen of Cossethay, could not escape from the Standard Five teacher which she was. In vain she went out to buy ribbon for her hat. They called after her, the boys she tried to teach.

And one evening, as she went from the edge of the town into the country, stones came flying at her. Then the passion of shame and anger surpassed her. She walked on unheeding, beside herself. Because of the darkness she could not see who were those that threw. But she did not want to know.

Only in her soul a change took place. Never more, and never more would she give herself as individual to her class. Never would she, Ursula Brangwen, the girl she was, the person she was, come into contact with those boys. She would be Standard Five teacher, as far away personally from her class as if she had never set foot in St. Philip's school. She would just obliterate them all, and keep herself apart, take them as scholars only.

So her face grew more and more shut, and over her flayed, exposed soul of a young girl who had gone open and warm to give herself to the children, there set a hard, insentient thing, that worked mechanically according to a system imposed.

It seemed she scarcely saw her class the next day. She could only feel her will, and what she would have of this class which she must grasp into subjection. It was no good, any more, to appeal, to play upon the better feelings of the class. Her swift-working soul realised this.

She, as teacher, must bring them all as scholars, into subjection. And this she was going to do. All else she would forsake. She had become hard and impersonal, almost avengeful on herself as well as on them, since the stone throwing. She did not want to be a person, to be herself any more, after such humiliation. She would assert herself for mastery, be only teacher. She was set now. She was going to fight and subdue.

She knew by now her enemies in the class. The one she hated most was Williams. He was a sort of defective, not bad enough to be so classed. He could read with fluency, and had plenty of cunning intelligence. But he could not keep still. And he had a kind of sickness very repulsive to a sensitive girl, something cunning and etiolated and degenerate. Once he had thrown an ink-well at her, in one of his mad little rages. Twice he had run home out of class. He was a well-known character.

And he grinned up his sleeve at this girl-teacher, sometimes hanging round her to fawn on her. But this made her dislike him more. He had a kind of leech-like power.

From one of the children she took a supple cane, and this she determined to use when real occasion came. One morning, at composition, she said to the boy Williams:

"Why have you made this blot?"

"Please, miss, it fell off my pen," he whined out, in the mocking voice that he was so clever in using. The boys near snorted with laughter. For Williams was an actor, he could tickle the feelings of his hearers subtly. Particularly he could tickle the children with him into ridiculing his teacher, or indeed, any authority of which he was not afraid. He had that peculiar gaol instinct.

"Then you must stay in and finish another page of composition," said the teacher.

This was against her usual sense of justice, and the boy resented it derisively. At twelve o'clock she caught him slinking out.

"Williams, sit down," she said.

And there she sat, and there he sat, alone, opposite to her, on the back desk, looking up at her with his furtive eyes every minute.

"Please, miss, I've got to go an errand," he called out insolently.

"Bring me your book," said Ursula.

The boy came out, flapping his book along the desks. He had not written a line.

"Go back and do the writing you have to do," said Ursula. And she sat at her desk, trying to correct books. She was trembling and upset. And for an hour the miserable boy writhed and grinned in his seat. At the end of that time he had done five lines.

"As it is so late now," said Ursula, "you will finish the rest this evening."

The boy kicked his way insolently down the passage.

The afternoon came again. Williams was there, glancing at her, and her heart beat thick, for she knew it was a fight between them. She watched him.

During the geography lesson, as she was pointing to the map with her cane, the boy continually ducked his whitish head under the desk, and attracted the attention of other boys.

"Williams," she said, gathering her courage, for it was critical now to speak to him, "what are you doing?"

He lifted his face, the sore-rimmed eyes half smiling. There was something intrinsically indecent about him. Ursula shrank away.

"Nothing," he replied, feeling a triumph.

"What are you doing?" she repeated, her heart-beat suffocating her.

"Nothing," replied the boy, insolently, aggrieved, comic.

"If I speak to you again, you must go down to Mr. Harby," she said.

But this boy was a match even for Mr. Harby. He was so persistent, so cringing, and flexible, he howled so when he was hurt, that the master hated more the teacher who sent him than he hated the boy himself. For of the boy he was sick of the sight. Which Williams knew. He grinned visibly.

Ursula turned to the map again, to go on with the geography lesson. But there was a little ferment in the class. Williams' spirit infected them all. She heard a scuffle, and then she trembled inwardly. If they all turned on her this time, she was beaten.

"Please, miss----" called a voice in distress.

She turned round. One of the boys she liked was ruefully holding out a torn celluloid collar. She heard the complaint, feeling futile.

"Go in front, Wright," she said.

She was trembling in every fibre. A big, sullen boy, not bad but very difficult, slouched out to the front. She went on with the lesson, aware that Williams was making faces at Wright, and that Wright was grinning behind her. She was afraid. She turned to the map again. And she was afraid.

"Please, miss, Williams----" came a sharp cry, and a boy on the back row was standing up, with drawn, pained brows, half a mocking grin on his pain, half real resentment against Williams--"Please, miss, he's nipped me,"--and he rubbed his leg ruefully.

"Come in front, Williams," she said.

The rat-like boy sat with his pale smile and did not move.

"Come in front," she repeated, definite now.

"I shan't," he cried, snarling, rat-like, grinning. Something went click in Ursula's soul. Her face and eyes set, she went through the class straight. The boy cowered before her glowering, fixed eyes. But she advanced on him, seized him by the arm, and dragged him from his seat. He clung to the form. It was the battle between him and her. Her instinct had suddenly become calm and quick. She jerked him from his grip, and dragged him, struggling and kicking, to the front. He kicked her several times, and clung to the forms as he passed, but she went on. The class was on its feet in excitement. She saw it, and made no move.

She knew if she let go the boy he would dash to the door. Already he had run home once out of her class. So she snatched her cane from the desk, and brought it down on him. He was writhing and kicking. She saw his face beneath her, white, with eyes like the eyes of a fish, stony, yet full of hate and horrible fear. And she loathed him, the hideous writhing thing that was nearly too much for her. In horror lest he should overcome her, and yet at the heart quite calm, she brought down the cane again and again, whilst he struggled making inarticulate noises, and lunging vicious kicks at her. With one hand she managed to hold him, and now and then the cane came down on him. He writhed, like a mad thing. But the pain of the strokes cut through his writhing, vicious, coward's courage, bit deeper, till at last, with a long whimper that became a yell, he went limp. She let him go, and he rushed at her, his teeth and eyes glinting. There was a second of agonised terror in her heart: he was a beast thing. Then she caught him, and the cane came down on him. A few times, madly, in a frenzy, he lunged and writhed, to kick her. But again the cane broke him, he sank with a howling yell on the floor, and like a beaten beast lay there yelling.

Mr. Harby had rushed up towards the end of this performance.

"What's the matter?" he roared.

Ursula felt as if something were going to break in her.

"I've thrashed him," she said, her breast heaving, forcing out the words on the last breath. The headmaster stood choked with rage, helpless. She looked at the writhing, howling figure on the floor.

"Get up," she said. The thing writhed away from her. She took a step forward. She had realised the presence of the headmaster for one second, and then she was oblivious of it again.

"Get up," she said. And with a little dart the boy was on his feet. His yelling dropped to a mad blubber. He had been in a frenzy.

"Go and stand by the radiator," she said.

As if mechanically, blubbering, he went.

The headmaster stood robbed of movement or speech. His face was yellow, his hands twitched convulsively. But Ursula stood stiff not far from him. Nothing could touch her now: she was beyond Mr. Harby. She was as if violated to death.

The headmaster muttered something, turned, and went down the room, whence, from the far end, he was heard roaring in a mad rage at his own class.

The boy blubbered wildly by the radiator. Ursula looked at the class. There were fifty pale, still faces watching her, a hundred round eyes fixed on her in an attentive, expressionless stare.

"Give out the history readers," she said to the monitors.

There was dead silence. As she stood there, she could hear again the ticking of the clock, and the chock of piles of books taken out of the low cupboard. Then came the faint flap of books on the desks. The children passed in silence, their hands working in unison. They were no longer a pack, but each one separated into a silent, closed thing.

"Take page 125, and read that chapter," said Ursula.

There was a click of many books opened. The children found the page, and bent their heads obediently to read. And they read, mechanically.

Ursula, who was trembling violently, went and sat in her high chair. The blubbering of the boy continued. The strident voice of Mr. Brunt, the roar of Mr. Harby, came muffled through the glass partition. And now and then a pair of eyes rose from the reading-book, rested on her a moment, watchful, as if calculating impersonally, then sank again.

She sat still without moving, her eyes watching the class, unseeing. She was quite still, and weak. She felt that she could not raise her hand from the desk. If she sat there for ever, she felt she could not move again, nor utter a command. It was a quarter-past four. She almost dreaded the closing of the school, when she would be alone.

The class began to recover its ease, the tension relaxed. Williams was still crying. Mr. Brunt was giving orders for the closing of the lesson. Ursula got down.

"Take your place, Williams," she said.

He dragged his feet across the room, wiping his face on his sleeve. As he sat down, he glanced at her furtively, his eyes still redder. Now he looked like some beaten rat.

At last the children were gone. Mr. Harby trod by heavily, without looking her way, or speaking. Mr. Brunt hesitated as she was locking her cupboard.

"If you settle Clarke and Letts in the same way, Miss Brangwen, you'll be all right," he said, his blue eyes glancing down in a strange fellowship, his long nose pointing at her.

"Shall I?" she laughed nervously. She did not want anybody to talk to her.

As she went along the street, clattering on the granite pavement, she was aware of boys dodging behind her. Something struck her hand that was carrying her bag, bruising her. As it rolled away she saw that it was a potato. Her hand was hurt, but she gave no sign. Soon she would take the tram.

She was afraid, and strange. It was to her quite strange and ugly, like some dream where she was degraded. She would have died rather than admit it to anybody. She could not look at her swollen hand. Something had broken in her; she had passed a crisis. Williams was beaten, but at a cost.

Feeling too much upset to go home, she rode a little farther into the town, and got down from the tram at a small tea-shop. There, in the dark little place behind the shop, she drank her tea and ate bread- and-butter. She did not taste anything. The taking of tea was just a mechanical action, to cover over her existence. There she sat in the dark, obscure little place, without knowing. Only unconsciously she nursed the back of her hand, which was bruised.

When finally she took her way home, it was sunset red across the west. She did not know why she was going home. There was nothing for her there. She had, true, only to pretend to be normal. There was nobody she could speak to, nowhere to go for escape. But she must keep on, under this red sunset, alone, knowing the horror in humanity, that would destroy her, and with which she was at war. Yet it had to be so.

In the morning again she must go to school. She got up and went without murmuring even to herself. She was in the hands of some bigger, stronger, coarser will.

School was fairly quiet. But she could feel the class watching her, ready to spring on her. Her instinct was aware of the class instinct to catch her if she were weak. But she kept cold and was guarded.

Williams was absent from school. In the middle of the morning there was a knock at the door: someone wanted the headmaster. Mr. Harby went out, heavily, angrily, nervously. He was afraid of irate parents. After a moment in the passage, he came again into school.

"Sturgess," he called to one of his larger boys. "Stand in front of the class and write down the name of anyone who speaks. Will you come this way, Miss Brangwen."

He seemed vindictively to seize upon her.

Ursula followed him, and found in the lobby a thin woman with a whitish skin, not ill-dressed in a grey costume and a purple hat.

"I called about Vernon," said the woman, speaking in a refined accent. There was about the woman altogether an appearance of refinement and of cleanliness, curiously contradicted by her half beggar's deportment, and a sense of her being unpleasant to touch, like something going bad inside. She was neither a lady nor an ordinary working man's wife, but a creature separate from society. By her dress she was not poor.

Ursula knew at once that she was Williams' mother, and that he was Vernon. She remembered that he was always clean, and well-dressed, in a sailor suit. And he had this same peculiar, half transparent unwholesomeness, rather like a corpse.

"I wasn't able to send him to school to-day," continued the woman, with a false grace of manner. "He came home last night so ill--he was violently sick--I thought I should have to send for the doctor.--You know he has a weak heart."

The woman looked at Ursula with her pale, dead eyes.

"No," replied the girl, "I did not know."

She stood still with repulsion and uncertainty. Mr. Harby, large and male, with his overhanging moustache, stood by with a slight, ugly smile at the corner of his eyes. The woman went on insidiously, not quite human:

"Oh, yes, he has had heart disease ever since he was a child. That is why he isn't very regular at school. And it is very bad to beat him. He was awfully ill this morning--I shall call on the doctor as I go back."

"Who is staying with him now, then?" put in the deep voice of the schoolmaster, cunningly.

"Oh, I left him with a woman who comes in to help me--and who understands him. But I shall call in the doctor on my way home."

Ursula stood still. She felt vague threats in all this. But the woman was so utterly strange to her, that she did not understand.

"He told me he had been beaten," continued the woman, "and when I undressed him to put him to bed, his body was covered with marks--I could show them to any doctor."

Mr Harby looked at Ursula to answer. She began to understand. The woman was threatening to take out a charge of assault on her son against her. Perhaps she wanted money.

"I caned him," she said. "He was so much trouble."

"I'm sorry if he was troublesome," said the woman, "but he must have been shamefully beaten. I could show the marks to any doctor. I'm sure it isn't allowed, if it was known."

"I caned him while he kept kicking me," said Ursula, getting angry because she was half excusing herself, Mr. Harby standing there with the twinkle at the side of his eyes, enjoying the dilemma of the two women.

"I'm sure I'm sorry if he behaved badly," said the woman. "But I can't think he deserved beating as he has been. I can't send him to school, and really can't afford to pay the doctor.--Is it allowed for the teachers to beat the children like that, Mr. Harby?"

The headmaster refused to answer. Ursula loathed herself, and loathed Mr. Harby with his twinkling cunning and malice on the occasion. The other miserable woman watched her chance.

"It is an expense to me, and I have a great struggle to keep my boy decent."

Ursula still would not answer. She looked out at the asphalt yard, where a dirty rag of paper was blowing.

"And it isn't allowed to beat a child like that, I am sure, especially when he is delicate."

Ursula stared with a set face on the yard, as if she did not hear. She loathed all this, and had ceased to feel or to exist.

"Though I know he is troublesome sometimes--but I think it was too much. His body is covered with marks."

Mr. Harby stood sturdy and unmoved, waiting now to have done, with the twinkling, tiny wrinkles of an ironical smile at the corners of his eyes. He felt himself master of the situation.

"And he was violently sick. I couldn't possibly send him to school to-day. He couldn't keep his head up."

Yet she had no answer.

"You will understand, sir, why he is absent," she said, turning to Mr. Harby.

"Oh, yes," he said, rough and off-hand. Ursula detested him for his male triumph. And she loathed the woman. She loathed everything.

"You will try to have it remembered, sir, that he has a weak heart. He is so sick after these things."

"Yes," said the headmaster, "I'll see about it."

"I know he is troublesome," the woman only addressed herself to the male now--"but if you could have him punished without beating--he is really delicate."

Ursula was beginning to feel upset. Harby stood in rather superb mastery, the woman cringing to him to tickle him as one tickles trout.

"I had come to explain why he was away this morning, sir. You will understand."

She held out her hand. Harby took it and let it go, surprised and angry.

"Good morning," she said, and she gave her gloved, seedy hand to Ursula. She was not ill-looking, and had a curious insinuating way, very distasteful yet effective.

"Good morning, Mr. Harby, and thank you."

The figure in the grey costume and the purple hat was going across the school yard with a curious lingering walk. Ursula felt a strange pity for her, and revulsion from her. She shuddered. She went into the school again.

The next morning Williams turned up, looking paler than ever, very neat and nicely dressed in his sailor blouse. He glanced at Ursula with a half-smile: cunning, subdued, ready to do as she told him. There was something about him that made her shiver. She loathed the idea of having laid hands on him. His elder brother was standing outside the gate at playtime, a youth of about fifteen, tall and thin and pale. He raised his hat, almost like a gentleman. But there was something subdued, insidious about him too.

"Who is it?" said Ursula.

"It's the big Williams," said Violet Harby roughly. "She was here yesterday, wasn't she?"

"Yes."

"It's no good her coming--her character's not good enough for her to make any trouble."

Ursula shrank from the brutality and the scandal. But it had some vague, horried fascination. How sordid everything seemed! She felt sorry for the queer woman with the lingering walk, and those queer, insidious boys. The Williams in her class was wrong somewhere. How nasty it was altogether.

So the battle went on till her heart was sick. She had several more boys to subjugate before she could establish herself. And Mr. Harby hated her almost as if she were a man. She knew now that nothing but a thrashing would settle some of the big louts who wanted to play cat and mouse with her. Mr. Harby would not give them the thrashing if he could help it. For he hated the teacher, the stuck-up, insolent high-school miss with her independence.

"Now, Wright, what have you done this time?" he would say genially to the boy who was sent to him from Standard Five for punishment. And he left the lad standing, lounging, wasting his time.

So that Ursula would appeal no more to the headmaster, but, when she was driven wild, she seized her cane, and slashed the boy who was insolent to her, over head and ears and hands. And at length they were afraid of her, she had them in order.

But she had paid a great price out of her own soul, to do this. It seemed as if a great flame had gone through her and burnt her sensitive tissue. She who shrank from the thought of physical suffering in any form, had been forced to fight and beat with a cane and rouse all her instincts to hurt. And afterwards she had been forced to endure the sound of their blubbering and desolation, when she had broken them to order.

Oh, and sometimes she felt as if she would go mad. What did it matter, what did it matter if their books were dirty and they did not obey? She would rather, in reality, that they disobeyed the whole rules of the school, than that they should be beaten, broken, reduced to this crying, hopeless state. She would rather bear all their insults and insolences a thousand times than reduce herself and them to this. Bitterly she repented having got beside herself, and having tackled the boy she had beaten.

Yet it had to be so. She did not want to do it. Yet she had to. Oh, why, why had she leagued herself to this evil system where she must brutalise herself to live? Why had she become a school-teacher, why, why?

The children had forced her to the beatings. No, she did not pity them. She had come to them full of kindness and love, and they would have torn her to pieces. They chose Mr. Harby. Well then, they must know her as well as Mr. Harby, they must first be subjugate to her. For she was not going to be made nought, no, neither by them, nor by Mr. Harby, nor by all the system around her. She was not going to be put down, prevented from standing free. It was not to be said of her, she could not take her place and carry out her task. She would fight and hold her place in this state also, in the world of work and man's convention.

She was isolated now from the life of her childhood, a foreigner in a new life, of work and mechanical consideration. She and Maggie, in their dinner-hours and their occasional teas at the little restaurant, discussed life and ideas. Maggie was a great suffragette, trusting in the vote. To Ursula the vote was never a reality. She had within her the strange, passionate knowledge of religion and living far transcending the limits of the automatic system that contained the vote. But her fundamental, organic knowledge had as yet to take form and rise to utterance. For her, as for Maggie, the liberty of woman meant something real and deep. She felt that somewhere, in something, she was not free. And she wanted to be. She was in revolt. For once she were free she could get somewhere. Ah, the wonderful, real somewhere that was beyond her, the somewhere that she felt deep, deep inside her.

In coming out and earning her own living she had made a strong, cruel move towards freeing herself. But having more freedom she only became more profoundly aware of the big want. She wanted so many things. She wanted to read great, beautiful books, and be rich with them; she wanted to see beautiful things, and have the joy of them for ever; she wanted to know big, free people; and there remained always the want she could put no name to.

It was so difficult. There were so many things, so much to meet and surpass. And one never knew where one was going. It was a blind fight. She had suffered bitterly in this school of St. Philip's. She was like a young filly that has been broken in to the shafts, and has lost its freedom. And now she was suffering bitterly from the agony of the shafts. The agony, the galling, the ignominy of her breaking in. This wore into her soul. But she would never submit. To shafts like these she would never submit for long. But she would know them. She would serve them that she might destroy them.

She and Maggie went to all kinds of places together, to big suffrage meetings in Nottingham, to concerts, to theatres, to exhibitions of pictures. Ursula saved her money and bought a bicycle, and the two girls rode to Lincoln, to Southwell, and into Derbyshire. They had an endless wealth of things to talk about. And it was a great joy, finding, discovering.

But Ursula never told about Winifred Inger. That was a sort of secret side-show to her life, never to be opened. She did not even think of it. It was the closed door she had not the strength to open.

Once she was broken in to her teaching, Ursula began gradually to have a new life of her own again. She was going to college in eighteen months' time. Then she would take her degree, and she would--ah, she would perhaps be a big woman, and lead a movement. Who knows?--At any rate she would go to college in eighteen months' time. All that mattered now was work, work.

And till college, she must go on with this teaching in St. Philip's School, which was always destroying her, but which she could now manage, without spoiling all her life. She would submit to it for a time, since the time had a definite limit.

The class-teaching itself at last became almost mechanical. It was a strain on her, an exhausting wearying strain, always unnatural. But there was a certain amount of pleasure in the sheer oblivion of teaching, so much work to do, so many children to see after, so much to be done, that one's self was forgotten. When the work had become like habit to her, and her individual soul was left out, had its growth elsewhere, then she could be almost happy.

Her real, individual self drew together and became more coherent during these two years of teaching, during the struggle against the odds of class teaching. It was always a prison to her, the school. But it was a prison where her wild, chaotic soul became hard and independent. When she was well enough and not tired, then she did not hate the teaching. She enjoyed getting into the swing of work of a morning, putting forth all her strength, making the thing go. It was for her a strenuous form of exercise. And her soul was left to rest, it had the time of torpor in which to gather itself together in strength again. But the teaching hours were too long, the tasks too heavy, and the disciplinary condition of the school too unnatural for her. She was worn very thin and quivering.

She came to school in the morning seeing the hawthorn flowers wet, the little, rosy grains swimming in a bowl of dew. The larks quivered their song up into the new sunshine, and the country was so glad. It was a violation to plunge into the dust and greyness of the town.

So that she stood before her class unwilling to give herself up to the activity of teaching, to turn her energy, that longed for the country and for joy of early summer, into the dominating of fifty children and the transferring to them some morsels of arithmetic. There was a little absentness about her. She could not force herself into forgetfulness. A jar of buttercups and fool's-parsley in the window-bottom kept her away in the meadows, where in the lush grass the moon-daisies were half-submerged, and a spray of pink ragged robin. Yet before her were faces of fifty children. They were almost like big daisies in a dimness of the grass.

A brightness was on her face, a little unreality in her teaching. She could not quite see her children. She was struggling between two worlds, her own world of young summer and flowers, and this other world of work. And the glimmer of her own sunlight was between her and her class.

Then the morning passed with a strange far-awayness and quietness. Dinner-time came, when she and Maggie ate joyously, with all the windows open. And then they went out into St. Philip's churchyard, where was a shadowy corner under red hawthorn trees. And there they talked and read Shelley or Browning or some work about "Woman and Labour".

And when she went back to school, Ursula lived still in the shadowy corner of the graveyard, where pink-red petals lay scattered from the hawthorn tree, like myriad tiny shells on a beach, and a church bell sometimes rang sonorously, and sometimes a bird called out, whilst Maggie's voice went on low and sweet.

These days she was happy in her soul: oh, she was so happy, that she wished she could take her joy and scatter it in armfuls broadcast. She made her children happy, too, with a little tingling of delight. But to her, the children were not a school class this afternoon. They were flowers, birds, little bright animals, children, anything. They only were not Standard Five. She felt no responsibility for them. It was for once a game, this teaching. And if they got their sums wrong, what matter? And she would take a pleasant bit of reading. And instead of history with dates, she would tell a lovely tale. And for grammar, they could have a bit of written analysis that was not difficult, because they had done it before:

"She shall be sportive as a fawn That wild with glee across the lawn Or up the mountain springs."

She wrote that from memory, because it pleased her.

So the golden afternoon passed away and she went home happy. She had finished her day of school, and was free to plunge into the glowing evening of Cossethay. And she loved walking home. But it had not been school. It had been playing at school beneath red hawthorn blossom.

She could not go on like this. The quarterly examination was coming, and her class was not ready. It irritated her that she must drag herself away from her happy self, and exert herself with all her strength to force, to compel this heavy class of children to work hard at arithmetic. They did not want to work, she did not want to compel them. And yet, some second conscience gnawed at her, telling her the work was not properly done. It irritated her almost to madness, and she let loose all the irritation in the class. Then followed a day of battle and hate and violence, when she went home raw, feeling the golden evening taken away from her, herself incarcerated in some dark, heavy place, and chained there with a consciousness of having done badly at work.

What good was it that it was summer, that right till evening, when the corncrakes called, the larks would mount up into the light, to sing once more before nightfall. What good was it all, when she was out of tune, when she must only remember the burden and shame of school that day.

And still, she hated school. Still she cried, she did not believe in it. Why should the children learn, and why should she teach them? It was all so much milling the wind. What folly was it that made life into this, the fulfilling of some stupid, factitious duty? It was all so made up, so unnatural. The school, the sums, the grammar, the quarterly examinations, the registers--it was all a barren nothing!

Why should she give her allegiance to this world, and let it so dominate her, that her own world of warm sun and growing, sap-filled life was turned into nothing? She was not going to do it. She was not going to be a prisoner in the dry, tyrannical man-world. She was not going to care about it. What did it matter if her class did ever so badly in the quarterly examination. Let it--what did it matter?

Nevertheless, when the time came, and the report on her class was bad, she was miserable, and the joy of the summer was taken away from her, she was shut up in gloom. She could not really escape from this world of system and work, out into her fields where she was happy. She must have her place in the working world, be a recognised member with full rights there. It was more important to her than fields and sun and poetry, at this time. But she was only the more its enemy.

It was a very difficult thing, she thought, during the long hours of intermission in the summer holidays, to be herself, her happy self that enjoyed so much to lie in the sun, to play and swim and be content, and also to be a school-teacher getting results out of a class of children. She dreamed fondly of the time when she need not be a teacher any more. But vaguely, she knew that responsibility had taken place in her for ever, and as yet her prime business was to work.

The autumn passed away, the winter was at hand. Ursula became more and more an inhabitant of the world of work, and of what is called life. She could not see her future, but a little way off, was college, and to the thought of this she clung fixedly. She would go to college, and get her two or three years' training, free of cost. Already she had applied and had her place appointed for the coming year.

So she continued to study for her degree. She would take French, Latin, English, mathematics and botany. She went to classes in Ilkeston, she studied at evening. For there was this world to conquer, this knowledge to acquire, this qualification to attain. And she worked with intensity, because of a want inside her that drove her on. Almost everything was subordinated now to this one desire to take her place in the world. What kind of place it was to be she did not ask herself. The blind desire drove her on. She must take her place.

She knew she would never be much of a success as an elementary school teacher. But neither had she failed. She hated it, but she had managed it.

Maggie had left St. Philip's School, and had found a more congenial post. The two girls remained friends. They met at evening classes, they studied and somehow encouraged a firm hope each in the other. They did not know whither they were making, nor what they ultimately wanted. But they knew they wanted now to learn, to know and to do.

They talked of love and marriage, and the position of woman in marriage. Maggie said that love was the flower of life, and blossomed unexpectedly and without law, and must be plucked where it was found, and enjoyed for the brief hour of its duration.

To Ursula this was unsatisfactory. She thought she still loved Anton Skrebensky. But she did not forgive him that he had not been strong enough to acknowledge her. He had denied her. How then could she love him? How then was love so absolute? She did not believe it. She believed that love was a way, a means, not an end in itself, as Maggie seemed to think. And always the way of love would be found. But whither did it lead?

"I believe there are many men in the world one might love--there is not only one man," said Ursula.

She was thinking of Skrebensky. Her heart was hollow with the knowledge of Winifred Inger.

"But you must distinguish between love and passion," said Maggie, adding, with a touch of contempt: "Men will easily have a passion for you, but they won't love you."

"Yes," said Ursula, vehemently, the look of suffering, almost of fanaticism, on her face. "Passion is only part of love. And it seems so much because it can't last. That is why passion is never happy."

She was staunch for joy, for happiness, and permanency, in contrast with Maggie, who was for sadness, and the inevitable passing-away of things. Ursula suffered bitterly at the hands of life, Maggie was always single, always withheld, so she went in a heavy brooding sadness that was almost meat to her. In Ursula's last winter at St. Philip's the friendship of the two girls came to a climax. It was during this winter that Ursula suffered and enjoyed most keenly Maggie's fundamental sadness of enclosedness. Maggie enjoyed and suffered Ursula's struggles against the confines of her life. And then the two girls began to drift apart, as Ursula broke from that form of life wherein Maggie must remain enclosed.

Chapter 14

The Widening Circle

Maggie's people, the Schofields, lived in the large gardener's cottage, that was half a farm, behind Belcote Hall. The hall was too damp to live in, so the Schofields were caretakers, gamekeepers, farmers, all in one. The father was gamekeeper and stock-breeder, the eldest son was market-gardener, using the big hall gardens, the second son was farmer and gardener. There was a large family, as at Cossethay.

Ursula loved to stay at Belcote, to be treated as a grand lady by Maggie's brothers. They were good-looking men. The eldest was twenty-six years old. He was the gardener, a man not very tall, but strong and well made, with brown, sunny, easy eyes and a face handsomely hewn, brown, with a long fair moustache which he pulled as he talked to Ursula.

The girl was excited because these men attended to her when she came near. She could make their eyes light up and quiver, she could make Anthony, the eldest, twist and twist his moustache. She knew she could move them almost at will with her light laughter and chatter. They loved her ideas, watched her as she talked vehemently about politics or economics. And she, while she talked, saw the golden-brown eyes of Anthony gleam like the eyes of a satyr as they watched her. He did not listen to her words, he listened to her. It excited her.

He was like a faun pleased when she would go with him over his hothouses, to look at the green and pretty plants, at the pink primulas nodding among their leaves, and cinarrias flaunting purple and crimson and white. She asked about everything, and he told her very exactly and minutely, in a queer pedantic way that made her want to laugh. Yet she was really interested in what he did. And he had the curious light in his face, like the light in the eyes of the goat that was tethered by the farmyard gate.

She went down with him into the warmish cellar, where already in the darkness the little yellow knobs of rhubarb were coming. He held the lantern down to the dark earth. She saw the tiny knob-end of the rhubarb thrusting upwards upon the thick red stem, thrusting itself like a knob of flame through the soft soil. His face was turned up to her, the light glittered on his eyes and his teeth as he laughed, with a faint, musical neigh. He looked handsome. And she heard a new sound in her ears, the faintly-musical, neighing laugh of Anthony, whose moustache twisted up, and whose eyes were luminous with a cold, steady, arrogant-laughing glare. There seemed a little prance of triumph in his movement, she could not rid herself of a movement of acquiescence, a touch of acceptance. Yet he was so humble, his voice was so caressing. He held his hand for her to step on when she must climb a wall. And she stepped on the living firmness of him, that quivered firmly under her weight.

She was aware of him as if in a mesmeric state. In her ordinary sense, she had nothing to do with him. But the peculiar ease and unnoticeableness of his entering the house, the power of his cold, gleaming light on her when he looked at her, was like a bewitchment. In his eyes, as in the pale grey eyes of a goat, there seemed some of that steady, hard fire of moonlight which has nothing to do with the day. It made her alert, and yet her mind went out like an extinguished thing. She was all senses, all her senses were alive.

Then she saw him on Sunday, dressed up in Sunday clothes, trying to impress her. And he looked ridiculous. She clung to the ridiculous effect of his stiff, Sunday clothes.

She was always conscious of some unfaithfulness to Maggie, on Anthony's score. Poor Maggie stood apart as if betrayed. Maggie and Anthony were enemies by instinct. Ursula had to go back to her friend brimming with affection and a poignancy of pity. Which Maggie received with a little stiffness. Then poetry and books and learning took the place of Anthony, with his goats' movements and his cold, gleaming humour.

While Ursula was at Belcote, the snow fell. In the morning, a covering of snow weighed on the rhododendron bushes.

"Shall we go out?" said Maggie.

She had lost some of her leader's sureness, and was now tentative, a little in reserve from her friend.

They took the key of the gate and wandered into the park. It was a white world on which dark trees and tree masses stood under a sky keen with frost. The two girls went past the hall, that was shuttered and silent, their footprints marking the snow on the drive. Down the park, a long way off, a man was carrying armfuls of hay across the snow. He was a small, dark figure, like an animal moving in its unawareness.

Ursula and Maggie went on exploring, down to a tinkling, chilly brook, that had worn the snow away in little scoops, and ran dark between. They saw a robin glance its bright eyes and burst scarlet and grey into the hedge, then some pertly-marked blue-tits scuffled. Meanwhile the brook slid on coldly, chuckling to itself.

The girls wandered across the snowy grass to where the artificial fish-ponds lay under thin ice. There was a big tree with a thick trunk twisted with ivy, that hung almost horizontal over the ponds. Ursula climbed joyfully into this and sat amid bosses of bright ivy and dull berries. Some ivy leaves were like green spears held out, and tipped with snow. The ice was seen beneath them.

Maggie took out a book, and sitting lower down the trunk began to read Coleridge's "Christabel". Ursula half listened. She was wildly thrilled. Then she saw Anthony coming across the snow, with his confident, slightly strutting stride. His face looked brown and hard against the snow, smiling with a sort of tense confidence.

"Hello!" she called to him.

A response went over his face, his head was lifted in an answering, jerking gesture.

"Hello!" he said. "You're like a bird in there."

And Ursula's laugh rang out. She answered to the peculiar, reedy twang in his penetrating voice.

She did not think of Anthony, yet she lived in a sort of connection with him, in his world. One evening she met him as she was coming down the lane, and they walked side by side.

"I think it's so lovely here," she cried.

"Do you?" he said. "I'm glad you like it."

There was a curious confidence in his voice.

"Oh, I love it. What more does one want than to live in this beautiful place, and make things grow in your garden. It is like the Garden of Eden."

"Is it?" he said, with a little laugh. "Yes--well, it's not so bad----" he was hesitating. The pale gleam was strong in his eyes, he was looking at her steadily, watching her, as an animal might. Something leaped in her soul. She knew he was going to suggest to her that she should be as he was.

"Would you like to stay here with me?" he asked, tentatively.

She blenched with fear and with the intense sensation of proffered licence suggested to her.

They had come to the gate.

"How?" she asked. "You aren't alone here."

"We could marry," he answered, in the strange, coldly-gleaming insinuating tone that chilled the sunshine into moonlight. All substantial things seemed transformed. Shadows and dancing moonlight were real, and all cold, inhuman, gleaming sensations. She realised with something like terror that she was going to accept this. She was going inevitably to accept him. His hand was reaching out to the gate before them. She stood still. His flesh was hard and brown and final. She seemed to be in the grip of some insult.

"I couldn't," she answered, involuntarily.

He gave the same brief, neighing little laugh, very sad and bitter now, and slotted back the bar of the gate. Yet he did not open. For a moment they both stood looking at the fire of sunset that quivered among the purple twigs of the trees. She saw his brown, hard, well-hewn face gleaming with anger and humiliation and submission. He was an animal that knows that it is subdued. Her heart flamed with sensation of him, of the fascinating thing he offered her, and with sorrow, and with an inconsolable sense of loneliness. Her soul was an infant crying in the night. He had no soul. Oh, and why had she? He was the cleaner.

She turned away, she turned round from him, and saw the east flushed strangely rose, the moon coming yellow and lovely upon a rosy sky, above the darkening, bluish snow. All this so beautiful, all this so lovely! He did not see it. He was one with it. But she saw it, and was one with it. Her seeing separated them infinitely.

They went on in silence down the path, following their different fates. The trees grew darker and darker, the snow made only a dimness in an unreal world. And like a shadow, the day had gone into a faintly luminous, snowy evening, while she was talking aimlessly to him, to keep him at a distance, yet to keep him near her, and he walked heavily. He opened the garden gate for her quietly, and she was entering into her own pleasances, leaving him outside the gate.

Then even whilst she was escaping, or trying to escape, this feeling of pain, came Maggie the next day, saying:

"I wouldn't make Anthony love you, Ursula, if you don't want him. It is not nice."

"But, Maggie, I never made him love me," cried Ursula, dismayed and suffering, and feeling as if she had done something base.

She liked Anthony, though. All her life, at intervals, she returned to the thought of him and of that which he offered. But she was a traveller, she was a traveller on the face of the earth, and he was an isolated creature living in the fulfilment of his own senses.

She could not help it, that she was a traveller. She knew Anthony, that he was not one. But oh, ultimately and finally, she must go on and on, seeking the goal that she knew she did draw nearer to.

She was wearing away her second and last cycle at St. Philip's. As the months went she ticked them off, first October, then November, December, January. She was careful always to subtract a month from the remainder, for the summer holidays. She saw herself travelling round a circle, only an arc of which remained to complete. Then, she was in the open, like a bird tossed into mid-air, a bird that had learned in some measure to fly.

There was college ahead; that was her mid-air, unknown, spacious. Come college, and she would have broken from the confines of all the life she had known. For her father was also going to move. They were all going to leave Cossethay.

Brangwen had kept his carelessness about his circumstances. He knew his work in the lace designing meant little to him personally, he just earned his wage by it. He did not know what meant much to him. Living close to Anna Brangwen, his mind was always suffused through with physical heat, he moved from instinct to instinct, groping, always groping on.

When it was suggested to him that he might apply for one of the posts as hand-work instructor, posts about to be created by the Nottingham Education Committee, it was as if a space had been given to him, into which he could remove from his hot, dusky enclosure. He sent in his application, confidently, expectantly. He had a sort of belief in his supernatural fate. The inevitable weariness of his daily work had stiffened some of his muscles, and made a slight deadness in his ruddy, alert face. Now he might escape.

He was full of the new possibilities, and his wife was acquiescent. She was willing now to have a change. She too was tired of Cossethay. The house was too small for the growing children. And since she was nearly forty years old, she began to come awake from her sleep of motherhood, her energy moved more outwards. The din of growing lives roused her from her apathy. She too must have her hand in making life. She was quite ready to move, taking all her brood. It would be better now if she transplanted them. For she had borne her last child, it would be growing up.

So that in her easy, unused fashion she talked plans and arrangements with her husband, indifferent really as to the method of the change, since a change was coming; even if it did not come in this way it would come in another.

The house was full of ferment. Ursula was wild with excitement. At last her father was going to be something, socially. So long, he had been a social cypher, without form or standing. Now he was going to be Art and Handwork Instructor for the County of Nottingham. That was really a status. It was a position. He would be a specialist in his way. And he was an uncommon man. Ursula felt they were all getting a foothold at last. He was coming to his own. Who else that she knew could turn out from his own fingers the beautiful things her father could produce? She felt he was certain of this new job.

They would move. They would leave this cottage at Cossethay which had grown too small for them; they would leave Cossethay, where the children had all been born, and where they were always kept to the same measure. For the people who had known them as children along with the other village boys and girls would never, could never understand that they should grow up different. They had held "Urtler Brangwen" one of themselves, and had given her her place in her native village, as in a family. And the bond was strong. But now, when she was growing to something beyond what Cossethay would allow or understand, the bond between her and her old associates was becoming a bondage.

" 'Ello, Urs'ler, 'ow are yer goin' on?" they said when they met her. And it demanded of her in the old voice the old response. And something in her must respond and belong to people who knew her. But something else denied bitterly. What was true of her ten years ago was not true now. And something else which she was, and must be, they could neither see nor allow. They felt it there nevertheless, something beyond them, and they were injured. They said she was proud and conceited, that she was too big for her shoes nowadays. They said, she needn't pretend, because they knew what she was. They had known her since she was born. They quoted this and that about her. And she was ashamed because she did feel different from the people she had lived amongst. It hurt her that she could not be at her ease with them any more. And yet--and yet--one's kite will rise on the wind as far as ever one has string to let it go. It tugs and tugs and will go, and one is glad the further it goes, even it everybody else is nasty about it. So Cossethay hampered her, and she wanted to go away, to be free to fly her kite as high as she liked. She wanted to go away, to be free to stand straight up to her own height.

So that when she knew that her father had the new post, and that the family would move, she felt like skipping on the face of the earth, and making psalms of joy. The old, bound shell of Cossethay was to be cast off, and she was to dance away into the blue air. She wanted to dance and sing.

She made dreams of the new place she would live in, where stately cultured people of high feeling would be friends with her, and she would live with the noble in the land, moving to a large freedom of feeling. She dreamed of a rich, proud, simple girl-friend, who had never known Mr. Harby and his like, nor ever had a note in her voice of bondaged contempt and fear, as Maggie had.

And she gave herself to all that she loved in Cossethay, passionately, because she was going away now. She wandered about to her favourite spots. There was a place where she went trespassing to find the snowdrops that grew wild. It was evening and the winter-darkened meadows were full of mystery. When she came to the woods an oak tree had been newly chopped down in the dell. Pale drops of flowers glimmered many under the hazels, and by the sharp, golden splinters of wood that were splashed about, the grey-green blades of snowdrop leaves pricked unheeding, the drooping still little flowers were without heed.

Ursula picked some lovingly, in an ecstasy. The golden chips of wood shone yellow like sunlight, the snowdrops in the twilight were like the first stars of night. And she, alone amongst them, was wildly happy to have found her way into such a glimmering dusk, to the intimate little flowers, and the splash of wood chips like sunshine over the twilight of the ground. She sat down on the felled tree and remained awhile remote.

Going home, she left the purplish dark of the trees for the open lane, where the puddles shone long and jewel-like in the ruts, the land about her was darkened, and the sky a jewel overhead. Oh, how amazing it was to her! It was almost too much. She wanted to run, and sing, and cry out for very wildness and poignancy, but she could not run and sing and cry out in such a way as to cry out the deep things in her heart, so she was still, and almost sad with loneliness.

At Easter she went again to Maggie's home, for a few days. She was, however shy and fugitive. She saw Anthony, how suggestive he was to look on, and how his eyes had a sort of supplicating light, that was rather beautiful. She looked at him, and she looked again, for him to become real to her. But it was her own self that was occupied elsewhere. She seemed to have some other being.

And she turned to spring and the opening buds. There was a large pear tree by a wall, and it was full, thronged with tiny, grey-green buds, myriads. She stood before it arrested with delight, and a realisation went deep into her heart. There was so great a host in array behind the cloud of pale, dim green, so much to come forth--so much sunshine to pour down.

So the weeks passed on, trance-like and pregnant. The pear tree at Cossethay burst into bloom against the cottage-end, like a wave burst into foam. Then gradually the bluebells came, blue as water standing thin in the level places under the trees and bushes, flowing in more and more, till there was a flood of azure, and pale-green leaves burning, and tiny birds with fiery little song and flight. Then swiftly the flood sank and was gone, and it was summer.

There was to be no going to the seaside for a holiday. The holiday was the removal from Cossethay.

They were going to live near Willey Green, which place was most central for Brangwen. It was an old, quiet village on the edge of the thronged colliery-district. So that it served, in its quaintness of odd old cottages lingering in their sunny gardens, as a sort of bower or pleasaunce to the sprawling colliery-townlet of Beldover, a pleasant walk-round for the colliers on Sunday morning, before the public-houses opened.

In Willey Green stood the Grammar School where Brangwen was occupied for two days during the week, and where experiments in education were being carried on.

Ursula wanted to live in Willey Green on the remoter side, towards Southwell, and Sherwood Forest. There it was so lovely and romantic. But out into the world meant out into the world. Will Brangwen must become modern.

He bought, with his wife's money, a fairly large house in the new, red-brick part of Beldover. It was a villa built by the widow of the late colliery manager, and stood in a quiet, new little side-street near the large church.

Ursula was rather sad. Instead of having arrived at distinction they had come to new red-brick suburbia in a grimy, small town.

Mrs. Brangwen was happy. The rooms were splendidly large--a splendid dining-room, drawing-room and kitchen, besides a very pleasant study downstairs. Everything was admirably appointed. The widow had settled herself in lavishly. She was a native of Beldover, and had intended to reign almost queen. Her bathroom was white and silver, her stairs were of oak, her chimney-pieces were massive and oaken, with bulging, columnar supports.

"Good and substantial," was the keynote. But Ursula resented the stout, inflated prosperity implied everywhere. She made her father promise to chisel down the bulging oaken chimney-pieces, chisel them flat. That sort of important paunch was very distasteful to her. Her father was himself long and loosely built. What had he to do with so much "good and substantial" importance?

They bought a fair amount also of the widow's furniture. It was in common good taste--the great Wilton carpet, the large round table, the Chesterfield covered with glossy chintz in roses and birds. It was all really very sunny and nice, with large windows, and a view right across the shallow valley.

After all, they would be, as one of their acquaintances said, among the elite of Beldover. They would represent culture. And as there was no one of higher social importance than the doctors, the colliery-managers, and the chemists, they would shine, with their Della Robbia beautiful Madonna, their lovely reliefs from Donatello, their reproductions from Botticelli. Nay, the large photographs of the Primavera and the Aphrodite and the Nativity in the dining-room, the ordinary reception-room, would make dumb the mouth of Beldover.

And after all, it is better to be princess in Beldover than a vulgar nobody in the country.

There was great preparation made for the removal of the whole Brangwen family, ten in all. The house in Beldover was prepared, the house in Cossethay was dismantled. Come the end of the school-term the removal would begin.

Ursula left school at the end of July, when the summer holiday commenced. The morning outside was bright and sunny, and the freedom got inside the schoolroom this last day. It was as if the walls of the school were going to melt away. Already they seemed shadowy and unreal. It was breaking-up morning. Soon scholars and teachers would be outside, each going his own way. The irons were struck off, the sentence was expired, the prison was a momentary shadow halting about them. The children were carrying away books and inkwell, and rolling up maps. All their faces were bright with gladness and goodwill. There was a bustle of cleaning and clearing away all marks of this last term of imprisonment. They were all breaking free. Busily, eagerly, Ursula made up her totals of attendances in the register. With pride she wrote down the thousands: to so many thousands of children had she given another sessions's lessons. It looked tremendous. The excited hours passed slowly in suspense. Then at last it was over. For the last time, she stood before her children whilst they said their prayers and sang a hymn. Then it was over.

"Good-bye, children," she said. "I shall not forget you, and you must not forget me."

"No, miss," cried the children in chorus, with shining faces.

She stood smiling on them, moved, as they filed out. Then she gave her monitors their term sixpences, and they too departed. Cupboards were locked, blackboards washed, ink wells and dusters removed. The place stood bare and vacated. She had triumphed over it. It was a shell now. She had fought a good fight here, and it had not been altogether unenjoyable. She owed some gratitude even to this hard, vacant place, that stood like a memorial or a trophy. So much of her life had been fought for and won and lost here. Something of this school would always belong to her, something of her to it. She acknowledged it. And now came the leave-taking.

In the teachers' room the teachers were chatting and loitering, talking excitedly of where they were going: to the Isle of Man, to Llandudno, to Yarmouth. They were eager, and attached to each other, like comrades leaving a ship.

Then it was Mr. Harby's turn to make a speech to Ursula. He looked handsome, with his silver-grey temples and black brows, and his imperturbable male solidity.

"Well," he said, "we must say good-bye to Miss Brangwen and wish her all good fortune for the future. I suppose we shall see her again some time, and hear how she is getting on."

"Oh, yes," said Ursula, stammering, blushing, laughing. "Oh, yes, I shall come and see you."

Then she realised that this sounded too personal, and she felt foolish.

"Miss Schofield suggested these two books," he said, putting a couple of volumes on the table: "I hope you will like them."

Ursula feeling very shy picked up the books. There was a volume of Swinburne's poetry, and a volume of Meredith's.

"Oh, I shall love them," she said. "Thank you very much--thank you all so much--it is so----"

She stuttered to an end, and very red, turned the leaves of the books eagerly, pretending to be taking the first pleasure, but really seeing nothing.

Mr. Harby's eyes were twinkling. He alone was at his ease, master of the situation. It was pleasing to him to make Ursula the gift, and for once extend good feeling to his teachers. As a rule, it was so difficult, each one was so strained in resentment under his rule.

"Yes," he said, "we hoped you would like the choice----"

He looked with his peculiar, challenging smile for a moment, then returned to his cupboards.

Ursula felt very confused. She hugged her books, loving them. And she felt that she loved all the teachers, and Mr. Harby. It was very confusing.

At last she was out. She cast one hasty glance over the school buildings squatting on the asphalt yard in the hot, glistening sun, one look down the well-known road, and turned her back on it all. Something strained in her heart. She was going away.

"Well, good luck," said the last of the teachers, as she shook hands at the end of the road. "We'll expect you back some day."

He spoke in irony. She laughed, and broke away. She was free. As she sat on the top of the tram in the sunlight, she looked round her with tremendous delight. She had left something which had meant much to her. She would not go to school any more, and do the familiar things. Queer! There was a little pang amid her exultation, of fear, not of regret. Yet how she exulted this morning!

She was tremulous with pride and joy. She loved the two books. They were tokens to her, representing the fruit and trophies of her two years which, thank God, were over.

"To Ursula Brangwen, with best wishes for her future, and in warm memory of the time she spent in St. Philip's School," was written in the headmaster's neat, scrupulous handwriting. She could see the careful hand holding the pen, the thick fingers with tufts of black hair on the back of each one.

He had signed, all the teachers had signed. She liked having all their signatures. She felt she loved them all. They were her fellow-workers. She carried away from the school a pride she could never lose. She had her place as comrade and sharer in the work of the school, her fellow teachers had signed to her, as one of them. And she was one of all workers, she had put in her tiny brick to the fabric man was building, she had qualified herself as co-builder.

Then the day for the home removal came. Ursula rose early, to pack up the remaining goods. The carts arrived, lent by her uncle at the Marsh, in the lull between hay and corn harvest. The goods roped in the cart, Ursula mounted her bicycle and sped away to Beldover.

The house was hers. She entered its clean-scrubbed silence. The dining-room had been covered with a thick rush matting, hard and of the beautiful, luminous, clean colour of sun-dried reeds. The walls were pale grey, the doors were darker grey. Ursula admired it very much, as the sun came through the large windows, streaming in.

She flung open doors and windows to the sunshine. Flowers were bright and shining round the small lawn, which stood above the road, looking over the raw field opposite, which would later be built upon. No one came. So she wandered down the garden at the back of the wall. The eight bells of the church rang the hour. She could hear the many sounds of the town about her.

At last, the cart was seen coming round the corner, familiar furniture piled undignified on top, Tom, her brother, and Theresa, marching on foot beside the mass, proud of having walked ten miles or more, from the tram terminus. Ursula poured out beer, and the men drank thirstily, by the door. A second cart was coming. Her father appeared on his motor bicycle. There was the staggering transport of furniture up the steps to the little lawn, where it was deposited all pellmell in the sunshine, very queer and discomforting.

Brangwen was a pleasant man to work with, cheerful and easy. Ursula loved deciding him where the heavy things should stand. She watched anxiously the struggle up the steps and through the doorways. Then the big things were in, the carts set off again. Ursula and her father worked away carrying in all the light things that remained upon the lawn, and putting them in place. Dinner time came. They ate bread and cheese in the kitchen.

"Well, we're getting on," said Brangwen, cheerfully.

Two more loads arrived. The afternoon passed away in a struggle with the furniture, upstairs. Towards five o'clock, appeared the last loads, consisting also of Mrs. Brangwen and the younger children, driven by Uncle Fred in the trap. Gudrun had walked with Margaret from the station. The whole family had come.

"There!" said Brangwen, as his wife got down from the cart: "Now we're all here."

"Ay," said his wife pleasantly.

And the very brevity, the silence of intimacy between the two made a home in the hearts of the children, who clustered round feeling strange in the new place.

Everything was at sixes and sevens. But a fire was made in the kitchen, the hearth-rug put down, the kettle set on the hob, and Mrs. Brangwen began towards sunset to prepare the first meal. Ursula and Gudrun were slaving in the bedrooms, candles were rushing about. Then from the kitchen came the smell of ham and eggs and coffee, and in the gaslight, the scrambled meal began. The family seemed to huddle together like a little camp in a strange place. Ursula felt a load of responsibility upon her, caring for the half-little ones. The smallest kept near the mother.

It was dark, and the children went sleepy but excited to bed. It was a long time before the sound of voices died out. There was a tremendous sense of adventure.

In the morning everybody was awake soon after dawn, the children crying:

"When I wakened up I didn't know where I was."

There were the strange sounds of the town, and the repeated chiming of the big church bells, so much harsher and more insistent than the little bells of Cossethay. They looked through the windows past the other new red houses to the wooded hill across the valley. They had all a delightful sense of space and liberation, space and light and air.

But gradually all set to work. They were a careless, untidy family. Yet when once they set about to get the house in order, the thing went with felicity and quickness. By evening the place was roughly established.

They would not have a servant to live in the house, only a woman who could go home at night. And they would not even have the woman yet. They wanted to do as they liked in their own home, with no stranger in the midst.

Chapter 15

The Bitterness of Ecstasy

A storm of industry raged on in the house. Ursula did not go to college till October. So, with a distinct feeling of responsibility, as if she must express herself in this house, she laboured arranging, re-arranging, selecting, contriving.

She could use her father's ordinary tools, both for woodwork and metal-work, so she hammered and tinkered. Her mother was quite content to have the thing done. Brangwen was interested. He had a ready belief in his daughter. He himself was at work putting up his work-shed in the garden.

At last she had finished for the time being. The drawingroom was big and empty. It had the good Wilton carpet, of which the family was so proud, and the large couch and large chairs covered with shiny chintz, and the piano, a little sculpture in plaster that Brangwen had done, and not very much more. It was too large and empty-feeling for the family to occupy very much. Yet they liked to know it was there, large and empty.

The home was the dining-room. There the hard rush floor-covering made the ground light, reflecting light upon the bottom their hearts; in the window-bay was a broad, sunny seat, the table was so solid one could not jostle it, and the chairs so strong one could knock them over without hurting them. The familiar organ that Brangwen had made stood on one side, looking peculiarly small, the sideboard was comfortably reduced to normal proportions. This was the family living-room.

Ursula had a bedroom to herself. It was really a servants' bedroom, small and plain. Its window looked over the back garden at other back gardens, some of them old and very nice, some of them littered with packing-cases, then at the backs of the houses whose fronts were the shops in High Street, or the genteel homes of the under-manager or the chief cashier, facing the chapel.

She had six weeks still before going to college. In this time she nervously read over some Latin and some botany, and fitfully worked at some mathematics. She was going into college as a teacher, for her training. But, having already taken her matriculation examination, she was entered for a university course. At the end of a year she would sit for the Intermediate Arts, then two years after for her B.A. So her case was not that of the ordinary school-teacher. She would be working among the private students who came only for pure education, not for mere professional training. She would be of the elect.

For the next three years she would be more or less dependent on her parents again. Her training was free. All college fees were paid by the government, she had moreover a few pounds grant every year. This would just pay for her train fares and her clothing. Her parents would only have to feed her. She did not want to cost them much. They would not be well off. Her father would earn only two hundred a year, and a good deal of her mother's capital was spent in buying the house. Still, there was enough to get along with.

Gudrun was attending the Art School at Nottingham. She was working particularly at sculpture. She had a gift for this. She loved making little models in clay, of children or of animals. Already some of these had appeared in the Students' Exhibition in the Castle, and Gudrun was a distinguished person. She was chafing at the Art School and wanted to go to London. But there was not enough money. Neither would her parents let her go so far.

Theresa had left the High School. She was a great strapping, bold hussy, indifferent to all higher claims. She would stay at home. The others were at school, except the youngest. When term started, they would all be transferred to the Grammar School at Willey Green.

Ursula was excited at making acquaintances in Beldover. The excitement soon passed. She had tea at the clergyman's, at the chemist's, at the other chemist's, at the doctor's, at the under-manager's--then she knew practically everybody. She could not take people very seriously, though at the time she wanted to.

She wandered the country, on foot and on her bicycle, finding it very beautiful in the forest direction, between Mansfield and Southwell and Worksop. But she was here only skirmishing for amusement. Her real exploration would begin in college.

Term began. She went into town each day by train. The cloistered quiet of the college began to close around her.

She was not at first disappointed. The big college built of stone, standing in the quiet street, with a rim of grass and lime trees all so peaceful: she felt it remote, a magic land. Its architecture was foolish, she knew from her father. Still, it was different from that of all other buildings. Its rather pretty, plaything, Gothic form was almost a style, in the dirty industrial town.

She liked the hall, with its big stone chimney-piece and its Gothic arches supporting the balcony above. To be sure the arches were ugly, the chimney-piece of cardboard-like carved stone, with its armorial decoration, looked silly just opposite the bicycle stand and the radiator, whilst the great notice-board with its fluttering papers seemed to slam away all sense of retreat and mystery from the far wall. Nevertheless, amorphous as it might be, there was in it a reminiscence of the wondrous, cloistral origin of education. Her soul flew straight back to the medieval times, when the monks of God held the learning of men and imparted it within the shadow of religion. In this spirit she entered college.

The harshness and vulgarity of the lobbies and cloak-rooms hurt her at first. Why was it not all beautiful? But she could not openly admit her criticism. She was on holy ground.

She wanted all the students to have a high, pure spirit, she wanted them to say only the real, genuine things, she wanted their faces to be still and luminous as the nuns' and the monks' faces.

Alas, the girls chattered and giggled and were nervous, they were dressed up and frizzed, the men looked mean and clownish.

Still, it was lovely to pass along the corridor with one's books in one's hands, to push the swinging, glass-panelled door, and enter the big room where the first lecture would be given. The windows were large and lofty, the myriad brown students' desks stood waiting, the great blackboard was smooth behind the rostrum.

Ursula sat beside her window, rather far back. Looking down, she saw the lime trees turning yellow, the tradesman's boy passing silent down the still, autumn-sunny street. There was the world, remote, remote.

Here, within the great, whispering sea-shell, that whispered all the while with reminiscence of all the centuries, time faded away, and the echo of knowledge filled the timeless silence.

She listened, she scribbled her notes with joy, almost with ecstasy, never for a moment criticising what she heard. The lecturer was a mouth-piece, a priest. As he stood, black-gowned, on the rostrum, some strands of the whispering confusion of knowledge that filled the whole place seemed to be singled out and woven together by him, till they became a lecture.

At first, she preserved herself from criticism. She would not consider the professors as men, ordinary men who ate bacon, and pulled on their boots before coming to college. They were the black-gowned priests of knowledge, serving for ever in a remote, hushed temple. They were the initiated, and the beginning and the end of the mystery was in their keeping.

Curious joy she had of the lectures. It was a joy to hear the theory of education, there was such freedom and pleasure in ranging over the very stuff of knowledge, and seeing how it moved and lived and had its being. How happy Racine made her! She did not know why. But as the big lines of the drama unfolded themselves, so steady, so measured, she felt a thrill as of being in the realm of the reality. Of Latin, she was doing Livy and Horace. The curious, intimate, gossiping tone of the Latin class suited Horace. Yet she never cared for him, nor even Livy. There was an entire lack of sternness in the gossipy class-room. She tried hard to keep her old grasp of the Roman spirit. But gradually the Latin became mere gossip-stuff and artificiality to her, a question of manners and verbosities.

Her terror was the mathematics class. The lecturer went so fast, her heart beat excitedly, she seemed to be straining every nerve. And she struggled hard, during private study, to get the stuff into control.

Then came the lovely, peaceful afternoons in the botany laboratory. There were few students. How she loved to sit on her high stool before the bench, with her pith and her razor and her material, carefully mounting her slides, carefully bringing her microscope into focus, then turning with joy to record her observation, drawing joyfully in her book, if the slide were good.

She soon made a college friend, a girl who had lived in Florence, a girl who wore a wonderful purple or figured scarf draped over a plain, dark dress. She was Dorothy Russell, daughter of a south-country advocate. Dorothy lived with a maiden aunt in Nottingham, and spent her spare moments slaving for the Women's Social and Political Union. She was quiet and intense, with an ivory face and dark hair looped plain over her ears. Ursula was very fond of her, but afraid of her. She seemed so old and so relentless towards herself. Yet she was only twenty-two. Ursula always felt her to be a creature of fate, like Cassandra.

The two girls had a close, stern friendship. Dorothy worked at all things with the same passion, never sparing herself. She came closest to Ursula during the botany hours. For she could not draw. Ursula made beautiful and wonderful drawings of the sections under the microscope, and Dorothy always came to learn the manner of the drawing.

So the first year went by, in magnificent seclusion and activity of learning. It was strenuous as a battle, her college life, yet remote as peace.

She came to Nottingham in the morning with Gudrun. The two sisters were distinguished wherever they went, slim, strong girls, eager and extremely sensitive. Gudrun was the more beautiful of the two, with her sleepy, half-languid girlishness that looked so soft, and yet was balanced and inalterable underneath. She wore soft, easy clothing, and hats which fell by themselves into a careless grace.

Ursula was much more carefully dressed, but she was self-conscious, always falling into depths of admiration of somebody else, and modelling herself upon this other, and so producing a hopeless incongruity. When she dressed for practical purposes she always looked well. In winter, wearing a tweed coat-and-skirt and a small hat of black fur pulled over her eager, palpitant face, she seemed to move down the street in a drifting motion of suspense and exceeding sensitive receptivity.

At the end of the first year Ursula got through her Intermediate Arts examination, and there came a lull in her eager activities. She slackened off, she relaxed altogether. Worn nervous and inflammable by the excitement of the preparation for the examination, and by the sort of exaltation which carried her through the crisis itself, she now fell into a quivering passivity, her will all loosened.

The family went to Scarborough for a month. Gudrun and the father were busy at the handicraft holiday school there, Ursula was left a good deal with the children. But when she could, she went off by herself.

She stood and looked out over the shining sea. It was very beautiful to her. The tears rose hot in her heart.

Out of the far, far space there drifted slowly in to her a passionate, unborn yearning. "There are so many dawns that have not yet risen." It seemed as if, from over the edge of the sea, all the unrisen dawns were appealing to her, all her unborn soul was crying for the unrisen dawns.

As she sat looking out at the tender sea, with its lovely, swift glimmer, the sob rose in her breast, till she caught her lip suddenly under her teeth, and the tears were forcing themselves from her. And in her very sob, she laughed. Why did she cry? She did not want to cry. It was so beautiful that she laughed. It was so beautiful that she cried.

She glanced apprehensively round, hoping no one would see her in this state.

Then came a time when the sea was rough. She watched the water travelling in to the coast, she watched a big wave running unnoticed, to burst in a shock of foam against a rock, enveloping all in a great white beauty, to pour away again, leaving the rock emerged black and teeming. Oh, and if, when the wave burst into whiteness, it were only set free!

Sometimes she loitered along the harbour, looking at the sea-browned sailors, who, in their close blue jerseys, lounged on the harbour-wall, and laughed at her with impudent, communicative eyes.

There was established a little relation between her and them. She never would speak to them or know any more of them. Yet as she walked by and they leaned on the sea-wall, there was something between her and them, something keen and delightful and painful. She liked best the young one whose fair, salty hair tumbled over his blue eyes. He was so new and fresh and salt and not of this world.

From Scarborough she went to her Uncle Tom's. Winifred had a small baby, born at the end of the summer. She had become strange and alien to Ursula. There was an unmentionable reserve between the two women. Tom Brangwen was an attentive father, a very domestic husband. But there was something spurious about his domesticity, Ursula did not like him any more. Something ugly, blatant in his nature had come out now, making him shift everything over to a sentimental basis. A materialistic unbeliever, he carried it all off by becoming full of human feeling, a warm, attentive host, a generous husband, a model citizen. And he was clever enough to rouse admiration everywhere, and to take in his wife sufficiently. She did not love him. She was glad to live in a state of complacent self-deception with him, she worked according to him.

Ursula was relieved to go home. She had still two peaceful years before her. Her future was settled for two years. She returned to college to prepare for her final examination.

But during this year the glamour began to depart from college. The professors were not priests initiated into the deep mysteries of life and knowledge. After all, they were only middle-men handling wares they had become so accustomed to that they were oblivious of them. What was Latin?--So much dry goods of knowledge. What was the Latin class altogether but a sort of second-hand curio shop, where one bought curios and learned the market-value of curios; dull curios too, on the whole. She was as bored by the Latin curiosities as she was by Chinese and Japanese curiosities in the antique shops. "Antiques"--the very word made her soul fall flat and dead.

The life went out of her studies, why, she did not know. But the whole thing seemed sham, spurious; spurious Gothic arches, spurious peace, spurious Latinity, spurious dignity of France, spurious naivete of Chaucer. It was a second-hand dealer's shop, and one bought an equipment for an examination. This was only a little side-show to the factories of the town. Gradually the perception stole into her. This was no religious retreat, no perception of pure learning. It was a little apprentice-shop where one was further equipped for making money. The college itself was a little, slovenly laboratory for the factory.

A harsh and ugly disillusion came over her again, the same darkness and bitter gloom from which she was never safe now, the realisation of the permanent substratum of ugliness under everything. As she came to the college in the afternoon, the lawns were frothed with daisies, the lime trees hung tender and sunlit and green; and oh, the deep, white froth of the daisies was anguish to see.

For inside, inside the college, she knew she must enter the sham workshop. All the while, it was a sham store, a sham warehouse, with a single motive of material gain, and no productivity. It pretended to exist by the religious virtue of knowledge. But the religious virtue of knowledge was become a flunkey to the god of material success.

A sort of inertia came over her. Mechanically, from habit, she went on with her studies. But it was almost hopeless. She could scarcely attend to anything. At the Anglo-Saxon lecture in the afternoon, she sat looking down, out of the window, hearing no word, of Beowulf or of anything else. Down below, in the street, the sunny grey pavement went beside the palisade. A woman in a pink frock, with a scarlet sunshade, crossed the road, a little white dog running like a fleck of light about her. The woman with the scarlet sunshade came over the road, a lilt in her walk, a little shadow attending her. Ursula watched spell- bound. The woman with the scarlet sunshade and the flickering terrier was gone--and whither? Whither?

In what world of reality was the woman in the pink dress walking? To what warehouse of dead unreality was she herself confined?

What good was this place, this college? What good was Anglo-Saxon, when one only learned it in order to answer examination questions, in order that one should have a higher commercial value later on? She was sick with this long service at the inner commercial shrine. Yet what else was there? Was life all this, and this only? Everywhere, everything was debased to the same service. Everything went to produce vulgar things, to encumber material life.

Suddenly she threw over French. She would take honours in botany. This was the one study that lived for her. She had entered into the lives of the plants. She was fascinated by the strange laws of the vegetable world. She had here a glimpse of something working entirely apart from the purpose of the human world.

College was barren, cheap, a temple converted to the most vulgar, petty commerce. Had she not gone to hear the echo of learning pulsing back to the source of the mystery?--The source of mystery! And barrenly, the professors in their gowns offered commercial commodity that could be turned to good account in the examination room; ready-made stuff too, and not really worth the money it was intended to fetch; which they all knew.

All the time in the college now, save when she was labouring in her botany laboratory, for there the mystery still glimmered, she felt she was degrading herself in a kind of trade of sham jewjaws.

Angry and stiff, she went through her last term. She would rather be out again earning her own living. Even Brinsley Street and Mr. Harby seemed real in comparison. Her violent hatred of the Ilkeston School was nothing compared with the sterile degradation of college. But she was not going back to Brinsley Street either. She would take her B.A., and become a mistress in some Grammar School for a time.

The last year of her college career was wheeling slowly round. She could see ahead her examination and her departure. She had the ash of disillusion gritting under her teeth. Would the next move turn out the same? Always the shining doorway ahead; and then, upon approach, always the shining doorway was a gate into another ugly yard, dirty and active and dead. Always the crest of the hill gleaming ahead under heaven: and then, from the top of the hill only another sordid valley full of amorphous, squalid activity.

No matter! Every hill-top was a little different, every valley was somehow new. Cossethay and her childhood with her father; the Marsh and the little Church school near the Marsh, and her grandmother and her uncles; the High School at Nottingham and Anton Skrebensky; Anton Skrebensky and the dance in the moonlight between the fires; then the time she could not think of without being blasted, Winifred Inger, and the months before becoming a school-teacher; then the horrors of Brinsley Street, lapsing into comparative peacefulness, Maggie, and Maggie's brother, whose influence she could still feel in her veins, when she conjured him up; then college, and Dorothy Russell, who was now in France, then the next move into the world again!

Already it was a history. In every phase she was so different. Yet she was always Ursula Brangwen. But what did it mean, Ursula Brangwen? She did not know what she was. Only she was full of rejection, of refusal. Always, always she was spitting out of her mouth the ash and grit of disillusion, of falsity. She could only stiffen in rejection, in rejection. She seemed always negative in her action.

That which she was, positively, was dark and unrevealed, it could not come forth. It was like a seed buried in dry ash. This world in which she lived was like a circle lighted by a lamp. This lighted area, lit up by man's completest consciousness, she thought was all the world: that here all was disclosed for ever. Yet all the time, within the darkness she had been aware of points of light, like the eyes of wild beasts, gleaming, penetrating, vanishing. And her soul had acknowledged in a great heave of terror only the outer darkness. This inner circle of light in which she lived and moved, wherein the trains rushed and the factories ground out their machine-produce and the plants and the animals worked by the light of science and knowledge, suddenly it seemed like the area under an arc-lamp, wherein the moths and children played in the security of blinding light, not even knowing there was any darkness, because they stayed in the light.

But she could see the glimmer of dark movement just out of range, she saw the eyes of the wild beast gleaming from the darkness, watching the vanity of the camp fire and the sleepers; she felt the strange, foolish vanity of the camp, which said "Beyond our light and our order there is nothing," turning their faces always inward towards the sinking fire of illuminating consciousness, which comprised sun and stars, and the Creator, and the System of Righteousness, ignoring always the vast darkness that wheeled round about, with half-revealed shapes lurking on the edge.

Yea, and no man dared even throw a firebrand into the darkness. For if he did he was jeered to death by the others, who cried "Fool, anti-social knave, why would you disturb us with bogeys? There is no darkness. We move and live and have our being within the light, and unto us is given the eternal light of knowledge, we comprise and comprehend the innermost core and issue of knowledge. Fool and knave, how dare you belittle us with the darkness?"

Nevertheless the darkness wheeled round about, with grey shadow-shapes of wild beasts, and also with dark shadow-shapes of the angels, whom the light fenced out, as it fenced out the more familiar beasts of darkness. And some, having for a moment seen the darkness, saw it bristling with the tufts of the hyena and the wolf; and some having given up their vanity of the light, having died in their own conceit, saw the gleam in the eyes of the wolf and the hyena, that it was the flash of the sword of angels, flashing at the door to come in, that the angels in the darkness were lordly and terrible and not to be denied, like the flash of fangs.

It was a little while before Easter, in her last year of college, when Ursula was twenty-two years old, that she heard again from Skrebensky. He had written to her once or twice from South Africa, during the first months of his service out there in the war, and since had sent her a post-card every now and then, at ever longer intervals. He had become a first lieutenant, and had stayed out in Africa. She had not heard of him now for more than two years.

Often her thoughts returned to him. He seemed like the gleaming dawn, yellow, radiant, of a long, grey, ashy day. The memory of him was like the thought of the first radiant hours of morning. And here was the blank grey ashiness of later daytime. Ah, if he had only remained true to her, she might have known the sunshine, without all this toil and hurt and degradation of a spoiled day. He would have been her angel. He held the keys of the sunshine. Still he held them. He could open to her the gates of succeeding freedom and delight. Nay, if he had remained true to her, he would have been the doorway to her, into the boundless sky of happiness and plunging, inexhaustible freedom which was the paradise of her soul. Ah, the great range he would have opened to her, the illimitable endless space for self-realisation and delight for ever.

The one thing she believed in was in the love she had held for him. It remained shining and complete, a thing to hark back to. And she said to herself, when present things seemed a failure:

"Ah, I was fond of him," as if with him the leading flower of her life had died.

Now she heard from him again. The chief effect was pain. The pleasure, the spontaneous joy was not there any longer. But her will rejoiced. Her will had fixed itself to him. And the old excitement of her dreams stirred and woke up. He was come, the man with the wondrous lips that could send the kiss wavering to the very end of all space. Was he come back to her? She did not believe.

My dear Ursula, I am back in England again for a few months before going out again, this time to India. I wonder if you still keep the memory of our times together. I have still got the little photograph of you. You must be changed since then, for it is about six years ago. I am fully six years older,--I have lived through another life since I knew you at Cossethay. I wonder if you would care to see me. I shall come up to Derby next week, and I would call in Nottingham, and we might have tea together. Will you let me know? I shall look for your answer.

Anton Skrebensky

Ursula had taken this letter from the rack in the hall at college, and torn it open as she crossed to the Women's room. The world seemed to dissolve away from around her, she stood alone in clear air.

Where could she go, to be alone? She fled away, upstairs, and through the private way to the reference library. Seizing a book, she sat down and pondered the letter. Her heart beat, her limbs trembled. As in a dream, she heard one gong sound in the college, then, strangely, another. The first lecture had gone by.

Hurriedly she took one of her note-books and began to write.

"Dear Anton, Yes, I still have the ring. I should be very glad to see you again. You can come here to college for me, or I will meet you somewhere in the town. Will you let me know? Your sincere friend----"

Trembling, she asked the librarian, who was her friend, if he would give her an envelope. She sealed and addressed her letter, and went out, bare-headed, to post it. When it was dropped into the pillar-box, the world became a very still, pale place, without confines. She wandered back to college, to her pale dream, like a first wan light of dawn.

Skrebensky came one afternoon the following week. Day after day, she had hurried swiftly to the letter-rack on her arrival at college in the morning, and during the intervals between lectures. Several times, swiftly, with secretive fingers, she had plucked his letter down from its public prominence, and fled across the hall holding it fast and hidden. She read her letters in the botany laboratory, where her corner was always reserved to her.

Several letters, and then he was coming. It was Friday afternoon he appointed. She worked over her microscope with feverish activity, able to give only half her attention, yet working closely and rapidly. She had on her slide some special stuff come up from London that day, and the professor was fussy and excited about it. At the same time, as she focused the light on her field, and saw the plant-animal lying shadowy in a boundless light, she was fretting over a conversation she had had a few days ago with Dr. Frankstone, who was a woman doctor of physics in the college.

"No, really," Dr. Frankstone had said, "I don't see why we should attribute some special mystery to life--do you? We don't understand it as we understand electricity, even, but that doesn't warrant our saying it is something special, something different in kind and distinct from everything else in the universe--do you think it does? May it not be that life consists in a complexity of physical and chemical activities, of the same order as the activities we already know in science? I don't see, really, why we should imagine there is a special order of life, and life alone----"

The conversation had ended on a note of uncertainty, indefinite, wistful. But the purpose, what was the purpose? Electricity had no soul, light and heat had no soul. Was she herself an impersonal force, or conjunction of forces, like one of these? She looked still at the unicellular shadow that lay within the field of light, under her microscope. It was alive. She saw it move--she saw the bright mist of its ciliary activity, she saw the gleam of its nucleus, as it slid across the plane of light. What then was its will? If it was a conjunction of forces, physical and chemical, what held these forces unified, and for what purpose were they unified?

For what purpose were the incalculable physical and chemical activities nodalised in this shadowy, moving speck under her microscope? What was the will which nodalised them and created the one thing she saw? What was its intention? To be itself? Was its purpose just mechanical and limited to itself?

It intended to be itself. But what self? Suddenly in her mind the world gleamed strangely, with an intense light, like the nucleus of the creature under the microscope. Suddenly she had passed away into an intensely-gleaming light of knowledge. She could not understand what it all was. She only knew that it was not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion. It was a consummation, a being infinite. Self was a oneness with the infinite. To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity.

Ursula sat abstracted over her microscope, in suspense. Her soul was busy, infinitely busy, in the new world. In the new world, Skrebensky was waiting for her--he would be waiting for her. She could not go yet, because her soul was engaged. Soon she would go.

A stillness, like passing away, took hold of her. Far off, down the corridors, she heard the gong booming five o'clock. She must go. Yet she sat still.

The other students were pushing back their stools and putting their microscopes away. Everything broke into turmoil. She saw, through the window, students going down the steps, with books under their arms, talking, all talking.

A great craving to depart came upon her. She wanted also to be gone. She was in dread of the material world, and in dread of her own transfiguration. She wanted to run to meet Skrebensky--the new life, the reality.

Very rapidly she wiped her slides and put them back, cleared her place at the bench, active, active, active. She wanted to run to meet Skrebensky, hasten--hasten. She did not know what she was to meet. But it would be a new beginning. She must hurry.

She flitted down the corridor on swift feet, her razor and note-books and pencil in one hand, her pinafore over her arm. Her face was lifted and tense with eagerness. He might not be there.

Issuing from the corridor, she saw him at once. She knew him at once. Yet he was so strange. He stood with the curious self-effacing diffidence which so frightened her in well-bred young men whom she knew. He stood as if he wished to be unseen. He was very well-dressed. She would not admit to herself the chill like a sunshine of frost that came over her. This was he, the key, the nucleus to the new world.

He saw her coming swiftly across the hall, a slim girl in a white flannel blouse and dark skirt, with some of the abstraction and gleam of the unknown upon her, and he started, excited. He was very nervous. Other students were loitering about the hall.

She laughed, with a blind, dazzled face, as she gave him her hand. He too could not perceive her.

In a moment she was gone, to get her outdoor things. Then again, as when she had been at school, they walked out into the town to tea. And they went to the same tea-shop.

She knew a great difference in him. The kinship was there, the old kinship, but he had belonged to a different world from hers. It was as if they had cried a state of truce between him and her, and in this truce they had met. She knew, vaguely, in the first minute, that they were enemies come together in a truce. Every movement and word of his was alien to her being.

Yet still she loved the fine texture of his face, of his skin. He was rather browner, physically stronger. He was a man now. She thought his manliness made the strangeness in him. When he was only a youth, fluid, he was nearer to her. She thought a man must inevitably set into this strange separateness, cold otherness of being. He talked, but not to her. She tried to speak to him, but she could not reach him.

He seemed so balanced and sure, he made such a confident presence. He was a great rider, so there was about him some of a horseman's sureness and habitual definiteness of decision, also some of the horseman's animal darkness. Yet his soul was only the more wavering, vague. He seemed made up of a set of habitual actions and decisions. The vulnerable, variable quick of the man was inaccessible. She knew nothing of it. She could only feel the dark, heavy fixity of his animal desire.

This dumb desire on his part had brought him to her? She was puzzled, hurt by some hopeless fixity in him, that terrified her with a cold feeling of despair. What did he want? His desires were so underground. Why did he not admit himself? What did he want? He wanted something that should be nameless. She shrank in fear.

Yet she flashed with excitement. In his dark, subterranean male soul, he was kneeling before her, darkly exposing himself. She quivered, the dark flame ran over her. He was waiting at her feet. He was helpless, at her mercy. She could take or reject. If she rejected him, something would die in him. For him it was life or death. And yet, all must be kept so dark, the consciousness must admit nothing.

"How long," she said, "are you staying in England?"

"I am not sure--but not later than July, I believe."

Then they were both silent. He was here, in England, for six months. They had a space of six months between them. He waited. The same iron rigidity, as if the world were made of steel, possessed her again. It was no use turning with flesh and blood to this arrangement of forged metal.

Quickly, her imagination adjusted itself to the situation.

"Have you an appointment in India?" she asked.

"Yes--I have just the six months' leave."

"Will you like being out there?"

"I think so--there's a good deal of social life, and plenty going on--hunting, polo--and always a good horse--and plenty of work, any amount of work."

He was always side-tracking, always side-tracking his own soul. She could see him so well out there, in India--one of the governing class, superimposed upon an old civilisation, lord and master of a clumsier civilisation than his own. It was his choice. He would become again an aristocrat, invested with authority and responsibility, having a great helpless populace beneath him. One of the ruling class, his whole being would be given over to the fulfilling and the executing of the better idea of the state. And in India, there would be real work to do. The country did need the civilisation which he himself represented: it did need his roads and bridges, and the enlightenment of which he was part. He would go to India. But that was not her road.

Yet she loved him, the body of him, whatever his decisions might be. He seemed to want something of her. He was waiting for her to decide of him. It had been decided in her long ago, when he had kissed her first. He was her lover, though good and evil should cease. Her will never relaxed, though her heart and soul must be imprisoned and silenced. He waited upon her, and she accepted him. For he had come back to her.

A glow came into his face, into his fine, smooth skin, his eyes, gold-grey, glowed intimately to her. He burned up, he caught fire and became splendid, royal, something like a tiger. She caught his brilliant, burnished glamour. Her heart and her soul were shut away fast down below, hidden. She was free of them. She was to have her satisfaction.

She became proud and erect, like a flower, putting itself forth in its proper strength. His warmth invigorated her. His beauty of form, which seemed to glow out in contrast with the rest of people, made her proud. It was like deference to her, and made her feel as if she represented before him all the grace and flower of humanity. She was no mere Ursula Brangwen. She was Woman, she was the whole of Woman in the human order. All-containing, universal, how should she be limited to individuality?

She was exhilarated, she did not want to go away from him. She had her place by him. Who should take her away?

They came out of the cafe.

"Is there anything you would like to do?" he said. "Is there anything we can do?"

It was a dark, windy night in March.

"There is nothing to do," she said.

Which was the answer he wanted.

"Let us walk then--where shall we walk?" he asked.

"Shall we go to the river?" she suggested, timidly.

In a moment they were on the tram, going down to Trent Bridge. She was so glad. The thought of walking in the dark, far-reaching water-meadows, beside the full river, transported her. Dark water flowing in silence through the big, restless night made her feel wild.

They crossed the bridge, descended, and went away from the lights. In an instant, in the darkness, he took her hand and they went in silence, with subtle feet treading the darkness. The town fumed away on their left, there were strange lights and sounds, the wind rushed against the trees, and under the bridge. They walked close together, powerful in unison. He drew her very close, held her with a subtle, stealthy, powerful passion, as if they had a secret agreement which held good in the profound darkness. The profound darkness was their universe.

"It is like it was before," she said.

Yet it was not in the least as it was before. Nevertheless his heart was perfectly in accord with her. They thought one thought.

"I knew I should come back," he said at length.

She quivered.

"Did you always love me?" she asked.

The directness of the question overcame him, submerged him for a moment. The darkness travelled massively along.

"I had to come back to you," he said, as if hypnotised. "You were always at the back of everything."

She was silent with triumph, like fate.

"I loved you," she said, "always."

The dark flame leaped up in him. He must give her himself. He must give her the very foundations of himself. He drew her very close, and they went on in silence.

She started violently, hearing voices. They were near a stile across the dark meadows.

"It's only lovers," he said to her, softly.

She looked to see the dark figures against the fence, wondering that the darkness was inhabited.

"Only lovers will walk here to-night," he said.

Then in a low, vibrating voice he told her about Africa, the strange darkness, the strange, blood fear.

"I am not afraid of the darkness in England," he said. "It is soft, and natural to me, it is my medium, especially when you are here. But in Africa it seems massive and fluid with terror--not fear of anything--just fear. One breathes it, like the smell of blood. The blacks know it. They worship it, really, the darkness. One almost likes it--the fear--something sensual."

She thrilled again to him. He was to her a voice out of the darkness. He talked to her all the while, in low tones, about Africa, conveying something strange and sensual to her: the negro, with his loose, soft passion that could envelop one like a bath. Gradually he transferred to her the hot, fecund darkness that possessed his own blood. He was strangely secret. The whole world must be abolished. He maddened her with his soft, cajoling, vibrating tones. He wanted her to answer, to understand. A turgid, teeming night, heavy with fecundity in which every molecule of matter grew big with increase, secretly urgent with fecund desire, seemed to come to pass. She quivered, taut and vibrating, almost pained. And gradually, he ceased telling her of Africa, there came a silence, whilst they walked the darkness beside the massive river. Her limbs were rich and tense, she felt they must be vibrating with a low, profound vibration. She could scarcely walk. The deep vibration of the darkness could only be felt, not heard.

Suddenly, as they walked, she turned to him and held him fast, as if she were turned to steel.

"Do you love me?" she cried in anguish.

"Yes," he said, in a curious, lapping voice, unlike himself. "Yes, I love you."

He seemed like the living darkness upon her, she was in the embrace of the strong darkness. He held her enclosed, soft, unutterably soft, and with the unrelaxing softness of fate, the relentless softness of fecundity. She quivered, and quivered, like a tense thing that is struck. But he held her all the time, soft, unending, like darkness closed upon her, omnipresent as the night. He kissed her, and she quivered as if she were being destroyed, shattered. The lighted vessel vibrated, and broke in her soul, the light fell, struggled, and went dark. She was all dark, will-less, having only the receptive will.

He kissed her, with his soft, enveloping kisses, and she responded to them completely, her mind, her soul gone out. Darkness cleaving to darkness, she hung close to him, pressed herself into soft flow of his kiss, pressed herself down, down to the source and core of his kiss, herself covered and enveloped in the warm, fecund flow of his kiss, that travelled over her, flowed over her, covered her, flowed over the last fibre of her, so they were one stream, one dark fecundity, and she clung at the core of him, with her lips holding open the very bottommost source of him.

So they stood in the utter, dark kiss, that triumphed over them both, subjected them, knitted them into one fecund nucleus of the fluid darkness.

It was bliss, it was the nucleolating of the fecund darkness. Once the vessel had vibrated till it was shattered, the light of consciousness gone, then the darkness reigned, and the unutterable satisfaction.

They stood enjoying the unmitigated kiss, taking it, giving to it endlessly, and still it was not exhausted. Their veins fluttered, their blood ran together as one stream.

Till gradually a sleep, a heaviness settled on them, a drowse, and out of the drowse, a small light of consciousness woke up. Ursula became aware of the night around her, the water lapping and running full just near, the trees roaring and soughing in gusts of wind.

She kept near to him, in contact with him, but she became ever more and more herself. And she knew she must go to catch her train. But she did not want to draw away from contact with him.

At length they roused and set out. No longer they existed in the unblemished darkness. There was the glitter of a bridge, the twinkle of lights across the river, the big flare of the town in front and on their right.

But still, dark and soft and incontestable, their bodies walked untouched by the lights, darkness supreme and arrogant.

"The stupid lights," Ursula said to herself, in her dark sensual arrogance. "The stupid, artificial, exaggerated town, fuming its lights. It does not exist really. It rests upon the unlimited darkness, like a gleam of coloured oil on dark water, but what is it?--nothing, just nothing."

In the tram, in the train, she felt the same. The lights, the civic uniform was a trick played, the people as they moved or sat were only dummies exposed. She could see, beneath their pale, wooden pretence of composure and civic purposefulness, the dark stream that contained them all. They were like little paper ships in their motion. But in reality each one was a dark, blind, eager wave urging blindly forward, dark with the same homogeneous desire. And all their talk and all their behaviour was sham, they were dressed-up creatures. She was reminded of the Invisible Man, who was a piece of darkness made visible only by his clothes.

During the next weeks, all the time she went about in the same dark richness, her eyes dilated and shining like the eyes of a wild animal, a curious half-smile which seemed to be gibing at the civic pretence of all the human life about her.

"What are you, you pale citizens?" her face seemed to say, gleaming. "You subdued beast in sheep's clothing, you primeval darkness falsified to a social mechanism."

She went about in the sensual sub-consciousness all the time, mocking at the ready-made, artificial daylight of the rest.

"They assume selves as they assume suits of clothing," she said to herself, looking in mocking contempt at the stiffened, neutralised men. "They think it better to be clerks or professors than to be the dark, fertile beings that exist in the potential darkness. What do you think you are?" her soul asked of the professor as she sat opposite him in class. "What do you think you are, as you sit there in your gown and your spectacles? You are a lurking, blood-sniffing creature with eyes peering out of the jungle darkness, snuffing for your desires. That is what you are, though nobody would believe it, and you would be the very last to allow it."

Her soul mocked at all this pretence. Herself, she kept on pretending. She dressed herself and made herself fine, she attended her lectures and scribbled her notes. But all in a mood of superficial, mocking facility. She understood well enough their two-and-two-make-four tricks. She was as clever as they were. But care!--did she care about their monkey tricks of knowledge or learning or civic deportment? She did not care in the least.

There was Skrebensky, there was her dark, vital self. Outside the college, the outer darkness, Skrebensky was waiting. On the edge of the night, he was attentive. Did he care?

She was free as a leopard that sends up its raucous cry in the night. She had the potent, dark stream of her own blood, she had the glimmering core of fecundity, she had her mate, her complement, her sharer in fruition. So, she had all, everything.

Skrebensky was staying in Nottingham all the time. He too was free. He knew no one in this town, he had no civic self to maintain. He was free. Their trams and markets and theatres and public meetings were a shaken kaleidoscope to him, he watched as a lion or a tiger may lie with narrowed eyes watching the people pass before its cage, the kaleidoscopic unreality of people, or a leopard lie blinking, watching the incomprehensible feats of the keepers. He despised it all--it was all non-existent. Their good professors, their good clergymen, their good political speakers, their good, earnest women--all the time he felt his soul was grinning, grinning at the sight of them. So many performing puppets, all wood and rag for the performance!

He watched the citizen, a pillar of society, a model, saw the stiff goat's legs, which have become almost stiffened to wood in the desire to make them puppet in their action, he saw the trousers formed to the puppet-action: man's legs, but man's legs become rigid and deformed, ugly, mechanical.

He was curiously happy, being alone, now. The glimmering grin was on his face. He had no longer any necessity to take part in the performing tricks of the rest. He had discovered the clue to himself, he had escaped from the show, like a wild beast escaped straight back into its jungle. Having a room in a quiet hotel, he hired a horse and rode out into the country, staying sometimes for the night in some village, and returning the next day.

He felt rich and abundant in himself. Everything he did was a voluptuous pleasure to him--either to ride on horseback, or to walk, or to lie in the sun, or to drink in a public-house. He had no use for people, nor for words. He had an amused pleasure in everything, a great sense of voluptuous richness in himself, and of the fecundity of the universal night he inhabited. The puppet shapes of people, their wood-mechanical voices, he was remote from them.

For there were always his meetings with Ursula. Very often, she did not go to college in the afternoon, but walked with him instead. Or he took a motor-car or a dog-cart and they drove into the country, leaving the car and going away by themselves into the woods. He had not taken her yet. With subtle, instinctive economy, they went to the end of each kiss, each embrace, each pleasure in intimate contact, knowing subconsciously that the last was coming. It was to be their final entry into the source of creation.

She took him home, and he stayed a week-end at Beldover with her family. She loved having him in the house. Strange how he seemed to come into the atmosphere of her family, with his laughing, insidious grace. They all loved him, he was kin to them. His raillery, his warm, voluptuous mocking presence was meat and joy to the Brangwen household. For this house was always quivering with darkness, they put off their puppet form when they came home, to lie and drowse in the sun.

There was a sense of freedom amongst them all, of the undercurrent of darkness among them all. Yet here, at home, Ursula resented it. It became distasteful to her. And she knew that if they understood the real relationship between her and Skrebensky, her parents, her father in particular, would go mad with rage. So subtly, she seemed to be like any other girl who is more or less courted by a man. And she was like any other girl. But in her, the antagonism to the social imposition was for the time complete and final.

She waited, every moment of the day, for his next kiss. She admitted it to herself in shame and bliss. Almost consciously, she waited. He waited, but, until the time came, more unconsciously. When the time came that he should kiss her again, a prevention was an annihilation to him. He felt his flesh go grey, he was heavy with a corpse-like inanition, he did not exist, if the time passed unfulfilled.

He came to her finally in a superb consummation. It was very dark, and again a windy, heavy night. They had come down the lane towards Beldover, down to the valley. They were at the end of their kisses, and there was the silence between them. They stood as at the edge of a cliff, with a great darkness beneath.

Coming out of the lane along the darkness, with the dark space spreading down to the wind, and the twinkling lights of the station below, the far-off windy chuff of a shunting train, the tiny clink-clink-clink of the wagons blown between the wind, the light of Beldover-edge twinkling upon the blackness of the hill opposite, the glow of the furnaces along the railway to the right, their steps began to falter. They would soon come out of the darkness into the lights. It was like turning back. It was unfulfilment. Two quivering, unwilling creatures, they lingered on the edge of the darkness, peering out at the lights and the machine-glimmer beyond. They could not turn back to the world--they could not.

So lingering along, they came to a great oak tree by the path. In all its budding mass it roared to the wind, and its trunk vibrated in every fibre, powerful, indomitable.

"We will sit down," he said.

And in the roaring circle under the tree, that was almost invisible yet whose powerful presence received them, they lay a moment looking at the twinkling lights on the darkness opposite, saw the sweeping brand of a train past the edge of their darkened field.

Then he turned and kissed her, and she waited for him. The pain to her was the pain she wanted, the agony was the agony she wanted. She was caught up, entangled in the powerful vibration of the night. The man, what was he?--a dark, powerful vibration that encompassed her. She passed away as on a dark wind, far, far away, into the pristine darkness of paradise, into the original immortality. She entered the dark fields of immortality.

When she rose, she felt strangely free, strong. She was not ashamed,--why should she be? He was walking beside her, the man who had been with her. She had taken him, they had been together. Whither they had gone, she did not know. But it was as if she had received another nature. She belonged to the eternal, changeless place into which they had leapt together.

Her soul was sure and indifferent of the opinion of the world of artificial light. As they went up the steps of the foot-bridge over the railway, and met the train-passengers, she felt herself belonging to another world, she walked past them immune, a whole darkness dividing her from them. When she went into the lighted dining-room at home, she was impervious to the lights and the eyes of her parents. Her everyday self was just the same. She merely had another, stronger self that knew the darkness.

This curious separate strength, that existed in darkness and pride of night, never forsook her. She had never been more herself. It could not occur to her that anybody, not even the young man of the world, Skrebensky, should have anything at all to do with her permanent self. As for her temporal, social self, she let it look after itself.

Her whole soul was implicated with Skrebensky--not the young man of the world, but the undifferentiated man he was. She was perfectly sure of herself, perfectly strong, stronger than all the world. The world was not strong--she was strong. The world existed only in a secondary sense:--she existed supremely.

She continued at college, in her ordinary routine, merely as a cover to her dark, powerful under-life. The fact of herself, and with her Skrebensky, was so powerful, that she took rest in the other. She went to college in the morning, and attended her classes, flowering, and remote.

She had lunch with him in his hotel; every evening she spent with him, either in town, at his rooms, or in the country. She made the excuse at home of evening study for her degree. But she paid not the slightest attention to her study.

They were both absolute and happy and calm. The fact of their own consummate being made everything else so entirely subordinate that they were free. The only thing they wanted, as the days went by, was more time to themselves. They wanted the time to be absolutely their own.

The Easter vacation was approaching. They agreed to go right away. It would not matter if they did not come back. They were indifferent to the actual facts.

"I suppose we ought to get married," he said, rather wistfully. It was so magnificently free and in a deeper world, as it was. To make public their connection would be to put it in range with all the things which nullified him, and from which he was for the moment entirely dissociated. If he married he would have to assume his social self. And the thought of assuming his social self made him at once diffident and abstract. If she were his social wife, if she were part of that complication of dead reality, then what had his under-life to do with her? One's social wife was almost a material symbol. Whereas now she was something more vivid to him than anything in conventional life could be. She gave the complete lie to all conventional life, he and she stood together, dark, fluid, infinitely potent, giving the living lie to the dead whole which contained them.

He watched her pensive, puzzled face.

"I don't think I want to marry you," she said, her brow clouded.

It piqued him rather.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Let's think about it afterwards, shall we?" she said.

He was crossed, yet he loved her violently.

"You've got a museau, not a face," he said.

"Have I?" she cried, her face lighting up like a pure flame. She thought she had escaped. Yet he returned--he was not satisfied.

"Why?" he asked, "why don't you want to marry me?"

"I don't want to be with other people," she said. "I want to be like this. I'll tell you if ever I want to marry you."

"All right," he said.

He would rather the thing was left indefinite, and that she took the responsibility.

They talked of the Easter vacation. She thought only of complete enjoyment.

They went to an hotel in Piccadilly. She was supposed to be his wife. They bought a wedding-ring for a shilling, from a shop in a poor quarter.

They had revoked altogether the ordinary mortal world. Their confidence was like a possession upon them. They were possessed. Perfectly and supremely free they felt, proud beyond all question, and surpassing mortal conditions.

They were perfect, therefore nothing else existed. The world was a world of servants whom one civilly ignored. Wherever they went, they were the sensuous aristocrats, warm, bright, glancing with pure pride of the senses.

The effect upon other people was extraordinary. The glamour was cast from the young couple upon all they came into contact with, waiters or chance acquaintances.

"Oui, Monsieur le baron," she would reply with a mocking courtesy to her husband.

So they came to be treated as titled people. He was an officer in the engineers. They were just married, going to India immediately.

Thus a tissue of romance was round them. She believed she was a young wife of a titled husband on the eve of departure for India. This, the social fact, was a delicious make-belief. The living fact was that he and she were man and woman, absolute and beyond all limitation.

The days went by--they were to have three weeks together--in perfect success. All the time, they themselves were reality, all outside was tribute to them. They were quite careless about money, but they did nothing very extravagant. He was rather surprised when he found that he had spent twenty pounds in a little under a week, but it was only the irritation of having to go to the bank. The machinery of the old system lasted for him, not the system. The money simply did not exist.

Neither did any of the old obligations. They came home from the theatre, had supper, then flitted about in their dressing-gowns. They had a large bedroom and a corner sitting-room high up, remote and very cosy. They ate all their meals in their own rooms, attended by a young German called Hans, who thought them both wonderful, and answered assiduously:

"Gewiss, Herr Baron--bitte sehr, Frau Baronin."

Often, they saw the pink of dawn away across the park. The tower of Westminster Cathedral was emerging, the lamps of Piccadilly, stringing away beside the trees of the park, were becoming pale and moth-like, the morning traffic was clock-clocking down the shadowy road, which had gleamed all night like metal, down below, running far ahead into the night, beneath the lamps, and which was now vague, as in a mist, because of the dawn.

Then, as the flush of dawn became stronger, they opened the glass doors and went on to the giddy balcony, feeling triumphant as two angels in bliss, looking down at the still sleeping world, which would wake to a dutiful, rumbling, sluggish turmoil of unreality.

But the air was cold. They went into their bedroom, and bathed before going to bed, leaving the partition doors of the bath-room open, so that the vapour came into the bedroom and faintly dimmed the mirror. She was always in bed first. She watched him as he bathed, his quick, unconscious movements, the electric light glinting on his wet shoulders. He stood out of the bath, his hair all washed flat over his forehead, and pressed the water out of his eyes. He was slender, and, to her, perfect, a clean, straight-cut youth, without a grain of superfluous body. The brown hair on his body was soft and fine and adorable, he was all beautifully flushed, as he stood in the white bath-apartment.

He saw her warm, dark, lit-up face watching him from the pillow--yet he did not see it--it was always present, and was to him as his own eyes. He was never aware of the separate being of her. She was like his own eyes and his own heart beating to him.

So he went across to her, to get his sleeping suit. It was always a perfect adventure to go near to her. She put her arms round him, and snuffed his warm, softened skin.

"Scent," she said.

"Soap," he answered.

"Soap," she repeated, looking up with bright eyes. They were both laughing, always laughing.

Soon they were fast asleep, asleep till midday, close together, sleeping one sleep. Then they awoke to the ever-changing reality of their state. They alone inhabited the world of reality. All the rest lived on a lower sphere.

Whatever they wanted to do, they did. They saw a few people--Dorothy, whose guest she was supposed to be, and a couple of friends of Skrebensky, young Oxford men, who called her Mrs. Skrebensky with entire simplicity. They treated her, indeed, with such respect, that she began to think she was really quite of the whole universe, of the old world as well as of the new. She forgot she was outside the pale of the old world. She thought she had brought it under the spell of her own, real world. And so she had.

In such ever-changing reality the weeks went by. All the time, they were an unknown world to each other. Every movement made by the one was a reality and an adventure to the other. They did not want outside excitements. They went to very few theatres, they were often in their sitting-room high up over Piccadilly, with windows open on two sides, and the door open on to the balcony, looking over the Green Park, or down upon the minute travelling of the traffic.

Then suddenly, looking at a sunset, she wanted to go. She must be gone. She must be gone at once. And in two hours' time they were at Charing Cross taking train for Paris. Paris was his suggestion. She did not care where it was. The great joy was in setting out. And for a few days she was happy in the novelty of Paris.

Then, for some reason, she must call in Rouen on the way back to London. He had an instinctive mistrust of her desire for the place. But, perversely, she wanted to go there. It was as if she wanted to try its effect upon her.

For the first time, in Rouen, he had a cold feeling of death; not afraid of any other man, but of her. She seemed to leave him. She followed after something that was not him. She did not want him. The old streets, the cathedral, the age and the monumental peace of the town took her away from him. She turned to it as if to something she had forgotten, and wanted. This was now the reality; this great stone cathedral slumbering there in its mass, which knew no transience nor heard any denial. It was majestic in its stability, its splendid absoluteness.

Her soul began to run by itself. He did not realise, nor did she. Yet in Rouen he had the first deadly anguish, the first sense of the death towards which they were wandering. And she felt the first heavy yearning, heavy, heavy hopeless warning, almost like a deep, uneasy sinking into apathy, hopelessness.

They returned to London. But still they had two days. He began to tremble, he grew feverish with the fear of her departure. She had in her some fatal prescience, that made her calm. What would be, would be.

He remained fairly easy, however, still in his state of heightened glamour, till she had gone, and he had turned away from St. Pancras, and sat on the tram-car going up Pimlico to the "Angel", to Moorgate Street on Sunday evening.

Then the cold horror gradually soaked into him. He saw the horror of the City Road, he realised the ghastly cold sordidness of the tram-car in which he sat. Cold, stark, ashen sterility had him surrounded. Where then was the luminous, wonderful world he belonged to by rights? How did he come to be thrown on this refuse-heap where he was?

He was as if mad. The horror of the brick buildings, of the tram-car, of the ashen-grey people in the street made him reeling and blind as if drunk. He went mad. He had lived with her in a close, living, pulsing world, where everything pulsed with rich being. Now he found himself struggling amid an ashen-dry, cold world of rigidity, dead walls and mechanical traffic, and creeping, spectre-like people. The life was extinct, only ash moved and stirred or stood rigid, there was a horrible, clattering activity, a rattle like the falling of dry slag, cold and sterile. It was as if the sunshine that fell were unnatural light exposing the ash of the town, as if the lights at night were the sinister gleam of decomposition.

Quite mad, beside himself, he went to his club and sat with a glass of whisky, motionless, as if turned to clay. He felt like a corpse that is inhabited with just enough life to make it appear as any other of the spectral, unliving beings which we call people in our dead language. Her absence was worse than pain to him. It destroyed his being.

Dead, he went on from lunch to tea. His face was all the time fixed and stiff and colourless, his life was a dry, mechanical movement. Yet even he wondered slightly at the awful misery that had overcome him. How could he be so ashlike and extinct? He wrote her a letter.

I have been thinking that we must get married before long. My pay will be more when I get out to India, we shall be able to get along. Or if you don't want to go to India, I could very probably stay here in England. But I think you would like India. You could ride, and you would know just everybody out there. Perhaps if you stay on to take your degree, we might marry immediately after that. I will write to your father as soon as I hear from you----

He went on, disposing of her. If only he could be with her! All he wanted now was to marry her, to be sure of her. Yet all the time he was perfectly, perfectly hopeless, cold, extinct, without emotion or connection.

He felt as if his life were dead. His soul was extinct. The whole being of him had become sterile, he was a spectre, divorced from life. He had no fullness, he was just a flat shape. Day by day the madness accumulated in him. The horror of not-being possessed him.

He went here, there, and everywhere. But whatever he did, he knew that only the cipher of him was there, nothing was filled in. He went to the theatre; what he heard and saw fell upon a cold surface of consciousness, which was now all that he was, there was nothing behind it, he could have no experience of any sort. Mechanical registering took place in him, no more. He had no being, no contents. Neither had the people he came into contact with. They were mere permutations of known quantities. There was no roundness or fullness in this world he now inhabited, everything was a dead shape mental arrangement, without life or being.

Much of the time, he was with friends and comrades. Then he forgot everything. Their activities made up for his own negation, they engaged his negative horror.

He only became happy when he drank, and he drank a good deal. Then he was just the opposite to what he had been. He became a warm, diffuse, glowing cloud, in a warm, diffuse formless fashion. Everything melted down into a rosy glow, and he was the glow, and everything was the glow, everybody else was the glow, and it was very nice, very nice. He would sing songs, it was so nice.

Ursula went back to Beldover shut and firm. She loved Skrebensky, of that she was resolved. She would allow nothing else.

She read his long, obsessed letter about getting married and going to India, without any particular response. She seemed to ignore what he said about marriage. It did not come home to her. He seemed, throughout the greater part of his letter, to be talking without much meaning.

She replied to him pleasantly and easily. She rarely wrote long letters.

India sounds lovely. I can just see myself on an elephant swaying between lanes of obsequious natives. But I don't know if father would let me go. We must see.

I keep living over again the lovely times we have had. But I don't think you liked me quite so much towards the end, did you? You did not like me when we left Paris. Why didn't you?

I love you very much. I love your body. It is so clear and fine. I am glad you do not go naked, or all the women would fall in love with you. I am very jealous of it, I love it so much.

He was more or less satisfied with this letter. But day after day he was walking about, dead, non-existent.

He could not come again to Nottingham until the end of April. Then he persuaded her to go with him for a week-end to a friend's house near Oxford. By this time they were engaged. He had written to her father, and the thing was settled. He brought her an emerald ring, of which she was very proud.

Her people treated her now with a little distance, as if she had already left them. They left her very much alone.

She went with him for the three days in the country house near Oxford. It was delicious, and she was very happy. But the thing she remembered most was when, getting up in the morning after he had gone back quietly to his own room, having spent the night with her, she found herself very rich in being alone, and enjoying to the full her solitary room, she drew up her blind and saw the plum trees in the garden below all glittering and snowy and delighted with the sunshine, in full bloom under a blue sky. They threw out their blossom, they flung it out under the blue heavens, the whitest blossom! How excited it made her.

She had to hurry through her dressing to go and walk in the garden under the plum trees, before anyone should come and talk to her. Out she slipped, and paced like a queen in fairy pleasaunces. The blossom was silver-shadowy when she looked up from under the tree at the blue sky. There was a faint scent, a faint noise of bees, a wonderful quickness of happy morning.

She heard the breakfast gong and went indoors.

"Where have you been?" asked the others.

"I had to go out under the plum trees," she said, her face glowing like a flower. "It is so lovely."

A shadow of anger crossed Skrebensky's soul. She had not wanted him to be there. He hardened his will.

At night there was a moon, and the blossom glistened ghostly, they went together to look at it. She saw the moonlight on his face as he waited near her, and his features were like silver and his eyes in shadow were unfathomable. She was in love with him. He was very quiet.

They went indoors and she pretended to be tired. So she went quickly to bed.

"Don't be long coming to me," she whispered, as she was supposed to be kissing him good night.

And he waited, intent, obsessed, for the moment when he could come to her.

She enjoyed him, she made much of him. She liked to put her fingers on the soft skin of his sides, or on the softness of his back, when he made the muscles hard underneath, the muscles developed very strong through riding; and she had a great thrill of excitement and passion, because of the unimpressible hardness of his body, that was so soft and smooth under her fingers, that came to her with such absolute service.

She owned his body and enjoyed it with all the delight and carelessness of a possessor. But he had become gradually afraid of her body. He wanted her, he wanted her endlessly. But there had come a tension into his desire, a constraint which prevented his enjoying the delicious approach and the lovable close of the endless embrace. He was afraid. His will was always tense, fixed.

Her final examination was at midsummer. She insisted on sitting for it, although she had neglected her work during the past months. He also wanted her to go in for the degree. Then, he thought, she would be satisfied. Secretly he hoped she would fail, so that she would be more glad of him.

"Would you rather live in India or in England when we are married?" he asked her.

"Oh, in India, by far," she said, with a careless lack of consideration which annoyed him.

Once she said, with heat:

"I shall be glad to leave England. Everything is so meagre and paltry, it is so unspiritual--I hate democracy."

He became angry to hear her talk like this, he did not know why. Somehow, he could not bear it, when she attacked things. It was as if she were attacking him.

"What do you mean?" he asked her, hostile. "Why do you hate democracy?"

"Only the greedy and ugly people come to the top in a democracy," she said, "because they're the only people who will push themselves there. Only degenerate races are democratic."

"What do you want then--an aristocracy?" he asked, secretly moved. He always felt that by rights he belonged to the ruling aristocracy. Yet to hear her speak for his class pained him with a curious, painful pleasure. He felt he was acquiescing in something illegal, taking to himself some wrong, reprehensible advantages.

"I do want an aristocracy," she cried. "And I'd far rather have an aristocracy of birth than of money. Who are the aristocrats now--who are chosen as the best to rule? Those who have money and the brains for money. It doesn't matter what else they have: but they must have money-brains,--because they are ruling in the name of money."

"The people elect the government," he said.

"I know they do. But what are the people? Each one of them is a money-interest. I hate it, that anybody is my equal who has the same amount of money as I have. I know I am better than all of them. I hate them. They are not my equals. I hate equality on a money basis. It is the equality of dirt."

Her eyes blazed at him, he felt as if she wanted to destroy him. She had gripped him and was trying to break him. His anger sprang up, against her. At least he would fight for his existence with her. A hard, blind resistance possessed him.

"I don't care about money," he said, "neither do I want to put my finger in the pie. I am too sensitive about my finger."

"What is your finger to me?" she cried, in a passion. "You with your dainty fingers, and your going to India because you will be one of the somebodies there! It's a mere dodge, your going to India."

"In what way a dodge?" he cried, white with anger and fear.

"You think the Indians are simpler than us, and so you'll enjoy being near them and being a lord over them," she said. "And you'll feel so righteous, governing them for their own good. Who are you, to feel righteous? What are you righteous about, in your governing? Your governing stinks. What do you govern for, but to make things there as dead and mean as they are here!"

"I don't feel righteous in the least," he said.

"Then what do you feel? It's all such a nothingness, what you feel and what you don't feel."

"What do you feel yourself?" he said. "Aren't you righteous in your own mind?"

"Yes, I am, because I'm against you, and all your old, dead things," she cried.

She seemed, with the last words, uttered in hard knowledge, to strike down the flag that he kept flying. He felt cut off at the knees, a figure made worthless. A horrible sickness gripped him, as if his legs were really cut away, and he could not move, but remained a crippled trunk, dependent, worthless. The ghastly sense of helplessness, as if he were a mere figure that did not exist vitally, made him mad, beside himself.

Now, even whilst he was with her, this death of himself came over him, when he walked about like a body from which all individual life is gone. In this state he neither heard nor saw nor felt, only the mechanism of his life continued.

He hated her, as far as, in this state, he could hate. His cunning suggested to him all the ways of making her esteem him. For she did not esteem him. He left her and did not write to her. He flirted with other women, with Gudrun.

This last made her very fierce. She was still fiercely jealous of his body. In passionate anger she upbraided him because, not being man enough to satisfy one woman, he hung round others.

"Don't I satisfy you?" he asked of her, again going white to the throat.

"No," she said. "You've never satisfied me since the first week in London. You never satisfy me now. What does it mean to me, your having me--" She lifted her shoulders and turned aside her face in a motion of cold, indifferent worthlessness. He felt he would kill her.

When she had roused him to a pitch of madness, when she saw his eyes all dark and mad with suffering, then a great suffering overcame her soul, a great, inconquerable suffering. And she loved him. For, oh, she wanted to love him. Stronger than life or death was her craving to be able to love him.

And at such moments, when he was made with her destroying him, when all his complacency was destroyed, all his everyday self was broken, and only the stripped, rudimentary, primal man remained, demented with torture, her passion to love him became love, she took him again, they came together in an overwhelming passion, in which he knew he satisfied her.

But it all contained a developing germ of death. After each contact, her anguished desire for him or for that which she never had from him was stronger, her love was more hopeless. After each contact his mad dependence on her was deepened, his hope of standing strong and taking her in his own strength was weakened. He felt himself a mere attribute of her.

Whitsuntide came, just before her examination. She was to have a few days of rest. Dorothy had inherited her patrimony, and had taken a cottage in Sussex. She invited them to stay with her.

They went down to Dorothy's neat, low cottage at the foot of the downs. Here they could do as they liked. Ursula was always yearning to go to the top of the downs. The white track wound up to the rounded summit. And she must go.

Up there, she could see the Channel a few miles away, the sea raised up and faintly glittering in the sky, the Isle of Wight a shadow lifted in the far distance, the river winding bright through the patterned plain to seaward, Arundel Castle a shadowy bulk, and then the rolling of the high, smooth downs, making a high, smooth land under heaven, acknowledging only the heavens in their great, sun-glowing strength, and suffering only a few bushes to trespass on the intercourse between their great, unabateable body and the changeful body of the sky.

Below she saw the villages and the woods of the weald, and the train running bravely, a gallant little thing, running with all the importance of the world over the water meadows and into the gap of the downs, waving its white steam, yet all the while so little. So little, yet its courage carried it from end to end of the earth, till there was no place where it did not go. Yet the downs, in magnificent indifference, bearing limbs and body to the sun, drinking sunshine and sea-wind and sea-wet cloud into its golden skin, with superb stillness and calm of being, was not the downs still more wonderful? The blind, pathetic, energetic courage of the train as it steamed tinily away through the patterned levels to the sea's dimness, so fast and so energetic, made her weep. Where was it going? It was going nowhere, it was just going. So blind, so without goal or aim, yet so hasty! She sat on an old prehistoric earth-work and cried, and the tears ran down her face. The train had tunnelled all the earth, blindly, and uglily.

And she lay face downwards on the downs, that were so strong, that cared only for their intercourse with the everlasting skies, and she wished she could become a strong mound smooth under the sky, bosom and limbs bared to all winds and clouds and bursts of sunshine.

But she must get up again and look down from her foothold of sunshine, down and away at the patterned, level earth, with its villages and its smoke and its energy. So shortsighted the train seemed, running to the distance, so terrifying in their littleness the villages, with such pettiness in their activity.

Skrebensky wandered dazed, not knowing where he was or what he was doing with her. All her passion seemed to be to wander up there on the downs, and when she must descend to earth, she was heavy. Up there she was exhilarated and free.

She would not love him in a house any more. She said she hated houses, and particularly she hated beds. There was something distasteful in his coming to her bed.

She would stay the night on the downs, up there, he with her. It was midsummer, the days were glamorously long. At about half-past ten, when the bluey-black darkness had at last fallen, they took rugs and climbed the steep track to the summit of the downs, he and she.

Up there, the stars were big, the earth below was gone into darkness. She was free up there with the stars. Far out they saw tiny yellow lights--but it was very far out, at sea, or on land. She was free up among the stars.

She took off her clothes, and made him take off all his, and they ran over the smooth, moonless turf, a long way, more than a mile from where they had left their clothing, running in the dark, soft wind, utterly naked, as naked as the downs themselves. Her hair was loose and blew about her shoulders, she ran swiftly, wearing sandals when she set off on the long run to the dew-pond.

In the round dew-pond the stars were untroubled. She ventured softly into the water, grasping at the stars with her hands.

And then suddenly she started back, running swiftly. He was there, beside her, but only on sufferance. He was a screen for her fears. He served her. She took him, she clasped him, clenched him close, but her eyes were open looking at the stars, it was as if the stars were lying with her and entering the unfathomable darkness of her womb, fathoming her at last. It was not him.

The dawn came. They stood together on a high place, an earthwork of the stone-age men, watching for the light. It came over the land. But the land was dark. She watched a pale rim on the sky, away against the darkened land. The darkness became bluer. A little wind was running in from the sea behind. It seemed to be running to the pale rift of the dawn. And she and he darkly, on an outpost of the darkness, stood watching for the dawn.

The light grew stronger, gushing up against the dark sap-hire of the transparent night. The light grew stronger, whiter, then over it hovered a flush of rose. A flush of rose, and then yellow, pale, new-created yellow, the whole quivering and poising momentarily over the fountain on the sky's rim.

The rose hovered and quivered, burned, fused to flame, to a transient red, while the yellow urged out in great waves, thrown from the ever-increasing fountain, great waves of yellow flinging into the sky, scattering its spray over the darkness, which became bluer and bluer, paler, till soon it would itself be a radiance, which had been darkness.

The sun was coming. There was a quivering, a powerful terrifying swim of molten light. Then the molten source itself surged forth, revealing itself. The sun was in the sky, too powerful to look at.

And the ground beneath lay so still, so peaceful. Only now and again a cock crew. Otherwise, from the distant yellow hills to the pine trees at the foot of the downs, everything was newly washed into being, in a flood of new, golden creation.

It was so unutterably still and perfect with promise, the golden-lighted, distinct land, that Ursula's soul rocked and wept. Suddenly he glanced at her. The tears were running over her cheeks, her mouth was working strangely.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

After a moment's struggle with her voice.

"It is so beautiful," she said, looking at the glowing, beautiful land. It was so beautiful, so perfect, and so unsullied.

He too realised what England would be in a few hours' time--a blind, sordid, strenuous activity, all for nothing, fuming with dirty smoke and running trains and groping in the bowels of the earth, all for nothing. A ghastliness came over him.

He looked at Ursula. Her face was wet with tears, very bright, like a transfiguration in the refulgent light. Nor was his the hand to wipe away the burning, bright tears. He stood apart, overcome by a cruel ineffectuality.

Gradually a great, helpless sorrow was rising in him. But as yet he was fighting it away, he was struggling for his own life. He became very quiet and unaware of the things about him, awaiting, as it were, her judgment on him.

They returned to Nottingham, the time of her examination came. She must go to London. But she would not stay with him in an hotel. She would go to a quiet little pension near the British Museum.

Those quiet residential squares of London made a great impression on her mind. They were very complete. Her mind seemed imprisoned in their quietness. Who was going to liberate her?

In the evening, her practical examinations being over, he went with her to dinner at one of the hotels down the river, near Richmond. It was golden and beautiful, with yellow water and white and scarlet-striped boat-awnings, and blue shadows under the trees.

"When shall we be married?" he asked her, quietly, simply, as if it were a mere question of comfort.

She watched the changing pleasure-traffic of the river. He looked at her golden, puzzled museau. The knot gathered in his throat.

"I don't know," she said.

A hot grief gripped his throat.

"Why don't you know--don't you want to be married?" he asked her.

Her head turned slowly, her face, puzzled, like a boy's face, expressionless because she was trying to think, looked towards his face. She did not see him, because she was pre-occupied. She did not quite know what she was going to say.

"I don't think I want to be married," she said, and her naive, troubled, puzzled eyes rested a moment on his, then travelled away, pre-occupied.

"Do you mean never, or not just yet?" he asked.

The knot in his throat grew harder, his face was drawn as if he were being strangled.

"I mean never," she said, out of some far self which spoke for once beyond her.

His drawn, strangled face watched her blankly for a few moments, then a strange sound took place in his throat. She started, came to herself, and, horrified, saw him. His head made a queer motion, the chin jerked back against the throat, the curious, crowing, hiccupping sound came again, his face twisted like insanity, and he was crying, crying blind and twisted as if something were broken which kept him in control.

"Tony--don't," she cried, starting up.

It tore every one of her nerves to see him. He made groping movements to get out of his chair. But he was crying uncontrollably, noiselessly, with his face twisted like a mask, contorted and the tears running down the amazing grooves in his cheeks. Blindly, his face always this horrible working mask, he groped for his hat, for his way down from the terrace. It was eight o'clock, but still brightly light. The other people were staring. In great agitation, part of which was exasperation, she stayed behind, paid the waiter with a half-sovereign, took her yellow silk coat, then followed Skrebensky.

She saw him walking with brittle, blind steps along the path by the river. She could tell by the strange stiffness and brittleness of his figure that he was still crying. Hurrying after him, running, she took his arm.

"Tony," she cried, "don't! Why are you like this? What are you doing this for? Don't. It's not necessary."

He heard, and his manhood was cruelly, coldly defaced. Yet it was no good. He could not gain control of his face. His face, his breast, were weeping violently, as if automatically. His will, his knowledge had nothing to do with it. He simply could not stop.

She walked holding his arm, silent with exasperation and perplexity and pain. He took the uncertain steps of a blind man, because his mind was blind with weeping.

"Shall we go home? Shall we have a taxi?" she said.

He could pay no attention. Very flustered, very agitated, she signalled indefinitely to a taxi-cab that was going slowly by. The driver saluted and drew up. She opened the door and pushed Skrebensky in, then took her own place. Her face was uplifted, the mouth closed down, she looked hard and cold and ashamed. She winced as the driver's dark red face was thrust round upon her, a full-blooded, animal face with black eyebrows and a thick, short-cut moustache.

"Where to, lady?" he said, his white teeth showing. Again for a moment she was flustered.

"Forty, Rutland Square," she said.

He touched his cap and stolidly set the car in motion. He seemed to have a league with her to ignore Skrebensky.

The latter sat as if trapped within the taxi-cab, his face still working, whilst occasionally he made quick slight movements of the head, to shake away his tears. He never moved his hands. She could not bear to look at him. She sat with face uplifted and averted to the window.

At length, when she had regained some control over herself, she turned again to him. He was much quieter. His face was wet, and twitched occasionally, his hands still lay motionless. But his eyes were quite still, like a washed sky after rain, full of a wan light, and quite steady, almost ghost-like.

A pain flamed in her womb, for him.

"I didn't think I should hurt you," she said, laying her hand very lightly, tentatively, on his arm. "The words came without my knowing. They didn't mean anything, really."

He remained quite still, hearing, but washed all wan and without feeling. She waited, looking at him, as if he were some curious, not-understandable creature.

"You won't cry again, will you, Tony?"

Some shame and bitterness against her burned him in the question. She noticed how his moustache was soddened wet with tears. Taking her handkerchief, she wiped his face. The driver's heavy, stolid back remained always turned to them, as if conscious but indifferent. Skrebensky sat motionless whilst Ursula wiped his face, softly, carefully, and yet clumsily, not as well as he would have wiped it himself.

Her handkerchief was too small. It was soon wet through. She groped in his pocket for his own. Then, with its more ample capacity, she carefully dried his face. He remained motionless all the while. Then she drew his cheek to hers and kissed him. His face was cold. Her heart was hurt. She saw the tears welling quickly to his eyes again. As if he were a child, she again wiped away his tears. By now she herself was on the point of weeping. Her underlip was caught between her teeth.

So she sat still, for fear of her own tears, sitting close by him, holding his hand warm and close and loving. Meanwhile the car ran on, and a soft, midsummer dusk began to gather. For a long while they sat motionless. Only now and again her hand closed more closely, lovingly, over his hand, then gradually relaxed.

The dusk began to fall. One or two lights appeared. The driver drew up to light his lamps. Skrebensky moved for the first time, leaning forward to watch the driver. His face had always the same still, clarified, almost childlike look, impersonal.

They saw the driver's strange, full, dark face peering into the lamps under drawn brows. Ursula shuddered. It was the face almost of an animal yet of a quick, strong, wary animal that had them within its knowledge, almost within its power. She clung closer to Krebensky.

"My love?" she said to him, questioningly, when the car was again running in full motion.

He made no movement or sound. He let her hold his hand, he let her reach forward, in the gathering darkness, and kiss his still cheek. The crying had gone by--he would not cry any more. He was whole and himself again.

"My love," she repeated, trying to make him notice her. But as yet he could not.

He watched the road. They were running by Kensington Gardens. For the first time his lips opened.

"Shall we get out and go into the park," he asked.

"Yes," she said, quietly, not sure what was coming.

After a moment he took the tube from its peg. She saw the stout, strong, self-contained driver lean his head.

"Stop at Hyde Park Corner."

The dark head nodded, the car ran on just the same.

Presently they pulled up. Skrebensky paid the man. Ursula stood back. She saw the driver salute as he received his tip, and then, before he set the car in motion, turn and look at her, with his quick, powerful, animal's look, his eyes very concentrated and the whites of his eyes flickering. Then he drove away into the crowd. He had let her go. She had been afraid.

Skrebensky turned with her into the park. A band was still playing and the place was thronged with people. They listened to the ebbing music, then went aside to a dark seat, where they sat closely, hand in hand.

Then at length, as out of the silence, she said to him, wondering:

"What hurt you so?"

She really did not know, at this moment.

"When you said you wanted never to marry me," he replied, with a childish simplicity.

"But why did that hurt you so?" she said. "You needn't mind everything I say so particularly."

"I don't know--I didn't want to do it," he said, humbly, ashamed.

She pressed his hand warmly. They sat close together, watching the soldiers go by with their sweethearts, the lights trailing in myriads down the great thoroughfares that beat on the edge of the park.

"I didn't know you cared so much," she said, also humbly.

"I didn't," he said. "I was knocked over myself.--But I care--all the world."

His voice was so quiet and colourless, it made her heart go pale with fear.

"My love!" she said, drawing near to him. But she spoke out of fear, not out of love.

"I care all the world--I care for nothing else--neither in life nor in death," he said, in the same steady, colourless voice of essential truth.

"Than for what?" she murmured duskily.

"Than for you--to be with me."

And again she was afraid. Was she to be conquered by this? She cowered close to him, very close to him. They sat perfectly still, listening to the great, heavy, beating sound of the town, the murmur of lovers going by, the footsteps of soldiers.

She shivered against him.

"You are cold?" he said.

"A little."

"We will go and have some supper."

He was now always quiet and decided and remote, very beautiful. He seemed to have some strange, cold power over her.

They went to a restaurant, and drank chianti. But his pale, wan look did not go away.

"Don't leave me to-night," he said at length, looking at her, pleading. He was so strange and impersonal, she was afraid.

"But the people of my place," she said, quivering.

"I will explain to them--they know we are engaged."

She sat pale and mute. He waited.

"Shall we go?" he said at length.

"Where?"

"To an hotel."

Her heart was hardened. Without answering, she rose to acquiesce. But she was now cold and unreal. Yet she could not refuse him. It seemed like fate, a fate she did not want.

They went to an Italian hotel somewhere, and had a sombre bedroom with a very large bed, clean, but sombre. The ceiling was painted with a bunch of flowers in a big medallion over the bed. She thought it was pretty.

He came to her, and cleaved to her very close, like steel cleaving and clinching on to her. Her passion was roused, it was fierce but cold. But it was fierce, and extreme, and good, their passion this night. He slept with her fast in his arms. All night long he held her fast against him. She was passive, acquiscent. But her sleep was not very deep nor very real.

She woke in the morning to a sound of water dashed on a courtyard, to sunlight streaming through a lattice. She thought she was in a foreign country. And Skrebensky was there an incubus upon her.

She lay still, thinking, whilst his arm was round her, his head against her shoulders, his body against hers, just behind her. He was still asleep.

She watched the sunshine coming in bars through the persiennes, and her immediate surroundings again melted away.

She was in some other land, some other world, where the old restraints had dissolved and vanished, where one moved freely, not afraid of one's fellow men, nor wary, nor on the defensive, but calm, indifferent, at one's ease. Vaguely, in a sort of silver light, she wandered at large and at ease. The bonds of the world were broken. This world of England had vanished away. She heard a voice in the yard below calling:

"O Giovann'--O'-O'-O'-Giovann'----!"

And she knew she was in a new country, in a new life. It was very delicious to lie thus still, with one's soul wandering freely and simply in the silver light of some other, simpler, more finely natural world.

But always there was a foreboding waiting to command her. She became more aware of Skrebensky. She knew he was waking up. She must modify her soul, depart from her further world, for him.

She knew he was awake. He lay still, with a concrete stillness, not as when he slept. Then his arm tightened almost convulsively upon her, and he said, half timidly:

"Did you sleep well?"

"Very well."

"So did I."

There was a pause.

"And do you love me?" he asked.

She turned and looked at him searchingly. He seemed outside her.

"I do," she said.

But she said it out of complacency and a desire not to be harried. There was a curious breach of silence between them, which frightened him.

They lay rather late, then he rang for breakfast. She wanted to be able to go straight downstairs and away from the place, when she got up. She was happy in this room, but the thought of the publicity of the hall downstairs rather troubled her.

A young Italian, a Sicilian, dark and slightly pock-marked, buttoned up in a sort of grey tunic, appeared with the tray. His face had an almost African imperturbability, impassive, incomprehensible.

"One might be in Italy," Skrebensky said to him, genially. A vacant look, almost like fear, came on the fellow's face. He did not understand.

"This is like Italy," Skrebensky explained.

The face of the Italian flashed with a non-comprehending smile, he finished setting out the tray, and was gone. He did not understand: he would understand nothing: he disappeared from the door like a half- domesticated wild animal. It made Ursula shudder slightly, the quick, sharp-sighted, intent animality of the man.

Skrebensky was beautiful to her this morning, his face softened and transfused with suffering and with love, his movements very still and gentle. He was beautiful to her, but she was detached from him by a chill distance. Always she seemed to be bearing up against the distance that separated them. But he was unaware. This morning he was transfused and beautiful. She admired his movements, the way he spread honey on his roll, or poured out the coffee.

When breakfast was over, she lay still again on the pillows, whilst he went through his toilet. She watched him, as he sponged himself, and quickly dried himself with the towel. His body was beautiful, his movements intent and quick, she admired him and she appreciated him without reserve. He seemed completed now. He aroused no fruitful fecundity in her. He seemed added up, finished. She knew him all round, not on any side did he lead into the unknown. Poignant, almost passionate appreciation she felt for him, but none of the dreadful wonder, none of the rich fear, the connection with the unknown, or the reverence of love. He was, however, unaware this morning. His body was quiet and fulfilled, his veins complete with satisfaction, he was happy, finished.

Again she went home. But this time he went with her. He wanted to stay by her. He wanted her to marry him. It was already July. In early September he must sail for India. He could not bear to think of going alone. She must come with him. Nervously, he kept beside her.

Her examination was finished, her college career was over. There remained for her now to marry or to work again. She applied for no post. It was concluded she would marry. India tempted her--the strange, strange land. But with the thought of Calcutta, or Bombay, or of Simla, and of the European population, India was no more attractive to her than Nottingham.

She had failed in her examination: she had gone down: she had not taken her degree. It was a blow to her. It hardened her soul.

"It doesn't matter," he said. "What are the odds, whether you are a Bachelor of Arts or not, according to the London University? All you know, you know, and if you are Mrs. Skrebensky, the B.A. is meaningless."

Instead of consoling her, this made her harder, more ruthless. She was now up against her own fate. It was for her to choose between being Mrs. Skrebensky, even Baroness Skrebensky, wife of a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, the Sappers, as he called them, living with the European population in India--or being Ursula Brangwen, spinster, school-mistress. She was qualified by her Intermediate Arts examination. She would probably even now get a post quite easily as assistant in one of the higher grade schools, or even in Willey Green School. Which was she to do?

She hated most of all entering the bondage of teaching once more. Very heartily she detested it. Yet at the thought of marriage and living with Skrebensky amid the European population in India, her soul was locked and would not budge. She had very little feeling about it: only there was a deadlock.

Skrebensky waited, she waited, everybody waited for the decision. When Anton talked to her, and seemed insidiously to suggest himself as a husband to her, she knew how utterly locked out he was. On the other hand, when she saw Dorothy, and discussed the matter, she felt she would marry him promptly, at once, as a sharp disavowal of adherence with Dorothy's views.

The situation was almost ridiculous.

"But do you love him?" asked Dorothy.

"It isn't a question of loving him," said Ursula. "I love him well enough--certainly more than I love anybody else in the world. And I shall never love anybody else the same again. We have had the flower of each other. But I don't care about love. I don't value it. I don't care whether I love or whether I don't, whether I have love or whether I haven't. What is it to me?"

And she shrugged her shoulders in fierce, angry contempt.

Dorothy pondered, rather angry and afraid.

"Then what do you care about?" she asked, exasperated.

"I don't know," said Ursula. "But something impersonal. Love--love--love--what does it mean--what does it amount to? So much personal gratification. It doesn't lead anywhere."

"It isn't supposed to lead anywhere, is it?" said Dorothy, satirically. "I thought it was the one thing which is an end in itself."

"Then what does it matter to me?" cried Ursula. "As an end in itself, I could love a hundred men, one after the other. Why should I end with a Skrebensky? Why should I not go on, and love all the types I fancy, one after another, if love is an end in itself? There are plenty of men who aren't Anton, whom I could love--whom I would like to love."

"Then you don't love him," said Dorothy.

"I tell you I do;--quite as much, and perhaps more than I should love any of the others. Only there are plenty of things that aren't in Anton that I would love in the other men."

"What, for instance?"

"It doesn't matter. But a sort of strong understanding, in some men, and then a dignity, a directness, something unquestioned that there is in working men, and then a jolly, reckless passionateness that you see--a man who could really let go----"

Dorothy could feel that Ursula was already hankering after something else, something that this man did not give her.

"The question is, what do you want," propounded Dorothy. "Is it just other men?"

Ursula was silenced. This was her own dread. Was she just promiscuous?

"Because if it is," continued Dorothy, "you'd better marry Anton. The other can only end badly."

So out of fear of herself Ursula was to marry Skrebensky.

He was very busy now, preparing to go to India. He must visit relatives and contract business. He was almost sure of Ursula now. She seemed to have given in. And he seemed to become again an important, self-assured man.

It was the first week in August, and he was one of a large party in a bungalow on the Lincolnshire coast. It was a tennis, golf, motor-car, motor-boat party, given by his great-aunt, a lady of social pretensions. Ursula was invited to spend the week with the party.

She went rather reluctantly. Her marriage was more or less fixed for the twenty-eighth of the month. They were to sail for India on September the fifth. One thing she knew, in her subconsciousness, and that was, she would never sail for India.

She and Anton, being important guests on account of the coming marriage, had rooms in the large bungalow. It was a big place, with a great central hall, two smaller writing-rooms, and then two corridors from which opened eight or nine bedrooms. Skrebensky was put on one corridor, Ursula on the other. They felt very lost, in the crowd.

Being lovers, however, they were allowed to be out alone together as much as they liked. Yet she felt very strange, in this crowd of strange people, uneasy, as if she had no privacy. She was not used to these homogeneous crowds. She was afraid.

She felt different from the rest of them, with their hard, easy, shallow intimacy, that seemed to cost them so little. She felt she was not pronounced enough. It was a kind of hold-your-own unconventional atmosphere.

She did not like it. In crowds, in assemblies of people, she liked formality. She felt she did not produce the right effect. She was not effective: she was not beautiful: she was nothing. Even before Skrebensky she felt unimportant, almost inferior. He could take his part very well with the rest.

He and she went out into the night. There was a moon behind clouds, shedding a diffused light, gleaming now and again in bits of smoky mother-of-pearl. So they walked together on the wet, ribbed sands near the sea, hearing the run of the long, heavy waves, that made a ghostly whiteness and a whisper.

He was sure of himself. As she walked, the soft silk of her dress--she wore a blue shantung, full-skirted--blew away from the sea and flapped and clung to her legs. She wished it would not. Everything seemed to give her away, and she could not rouse herself to deny, she was so confused.

He would lead her away to a pocket in the sand-hills, secret amid the grey thorn-bushes and the grey, glassy grass. He held her close against him, felt all her firm, unutterably desirable mould of body through the fine fibre of the silk that fell about her limbs. The silk, slipping fierily on the hidden, yet revealed roundness and firmness of her body, her loins, seemed to run in him like fire, make his brain burn like brimstone. She liked it, the electric fire of the silk under his hands upon her limbs, the fire flew over her, as he drew nearer and nearer to discovery. She vibrated like a jet of electric, firm fluid in response. Yet she did not feel beautiful. All the time, she felt she was not beautiful to him, only exciting. She let him take her, and he seemed mad, mad with excited passion. But she, as she lay afterwards on the cold, soft sand, looking up at the blotted, faintly luminous sky, felt that she was as cold now as she had been before. Yet he, breathing heavily, seemed almost savagely satisfied. He seemed revenged.

A little wind wafted the sea grass and passed over her face. Where was the supreme fulfilment she would never enjoy? Why was she so cold, so unroused, so indifferent?

As they went home, and she saw the many, hateful lights of the bungalow, of several bungalows in a group, he said softly:

"Don't lock your door."

"I'd rather, here," she said.

"No, don't. We belong to each other. Don't let us deny it."

She did not answer. He took her silence for consent.

He shared his room with another man.

"I suppose," he said, "it won't alarm the house if I go across to happier regions."

"So long as you don't make a great row going, and don't try the wrong door," said the other man, turning in to sleep.

Skrebensky went out in his wide-striped sleeping suit. He crossed the big dining hall, whose low firelight smelled of cigars and whisky and coffee, entered the other corridor and found Ursula's room. She was lying awake, wide-eyed and suffering. She was glad he had come, if only for consolation. It was consolation to be held in his arms, to feel his body against hers. Yet how foreign his arms and body were! Yet still, not so horribly foreign and hostile as the rest of the house felt to her.

She did not know how she suffered in this house. She was healthy and exorbitantly full of interest. So she played tennis and learned golf, she rowed out and swam in the deep sea, and enjoyed it very much indeed, full of zest. Yet all the time, among those others, she felt shocked and wincing, as if her violently-sensitive nakedness were exposed to the hard, brutal, material impact of the rest of the people.

The days went by unmarked, in a full, almost strenuous enjoyment of one's own physique. Skrebensky was one among the others, till evening came, and he took her for himself. She was allowed a great deal of freedom and was treated with a good deal of respect, as a girl on the eve of marriage, about to depart for another continent.

The trouble began at evening. Then a yearning for something unknown came over her, a passion for something she knew not what. She would walk the foreshore alone after dusk, expecting, expecting something, as if she had gone to a rendezvous. The salt, bitter passion of the sea, its indifference to the earth, its swinging, definite motion, its strength, its attack, and its salt burning, seemed to provoke her to a pitch of madness, tantalizing her with vast suggestions of fulfilment. And then, for personification, would come Skrebensky, Skrebensky, whom she knew, whom she was fond of, who was attractive, but whose soul could not contain her in its waves of strength, nor his breast compel her in burning, salty passion.

One evening they went out after dinner, across the low golf links to the dunes and the sea. The sky had small, faint stars, all was still and faintly dark. They walked together in silence, then ploughed, labouring, through the heavy loose sand of the gap between the dunes. They went in silence under the even, faint darkness, in the darker shadow of the sandhills.

Suddenly, cresting the heavy, sandy pass, Ursula lifted her head, and shrank back, momentarily frightened. There was a great whiteness confronting her, the moon was incandescent as a round furnace door, out of which came the high blast of moonlight, over the seaward half of the world, a dazzling, terrifying glare of white light. They shrank back for a moment into shadow, uttering a cry. He felt his chest laid bare, where the secret was heavily hidden. He felt himself fusing down to nothingness, like a bead that rapidly disappears in an incandescent flame.

"How wonderful!" cried Urusla, in low, calling tones. "How wonderful!"

And she went forward, plunging into it. He followed behind. She too seemed to melt into the glare, towards the moon.

The sands were as ground silver, the sea moved in solid brightness, coming towards them, and she went to meet the advance of the flashing, buoyant water. She gave her breast to the moon, her belly to the flashing, heaving water. He stood behind, encompassed, a shadow ever dissolving.

She stood on the edge of the water, at the edge of the solid, flashing body of the sea, and the wave rushed over her feet.

"I want to go," she cried, in a strong, dominant voice. "I want to go."

He saw the moonlight on her face, so she was like metal, he heard her ringing, metallic voice, like the voice of a harpy to him.

She prowled, ranging on the edge of the water like a possessed creature, and he followed her. He saw the froth of the wave followed by the hard, bright water swirl over her feet and her ankles, she swung out her arms, to balance, he expected every moment to see her walk into the sea, dressed as she was, and be carried swimming out.

But she turned, she walked to him.

"I want to go," she cried again, in the high, hard voice, like the scream of gulls.

"Where?" he asked.

"I don't know."

And she seized hold of his arm, held him fast, as if captive, and walked him a little way by the edge of the dazzling, dazing water.

Then there in the great flare of light, she clinched hold of him, hard, as if suddenly she had the strength of destruction, she fastened her arms round him and tightened him in her grip, whilst her mouth sought his in a hard, rending, ever-increasing kiss, till his body was powerless in her grip, his heart melted in fear from the fierce, beaked, harpy's kiss. The water washed again over their feet, but she took no notice. She seemed unaware, she seemed to be pressing in her beaked mouth till she had the heart of him. Then, at last, she drew away and looked at him--looked at him. He knew what she wanted. He took her by the hand and led her across the foreshore, back to the sandhills. She went silently. He felt as if the ordeal of proof was upon him, for life or death. He led her to a dark hollow.

"No, here," she said, going out to the slope full under the moonshine. She lay motionless, with wide-open eyes looking at the moon. He came direct to her, without preliminaries. She held him pinned down at the chest, awful. The fight, the struggle for consummation was terrible. It lasted till it was agony to his soul, till he succumbed, till he gave way as if dead, lay with his face buried, partly in her hair, partly in the sand, motionless, as if he would be motionless now for ever, hidden away in the dark, buried, only buried, he only wanted to be buried in the goodly darkness, only that, and no more.

He seemed to swoon. It was a long time before he came to himself. He was aware of an unusual motion of her breast. He looked up. Her face lay like an image in the moonlight, the eyes wide open, rigid. But out of the eyes, slowly, there rolled a tear, that glittered in the moonlight as it ran down her cheek.

He felt as if as the knife were being pushed into his already dead body. With head strained back, he watched, drawn tense, for some minutes, watched the unaltering, rigid face like metal in the moonlight, the fixed, unseeing eye, in which slowly the water gathered, shook with glittering moonlight, then surcharged, brimmed over and ran trickling, a tear with its burden of moonlight, into the darkness, to fall in the sand.

He drew gradually away as if afraid, drew away--she did not move. He glanced at her--she lay the same. Could he break away? He turned, saw the open foreshore, clear in front of him, and he plunged away, on and on, ever farther from the horrible figure that lay stretched in the moonlight on the sands with the tears gathering and travelling on the motionless, eternal face.

He felt, if ever he must see her again, his bones must be broken, his body crushed, obliterated for ever. And as yet, he had the love of his own living body. He wandered on a long, long way, till his brain drew dark and he was unconscious with weariness. Then he curled in the deepest darkness he could find, under the sea-grass, and lay there without consciousness.

She broke from her tense cramp of agony gradually, though each movement was a goad of heavy pain. Gradually, she lifted her dead body from the sands, and rose at last. There was now no moon for her, no sea. All had passed away. She trailed her dead body to the house, to her room, where she lay down inert.

Morning brought her a new access of superficial life. But all within her was cold, dead, inert. Skrebensky appeared at breakfast. He was white and obliterated. They did not look at each other nor speak to each other. Apart from the ordinary, trivial talk of civil people, they were separate, they did not speak of what was between them during the remaining two days of their stay. They were like two dead people who dare not recognise, dare not see each other.

Then she packed her bag and put on her things. There were several guests leaving together, for the same train. He would have no opportunity to speak to her.

He tapped at her bedroom door at the last minute. She stood with her umbrella in her hand. He closed the door. He did not know what to say.

"Have you done with me?" he asked her at length, lifting his head.

"It isn't me," she said. "You have done with me--we have done with each other."

He looked at her, at the closed face, which he thought so cruel. And he knew he could never touch her again. His will was broken, he was seared, but he clung to the life of his body.

"Well, what have I done?" he asked, in a rather querulous voice.

"I don't know," she said, in the same dull, feelingless voice. "It is finished. It had been a failure."

He was silent. The words still burned his bowels.

"Is it my fault?" he said, looking up at length, challenging the last stroke.

"You couldn't----" she began. But she broke down.

He turned away, afraid to hear more. She began to gather her bag, her handkerchief, her umbrella. She must be gone now. He was waiting for her to be gone.

At length the carriage came and she drove away with the rest. When she was out of sight, a great relief came over him, a pleasant banality. In an instant, everything was obliterated. He was childishly amiable and companionable all the day long. He was astonished that life could be so nice. It was better than it had been before. What a simple thing it was to be rid of her! How friendly and simple everything felt to him. What false thing had she been forcing on him?

But at night he dared not be alone. His room-mate had gone, and the hours of darkness were an agony to him. He watched the window in suffering and terror. When would this horrible darkness be lifted off him? Setting all his nerves, he endured it. He went to sleep with the dawn.

He never thought of her. Only his terror of the hours of night grew on him, obsessed him like a mania. He slept fitfully, with constant wakings of anguish. The fear wore away the core of him.

His plan was to sit up very late: drink in company until one or half-past one in the morning; then he would get three hours of sleep, of oblivion. It was light by five o'clock. But he was shocked almost to madness if he opened his eyes on the darkness.

In the daytime he was all right, always occupied with the thing of the moment, adhering to the trivial present, which seemed to him ample and satisfying. No matter how little and futile his occupations were, he gave himself to them entirely, and felt normal and fulfilled. He was always active, cheerful, gay, charming, trivial. Only he dreaded the darkness and silence of his own bedroom, when the darkness should challenge him upon his own soul. That he could not bear, as he could not bear to think about Ursula. He had no soul, no background. He never thought of Ursula, not once, he gave her no sign. She was the darkness, the challenge, the horror. He turned to immediate things. He wanted to marry quickly, to screen himself from the darkness, the challenge of his own soul. He would marry his Colonel's daughter. Quickly, without hesitation, pursued by his obsession for activity, he wrote to this girl, telling her his engagement was broken--it had been a temporary infatuation which he less than any one else could understand now it was over--and could he see his very dear friend soon? He would not be happy till he had an answer.

He received a rather surprised reply from the girl, but she would be glad to see him. She was living with her aunt. He went down to her at once, and proposed to her the first evening. He was accepted. The marriage took place quietly within fourteen days' time. Ursula was not notified of the event. In another week, Skrebensky sailed with his new wife to India.

Chapter 16

The Rainbow

Ursula went home to Beldover faint, dim, closed up. She could scarcely speak or notice. It was as if her energy were frozen. Her people asked her what was the matter. She told them she had broken off the engagement with Skrebensky. They looked blank and angry. But she could not feel any more.

The weeks crawled by in apathy. He would have sailed for India now. She was scarcely interested. She was inert, without strength or interest.

Suddenly a shock ran through her, so violent that she thought she was struck down. Was she with child? She had been so stricken under the pain of herself and of him, this had never occurred to her. Now like a flame it took hold of her limbs and body. Was she with child?

In the first flaming hours of wonder, she did not know what she felt. She was as if tied to the stake. The flames were licking her and devouring her. But the flames were also good. They seemed to wear her away to rest. What she felt in her heart and her womb she did not know. It was a kind of swoon.

Then gradually the heaviness of her heart pressed and pressed into consciousness. What was she doing? Was she bearing a child? Bearing a child? To what?

Her flesh thrilled, but her soul was sick. It seemed, this child, like the seal set on her own nullity. Yet she was glad in her flesh that she was with child. She began to think, that she would write to Skrebensky, that she would go out to him, and marry him, and live simply as a good wife to him. What did the self, the form of life matter? Only the living from day to day mattered, the beloved existence in the body, rich, peaceful, complete, with no beyond, no further trouble, no further complication. She had been wrong, she had been arrogant and wicked, wanting that other thing, that fantastic freedom, that illusory, conceited fulfilment which she had imagined she could not have with Skrebensky. Who was she to be wanting some fantastic fulfilment in her life? Was it not enough that she had her man, her children, her place of shelter under the sun? Was it not enough for her, as it had been enough for her mother? She would marry and love her husband and fill her place simply. That was the ideal.

Suddenly she saw her mother in a just and true light. Her mother was simple and radically true. She had taken the life that was given. She had not, in her arrogant conceit, insisted on creating life to fit herself. Her mother was right, profoundly right, and she herself had been false, trashy, conceited.

A great mood of humility came over her, and in this humility a bondaged sort of peace. She gave her limbs to the bondage, she loved the bondage, she called it peace. In this state she sat down to write to Skrebensky.

Since you left me I have suffered a great deal, and so have come to myself. I cannot tell you the remorse I feel for my wicked, perverse behaviour. It was given to me to love you, and to know your love for me. But instead of thankfully, on my knees, taking what God had given me, I must have the moon in my keeping, I must insist on having the moon for my own. Because I could not have it, everything else must go.

I do not know if you can ever forgive me. I could die with shame to think of my behaviour with you during our last times, and I don't know if I could ever bear to look you in the face again. Truly the best thing would be for me to die, and cover my fantasies for ever. But I find I am with child, so that cannot be.

It is your child, and for that reason I must revere it and submit my body entirely to its welfare, entertaining no thought of death, which once more is largely conceit. Therefore, because you once loved me, and because this child is your child, I ask you to have me back. If you will cable me one word, I will come to you as soon as I can. I swear to you to be a dutiful wife, and to serve you in all things. For now I only hate myself and my own conceited foolishness. I love you--I love the thought of you--you were natural and decent all through, whilst I was so false. Once I am with you again, I shall ask no more than to rest in your shelter all my life----

This letter she wrote, sentence by sentence, as if from her deepest, sincerest heart. She felt that now, now, she was at the depths of herself. This was her true self, forever. With this document she would appear before God at the Judgment Day.

For what had a woman but to submit? What was her flesh but for childbearing, her strength for her children and her husband, the giver of life? At last she was a woman.

She posted her letter to his club, to be forwarded to him in Calcutta. He would receive it soon after his arrival in India--within three weeks of his arrival there. In a month's time she would receive word from him. Then she would go.

She was quite sure of him. She thought only of preparing her garments and of living quietly, peacefully, till the time when she should join him again and her history would be concluded for ever. The peace held like an unnatural calm for a long time. She was aware, however, of a gathering restiveness, a tumult impending within her. She tried to run away from it. She wished she could hear from Skrebensky, in answer to her letter, so that her course should be resolved, she should be engaged in fulfilling her fate. It was this inactivity which made her liable to the revulsion she dreaded.

It was curious how little she cared about his not having written to her before. It was enough that she had sent her letter. She would get the required answer, that was all.

One afternoon in early October, feeling the seething rising to madness within her, she slipped out in the rain, to walk abroad, lest the house should suffocate her. Everywhere was drenched wet and deserted, the grimed houses glowed dull red, the butt houses burned scarlet in a gleam of light, under the glistening, blackish purple slates. Ursula went on towards Willey Green. She lifted her face and walked swiftly, seeing the passage of light across the shallow valley, seeing the colliery and its clouds of steam for a moment visionary in dim brilliance, away in the chaos of rain. Then the veils closed again. She was glad of the rain's privacy and intimacy.

Making on towards the wood, she saw the pale gleam of Willey Water through the cloud below, she walked the open space where hawthorn trees streamed like hair on the wind and round bushes were presences slowing through the atmosphere. It was very splendid, free and chaotic.

Yet she hurried to the wood for shelter. There, the vast booming overhead vibrated down and encircled her, tree-trunks spanned the circle of tremendous sound, myriads of tree-trunks, enormous and streaked black with water, thrust like stanchions upright between the roaring overhead and the sweeping of the circle underfoot. She glided between the tree-trunks, afraid of them. They might turn and shut her in as she went through their martialled silence.

So she flitted along, keeping an illusion that she was unnoticed. She felt like a bird that has flown in through the window of a hall where vast warriors sit at the board. Between their grave, booming ranks she was hastening, assuming she was unnoticed, till she emerged, with beating heart, through the far window and out into the open, upon the vivid green, marshy meadow.

She turned under the shelter of the common, seeing the great veils of rain swinging with slow, floating waves across the landscape. She was very wet and a long way from home, far enveloped in the rain and the waving landscape. She must beat her way back through all this fluctuation, back to stability and security.

A solitary thing, she took the track straight across the wilderness, going back. The path was a narrow groove in the turf between high, sere, tussocky grass; it was scarcely more than a rabbit run. So she moved swiftly along, watching her footing, going like a bird on the wind, with no thought, contained in motion. But her heart had a small, living seed of fear, as she went through the wash of hollow space.

Suddenly she knew there was something else. Some horses were looming in the rain, not near yet. But they were going to be near. She continued her path, inevitably. They were horses in the lee of a clump of trees beyond, above her. She pursued her way with bent head. She did not want to lift her face to them. She did not want to know they were there. She went on in the wild track.

She knew the heaviness on her heart. It was the weight of the horses. But she would circumvent them. She would bear the weight steadily, and so escape. She would go straight on, and on, and be gone by.

Suddenly the weight deepened and her heart grew tense to bear it. Her breathing was laboured. But this weight also she could bear. She knew without looking that the horses were moving nearer. What were they? She felt the thud of their heavy hoofs on the ground. What was it that was drawing near her, what weight oppressing her heart? She did not know, she did not look.

Yet now her way was cut off. They were blocking her back. She knew they had gathered on a log bridge over the sedgy dike, a dark, heavy, powerfully heavy knot. Yet her feet went on and on. They would burst before her. They would burst before her. Her feet went on and on. And tense, and more tense became her nerves and her veins, they ran hot, they ran white hot, they must fuse and she must die.

But the horses had burst before her. In a sort of lightning of knowledge their movement travelled through her, the quiver and strain and thrust of their powerful flanks, as they burst before her and drew on, beyond.

She knew they had not gone, she knew they awaited her still. But she went on over the log bridge that their hoofs had churned and drummed, she went on, knowing things about them. She was aware of their breasts gripped, clenched narrow in a hold that never relaxed, she was aware of their red nostrils flaming with long endurance, and of their haunches, so rounded, so massive, pressing, pressing, pressing to burst the grip upon their breasts, pressing for ever till they went mad, running against the walls of time, and never bursting free. Their great haunches were smoothed and darkened with rain. But the darkness and wetness of rain could not put out the hard, urgent, massive fire that was locked within these flanks, never, never.

She went on, drawing near. She was aware of the great flash of hoofs, a bluish, iridescent flash surrounding a hollow of darkness. Large, large seemed the bluish, incandescent flash of the hoof-iron, large as a halo of lightning round the knotted darkness of the flanks. Like circles of lightning came the flash of hoofs from out of the powerful flanks.

They were awaiting her again. They had gathered under an oak tree, knotting their awful, blind, triumphing flanks together, and waiting, waiting. They were waiting for her approach. As if from a far distance she was drawing near, towards the line of twiggy oak trees where they made their intense darkness, gathered on a single bank.

She must draw near. But they broke away, they cantered round, making a wide circle to avoid noticing her, and cantered back into the open hillside behind her.

They were behind her. The way was open before her, to the gate in the high hedge in the near distance, so she could pass into the smaller, cultivated field, and so out to the high-road and the ordered world of man. Her way was clear. She lulled her heart. Yet her heart was couched with fear, couched with fear all along.

Suddenly she hesitated as if seized by lightning. She seemed to fall, yet found herself faltering forward with small steps. The thunder of horses galloping down the path behind her shook her, the weight came down upon her, down, to the moment of extinction. She could not look round, so the horses thundered upon her.

Cruelly, they swerved and crashed by on her left hand. She saw the fierce flanks crinkled and as yet inadequate, the great hoofs flashing bright as yet only brandished about her, and one by one the horses crashed by, intent, working themselves up.

They had gone by, brandishing themselves thunderously about her, enclosing her. They slackened their burst transport, they slowed down, and cantered together into a knot once more, in the corner by the gate and the trees ahead of her. They stirred, they moved uneasily, they settled their uneasy flanks into one group, one purpose. They were up against her.

Her heart was gone, she had no more heart. She knew she dare not draw near. That concentrated, knitted flank of the horse-group had conquered. It stirred uneasily, awaiting her, knowing its triumph. It stirred uneasily, with the uneasiness of awaited triumph. Her heart was gone, her limbs were dissolved, she was dissolved like water. All the hardness and looming power was in the massive body of the horse-group.

Her feet faltered, she came to a standstill. It was the crisis. The horses stirred their flanks uneasily. She looked away, failing. On her left, two hundred yards down the slope, the thick hedge ran parallel. At one point there was an oak tree. She might climb into the boughs of that oak tree, and so round and drop on the other side of the hedge.

Shuddering, with limbs like water, dreading every moment to fall, she began to work her way as if making a wide detour round the horse-mass. The horses stirred their flanks in a knot against her. She trembled forward as if in a trance.

Then suddenly, in a flame of agony, she darted, seized the rugged knots of the oak tree and began to climb. Her body was weak but her hands were as hard as steel. She knew she was strong. She struggled in a great effort till she hung on the bough. She knew the horses were aware. She gained her foot-hold on the bough. The horses were loosening their knot, stirring, trying to realise. She was working her way round to the other side of the tree. As they started to canter towards her, she fell in a heap on the other side of the hedge.

For some moments she could not move. Then she saw through the rabbit-cleared bottom of the hedge the great, working hoofs of the horses as they cantered near. She could not bear it. She rose and walked swiftly, diagonally across the field. The horses galloped along the other side of the hedge to the corner, where they were held up. She could feel them there in their huddled group all the while she hastened across the bare field. They were almost pathetic, now. Her will alone carried her, till, trembling, she climbed the fence under a leaning thorn tree that overhung the grass by the high-road. The use went from her, she sat on the fence leaning back against the trunk of the thorn tree, motionless.

As she sat there, spent, time and the flux of change passed away from her, she lay as if unconscious upon the bed of the stream, like a stone, unconscious, unchanging, unchangeable, whilst everything rolled by in transience, leaving her there, a stone at rest on the bed of the stream, inalterable and passive, sunk to the bottom of all change.

She lay still a long time, with her back against the thorn tree trunk, in her final isolation. Some colliers passed, tramping heavily up the wet road, their voices sounding out, their shoulders up to their ears, their figures blotched and spectral in the rain. Some did not see her. She opened her eyes languidly as they passed by. Then one man going alone saw her. The whites of his eyes showed in his black face as he looked in wonderment at her. He hesitated in his walk, as if to speak to her, out of frightened concern for her. How she dreaded his speaking to her, dreaded his questioning her.

She slipped from her seat and went vaguely along the path--vaguely. It was a long way home. She had an idea that she must walk for the rest of her life, wearily, wearily. Step after step, step after step, and always along the wet, rainy road between the hedges. Step after step, step after step, the monotony produced a deep, cold sense of nausea in her. How profound was her cold nausea, how profound! That too plumbed the bottom. She seemed destined to find the bottom of all things to-day: the bottom of all things. Well, at any rate she was walking along the bottom-most bed--she was quite safe: quite safe, if she had to go on and on for ever, seeing this was the very bottom, and there was nothing deeper. There was nothing deeper, you see, so one could not but feel certain, passive.

She arrived home at last. The climb up the hill to Beldover had been very trying. Why must one climb the hill? Why must one climb? Why not stay below? Why force one's way up the slope? Why force one's way up and up, when one is at the bottom? Oh, it was very trying, very wearying, very burdensome. Always burdens, always, always burdens. Still, she must get to the top and go home to bed. She must go to bed.

She got in and went upstairs in the dusk without its being noticed she was in such a sodden condition. She was too tired to go downstairs again. She got into bed and lay shuddering with cold, yet too apathetic to get up or call for relief. Then gradually she became more ill.

She was very ill for a fortnight, delirious, shaken and racked. But always, amid the ache of delirium, she had a dull firmness of being, a sense of permanency. She was in some way like the stone at the bottom of the river, inviolable and unalterable, no matter what storm raged in her body. Her soul lay still and permanent, full of pain, but itself for ever. Under all her illness, persisted a deep, inalterable knowledge.

She knew, and she cared no more. Throughout her illness, distorted into vague forms, persisted the question of herself and Skrebensky, like a gnawing ache that was still superficial, and did not touch her isolated, impregnable core of reality. But the corrosion of him burned in her till it burned itself out.

Must she belong to him, must she adhere to him? Something compelled her, and yet it was not real. Always the ache, the ache of unreality, of her belonging to Skrebensky. What bound her to him when she was not bound to him? Why did the falsity persist? Why did the falsity gnaw, gnaw, gnaw at her, why could she not wake up to clarity, to reality. If she could but wake up, if she could but wake up, the falsity of the dream, of her connection with Skrebensky, would be gone. But the sleep, the delirium pinned her down. Even when she was calm and sober she was in its spell.

Yet she was never in its spell. What extraneous thing bound her to him? There was some bond put upon her. Why could she not break it through? What was it? What was it?

In her delirium she beat and beat at the question. And at last her weariness gave her the answer--it was the child. The child bound her to him. The child was like a bond round her brain, tightened on her brain. It bound her to Skrebensky.

But why, why did it bind her to Skrebensky? Could she not have a child of herself? Was not the child her own affair? all her own affair? What had it to do with him? Why must she be bound, aching and cramped with the bondage, to Skrebensky and Skrebensky's world? Anton's world: it became in her feverish brain a compression which enclosed her. If she could not get out of the compression she would go mad. The compression was Anton and Anton's world, not the Anton she possessed, but the Anton she did not possess, that which was owned by some other influence, by the world.

She fought and fought and fought all through her illness to be free of him and his world, to put it aside, to put it aside, into its place. Yet ever anew it gained ascendency over her, it laid new hold on her. Oh, the unutterable weariness of her flesh, which she could not cast off, nor yet extricate. If she could but extricate herself, if she could but disengage herself from feeling, from her body, from all the vast encumbrances of the world that was in contact with her, from her father, and her mother, and her lover, and all her acquaintance.

Repeatedly, in an ache of utter weariness she repeated: "I have no father nor mother nor lover, I have no allocated place in the world of things, I do not belong to Beldover nor to Nottingham nor to England nor to this world, they none of them exist, I am trammelled and entangled in them, but they are all unreal. I must break out of it, like a nut from its shell which is an unreality."

And again, to her feverish brain, came the vivid reality of acorns in February lying on the floor of a wood with their shells burst and discarded and the kernel issued naked to put itself forth. She was the naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world was a bygone winter, discarded, her mother and father and Anton, and college and all her friends, all cast off like a year that has gone by, whilst the kernel was free and naked and striving to take new root, to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the flux of Time. And the kernel was the only reality; the rest was cast off into oblivion.

This grew and grew upon her. When she opened her eyes in the afternoon and saw the window of her room and the faint, smoky landscape beyond, this was all husk and shell lying by, all husk and shell, she could see nothing else, she was enclosed still, but loosely enclosed. There was a space between her and the shell. It was burst, there was a rift in it. Soon she would have her root fixed in a new Day, her nakedness would take itself the bed of a new sky and a new air, this old, decaying, fibrous husk would be gone.

Gradually she began really to sleep. She slept in the confidence of her new reality. She slept breathing with her soul the new air of a new world. The peace was very deep and enrichening. She had her root in new ground, she was gradually absorbed into growth.

When she woke at last it seemed as if a new day had come on the earth. How long, how long had she fought through the dust and obscurity, for this new dawn? How frail and fine and clear she felt, like the most fragile flower that opens in the end of winter. But the pole of night was turned and the dawn was coming in.

Very far off was her old experience--Skrebensky, her parting with him--very far off. Some things were real; those first glamorous weeks. Before, these had seemed like hallucination. Now they seemed like common reality. The rest was unreal. She knew that Skrebensky had never become finally real. In the weeks of passionate ecstasy he had been with her in her desire, she had created him for the time being. But in the end he had failed and broken down.

Strange, what a void separated him and her. She liked him now, as she liked a memory, some bygone self. He was something of the past, finite. He was that which is known. She felt a poignant affection for him, as for that which is past. But, when she looked with her face forward, he was not. Nay, when she looked ahead, into the undiscovered land before her, what was there she could recognise but a fresh glow of light and inscrutable trees going up from the earth like smoke. It was the unknown, the unexplored, the undiscovered upon whose shore she had landed, alone, after crossing the void, the darkness which washed the New World and the Old.

There would be no child: she was glad. If there had been a child, it would have made little difference, however. She would have kept the child and herself, she would not have gone to Skrebensky. Anton belonged to the past.

There came the cablegram from Skrebensky: "I am married." An old pain and anger and contempt stirred in her. Did he belong so utterly to the cast-off past? She repudiated him. He was as he was. It was good that he was as he was. Who was she to have a man according to her own desire? It was not for her to create, but to recognise a man created by God. The man should come from the Infinite and she should hail him. She was glad she could not create her man. She was glad she had nothing to do with his creation. She was glad that this lay within the scope of that vaster power in which she rested at last. The man would come out of Eternity to which she herself belonged.

As she grew better, she sat to watch a new creation. As she sat at her window, she saw the people go by in the street below, colliers, women, children, walking each in the husk of an old fruition, but visible through the husk, the swelling and the heaving contour of the new germination. In the still, silenced forms of the colliers she saw a sort of suspense, a waiting in pain for the new liberation; she saw the same in the false hard confidence of the women. The confidence of the women was brittle. It would break quickly to reveal the strength and patient effort of the new germination.

In everything she saw she grasped and groped to find the creation of the living God, instead of the old, hard barren form of bygone living. Sometimes great terror possessed her. Sometimes she lost touch, she lost her feeling, she could only know the old horror of the husk which bound in her and all mankind. They were all in prison, they were all going mad.

She saw the stiffened bodies of the colliers, which seemed already enclosed in a coffin, she saw their unchanging eyes, the eyes of those who are buried alive: she saw the hard, cutting edges of the new houses, which seemed to spread over the hillside in their insentient triumph, the triumph of horrible, amorphous angles and straight lines, the expression of corruption triumphant and unopposed, corruption so pure that it is hard and brittle: she saw the dun atmosphere over the blackened hills opposite, the dark blotches of houses, slate roofed and amorphous, the old church-tower standing up in hideous obsoleteness above raw new houses on the crest of the hill, the amorphous, brittle, hard edged new houses advancing from Beldover to meet the corrupt new houses from Lethley, the houses of Lethley advancing to mix with the houses of Hainor, a dry, brittle, terrible corruption spreading over the face of the land, and she was sick with a nausea so deep that she perished as she sat. And then, in the blowing clouds, she saw a band of faint iridescence colouring in faint colours a portion of the hill. And forgetting, startled, she looked for the hovering colour and saw a rainbow forming itself. In one place it gleamed fiercely, and, her heart anguished with hope, she sought the shadow of iris where the bow should be. Steadily the colour gathered, mysteriously, from nowhere, it took presence upon itself, there was a faint, vast rainbow. The arc bended and strengthened itself till it arched indomitable, making great architecture of light and colour and the space of heaven, its pedestals luminous in the corruption of new houses on the low hill, its arch the top of heaven.

And the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven.

2 RTEXT

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Question:

What was emancipee?

Answer:

I'm not sure I understand the question. There is a word in French, "émancipée", which is the feminine form of a predicate adjective, "liberated" or "emancipated" in English: *une fille émancipée* (a liberated girl).

The word is also used, in both French and English, as a noun, meaning a liberated woman, someone who ignores current cultural dictates:

"Lydia Lensky, married to the young doctor, became with him a patriot and an *emancipee*." [from D. H. Lawrence's book, The Rainbow]

http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_was_emancipee

Retrieved on June 26, 2013.