

I sat a long time thinking such things by my bed that night, till finally I was inclined to sleep there; and, lacking candlesticks, I remembered that Peter Peters, three doors away on the other side, had had five candelabra in his drawing-room; so I said to myself: "I will search for candles in the kitchen, and, if I find any, will go and get Peter Peters' candelabra, and sleep here."

I took then the two lights which I had, my good God, went down to the basement, and there found three packets of candles, the fact being that the cessation of gas-lighting had compelled everyone to provide himself in this way, for there were many everywhere. With these I reascended, went into the little alcove where I had kept some drugs, got a bottle of carbolic oil, and went dashing all the corpses; then left the two candles on the waiting-room table, and, with the study-lamp, passed to the front-door, which was irascibly banging. I stepped out to find the tempest heightened to a mighty turbulence (though it was dry), which instantly snatched at my clothes to whirl them into a flapping cloud about me, and my lamp was out. I persisted, however, half blinded, to Peters' door, found it locked, though near by was a window, the sash up, into which with little difficulty I lifted myself; but my foot, as I lowered it, stood on a body, and this fretted and upset me, so that I hissed a curse, and passed on scraping the carpet with my soles, that I might hurt no one: for I did not wish to hurt anyone. The murk here was not deep, I could recognize Peters' furniture, but when I passed out into the passage all was blackness, and I, depending upon the lamp, had left the matches in the other house. Still, I felt my way to the stair, my foot was on the lowest step, when I was arrested by a shaking of the front-door, which someone seemed to be at with hustlings and the most urgent poundings, while I stood with stern brows, peering, two or three minutes: for I knew that, if I once yielded, to the flinching at my heart, no mercy would be shown me in this house of tragedy, but thrilling shrieks would of themselves emanate, to ring through its haunted halls; and, though the rattling continued an inordinate interval—insistent, imperative—so that I thought it could hardly fail to force the door, I whispered to my heart that it could only be the winds struggling at it as with the vigor of a wrist; and presently I groped on up by the rail—in my brain now the remembrance of a dream which I had once dreamed in the *Boreal* of the woman Clodagh, how she left drip a fluid like pomegranate-seeds into gruel, and tendered it urgently to Peter Peters, and it was a dreadful purging-draught; but I would not stop, step by step went up, though I suffered, my brows peering at the deep dark, my heart shocked at its own rashness, till I got to the landing; but, as I turned there to ascend the second part of the stair, my left palm touched something deathly cold; on which, making some movement of terror, my foot struck something, and I stumbled over a table there; a horrible row followed, for something dropped to the ground; and in that moment, ah, I heard—a voice—human—that uttered words—the voice of Clodagh, for I knew it; yet not the voice of Clodagh in the flesh, but clogged with clay and worms, choked with effort, and thick-tongued; and in that grisly croaking of the grave I heard the words:

*"Things being as they are in the matter of the death of Peter. . ."*

There it stopped dead, leaving me so sick, my God, so sick, that I could hardly gather my garments round me to fly, fly, fly, soft-footed, whimpering in pain, down the steps, down like a sneaking thief, but quick, snatching myself away, then wrestling with the catch of the door, which she would not let me open, conscious of her all the time behind me, watching me. And when I did get out, I was away up the length of the street, trailing my *jubbah*, glancing backward, gasping, for I thought that she might dare to follow, with her daring will; and all that night I lay on a bench within the wind-tossed and darkling Park.

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The first thing which I did when the sun was up was to return to that place: and I returned with a hard and masterful will.

Approaching Peters' house I remarked now, what the dark had concealed from me, that on his balcony was someone, alone there—a slight iron structure, connected to its roof by three voluted pillars: at the middle one of which was a woman—kneeling—her arms clasped about the pillar, her face up-looking; and never did I see aught more horrid: the curves of the woman's bust and hips still well-preserved in a dress of red, much faded now; her reddish hair floating loose in a cloud about her; but her face in that exposed place had been eaten away by breeze and gale to a noseless skeleton which grinned from ear to ear, the jaw dropped—horrid in contrast with the grace of body, and frame of hair. I meditated upon her long that morning from the opposite pavement: the locket at your throat contained, I knew, my portrait, Clodagh, poisoner. . . .

I thought that I would go into that house, and walk through it from top to bottom, and sit in it, and spit in it, and stamp in it, in spite of anyone: for the sun was now high. So I went in and up the stair to the place where I had been perturbed, and had heard the words: and here a rage took me, for I understood that I had been made the dupe of the malignant wills that beset me, and the laughing-stock of Those for whom I care not a fig, seeing that from a little table there I had knocked to the ground in my stumble a phonograph with a horn, which I now kicked down the stair: for I gathered that its clock-work, stopped up by the scoriæ, had been jogged into a few movements by the shock of the fall, causing it to gossip those thirteen words to me and stop; and I was indignant then, but have since been glad: for I was thereby given the idea of gathering "records," and have been touched to strange sensations, sometimes thrilled, at listening to this stillness of Eternity being disturbed by those voices sounding upon me out of the void.

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Well, most of that same day I spent in a chamber at Woolwich, dusting out, sometimes oiling, time-fuses: a job in which I acquired such ease; that each finally kept me just ninety seconds, so that by evening I had done 500, these little things being pretty simple, easily made, most containing a tiny dry-cell which sparks at the running-down moment, while others ignite by striking. I arranged them in rows in the van, and passed the night in an inn near the Barracks, having brought candle sticks from London; and I so arranged the furniture round the bed as to get an altar of candles mixed with vases containing palms, amid which I scattered a fragrance of ambergris from some Arab sachets which I had, and in the bed a bottle of sweet Chypre-wine, with bonbons, nuts, and havannas; and, lying there, I meditated with a smile which I knew to be malign upon that lust in me which was urging me through all those drudgeries at the Arsenal, I who shirked all work as unroyal. So, however, it was: and the next morning I was at it again, my fingers stiff with cold, for the gale blew keen; but before noon I had 800 fuses, and, judging these sufficient to begin with, got into the motor, and took it round to a place called the East Laboratory, a series of buildings, where I knew that I should find whatever I wanted: and I prepared my mind for a day's labor. In this place I found stores on stores: mountains of percussion-caps, more chambers of fuses, small-arm cartridges, shells, and all those murderous chemicals, amaking and made, with which man exterminated himself: clever, and yet . . . Queer mixed people, like ægipeds, and mermaids, and absurd immature births. At any rate, their lyddites, melanites, cordites, galignites, dynamites, toluols, powders, jellies, oils, marls, came in very well for their own destruction: for by three o'clock I had so worked, that I had on the first

vehicles the phalanx of fuses, with kegs and cartridge-boxes full of powder, of explosive cottons and gelatines, liquid nitro-glycerine, earthy dynamite, with bombs, reels of cordite, two pieces of tarred cloth, an iron ladle, a spade, a crow-bar; then the cabs containing coal and cans of oil. And first, in the Laboratory, I connected a fuse with a huge tin of blasting-gelatine, and I timed the fuse for the midnight of the seventh day thence; after which I visited the Carriage Department, the Ordnance Store Department, the Powder Magazines in the Marshes, traversing, it seemed to me, miles of building; and in some I laid coal-and-oil with an explosive in suitable spots, and in some an explosive alone: and all I timed for ignition at midnight of the seventh day.

Hot now and sooty, I moved through the town, stopping regularly at every hundredth door: and I laid the faggots of conflagration, timing them for ignition at midnight of the seventh day.

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Whatever door I found closed against me I drove at it with venom.

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Shall I commit it to paper? that deep secret of the human organism?. . . As I worked, I waxed wicked as a demon! and with lowered neck, and outpush of the belly, and the blasphemous strut of tragic play-actors, I went: for here was no harmless fireworks, but the crime of arson, and a devilish, though vague, malevolence, and the rage to grind and raven and riot was upon me like a dog-madness, all the mood of Nero and Nebuchadnezzar, out of my mouth proceeding all the obscenities of the slum and gutter, and I sent up such hisses and giggles of challenge to Heaven that day as never yet has man let out. But this way lies frenzy. . .

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I was angered, however, that day of the faggot-laying, even in the midst of my feeling of omnipotence, by the slowness of the motor, which made me kick it; and at that hill near the Old Dover Road the thing refused to move, the train too heavy for my horse-power: so there I stood impotent; no other motor visible, and most of the motors with exhausted accumulators, ruined magnetos, choked needle-valves, waterless or petrolless; there was a tram just there, but the notion of setting-up an electric station, with or without automatic stoking-gear, presented so hideous a picture of labor to me, that I would not entertain it. After half an hour, however, I remembered seeing hereabouts a power-station driven by turbines: so I uncoupled the motor, covered the drays with the tarpaulins, and went driving about, not caring whom I crushed; and, presently finding the station in a by-street, I went in by a window, a rage upon me to have my will quickly accomplished. I got some cloths and dusted a commutator; ran and turned the water into the turbines; set the lubricators running on the bearings; adjusted the generator-brushes; and ran up to the gallery to switch the current on to the line. By this time It was getting dark: so I hurried out, got into the car, and was off down three by-streets, till I turned into my own street; but had no sooner reached it than I pulled up with a jerk, with a shout of astonishment—the cursed street all lit up and gay! three arc-lamps not far apart revealing every feature of a field of dead; and there was a thing there the grinning impression of which I shall carry to my grave, a thing which spelled at me, and ceased, and began again, and ceased, and spelled at me: for above a shop was a flag, red with white letters, fluttering on the gale the name “Metcalf’s Stores;” and

under the flag, stretched across the house, was the thing which spelled, letter by letter, in letters of brilliance deliberately, coming to an end, and going back to begin again, spelling

DRINK  
ROBORAL

And that was the last word of civilized Man to me, Adam Jeffson—its ultimate gospel and message: *Drink Roboral!*

I was put into such a passion by this ribaldry, which affected me like the laughter of skeletons, that I rushed from the motor, threw two of my fuses at it, then went looking for stones to stone it; but no stones: and I had to stand there enduring that rape of my eyes, its dogged iteration, its taunting ogle—D,R,I,N,K R,O,B,O,R,A,L.

It was one of those advertisements worked by a little motor driven by the station, I had now set it going, and this nonsense stopped my operations for that day, since it was late: so I drove to the—hotel which I had made my home in sullen and weary mood: for I knew that Roboral would not cure the least of all my sores.

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The next morning I awoke in another frame of mind, disposed to idle, and let things slide. After washing in cold rose-water and descending to the *salle-à-manger*, which I had laid my morning-meal the previous evening, I promenaded the only one of these sombrous tufted corridors in which were not more than two dead, though behind the doors on both sides I knew that they lay in plenty. When I was warmed, I again went down, got four cans from other motors, and drove away—to Woolwich, as I thought: but instead of crossing the river by Blackfriars, I went more eastward, and, having passed into Cheapside, which was impassable, unless I crept, was going to turn back, when I observed a phonograph-shop, into which I got by a side-door, seized by curiosity to hear what I might hear: so I put one, with a lot of records, into the car, for there was still a strong peach-odor in this closed shop which displeased me; then proceeded westward through by-streets, seeking some house into which to go from the winds, when I saw the Parliament-house: and thither I went with my two parcels, walking into this old place along dusty busts, to deposit my boxes on a table beside a brass thing lying there, what they called “the Mace;” and I sat to hear.

Unfortunately, the phonograph was a clock-work one, and, when I wound it, would not go, so that I got angry, nearly tore it to pieces, and was half for kicking it; but there was a man seated in the chair which they called “the Speaker’s Chair,” who was in such a posture, that he had, every time I glanced at him, an air of bending forward with interest to watch what I was doing, a Mohrgrabim sort of man, almost black, with Jewish nose, crinkled hair, keffie, and flowing robe, probably a Galla, present with him being seven people only about the benches, mostly leaning forward with rested head, so that this room had quite a void and solitary mood; but this Galla, or Bedouin, with his grotesque interest in my doings, restrained my hands; and at last, by dint of poking and dusting, I got the phonograph to go.

And all that morning, and far into the afternoon, forgetful of food and of the cold which gradually possessed me, I sat there listening, musing—cylinder after cylinder: frivolous songs, orchestras, voices of famous men whom I had talked with, and shaken their solid hands, talking afresh to me, though rather thick-tongued and hoarse, from out of the vague void beyond the

grave, most strange; and the fourth record that I put on, ah, I knew with a start that throat of thunder, knew it well: the “parson,” Mackay’s. . . . Over and over I heard that day those words of his, spoken when the cloud had got to the longitude of Prague: and in all that torrent of oratory not one note of “I told you so:” but he calls; “. . . praise Him, O Earth, for He is He; and if He slay me, I will laugh raillery at His sword, and banter Him to His face: for His sword is sharp Joy, and His poisons end my death. Care not, therefore, but take my comfort to your heart tonight, and my honeys to your tongue: for of old He chose thee, and once mixed spousally with thee in an ancient couch, O Afflicted: and He is thou, flesh of thy flesh. Hope, therefore, most at the nadir of despair: for He is nimble as a weasel, and He twists like quicksilver, and His tropics and turning-points are inborn in Being, and when He falls He falls like harlequin and shuttlecocks, shivering plumb to His feet, and each third day, lo, He is risen again, and His defeats are the rough scaffolding from which He heaps His Parthenons, and the last end of this sphere shall be no peach-cloud, I say to you, but Carnival and Harvest-home. . . .

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So Mackay, with thick-tongued effort. I found this brown room of the Commons-house, with its green benches, and grilled galleries, so agreeable to my mood, that I went again the next day, and listened to more records until they wearied me: for what I had was an itch to hear scandals and revelations of the festering heart, but these records, got from a shop, divulged nothing. I then went out to make for Woolwich, but, seeing in the motor the poet’s note-book in which I had written, I took it, went back, and was writing an hour, till I was tired of that, too; and, judging it too late for Woolwich that day, wandered about the dusty committee-rooms and recesses of this considerable place. In one room another foolishness seized upon me, shewing how my whims have become more imperious within me than all the laws of the Medes: for in that Room No. 15 I found a young policeman, flat on his back, who pleased me: his helmet tilted under his head, and near one white-gloved hand an official envelope; that stagnant quiet apartment still peach-scented, and he gave not the slightest smell, though he was stoutish, his countenance now the color of ashes, in each cheek a hole large as a sixpence, his lids flimsy, vaulted, fallen into their caverns, from under whose fringe of lash was whispered the word “*Eternity*.” His hair seemed long for a policeman, probably had grown since death; but what interested me about him was the envelope at his hand: for “what,” I asked myself, “was this fellow doing here with an envelope at three on a Sunday afternoon?” and this causing me to look closer, I saw by a mark at the left temple that he had been shot or felled; whereupon I was thrown into a rage, thinking that this poor man had been killed in the execution of his duty, when many had fled their post to pray or riot: so I said to him: “Well, D. 47, you sleep very well; and you did well, dying so; I am pleased with you, and decree that by my own hand you shall be distinguished with burial:” and this wind so possessed me, that I at once went out, and with the crowbar and spade from the car went into Westminster Abbey, where I routed up a grave-slab in the south transept, and began to dig; but, I do not know how, before I had digged a foot the impulse forsook me, so I left off, promising to resume it; but nothing was ever done, for the next day I was at Woolwich, and busy enough about other things.

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During the next four days I worked with a fever on me, and a map of London before me.

There were places in that city—secrets, vastnesses, horrors! In the wine-vaults at London Docks was a vat which must have contained twenty thousand gallons, and with a dancing heart I laid a train there; the tobacco-warehouse must have covered eighty acres, and there I laid a fuse; in a house near Regent's Park, shut in from the street by shrubbery and a wall, I saw a thing . . . ! and what shapes a great city hid I only now know.

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I left no quarter unremembered, taking a train of eight vehicles, now drawn by three motors, with which I visited West Ham and Kew, Finchley and Clapham, Dalston and Marylebone; deposited piles in the Guildhall, in Holloway Gaol in the Tower, in the Parliament-house, in St. Giles' Workhouse, under the organ of St. Paul's in the Kensington Museum, in Whiteley's place, in the Trinity House, in the Office of Works, in the recesses of the British Museum; in a hundred warehouses, in five hundred shops, in a thousand dwellings. And I timed them all for ignition at midnight of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April.

By five in the afternoon of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, when I left my train in Maida Vale, and drove alone to the house on high ground near Hampstead Heath which I had chosen, the thing was finished.

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The morning dawned, and I was early astir: for I had much to do.

I intended to make for the coast the next day, so had to select a motor, store it, have it in a place of safety; and I had to tow another vehicle stored with trunks of fuses, books, clothes, and other little things.

My first journey was to Woolwich, whence I took all that I might ever want in the way of mechanism; thence to the National Gallery, where I cut from their frames the "Vision of St. Helena," Murillo's "Boy Drinking," and "Christ at the Column;" and thence to the Embassy to bathe, anoint my body, and dress.

As I had anticipated and hoped, a blustering storm was blowing from the north.

When I had started out from Hampstead at 9 a.m. I had had to assume that some of my fuses had somehow forerun, for I saw morose hazes at various points, was anon aware of the dumb bump and hum of some explosion somewhere remote, as when gunnings of Mont Pelée in Martinique get, like echoes of God's voice, to ears in Guadeloupe; and by noon I felt sure that several regions of east London must already be in flames. With the solemn feelings of bridegrooms and marriage-mornings—with a shrinking heart, God knows, yet a heart upbuoyed on thrilling joys—I drove about on the business of the orgy of the night.

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The house at Hampstead, which no doubt still stands, is of agreeable design in quite a stone and rural style, with breadths of wall-surface, two coped gables, mullioned windows, over-sailing verge-roofs; but, rather spoiling it, a tower at the south-east corner, on the top floor of which I had slept the previous night. There I had a box of pallid tobacco compounded with rose-leaves and opium, found in a foreign house in Seymour Street, also a true Saloniki hookah, with Cyclades wine, nuts, and so on, and a gold harp stamped with the name of Krasinski, taken from his house in Portland Street.

But so much did I find to do that day, so many odd things turned up which I thought that I would take, that it was not until six that I drove finally northward through Camden Town. And now an awe possessed my soul at the solemn noise which everywhere encompassed me, an ineffable awe, a blessed terror. Never could I have dreamt of aught so great and strong. Everywhere over my head there rushed southward with outstretched throat and a wing of haste a smoke inflamed; and, mixed with the roaring, I heard hubbubs of tumblings and rumblings, unaccountable, like the moving-about of furniture in the houses of Titans, while pervading the air was a most weird and tearful crying, as it were threnody and nenia, and wild wails of pain, dying swan-songs, and all lamentations at cosmic break-up and tribulation. Yet I was aware that at such an hour the flames must be far from general; in fact, they had not well commenced.

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As I had left a region of houses without combustibles to the south of the house which I was to occupy, and as the storm was from the north, I simply left my two vehicles at the door without fear; then went up the tower, lit the candles, ate voraciously of the dinner which I had left ready; then with hands which shivered arranged the bed-clothes upon which to drop in the morning hours, opposite the wall where the bed was being a Gothic window, large, with a low sill, looking south: so that I could recline at ease in the easy-chair, and see. It had been a young lady's room, for on the toilette were crystals of Laliqué, a plait of brown hair, powders, *rouge-aux-lèvres*, one little bronze slipper, and knickknacks, and I loved her and hated her, though I did not see her anywhere; anyway, before nine I was seated at the window to watch, all being ready at my hand, the candles extinguished: for the theatre was opened, and the atmosphere of this earth seemed turned into Hell, and Hell was in my soul.

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Immediately after midnight there was a visible increase in the conflagration, when on all hands I began to see structures soar ablaze, with grand hurrahs, on high, in fives and tens, in twenties and forties: all between me and the limit of my vision they leapt, then lingered, they fell, while my spirit more and more felt—deeper mysteries of sensation, sweeter thrills. I sipped exquisitely, I drew out enjoyment leisurely. Anon when some more expansive angel of flame arose with steady aspiration, to tarry with spread arms, and scatter, I would lift a little to clap, as at acting, or would call to them in the names of woman with “higher, wild Polly,” “hop, Cissy, you flea,” or “Bertha, burst:” for now I seemed to see pandemonium through crimson spectacles, the air wildly hot, and my eyeballs like theirs that walk staring in the midst of burning fiery furnaces, and my skin itched with a rich and prickly itch. Anon I touched the chords of the harp to the air of Wagner's “Walkürenritt.”

Near three in the morning I reached the climax of my wicked sweets, my drunken eyelids closing in a luxury of pleasure, and my lips lay stretched in a smile that drivelled; a feeling of dear peace, of power without bound, consoled me: for now the whole field at which through streaming tears I peered, mustering its hundred thousand thunders, and brawling beyond the clouds the voice of its southward-bounding torment, wobbled to the horizon one ocean of smokeless fire, in which sported and washed themselves all that dwell in Hell, with callings, flights, and holiday; and I—first of my kind— had flashed a sign to the nigher planets. . . .

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Those words “nigher planets” I wrote thirteen months ago, some days after the destruction of London, I being then on board the old *Boreal*, bound for France; for the night was dark, though calm, and I was frightened of running into some ship, so wrote to do something, the ship lying still; and though the book in which I wrote has been with me, no impulse to scribble has since visited me, until now.

I had no intention of wearing out my life in lighting fires in that island, and came to France with the idea of seeking some palace in the Riviera, Spain, there for the present to make my home: so I set out from Calais toward the end of April, taking my things, by train at first, then, being in no hurry, by motor, maintaining a south direction, ever anew astonished at the luxuriance of the forest vegetation which within so short a space chokes this pleasant land, even before the advent of summer.

After three weeks of slow travelling—for France with her paved villages, hilly character, forests, and country-manner, is always charming to me—after three weeks I happened upon a valley which had never entered my head, and the moment I saw it I said: “Here I will live,” though I had no idea what it was, for the monastery which I saw did not look like a monastery, according to my ideas: but the map showed that it must be La Chartreuse de Vauclaire in Périgord.

This word “Vauclaire” must be a corruption of *Vallis Clara*, for *i*'s and *u*'s did interchange about in this way—“fool” and “fou”—which proves the dear laziness of French people, for the “l” was too much trouble for them to sing: at any rate, this Vauclaire, or Valclear, was well named, for here, if anywhere, is Paradise, and, if anyone knew how and where to build and brew liqueurs, it was those old monks, who followed their Master with *entraîn* in that Cana miracle, but æsthetically shirked to say to any mountain: “Be thou removed.”

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The hue of the vale is cerulean, resembling that blue of the robes of Albertinelli's Madonnas, the monastery itself consisting of an oblong space, or garth, round three sides of which stand sixteen small houses, all identical, cells of the fathers, looking inwards upon cloisters; and in one part of the oblong, under cypress sighings, black crosses over graves.

West is the church, the hostelry, a court with some trees and a fountain; and, beyond, the entrance-gate.

All this on a slope green as grass, backed against a mountain-side of which one does not see the tree-trunks, the trees resembling one leafy tree-top, run out over the breadth of the mountain's breast.

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I was there four months, till something drove me away. What had become of the brothers I do not know, for I only found five, four of whom I took in two journeys in the motor to the church of Saint Martial d'Artenset, and left them there; and the fifth remained three weeks with me, for I would not remove him from his prayer: a brother who knelt in his cell robed and hooded in his phantom white, for like whatever is most phantom, visionary, eerie must a procession of these people have seemed at evening or midnight; he in his pigmy chaste chamber glaring upward at

his Christ, who hung long-armed in a recess beside three book-shelves; under the Christ a Madonna, gilt-and-blue; the books on the three shelves few, leaning different ways; his elbow on a table at which was a chair; and, behind him, in a corner, the bed—a bed all ennooked in boards: two perpendicular boards at foot and head, reaching the ceiling, a horizontal board at the side over which he got into bed, and another like it above it for fringe, making the bed within a shady den. He was a big severe being, forty, blond as corn, but with red also in his hairy beard; and appalling was the significance of that glare that prayed, and the long-drawn gauntness of those jaundiced jaws. I cannot explain to myself my reverence for this man; but I had it.

It was my way to plant at the portal the carved chair from the chancel on sultry days, and rest my soul, refusing to meditate on any thing, drowsing and smoking for hours: all down there in the plain being woods of fruit waving about the prolonged thread of the river Isle, whose route winds loitering quite nigh the foot of the monastery-slope; this slope dominating the village of Monpont all in thicket, the Isle drawing its waters through the village-meadow, which is dim with shades of oaks: and to have played there a boy, using it familiarly as one's own breathing and foot, must have been pretty sweet and homely.

Well, one morning after four months I opened my eyes in my cell to the piercing consciousness that I had burned Monpont over-night: and so overcome was I with compunction for this poor inoffensive little place, that for two days, scarcely eating, I paced between the oak pews of the nave—massive stalls they are, separated by Corinthian pilasters—wondering what was to become of me, and if I was not already mad; and there are some little angels with strangely human faces, Greuze-like, supporting the nerves of the apse, which, every time I passed em seemed conscious of me and my existence there; and the woodwork which ornaments the length of the nave, and of the choir also, all an intricacy of marguerites and roses, here and there took in my eyes significant forms from particular points of view; and there is a partition—for the nave is divided into two chapels, one for the brothers and one for the fathers—and in this partition a massive door, which yet looks quite light and graceful, carved with oak and acanthus' leaves, and every time I passed through I had the impression that the door was a sentient being, sub-conscious of me; and the Italian-Renaissance vault which springs from the nave seemed to look upon me with a gloomy knowledge of me, and of the heart within me: so that in the afternoon of the second day, after pacing the nave for hours, I dropped down at one of the two altars near that door of the screen, entreating God to have pity upon my soul; and in the very midst of my praying, I was up and away, the devil in me; leapt into the motor; nor did I come back to Vauclaire for another month, and came leaving regions of desolation in my rear, cities, furnaces of timber, Bordeaux burned, Lebourne burned, Bergerac burned.

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I returned to Vauclaire, for it seemed now my home; and there I experienced a true, a deep repentance; and I humbled myself before my Maker. In which state I was seated one day in front of the monastery-gate when something said to me: "You will never be a good man, nor permanently escape Hell and frenzy, unless you have an aim in life, devoting yourself heart and soul to some work which will exact all your thought, your ingenuity, your knowledge, your strength of body and will, your skill of head and hand: otherwise you are bound to succumb. Do this, therefore, beginning, not tomorrow, but now: for though no man will see your work, there is still the Almighty God, who is also something in His way: and He will see how you strive, and try, and groan; and perhaps, seeing, may have mercy upon you.

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In this way arose the notion of the palace—a notion, indeed, which had entered my brain before, but merely as a bombastic outcome of my mad moods: now, however, in a very different way, soberly, and, before long, occupying itself with details, difficulties, means, limitations, and every species of practical matter-of-fact; and every obstacle which, one by one, I foresaw was, one by one, as the days passed, overborne, by the ardor with which that notion, soon becoming a mania, possessed me. After nine days of incessant meditation, I decided Yes; and I said: I will build a palace which shall be both a palace and a temple: the first human temple somewhat worthy the Potency of Heaven, the only human palace worthy the satrap of earth.

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After this decision I remained at Vauclaire another week, a different man from the loungee it had seen, strenuous, converted, humble, making plans of this and of that, of the detail, and of the whole, drawing, multiplying, adding, conics, fluxions, graphs, totting up the period of building, which came out at a little over twelve years, estimating quantities and strength of material, weight and bulk, my nights full of nightmare as to the *kind*, deciding as to the size and structure of the crane, forge, and workshop, and the necessarily-limited weights of their parts, making a catalogue of over 2,400 articles, and finally, up to the fourth week after my departure from Vauclaire, skimming through the topography of almost the whole globe, before fixing upon the island of Imbros for my site.

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I went back to England, and once again to those vacant windows and heaped black streets of what had been London: for its bank-vaults, &c., contained the necessary complement of the gold brought by me from Paris and then stowed in the *Speranza* at Dover, nor had I sufficient familiarity with French industries and methods to ferret out, even with the help of *Bottins*, one half of the 4,000 odd objects which I had now catalogued. My ship was the *Speranza*, which had brought me from Havre: for at Calais, to which I first journeyed, I could discover nothing suitable for all purposes, the *Speranza* being an American yacht, palatially fitted, three-masted, air-driven, with a carrying capacity of 2,000 tons, Tobin-bronzed, in good condition, containing sixteen interacting tanks, with a six-block pulley-system amidships which enables me to lift considerable weights without the aid of the hoisting air-engine, high in the water, sharp, handsome, having-in a few tons only of sand-ballast, and needing when I found her only three days' swotting at the water-line and engines to make her decent and fit: so I tossed out her dead, backed her from the Outer to the Inner Basin to my train on the quay, took in the sixty-three hundred-weight-bags of gold, and the, half-ton of amber, and with this alone went to Dover, to Canterbury by motor, and thence by train, with a store of explosives for blasting obstructions, to London, proposing to make Dover my *dépôt*, and the London rails my thoroughfare from every direction of the country.

But instead of four months, as I had estimated, it kept me ten, a harrowing slavery: I had to blast no less than twenty-five trains from the path of my laden wagons, several times blasting away the metals as well, and then having to travel hundreds of yards without metals: for the labor

of kindling the obstructing engines, to shunt them down sidings perhaps distant, was a thing which I would not undertake. However, all's well that ends well, though, if I had it to go through again, no, I should not. The *Speranza* is now lying nine miles off Cape Roca, a mist on the still sea, this being the 19<sup>th</sup> of June at ten in the night; no wind, no moon; cabin full of mist; and I pretty listless and disappointed, wondering in my soul why I was such a fool as to wallow in all those toils, ten long servile months, my good God, and now gravely thinking of throwing the whole thing to the devil; she pretty deep in the sea, pregnant with the palace. When the thirty-three . . .

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Those words “when the thirty-three” were written over seventeen years since—long years—seventeen in number, nor have I now any notion to what they refer. The book in which I wrote I had lost in the *Speranza* cabin, and yesterday, in coming home to Imbros from an hour's cruise, found it there behind a chest.

I now find considerable difficulty in guiding the pencil, and these lines now written have quite an odd look, like the handwriting of a man not proficient in the art: it is seventeen years . . . Nor is the expression of my ideas fluent—have to think for the word, and I should not be surprised if the spelling is queer: I have been thinking inarticulately perhaps all these years; and now the letters have rather a foreign air to me, like Russian; or perhaps it is my fancy: for that I have fancies I know.

But what to write? The history of those seventeen years could not be put down, my good God; at least, it would take seventeen more to do it. If I were to detail the building of the palace alone, and how it killed me nearly, and how I twice fled from it, and had to come back, and became its bounden slave, and dreamt of it, and grovelled before it, and prayed, and raved, and rolled; and how I forgot to make provision in the north wall for the expansion of the gold in summer, and had to break down eight months' work, and how I cursed Thee, how I cursed Thee; and how the lake of wine evaporated faster than the conduits replenished it, and the five voyages which I had to take to Constantinople for loads of wine, and my frothing despairs, till I had the thought of placing the reservoir in the platform; and how I had then to break down the south side of the platform to the very bottom, and the prolonged nightmare of terror that I had lest the south side of the palace would undergo subsidence; and how the petrol failed, and of the three-weeks' search for petrol along the coast; and how, after list-rubbing all the jet, I found that I had forgotten the rouge for polishing; and how, in the third year, I found the fluuate for water-proofing the pores of the platform-stone nearly all leaked away in the *Speranza's* hold, and I had to get silicate of soda at Gallipoli; and how, after two years observation, I had to come to the conclusion that the lake was leaking, and discovered that this Imbros sand was not suitable for mixing with the skin of Portland cement which covered the cement-concrete, and had to substitute sheet-bitumen in three places; and how I did all, all, for the sake of God, thinking “I will work, and be a good man, and cast Hell from me; and when I see it stand finished it will be an Altar and a Testimony to me, and I shall find peace, and be well:” and how I have been cheated—seventeen years, long years of my life—for there is no “God;” and how my plasterers'-

hair failed me, and I had to use flock, hessian, scrym, wadding, whatever I could find, for filling the spates between the platform cross-walls; and of the espagnolette bolts, how a number of them strangely vanished, as if snatched to Hell by harpies, and I had to make them; and how the crane-chain would not reach two of the silver-panel castings when finished, and they were too heavy for me to lift, and the wringing of the hands of my despair, and my dragging up of the grass, and the transport of my wrath; and how, for all one wild fortnight, I sought in vain for the text-book which describes the ambering process; and how, when all was all but over, in the blasting away of the forge and crane with gun-cotton, a crack appeared down the gold of the east platform-steps, and how I would not be consoled, but mourned and mourned; and how, in spite of all my sorrows, it was divine to watch my power grow from its troglodyte-beginnings of hundredweights, until I could swing tons, squeeze the flowing metals between the mould-end levers and the plungers, build at ease in a travelling-cage, and through sleepless hours view from my hut-door under the moon's electric-light of this land the three piles, of gold stones, of silver panels, of squares of jet, and be comforted; and how the putty-wash—but it is over: and not to live over again that vulgar nightmare of means and ends have I taken to this writing again—but to write down something, if I dare.

Seventeen years, my good God, of that delusion! I could put down no sort of explanation for all those groans and griefs at which a reasoning being would not shriek with derision, for I should have lived at ease in some retreat of the Middle-Orient, and burned my cities: but no, I must be “a good man”—vain notion. The words of a turbulent madman, that “parson” man in Britain who predicted what happened, were with me, where he says “the defeat of Man is *His* defeat;” and I said to myself “Well, the last man shall not be quite a fiend, just to spite That Other;” and I worked and groaned, saying “I will be a good man, and burn nothing, nor utter aught unseemly, nor debauch myself, but choke back the blasphemies that Those Others shriek through my throat, and build and build, with griefs and groans;” and it was vanity: though I do love the house, too, I love it well, for it is my home in the waste.

I had calculated to finish it in twelve years, and I should have finished it in fourteen, but one day, when the south and west platform-steps were already finished—it was in the July of the third year, near sunset—as I left off work, instead of stepping to the tent where my dinner lay ready, I paced down to the ship—strangely—in a daft, mechanical kind of way, without saying a word to myself, a smile of malice on my lips; and at midnight was lying off Mitylene, thirty miles south, having bid, as I thought, a last goodbye to all those toils. I was going to burn Athens.

I did not, however; but kept on my way westward round Cape Matapan, intending to destroy the forests and towns of Sicily, if I found there a suitable motor for travelling, for I had not been at the pains to take the motor on board at Imbras; otherwise I would ravage parts of southern Italy. But when I came thereabouts I was confronted with a horror: for no southern Italy was there, and no Sicily was there, unless a little island five miles long was Sicily, for nothing else I saw, save the crater of Stromboli, smoking still; and, as I cruised northward, looking for land, for a long time I would not credit the evidence of the instruments, thinking that they wilfully misled me, or I stark mad. But no: no Italy was there, until I came to the latitude of Naples, it too, having vanished, engulfed, engulfed, all that stretch; from which monstrous thing I got so solemn a shock and mood of awe, that the mischievous mind in me was quite chilled and quelled, for it was, and is, my belief that widespread re-arrangement of the earth's surface is being purposed, and in all that drama, O my God, how shall I be found?

However, I went on my way, but more leisurely, not daring during many days to do anything, lest I might offend anyone; and, in this foolish cowering mood, coasted all the west coast of Spain and France during seven weeks, in that prolonged intensity of calm which at present alternates with storms that transcend all thought, till I came again to Calais: and there, for the first time, landed.

Here I would no more contain myself, but burned; and that stretch of forest between Agincourt and Abbéville, five square miles, I burned; and Abbéville I burned; and Amiens I burned; and three forests between Amiens and Paris I burned; and Paris I burned; burning and burning during four months, leaving in my rear reeking regions, a tract of ravage, like some being of the Pit that blights where his wings of fire pass.

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This of city-burning has now become a habit with me more enchanting—and more debased—than ever was opium to the smoker; my necessary, my brandy, my bacchanal, my secret sin. I have burned Calcutta, Pekin, and San Francisco. . . . In spite of the curbing influence of this building, I have burned and burned—three hundred cities and countrysides. Like Leviathan disporting himself in the sea, so I have rioted in the earth.

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After an absence of six months, I came back to Imbros: for I was for gazing again upon the building that I had done, that I might mock myself for all that unkingly grovelling; but when I saw it, standing there as I had abandoned it, frustrate and forlorn, waiting its maker's hand, some pity and instinct to build took me: for something of God was in man; and I dropped prostrate, and spread my arms to God, and was converted, promising to finish the work, with prayers that as I built so He would build my will, and save the last man from the enemy. And I set to work that day to list-rub the last six dalles of the jet.

\* \* \*

I did not leave Imbros after that during four years, except for brief trips to the coast—to Kilid-Bahr, Gallipoli, Lapsaki, Gamos, Erdek, Erekli, once even to Constantinople—if I happened to want anything, or was weary of work, but without once doing the least hurt to anything, containing my humors, and fearing my Maker; and full of peace and charm were those cruises through this Levantic world, which, truly, is rather like a sketch in water-colors done by an angel than like the dun earth; and full of self-satisfaction and pious contentment would I cruise back to Imbros, approved by my conscience, for that I had evaded temptation, and lived tame and stainless.

I had set up the southern of the two closed-lotus columns, and the platform-top was already looking as lovely as heaven, flushing its glory of two-foot squares, pellucid jet alternating with pellucid gold, when I noticed one morning that the *Speranza's* bottom was really now too foul, and the caprice seized me then and there to leave everything, and clean her: so I went on board, descended to the hold, threw off my sudeyrie, and began to shift the ballast over to starboard, to tilt up her port bottom to the scraper: wearying labor, and is about noon I was seated on a ballast-bag, resting in the semi-gloom down there, when something seemed to whisper into me: *You*

*dreamed last night that there is an old Chinaman alive in Peking.*” Horridly I started: I had dreamed something of the sort; and I sprang to my feet.

I cleaned no *Speranza* that day; nor for three days did I anything, but sat on the cabin-house brooding, my palm among the hairy draperies of my chin upholding it: for the notion of such a thing, if it could by any possibility be true, was detestable as death to me, changing the color of the sun and the whole tone of existence; and anon at the outrage of that thing my brow would flush with rage, and my eyes blaze; till in the fourth twilight I said to myself: “That old Chinaman in Peking is likely to be devoured by fire, I think, or be blown to the clouds.”

So, a second time, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, the poor palace was left to build itself: for, after a trip to Gallipoli, where I got some lime-twigs in boxes of earth, and some preserved limes and ginger, I set out for a long voyage to the East, passing through the Suez Canal, and visiting Bombay, where I was three weeks, and then destroyed it.

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I had the thought of travelling across Hindostan by engine, but did not wish to leave my ship, to which I was attached, not sure of seeing anything so suitable at Calcutta; and, moreover, I was afraid to abandon my motor, which I had taken on board with the air-windlass: I therefore went down the west coast.

All that northern shore of the Arabian Sea has at present an odor which it wafts far over the ocean, resembling odors of happy dream-lands, sweet to smell in the early mornings as if the earth were all a perfume, and heaven and inhalation.

On that voyage, however, I had, from beginning to end, twenty-seven fearful storms, or, if I reckon that one near the Carolines, twenty-eight; but I do not wish to write of these rages: they were too inhuman; and how I came alive through them against my wildest hope Someone, or Something, only knows.

I will put down here a thing; it is this, my God—something that I have noted: a definite obstreperousness in the temperament of the elements now, when once roused, which grows, which grows. Tempests have become very far more wrathful, the sea more truculent and unbounded in its insolence; when it thunders it thunders with a rancor new to me, cracking as though it would wreck the welkin’s vault, and bawling through the heaven of heavens as if roaring to devour all being; in Bombay once, in China thrice, I was shaken by earthquakes, the second and third marked by a certain extravagance of agitation that might turn a man grey. Why should this be, my God? I remember being told ages ago that on the American prairies, which of old had been swept by great tempests, the tempests gradually subsided when man went to reside there: so, if this be true, it would seem that the mere presence of man had a certain subduing or mesmerising effect on the innate turbulence of Nature, and his absence today may have taken off the curb. It is my belief that within fifty years the forces of the earth will be turned fully loose to tumble as they choose, and this globe will become one of the undisputed playgrounds of Hell, the theatre of commotions huge as those witnessed on Jupiter.

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The earth is all on my brain, on my brain, O dark-minded Mother, with thy mighty cravings, thy regrets, and bleak griefs, and comatose slumbers, and doom to come, O Mother, and I, poor man, though a monarch, the one witness of the drama of thy monstrous sorrows. Upon her I brood, and

do not stop, but brood and brood—the habit, I think, becoming fixed and fated during that Orient cruising: for what is in store for her God only knows, and I have seen in my broodings visions of her future, which, if a man should see with the instrument of flesh, he would spread the arms, and wheel and wheel through the mazes of a giggling frenzy, for the vision by itself is the brink of giddiness. If I might stop but for one hour from brooding upon her! but I am her child, and my mind grows and grows to her like the off-shoots of the banyan-tree, which strike back downward to take root, and she sucks and draws it, as her gravity draws my foot, and I cannot take flight from her, for she is greater than I, and there is no escaping her: so that in the end, I know, my soul will hurl itself to ruin, like erring sea-birds upon pharos-lights, against her wild and mighty bosom. A whole night through I may lie open-eyed, my brain obsessed with that Gulf of Mexico, how identical its hollow with the protuberance of Africa opposite, and how the protuberance of Brazil fits-in with the hollow of Africa: so that it is obvious to me—*obvious*—that they once were one, and one night shied so far apart; of which thing the wild Atlantic was aware, and ran blithely, hasting in between: and how if an eye had been there to see, and an ear to hear that solitary oratory of Thee . . . Thou, Thou . . . and if now again they throw-together, so long divorced . . . but that way fury lies. Yet one cannot but think: for she fills my soul, and absorbs it, with all her moods and ways. She has meanings, secrets, plans. . . . Strange that twinness between the scheme of Europe and the scheme of Asia: each with three southern peninsulas, three twins; Spain, Arabia, Italy-Sicily, India-Ceylon; the Morea and Greece split by the Gulf of Corinth, the Malay Peninsula and Annam split by the Gulf of Siam; each with two northern peninsulas pointing south—Sweden and Norway, Korea and Kamschatka; each with two island-twins—Britain, Japan; the Old World and the New has each a peninsula pointing north—Denmark, Yucatan: Denmark a forefinger with long nail, Yucatan a thumb—pointing to the Pole. What does she mean? Is she herself a living entity with a will and a fate, as sailors said that ships were? And that thing that wheeled at the Arctic, wheels it still away there in its dark ardour? Queer that volcanoes are all near the sea: I don't know why. This fact, added to the fact of submarine explosions, used to support the chemical theory of volcanoes, which supposed the infiltration of the sea into ravines containing the materials which make the fuel of eruptions: but God knows if that is true. The lofty ones are intermittent—a century, three, ten, of still waiting, and then their oratory struck dumb for ever some poor district; the low ones are constant; and sometimes they form a linear system, consisting of vents, like the chimneys of some foundry underneath. Who could know the way of her? In mountains, a series of peaks denotes the presence of dolomites; rounded heads mean calcareous rocks; needles mean crystalline schists: but why? I have some knowledge of her for ten miles down, but whether through eight thousand miles she is flame or small-shot, hard or soft, I do not know, I do not know. Her method of forming coal, geysers, and sulphur-springs, and the jewels, the atols and coral reefs; the rocks of sedimentary origin, like gneiss; the plutonic rocks, rocks of fusion, and the unstratified rubble that constitutes the basis of the crust; and harvests, the flame of flowers, and the passage from the vegetable to the animal: I do not know them, but they are of her, and are like me, molten in the same oven of her scarlet heart. She is dark and moody, sudden and ill-fated, and tears her young like a cannibal cat; and she is old and deep, and remembers Ur of the Chaldees that Uruk erected, and the amœba's first stir, and remembers that Temple of Bel, and bears still as a thing of yesterday old Persepolis and the tomb of Cyrus, the site of Haran, and those vihârah-temples hewn from the Himalayan stone; and, in coming home from the Orient, I stopped at Ismailia, and so to Cairo, saw where Memphis was, and brooded one midnight before that pyramid and that mute sphynx, seated in a tomb, until tears of pity streamed down my cheeks: for man “passeth

away.” These rock-tombs have columns extremely like the two palace-pillars, only that these are round, and mine are square, but the same band near the top, over this the closed lotus-flower, then the plinth that separates them from the architrave, only mine have no architrave, the tombs themselves consisting of an outer court, then comes a well, and inside another chamber for the dead; and there, till the want of food drove me away, I remained: for more and more the earth overgrows me, woos me, assimilates me; so that I ask myself this question: “Must I not in some years cease to be a man, to become a small earth, her copy, weird and fierce, half demoniac, half ferine, wholly mystic—morose and turbulent—fitful, and mad, and sad—like her?”

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A month of that voyage, from May the 15<sup>th</sup> to June the 12<sup>th</sup>, I squandered at the Andaman Islands near Malay: for that any old Chinaman should be alive in Pekin commenced to appear the queerest whimsey that ever entered a head; and those jungled islands of the sun, to which I had got after a vast orgy one night at Calcutta, when I fired not merely the city but the river, pleased my fancy to such an extent, that at one time I meant to abide there, I being at the one named “Saddle Hill”: and seldom have I had such sensations of peace as I lay a whole day in a valley, deep in the shadow of tropical ranknesses, watching the *Speranza* at anchor: for the valley rose from a bay, of which I could see one peak lined with cocoanut-trees, all cloud scorched out of the sky except the flimsiest lawn-figments, and the sea as still as a lake breathed on by breezes, yet making a considerable noise in its breaking on the coast, as I have noticed in these sorts of places: I do not know why. These Andaman people seem to have been quite savage, for I met some in roaming the island, nearly skeletons, yet with limbs still cohering, and in some cases mummified relics of flesh, and never a shred of clothes: a strange thing, considering their closeness to old civilizations: they looking small and black, or almost, and I never found a man without seeing near him a spear, so that they were keen folk, the earth’s perversity spurred in them, too, and I was so pleased with these people, that I took on board with the gig one of their little tree-canoes: which was my foolishness: for gig and canoe were three days later smitten from the decks into the middle of the sea.

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I passed down the Straits of Malacca, and In that short distance between the Andaman Islands and the S.W. corner of Borneo I was thrice so mauled, that at times it seemed out of the question that anything built by man could outlive such cataclysms; and I abandoned myself, but with bitter reproaches, to perish darkly, the effect of the last on me, when it was over, being the unloosening anew of my tumid moods: for I said “Since they mean to slay me, death shall find me rebellious”; and for weeks I did not sight some specially blessed village, or umbrageous spread of timber, that I did not stop the ship, and land the materials for their destruction: so that nearly all those odorous lands about the north of Australia will bear the traces of my hand for many a year: for more and more my voyage grew loitering and zigagged, as some whim shunted it, or a movement of the pointer on the chart; and I thought of chewing the lotus of sloth and nepenthe, enchanted in some pensive nook of this summer, where from my hut-door I should see through the opal hues of opium the sea-lagoon gush sluggishly upon the coral atol, and the cocoanut-tree would droop like slumber, and the breadfruit-tree would mumble in dream, and I should watch the *Speranza* at anchor in the pallid atol-lake, year after year, and wonder what she

was, and whence, and wherefore she dozed so deep for ever; and after an age of melancholy peace I should note that sun and moon had ceased to move, and hung spent, opening anon an eyelid to doze again, and God would sigh "Enough," and nod: for that any old Chinaman should be alive in Pekin was a thing so fantastically maniac, as to cast me at times into paroxysms of wild red laughter that left me faint.

During four months, from June into October, I visited the Fijis, where I saw heads still englobed in thickets of stiff hair; in Samoa skulls coroneted with nautilus-shell, and in one townlet an assemblage of bodies suggesting some festival: so that I believe that these people perished on a day of woe and overthrow without the least presage of anything. The women of the Maoris wore an abundance of jade embellishments, and I found a peculiar kind of shell-trumpet, one of which I have now, with a tattooing chisel and a wooden bowl nicely carved; while the New Caledonians went nude, confining their attention to the hair, wearing apparently an artificial air made of the fur of some animal like a bat, and they wore wooden masks, and big rings—for the ear, no doubt—which must have reached down to the shoulders: for the earth urged them every one, and made them wild, wayward and various like herself. I went from one to the other without any system whatever, seeking the ideal resting-place, and frequently thinking that I had found it, only to weary of it at the feeling that there might be a yet deeper and dreamier in-being; but in this seeking I received a check, my God, which chilled me to the liver, and set me fleeing from these places.

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One night, the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, I dined late-at eight—sitting, as was my way in calm weather, cross-legged on the cabin-rug in the starboard aft corner, a semicircle of *Speranza* gold-plate before me, and near above me the lamp's red glow and green conical reservoir, whose creakings never cease in the stillest mid-sea; and beyond the plates the array of soups, meat-extracts, meats, fruit, sweets, wines, nuts, liqueurs, coffee on p the silver spirit-tripod—all which it was always my care to select from the store-room and lay out once for all in the morning. I was late, seven being my hour, for on that day I had been engaged in the job, always postponed, of overhauling the ship, brushing here a rope with tar, there a board with paint, there a crank with oil, rubbing a door-handle, a brass-fitting, filling the three cabin-lamps, dusting mirrors, dashing the plains of deck with bucketfulls, and, up aloft, chopping loose with its rigging the mizzen topmast, which for a month had been sprained at the clamps: all this in cotton drawers under my loose *quamis*, bare-footed, my beard knotted up, the sun ablaze, the sea smooth and pallid with that smooth pallor of currents in a hurry, the ship pretty still, no land near, yet large tracts of sea-weed reaching away eastward—I at it from 11 until near 7, when sudden darkness interrupted: for I wanted to have it all over in one offensive day: so I was pretty weary when I went down, lit the central lever-lamp and my own two, dressed in my room, then to dinner in the saloon; and voraciously I ate, perspiration, as usual, pouring down my brow, using knife or spoon in the right hand, but never the Western fork, licking the plates clean in the Mohammedan manner, drinking pretty freely. Still I was weary and went on deck, where I had the easy-chair with the broken arm, its blue-velvet threadbare now, before the wheel; and in it I lay, smoking cigar after cigar from the Indian D box, half-asleep, yet conscious, while the moon moved up into a sky nearly cloudless: and she was bright, but not bright enough to outshine that enlightened flight of the ocean, which that night was one swamp of phosphorescence, a wild luminosity of jack-o'-lantern thronged with stars and flashes—the whole trooping unanimously, as if in haste with some

momentous purpose, an interminable assemblage teeming, careering eastward in the sweep of an urgent current. I could hear it in my sluggard slumbrousness struggling at the bound rudder, gulping sloppy noises of hogs' chops guttling beneath the sheer of the poop; and I knew that the ship was slipping along pretty quickly, drawn into the trend of that procession, probably at the rate of six knots; but I did not care, knowing very well that no land was within two hundred miles of my bows, for I was in long. 1730, in the latitude of Fiji and the Society Islands, between those two; and after a time the cigar drooped and dropped from my mouth, drowsiness overcame me, and I slept there, in the lap of immensity.

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So that something preserves me: Something, Someone: *and for what?*. . . If I had slept in the cabin, I must most certainly have perished: for, stretched there on the chair, I dreamed a dream which once I had dreamed in snows yonder in the beyond of that hyperborean North: that I was in an Arab paradise; and I had a protracted vision of it, for I reached up amid the trees, and picked the peaches, and pressed the blossoms to my nostrils with breathless inhalations of fondness: until a sickness woke me, and when I opened my eyes the night was gloomy, the moon down, everything drenched with dew, the sky a jungle lush with stars, bazaar of maharajahs tiaraed, begums arrayed in garish trains, and all the air informed with that mortal afflatus; and high and wide uplifted before my sight—stretching from the northern to the southern limit—a row of eight or nine smokes, inflamed as from the chimneys of some Cyclopean forge which goes all night, most solemn, most great and dreadful in the solemn night: eight or nine, I should say, or it may be seven, or it may be ten, for I did not reckon them; and from those craters puffed up gusts of encrimsoned stuff, there a gust and there a gust, with tinselled fumes that convolved upon themselves, glittering with troops of sparks and flashes, all in a garish haze of glare: for the foundry was going, though languidly; and upon a land of rock four knots ahead, which no chart had ever marked, the *Speranza* drove straight with the sweep of the phosphorus sea.

As I rose, I fell flat: and what I did thereafter I did in a state of existence whose acts, to the waking intellect, seem unreal as dream. I must immediately, I think, have been conscious that here was the cause of the destruction of organisms, conscious that it still surrounded its own neighborhood with baneful emanations, conscious that I was approaching it: and I must have somehow crawled or won myself forward. I have a certain sort of impression that it was a purple land of pure porphyry; there is some faint memory, or dream, of hearing a long-drawn rumor of breakers booming upon its rock: I do not know how I have them. I certainly remember retching with desperate jerks of my travailing entrails, remember that I was on my back when I moved the adjustor in the engine-room: but any recollection of going down the stair, or of coming up again, I have not. Happily, the rudder being fixed hard to starboard, the ship, as she forged ahead, must have swung about; and I must have been back up to free the wheel in time, for when my senses came again I was lying there, my head against a gimbal, one heel stuck up on a spoke of the wheel, no land in sight, and the sun shining.

This made me so sick, that for either two or three days I lay without eating in the seat near the wheel, only waking occasionally to sufficient sense to see to it that she was making westward from that place; and on the morning when I came well to myself I was not certain whether it was the second or the third morning: so that my calendar, so exactly kept, may now be a day out, for to this day I have never been at the pains to ascertain if I am here spelling on the 10<sup>th</sup> or the 11<sup>th</sup> of May.

\* \* \*

Well, on the fifth evening after this, as the sun was sinking at the rim of the sea, I happened to look where he hung on the starboard bow: and there I saw a black-green spot clean-cut against his red—a very unusual object here and now—a ship: a poor thing, as she proved when I got nigh to her, without any sign of mast, all water-logged, some relics of rigging straggling over her beam, even her bowsprit broken at the middle, she nothing but one bush of weeds and sea-things from bowsprit-tip to poop-edge, stout as a hedgehog, awaiting there the next pounding of the sea to founder.

It being near my dinner-hour, I stopped the *Speranza* about sixty feet from her; and, in pacing my spacious poop, as usual before eating, kept giving glances at her, wondering who were the sons of men that had lived on her, their names, and minds, and way of life, and faces, until the desire arose within me to go to her and see: so I threw off my outer robes, uncovered and unroped the cedar cutter—the only boat, except the air-pinnace, then left to me whole—and lowered her by the mizzen pulley-system. But it was a ridiculous nonsense, for when I had paddled to the derelict it was only to be thrown into paroxysms of rage by repeated failures to scale her bulwarks, low as they were: for though my hands could easily reach, I could find no hold on the slimy mass, and three rope-ends which I seized were also untenably slippery, so that I collapsed always back into the boat, my clothes a mass of filth, and the only thought in my blazing brain a twenty-pound charge of guncotton, of which I had plenty, to blast her backside to uttermost Hell. In the end I had to go back to the *Speranza*, get rope, then back to the other, for I would not be challenged in such a way, though now the dark was come, hardly tempered by a far half-moon, and I getting hungry, and from minute to minute more devilishly ferocious; until, by dint of throwing, I managed to slip the rope-loop round a mast-stump and drew myself up, my left hand slashed by some hellish shell: and for what? the imperiousness of a caprice. The shadowy moonshine shewed an ample tract of deck, mostly invisible beneath rolls of putrid seaweed, and no bodies, no thing but a concave esplanade of seaweed, she a ship of probably 3,000 tons, three-masted, a sailer. When I moved aft, having on thick babooshes, I could see that only four of the companion-steps remained; but by a leap I was able to descend into that desolation, where the stale sea-stench seemed concentrated into the very essence of rawness, and here I got a ghostly awe and timorousness, lest she should go down with me, or something; but, on flashing matches, I saw an ordinary cabin, with some fungoids, skulls, bones, rags, but not one connected skeleton in the second starboard berth a table, and on the floor an ink pot whose continual rolling made me look down: and there observed a scribbling-book with black covers which curved half-open, for it had been wet. This book I took, and paddled back to the *Speranza*: for that ship was nothing but an emptiness, and a stretch of the crude elements of existence nearly assimilated already to the rank deep to which she was wedded, soon to be sucked back into its nature and being, to become a sea-in-little, as I, in time, my God, am to be turned into an earth-in-little.

During dinner, and after, I read the hook—with some difficulty, for it was pen-written in French, and discolored; and it turned out to be the journal of someone, a passenger and voyager, I imagine, who called himself Albert Tissu, and the ship the *Marie Meyer*: nothing remarkable in the narrative descriptions of South Sea scenes, records of weather, cargoes— until I came to the last page, which was remarkable enough, that page being dated the 12<sup>th</sup> of April—strange thing, my good God, that same day, twenty years ago, when I reached the Pole; and the writing on that

page was quite different from the spruce look of the rest, proving high excitement, wildest haste, headed "*Cinq Heures, P.M.*," and he writes: "Monstrous event! phenomenon without likeness! the witnesses of which must live immortalized in the annals of the universe, so that Mama and Juliette will now confess that I was justified in undertaking this voyage. Conversing with Captain Tombarel on the stem, when a murmur from him—'Mon Dieu!' His visage blanches! I follow the direction of his gaze to eastward—I behold! seven kilomètres perhaps away, *ten waterspouts*, reaching up, up, high, all in a line, with intervals of nine hundred metres, very regularly placed; but they do not wander nor waver; as waterspouts do, nor are they at all lily-shaped, like waterspouts—just pillars of water, a little twisted here and there, and, as I conjecture, fifty metres in diameter. And six minutes we look, while Captain Tombarel repeats and repeats under his breath 'Mon Dieu!' 'Mon Dieu!', the while crew now on deck, I agitated, yet collected, watch in hand; until suddenly all is blotted out: the pillars, doubtless still there, can no more be seen: for the ocean about them is steaming, hissing higher still than the pillars a vapor, immense in extent, whose sibilation we at this distance can distinctly hear. It is affrighting! it is intolerable! the eyes can hardly bear to watch, the ears to hear! it seems unearthly travail, monstrous birth! But it lasts not long: all at once the *Marie Meyer* commences to pitch and roll, for the sea, a moment since still, is now rough! and at the same time, through the white vapor, we descry a shade rising, a shade, a mighty back, a new-born land, bearing skyward ten flames of fire, slowly, steadily, out of the sea, into the clouds. At the moment when that sublime emergence ceases, or seems to cease, the thought that smites me is this: 'I, Albert Tissu, am immortalized': I rush down, I write it. The latitude is 16° 21' 13'' South; the longitude 176° 58' 19'' West<sup>1</sup>. There is a running about on the decks—an odor like almonds—it is so dark, I—"

So this Albert Tissu.

\* \* \*

With all that region I would have no more to do: for all here, it used to be said, lies a sunken continent, and I thought that it would be rising and shewing itself to my eyes, and driving me rushing-frenzied: for the earth is turbid with these contortions, monstrous grimaces, apparitions that are like the Gorgon's face, appalling a man into spinning stone; and nothing could be more appallingly insecure than living on a planet.

Nor did I stop until I had got so far north as the Philippines, where I was two weeks—exuberant, odorous places, but so steep and rude, that at one place I abandoned all attempt at travelling in the motor, and left it in a valley by a broad, noisy river, thick with mossy rocks: for I said "Here I will live, and be at peace"; and then I had a scare, seeing that during three days I could not re-discover the river and the motor, and I was in the greatest despair, thinking "When shall I find my way out of these jungles and vastnesses?", for I was where no paths are, and had lost myself in depths of verdure where the lure of the earth is too strong and rank for a solitary man, since in such places, I assume, a man would rapidly be transmuted into a tree, or a snake, or a cat. At last, however, I refound the spot, to my great joy, but would not shew that I was glad, and, to conceal it, attacked a wheel of the motor with some kicks. . . . But those two years of roaming, they are over, and like a dream; and not to write of that—of all that—have I taken this pencil in hand after seventeen long, long years.

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<sup>1</sup> French reckoning apparently, from meridian of Paris.

Singular—my reluctance to put it on paper. . .

I will write of the voyage to China, how I landed the car on the wharf at Tientsin, and passed up, nigh the river, to Peking through a maize and rice land which was charming in spite of cold, I thick with clothes like an Arctic traveller; and of the three earthquakes within two weeks; and how the only map which I had of the city gave no indication of the whereabouts of its military stores, and I had to seek them; and of the three days' effort to enter to them, every gate grim and riveted against me; and how I burned, but had to observe the flames from beyond the city-walls, the place being all one cursed plain; yet how I cried aloud with wild banterings and challenges of Tophet to that old Chinaman still alive within it; and how I coasted, and made acquaintance with the hairy Ainus, male and female hairy alike; and how, lying one midnight sleepless in my cabin, the *Speranza* being in a still glassy harbor beneath a cliff overgrown by drooping greenery—the harbor of Chemulpo—to me lying awake came the notion, "Suppose now you should hear a foot pacing to and fro, patiently, on the poop above—*suppose*"; and the night of terrors that rived me: for I could not help supposing, and at one time really seemed to hear it, and how sweat poured from my every pore; and how I went to Nagasaki, and destroyed it; and how I crossed that Pacific deep to San Francisco, for I knew that Chinamen had been there, too, and one might be alive; and how, one still day, the 15<sup>th</sup> or the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, I, seated by the wheel in the mid-Pacific, suddenly noted a wild white hole that ran and wheeled, and wheeled and ran, within the sea, reeling toward me; and I was aware of the hot whiff of a wind, then of the hot wind itself, which wheeled, deep-venting a vehemence of the letter V, humming the hymn of hosts of spinning-tops, and the *Speranza* was on her beam, sea pouring over her port-bulwarks, myself down on the deck against the taifrail, drowning fast, pegged there; but all was soon over, and the hole within the sea, and the hot spinning-top of wind, ran reeling on to the horizon, and the *Speranza* righted herself: so that it was evident that someone wished to do for me, for that a typhoon of such vehemence ever blew before I do not think; and how I arrived at San Francisco, and fired it, and had my delights: for it was mine; and how I thought to pass over the trans-continental railway to New York, but would not, fearing to leave the *Speranza*, lest all the craft in the harbor there should be wrecked, or rusted, and buried under sea-weed, and turned unto the sea; and how I returned, my thoughts all seduced now to musing on the earth and her moods, and a notion in my soul that I would return to those secret deeps of the Filipinas, and evolve into an autochthone—a sycamore or a serpent, or a person with serpent-limbs, like the Saturnian autochthones; but I would not: for Heaven was in men, too, Earth and Heaven; and how, as I moved round west anew, another winter come, I now lost in a mood of dismal despondencies, on the very brink of the inane abysm and smiling idiotcy, I saw in the island of Java that temple of Boro Budor: and like a tornado, or volcanic event, my soul was changed: for my studies in the architecture of man before I started on the palace came back to me with zest, and for five nights I slept in the temple, examining it by day. It is vast, having that aspect of massiveness which characterizes Mongol building, my measurement of its breadth being 529 feet, and it rises in six terraces, each divided up into innumerable niches, containing each a statue of the seated Boodh, with a voluptuousness of tracery that is drunkening, all surmounted by a crowd of cupolas, and crowned by a great dagop: and when I saw this, I had a longing to be back at my home after so prolonged roaming, and to set up the temple of temples; and I said: "I will go back, and build it as a witness to God."

\* \* \*

Save for some days in Egypt, I did not once stop on that homeward voyage, moving into the little harbor at Imbros on it calm sundown on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March (as I reckon); and I moored the *Speranza* to the ring in the little quay; then raised the battered motor from the hold with the middle air-engine (“battered” by the typhoon in the mid-Pacific, which had broken it from its ropings and tumbled it head-over-heels to port); and I went through the windowless village-street, and tip through the plantains and cypresses which I knew, and the Nile-mimosas, and mulberries, and Trebizond-palms, and pines, and acacias, and fig-trees, until thicket stopped me, and I had to alight, for in those two years the path had finally disappeared; and on, on foot, I made my way, until I came to the board-bridge, and leant there, and looked at the rill; and thence walked toiling up the foot-path in the sward toward that rolling table-land where I had built with many a groan, until, half-way up, I saw the tip of the crane-arm, then the blazing top of the south pillar, then the shed-roof, then the platform, a wobbling blotch of brightness watering the eyes under the setting sun. But the tent, and almost all that it had contained, was gone.

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For two days I would do nothing, just lounging and watching, shirking a load so huge; but on the third morning I languidly began something: and I had not worked an hour when a fervour took me—to finish it, to finish it—and this did not leave me, with but three brief intervals, for nearly seven years; nor would the end have been so long in coming, but for the unexpected difficulty in getting the four flat roofs water-tight, I having to take down half the west one. Finally I made them of gold slabs 1¼ inch thick, on each beam double-gutters being fixed along each side of the top flange to catch any leakage at the joints, which are filled with slater’s cement, the slabs being clamped to the top flanges by steel clips, having bolts set with plaster-of-Paris in holes drilled in the slabs, and the roofs are slightly pitched to the front edges, where they drain into gold-plated copper-gutters on plated brackets, with one side flashed up. . . . But now I babble again of that slavery, which I would forget, but cannot: for every measurement bolt, ring, is in my brain, like an obsession; but it is past—and it was vanity.

\* \* \*

Six months ago today it was finished: six months more protracted, desolate, burdened, than all those sixteen years in which I built.

I wonder what a man—some Shah, or Tsar, of that far-off past—would say now of me, if an eye could light on me? He’d shrink, I think—yes, undoubtedly—before the majesty of these eyes; and though I am not lunatic—for I am not, I am not—no doubt he’d fly from me, crying out “Here is the lunacy of Pride!”

For there would seem to him—I believe so—in myself, in all about me, somewhat of royal beyond bounds, fraught with terror. My body has fattened, my girth now filling out to a portly roundness its band or girdle of crimson cloth a foot broad, Babylonish, gold-embroidered, hung with a hundred copper and gold coins of the Orient; my beard, still ink-black, sweeps in two sheaves to my hips, flustered by each wind; as I pace the chambers of this palace, the floor of amber-and-silver blushes in its depths, reflecting the low neck and short arm of my robe of blue and scarlet, abloom with luminous stones. I am ten times Satrap and Emperor, seated a hundred times enthroned in established obese old majesty: challenge me who dare! Among those lights

that I nightly pore upon may fly songsters, my peers and fellow-denizens, but *here* I am sole; earth bows her brow before my purples and hereditary sceptre: for though she entices me, not yet am I hers, but she is mine. It seems to me not less than a million æons since other beings, more or less resembling me, stepped impudently in the open sunlight on this planet; I can in fact no longer picture to myself, nor properly credit, that such a state of things—so fantastic, far-fetched, droll—could have existed: though, at bottom, I suppose, I know that it must have been so; indeed, up to ten years ago I used to *dream* that there were others, would see them go about the streets like ghosts, and be troubled, and bound awake; but never now could such a thing, I think, occur to me in sleep: for the wildness of the circumstance would certainly strike my mind, and immediately I should descry that the dream was a dream. For now at least I am sole, I am lord. The walls of this palace which I have piled stare down ravished at their reflection in the fire of a lake of wine.

Not that I made it of wine because wine is rare, nor the walls of gold because gold is rare, since I am not a goose: but because, having determined to match for beauty a human work with the works of those Others, I had in mind that, by some prank of the earth, precisely the objects most costly are usually the most beautiful.

The vision of splendor and loveliness which is this palace now risen before my eyes cannot be described by pen or paper, though there *may* be words in the lexicons of mankind which if I searched for them with inspired wit for sixteen years, as I have built for sixteen years, might as vividly express my mind to a mind as the stones-of-gold, so grouped, express it to the eye: but, failing such labors and skill, I suppose I could not give, if there lived another man, and I sought to give, the smallest conception of its celestial charm.

It is a structure not less clear than the sun, nor fair than the moon—the sole structure in the making of which no restraining thought of cost has played a part, one of its steps being of more cost than all the temples, mosques and besestins, the palaces, pagodas and cathedrals, reared between the eras of the Nimrods and the Napoleons.

The house itself is quite small—40 ft. long, by 35 broad, by 27 high: yet the structure as a whole is pretty enormous, high uplifted, because of the platform on which the house stands, its base 480 ft. square, its height 130 ft., its top 48 ft. square, the elevation 22½ degrees, the top reached on each edge by 183 steps, low, gold-plated—not a continuous flight, but broken into threes, fives, sixes, nines, with landings between, these from the top looking like a great terraced parterre of gold: the palace is thus Assyrian in plan, except that the platform has steps every-way, instead of one set, the platform-top round the house being a mosaic of squares of the glassiest gold and of the glassiest jet, corner to corner, each square 2 ft., round the platform running 48 gold pilasters, 2 ft. high, square, tapering upwards, topped by knobs, the knobs connected by silver chains, from the chains hanging hosts of silver globes that gabble together in a breeze. The house itself consists of an outer court (facing east toward the sea) and the house proper built round an inner court, the outer court being an oblong as broad as the house, its three walls of gold, battlemented, lower than the house, round their top running a band of silver 1 ft. wide; and at the gate, which is Egyptian, narrower at top, stand the two pillars of gold, square, tapering upwards, 45 ft. high, with their capital of band, closed-lotus, and plinth. In the outer court is the well, reproducing in little the shape of the court, its sides gold-lined, tapering downwards to the bottom of the platform, where a conduit replenishes the mean evaporation of the lake—automatically on the principle of carburetter-floats—the well containing 105,360 litres, and the lake occupying a circle round the platform of 980 ft. diameter, with a depth of 3½ ft. Round the well, too, run pilasters connected by silver chains, and it communicates by a conduit with a pool

of wine sunk into the inner court, the pool being fed from eight gold tanks, tall and narrow, tapering upwards, which surround it, each containing a different red wine, sufficient to last my lifetime. The ground of the outer court, as well as the platform-top, is a mosaic of jet and gold, but thenceforth the squares consist of silver and amber, amber limpid as slabs of solid oil, the entrance to the inner court being by an Egyptian doorway with folding-doors of cedar, gold-plated, surrounded by a coping of silver, huge, thick, 1½ ft. wide, simplicity of line everywhere heightening the effect of richness of material. The rest resembles rather a Homeric than an Assyrian house (except for the “galleries”, which are Babylonish and Old Hebrew), the inner court with its wine-pool and tanks being an oblong 8 ft. by 9 ft., upon which open four silver-latticed windows, oblongs in the same proportion, and two doors, oblongs in the same proportion, round this court running the eight walls of the house proper, the four inner being 10 ft. from the four outer, each parallel two forming one long chamber, except the front (east) two, which are split up into three rooms. In each room are four panels of silver, thinner than their rims, in the sunken space being paintings, of which 21 were taken at the burning of Paris from a place named “The Louvre,” and 3 from a place in London, the panels having the look of great frames, and are surrounded by garlands of opal, garnet, topaz, each garland being an oval, a foot wide at the sides, narrowing to an inch at top and bottom. As to the “galleries,” they are four recesses in the four outer walls under the roofs, hung with rose and white silks on gold pilasters, each gallery entered by four steps down from its roof, to the roofs leading two corkscrew stairs of cedar, east and north, on the east roof being the kiosk with the telescope: and from that height, and from the galleries, I can watch under the moonlight of this climate, which is not unlike limelight, those mountains of Macedonia silent for ever, and where the islands of Samothraki, Lemnos, Tenedos sleep like purplish birds of fable on the Ægean Sea: for, usually, I sleep during the daytime and keep a nightlong vigil, frequently at midnight descending to be taking my scarlet baths in the lake, to disport myself in that intoxication of nose, eyes, pores, dreaming long wide-eyed dreams at the bottom, to come back up doddering, weak, drunken. Or again—twice within these idle void months—I have rushed, calling out, from these halls of luxury, snatching off my gorgeous rags, to skulk in a hut on the shore, smitten in those moments with a vision of the past and vastness of this planet, and moaning “alone, alone . . . all alone, alone, alone . . . alone, alone for events resembling eruptions take place in my brain, and one flushed ’foreday—how flushed!—I may kneel on the roof with streaming cheeks, my arms cast out, with awe-struck heart adoring, the next I may strut like a cock, wanton as sin, lusting to blow up a city, to wallow in filth, and, like the Babylonian maniac, naming myself the mate of Heaven.

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But it was not to write of this—of all this. . .

Of the furnishing of the palace I have written nothing. . . But why I hesitate to admit to myself what I *know*... If They speak to me, I may speak of Them: for I do not fear Them, but am Their peer. . .

Of the island I have written nothing: its size, climate, form, flora. . . There are two winds: a north and a south; the north is cool the south is warm; and the south blows during the winter months, so that sometimes at Christmas it is hot; and the north blows from May to September, so that the summer is seldom oppressive, and the climate was made for a king. The mangal-stove in the south hall I have never once lit.

The length is 19 miles, the breadth 10, and the highest mountains must be 2,000 ft., though I have not been all over it. It is densely wooded, and I have seen growths of wheat and barley, obviously degenerate now, with currants, figs, valonia, tobacco, vines in rank abundance, and two marble quarries. From the palace, which stands on a sunny plateau of swards, dotted with the shades thrown by fourteen huge cedars and eight planes, I can see all round an edge of forest, with the sheen of a lake to the north, and in the hollow to the east the rivulet with its bridge; and I can spy right through—

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It shall be written now:

I have this day heard within me the contention of the voices.

\* \* \*

I had thought that they were done with me! That all, all, all, was ended! I have not heard them for twenty years!

But today—distinctly—breaking in with brawling suddenness upon my consciousness . . . I heard.

This *far niente* and vacuous inaction here has been undermining my mind, this brooding upon the earth, this empty life, and bursting brain! So, immediately after eating at noon today, I said to myself “I have been duped by the palace: for I have spent myself in building, hoping for peace, and there is no peace; therefore now I will flee from it to another, sweeter work—not of building, but of burning—not of Heaven, but of Hell—not of self-denial, but of reddest revel: Constantinople—beware!”; and, throwing a plate away, with a stamp I was up: but, as I stood—again, again—I heard: the startling wrangle, the vulgar rough outbreak and voluble controversy, till my consciousness could not hear its ears; and one urged: “Go! go!” and the other: “Not there! . . . where you like . . . not there . . . for your life!”

I did not—for I could not—go, I was so overcome; dropped shuddering upon the couch.

These voices, or impulses, strongly as I was conscious of them of old, quarrel within me now with an openness new to them. Lately, influenced by my scientific habit, I have asked myself whether what I used to call “the Voices” were not in truth two intuitive movements such as most men may have felt, though with less force. But today doubt is past, doubt is past: nor, unless I be mad, can I ever more doubt.

\* \* \*

I have been thinking, thinking, of my life: there is a something which I cannot understand.

There was a man whom I met in that dark backward and abysm of time—at the college in England it was—his name far enough now beyond the grasp of my memory, lost in the limbo of past things; but he used to talk about certain “Black” and “White” Powers, and of their strife for this world—short man with a Roman nose, who lived in fear of growing a paunch, his forehead in profile more prominent at top than at bottom, his hair parted in the middle, and he had the theory that the male form was more beautiful than the female—I forget what his name was, the dim clear-obscure being, one of those untrained brains that accepted fancies and ascertained facts with equal belief, as men in general did: yet deep was the effect of his thesis upon me, though I

think I often made a point of mocking him. This man always declared that “the Black” would carry off the victory in the end: and so he has, old “Black.”

But, assuming the existence of this “Black” and this “White” being—and supposing it to be a fact that my reaching the Pole had any connection with the destruction of species, according to the notions of the extraordinary Scotch “preacher”—then, it must have been the potency of “*the Black*” which carried me, over all obstacles, to the Pole. So far I can understand.

But *after* I had reached the Pole, what further use had either White or Black for me? Which was it—White or Black—that preserved my life through my protracted return on the ice-and *why*? It *could* not have been “the Black!” For from the moment when I stood at the Pole, the only purpose of the Black, which had formerly preserved, must have been to destroy, me with the others. It must have been “*the White*,” then, that led me back, retarding me long, so that I should not enter the poison-cloud, and then openly presenting me the *Boreal* to bring me home to Europe. But his motive? And the significance of these fresh wrangles, after such a stillness? This I do not understand!

Damn Them and their tangles! I care nothing for Them!— if they were there. For are not these outcries that I hear nothing but the screams of my own burning nerves, and I all mad and morbid, morbid, and mad, mad, my good God?

This inertia here is *not good* for me! This stalking about the palace! and long thinkings about Earth and Heaven, Black and White, White and Black, and things beyond the stars! My brain is like bursting through the walls of my poor head.

Tomorrow, then, to Constantinople. . .

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I came down to the *Speranza* with the motor, went through her, spent the day in work, slept on her, worked again today until four at both ship and time-fuses (I with only 700 fuses left, and in Stamboul alone must be 8,000 houses, without counting Galata, Tophana, Kassim-pacha), started out at 5.30, and am now at 11 p.m. lying two miles off the island of Mamora, with moonlight musing on the sea, which a breeze brindles, the little land seeming immensely stretched-out, grave and great, as if it were the globe, and there were nothing more, and the tiny island at its end immense, and the *Speranza* vast, and I alone puny. Tomorrow morning I will moor the *Speranza* in the Golden Horn at that hill where the palace of the Capitan Pacha is. . . .

\* \* \*

I found that tangle of craft in the Golden Horn wonderfully preserved, with hardly any moss-growths, owing, I suppose, to the little Ali-Bey, which, flowing into the horn at the top, makes a constant current. . . .

Ali, I remember the place; long ago I lived here—the fairest of cities—and the greatest, for, though I think that London in England was bigger, no city, surely, ever *seemed* so big. But it is flimsy, and will burn like tinder, the houses built light, of timber, with interstices filled by earth and bricks, some looking ruinous already, with their lovely tints of green and gold and pink and azure and daffodil, faint like tints of flowers withering: for it is a city of paints and trees, and all about the little winding streets, as I write, are volatile armies of almond-blossoms, laughing in a mêlée with maple-blossoms, white whirled with purple. Even the most sumptuous of the Sultan’s palaces are built in this combustible manner, for I believe that they had a notion that stone-

building was presumptuous, though I have seen some stone-houses in Galata; indeed, the place lived in a state of sensation at nightly flares-up, and I have come across several tracts already devastated by fires. The ministers-of-state used to attend them, and, if the fire would not go out, the Sultan himself would drive up, to egg-on and incite the firemen. Now it will burn still better.

But I have been here six weeks, and still no burning: for the place seems to plead with me, it is so fair, and I do not know why I did not live here, and spare my toils all those sixteen years of nightmare: so that for three weeks the impulse to fire was quieted, and since then an irritating whisper has been at my ear which says: "It is not really like the Shah you are, this firing, rather like a child, or a savage, who liked to see fireworks; at least, if you must burn, do not burn poor Constantinople, which is so charming, and so old, with its balsamic perfumes, and the blossomy trees of white and light-purple peering over the walls of the cloistered houses, and all those lichened tombs—menhirs and regions of marble tombs between the quarters, Greek tombs, Byzantine, Jew, Mussulman tombs, with their strange and sacred inscriptions, over-waved by their cypresses sighing, and their plane-trees"; and for weeks I would do nothing, but roamed about with two minds in me under the sultriness of the sky by day, and the mighty trance of the nights of this place, that are like nights gazed at through azure glasses, and in one of them is not one night, but the thousand-and-one crowded nightlongs of glamour and phantasm: for I would sit on that esplanade of the Seraskierat, or those tremendous stones of the porch of the mosque of Mehmedfatih, dominating from its steps all Stamboul, and pore upon the moon for hours and hours, so passionately rapt she soared through cloud and cloudless, until I would be smitten with doubt of my own identity: for whether I were she, or the earth, or myself, or some other thing or person, I did not know, all so silent alike, and all, except myself, so vast, the Seraskierat, and Stamboul, and the Marmora Sea, and Europe, and those argent fields of the moon, all large alike compared with me, and measure and space were lost, and I with them.

\* \* \*

These proud Turks died stolidly, many of them: in streets of Kassim-pacha, in crowded Taxim on the heights of Pera, and under the arcades of Sultan-Selim, I have seen the open-air barber's razor with his bones, and with him the skull of the faithful half-shaved, and the two-hours' narghile with traces of tembaki and hashish still in the bowl. Ashes now are they, and dry yellow bone; but in the houses of Phanar, in noisy old Galata, in the Jew quarter of Pri-pacha, the black shoe and head-dress of the Greek is still distinguishable from the Hebrew blue: for it was a ritual of colors here in boot and hat-yellow for Mussulman, red boot, black calpac for Armenian, for the Effendi a white turban, for the Greek a black, while the Tartar skull shines from under a high calpac, the Nizain-djid's from a melon-shaped head-piece, the Imam's and Dervish's from a conical felt, and here and there a "Frank" in European rags; and I have seen the towering turban of the bashi-bazouk, and some softas in those domes on the wall of Stamboul, and the beggar, and the street-merchant with his tray of watermelons, sweetmeats, raisins, sherbet, and the bear-shewer, and the Barbary organ, and the night-watchman who evermore cried "Fire!", with his lantern, pistols, dirk, and wooden javelin; I have gone out to those plains beyond the walls whence the city looks nothing but minarets shooting through cypress-tops, and I seemed to see the muezzin, at some summit, crying "*Mohammed Resoul Allah!*"—the wild man; and from the cemetery of Scutari the walled city of Stamboul lay spread entire before me up to Phanar and Eyoub in their cypress-woods, the whole embowered now, one mass of alleys darkened by balconies of old Byzantine houses, beneath which one on mule-back had to stoop the head—

alleys where even old Stamboulers would lose their way in intricacies of the picturesque; and within the boscaje of the Bosphorus coast, to Foundoucli and beyond, some peeping yali, snow-white palace, or Armenian cot; and the Seraglio by the sea, a town within a town; and southward the sea of Marmora, blue-and-white, and vast, wriggling vigorous like a sea just born and rejoicing at its birth under the sun, all brisk, alert, to the Islands like sighs afar: and, as I looked, I suddenly said a wild, mad thing, my God, a wild and maniac thing, a screaming maniac thing for Hell to scream at: for something said with my tongue: "*This city is not quite dead.*"

\* \* \*

Five nights I slept in Stamboul itself at the palace of some sanjak-bey or emir, or rather dozed, with one slumbrous lid that would open to note my visitors Sinbad, and Ali Baba, and old Haroun, to note how they slumbered and dozed: for it was in the small chamber where the bey received those speechless all-night visits of the Turks, rosy hours of perfumed romance, and drunkenness of the fancy, and visionary languor, sinking toward sunrise into the still deeper peace of sleep; and there, still, were the *yatags* for the guests to sit cross-legged on for the waking mooning, and to drop upon for the morning swoon, and the copper brazier still scenting of essence-of-rose, and the cushions, rugs, hangings, the monsters of the wall, the hashish-chibouques, hookahs, narghiles, and drugged pale cigarettes, and a secret-looking lattice outside the doorway, painted with trees and peacocks; and the air narcotic and grey with the incense of pastilles and the scented smokes that a smoked; and I all drugged and mumbling, my left eye suspicious of Ali there, and Sinbad, and old Haroun, who dozed, And when I had slept, and rose to bathe in a room close to the latticed balcony of the façade, before me lay Galata in sun shine, and that great avenue mounting to Pera, once crowded at every nightfall with divans on which grave dervishes smoked narghiles, and there was no room to pass, for all was divans, lounges, almond-trees, heaven-high hum, chibouques in forests, the dervish, and the innumerable porter, the horse-hirer with his horse from Tophana, and arsenal-men from Kassim, and traders from Galata, and artillery-workmen from Tophana; and at the back of the house a covered bridge led across a street, which consisted of two walls, into a wilderness of flowers, all a tangle, which was the harem-garden where I passed some hours; and here I might have remained many days, but that dozing one 'foreday with those fancied others, it was as if there occurred a laugh somewhere, and a thing said: "But this city is not quite dead!" startling me from deeps of peace to wakefulness; and I said to myself: "If it is not quite dead, it *will* be—with some suddenness!": and that morning I was at the Arsenal.

\* \* \*

It is long since I have so enjoyed, to the spine. It may be "the White" who has the guidance of my life, but assuredly it is "the Black" who governs in my soul.

Grandly did old Stamboul, Galata, Tophana, Kassim, right out beyond the walls of Phanar and Eyoub, blaze and flare—the whole place, except one bit of Galata, being like so much tinder: and in the five hours between 8 p.m. and 1 a.m. all was over. I saw the tops of all that forest of cemetery-cypresses round the tombs of the Osmanlis outside the walls, and those in the cemetery of Kassim, and those round the mosque of Eyoub, shrivel away instantaneously, like flimsy hair snatched by a flame; I saw the Genoese tower of Galata go heading obliquely on an upward curve, like Sir Roger de Coverley and wild rockets, and burst high, with a report; in pairs, and

trios, and fours I saw the cupolas of the fourteen great mosques give in and sink, or soar and rain and the great minarets nod the forehead, and drop; and I saw the flame-sheets reach out and out across the empty breadth of the Etmeidan—three hundred yards—to the six minarets of the Mosque of Achmet, wrapping the red-granite obelisk in the center; and across the breadth of the Serai-Meidani it reached to the building of the Seraglio and the Sublime Porte; and across those waste spaces between the houses and the great wall; and across the seventy or eighty arcaded bazaars, all-enwrapping, it reached; and the spirit of fire grew upon me: for the Golden Horn itself was a tongue of fire, crowded, west of the galley-harbor, with exploding battleships, corvettes, frigates, brigs, and, east, with a region of gondolas, feluccas, caiques, merchantmen, aburn; on my left crackled Scutari; and I had sent out forty craft under low horse-powers of air, with fuses timed for 11 p.m., to light with their roaming fires the Sea of Marmora: so before midnight I was girdled in one furnace and gulf of fire, sea and sky inflamed, and earth aflame. Not far from me to the left I saw the Tophana barracks of the Cannoniers, and the Artillery-works, after long reluctance and delay, take wing together; and three minutes later, down by the water, the barrack of the Bombardiers and the Military School together, grandly, grandly; and then, to the right, in the valley of Kassim, the Arsenal: these five riding the sky like smoky suns, and pouring daylight of Tophet over many a mile of sea and country; also I saw the two lines of ruddier flaring where the barge-bridge and the raft-bridge over the Golden Horn galloped in haste to burn; and all that vastness burned in haste, faster and faster—to fervor—to carnival—to unanimous acme: and when its roaring railed at the infinite, and the might of its glowing heart was gravitation, being, sensation, and I its compliant wife, then my forehead dropped, and, sighing as it were my final sigh, I tumbled drunk.

\* \* \*

O wild Providence! Unfathomable madness of Heaven! that ever I should write what now I write! I will not write it. . . .

\* \* \*

The hissing of it! It must be some frantic fancy! a tearing out of the hair to scatter on the ranting fire-cataracts of Saturn! My hand will not write it!

\* \* \*

In God's name. . . During four nights after the fire I slept in a house—French, as I saw books, &c., probably the Ambassador's, for it has vast gardens and a good view over the sea, situated on that east declivity of Pera—one of the houses which, for my safety, I had left standing round the minaret whence I had watched, this minaret being at the top of the Mussulman quarter on the heights of Taxim, between Pera proper and Foundoucli; and down below, both at the quay of Foundoucli and at that of Tophana, I had left under shelter two caiques for double -safety, one a Sultan's gilt craft, with the gold-spur at the prow, and one a boat of those zaptias that patrolled the Golden Horn as water-police: by one or other of which I meant to reach the *Speranza*, she being safely anchored some distance up the Bosphorus coast. So on the fifth morning I set out for the Tophana quay; but, as some rain had fallen overnight, this had re-excited the thin smoke resembling quenched steam, which, as from some reeking district of Abaddon, still trickled

upward over many a square-mile of blackened tract, through of flame I could see no sign; and I had not advanced far over every sort of *débris* when I found my eyes watering, my throat choked, my way almost blocked by roughness: whereupon I said “I will turn back, cross the region of tombs and barren behind Pera, descend the hill, get the zaptia boat at the Foundoucli quay, and so reach the *Speranza*.”

Accordingly, I made my way out of the quarter of smoke, walked beyond the limits of smouldering ruin and tomb, and soon entered a woodland, singed at the beginning, but soon green and flourishing as the jungle. This cooled and soothed me; and, being in no hurry to reach the ship, I was led on and on, in a north-western direction, I think. Somewhere thereabouts, I thought, was the place they called “The Sweet Waters,” and I went on with some notion of coming upon them, thinking to pass the day, until afternoon, lost in that forest, where nature in just twenty years has rushed back to an exuberance of savagery, everywhere now the wildest vegetation, dim dells, rills wimpling through twilights of mimosa, pendulous fuchsia, palm, cypress, mulberry, jonquil, narcissus, daffodil, rhododendron, acacia, fig. Once I stumbled upon a cemetery of old gilt tombs, absolutely overgrown and lost and anon got glimpses of little trellised yalis choked in boscage, as with a listless foot I moved, munching an almond or an olive, though I could vow that olives were not formerly indigenous to any soil so northern; yet here they are now in plenty, though elementary: so that modifications whose end I cannot see are clearly proceeding in everything, some of the cedars that I met that day being immense beyond anything I ever saw; and the thought, I remember, was in my head, that if a twig or a leaf should turn into a bird, or into a fish with wings, and fly before my eyes, what then should I do? and I would eye a bush suspiciously a little. After a long time I penetrated into a very sombre grove, where, the day outside the wood being brilliant, grilling, breathless, the leaves and flowers hung motionless, so that I seemed to be hearing on my ear-drum the booming of the muteness of the universe, and when my foot split a twig it produced the report of pistols. Then I got to a glade in the tangle, about eight yards across, that gave out a fragrance of lime and orange, where the twilight just enabled me to see some old bones, three skulls, the edge of a tam-tam prying out from a tuft of wild corn with corn-flowers, some golden champac, and all round a gushing of muskroses. I had stopped—*why* I do not recollect—perhaps at the thought that, if I was not getting to the Sweet Waters, I should seriously be setting about seeking my way out; and, as I stood looking about me, I remember that some cruising insect drew near my ear its lonesome drone.

Suddenly, God knows, I started. . . .

I believed—I dreamed—that I saw a pressure in a bed of moss and violets, *recently made!* and while I stood poring upon that impossible thing, I believed—I dreamed—the lunacy of it!—that I heard a laugh . . . the laugh, my good God, of a human soul.

Or it seemed half a laugh, and half a sob: and it passed from me in one fleeting instant.

Laughs, and sobs, and absurd hallucinations, I had often heard before, feet walking, noises behind me; and, even as I had heard them, I had known that they were nothing: but, brief as was this impression, it was yet so thrillingly *real*, that my heart received as it were the shock of death, and I was shot backward into a mass of moss, where I remained sustained on my right palm, while the left pressed my laboring breast; and there, toiling to draw my breath, I lay still, all my soul focussed into my ears; but now could hear no sound, save only that hum of the dumbness of the inane.

There was, however, the foot-print: if my eye and ear should so conspire against me, that, I thought, was hard.

Still I lay, still, in that same position, without a stir, sick and dry-mouthed, infirm, with dying breaths: but keen, keen—and malign.

I would wait, I said to myself, I would be cunning as snakes, though so woefully sick and invalid: I would make no sound. . . .

After some time I became aware that my eyes were leering—leering in one direction: and immediately the fact that I had a sense of direction proved to me that I must, *in truth*, have heard something! Whereupon I strove—I contrived—to raise myself; and, as I stood upright, swaying there, not the terrors of death alone were in my breast, but the authority of the monarch was on my forehead.

I moved: I found the strength. . . .

Slow step by slow step, with daintiest noiselessness, I moved to a thread of moss that led from the glade into the grove; and along its zigzag way I wound—toward the sound, in my ears now the noising of some streamlet, while, following the moss-path, I was led into a mass of bush which reached only two or three feet above my head; and through this, stealing, I wheedled my painful way, got out upon a strip of long-grass, to be faced now by a wall of acacia-trees, prickly-pear, pichulas, three yards before me: between which and forest beyond I got glimpses of a streamlet's gleams.

On my hands and knees I crept toward the acacia-thicket; entered it a little; and, leaning far forward, peered. And there—at once—ten yards in front, rather to my right—I saw.

Strange to say, my agitation, instead of intensifying to the point of apoplexy and death, now, at the actual sight, subsided to something like calm: and with a malign and sullen eye askance I knelt, eyeing her there.

\* \* \*

She was on her knees, her palms on the ground supporting her, at the margin of the streamlet; leaning over she was, eyeing with a species of shyness, and of startled surprise, the reflection of her face in the waves: and I, with a sullen eye askance, knelt there, and finally stood, regarding her during five, six, good minutes of time.

\* \* \*

I believe that her half-a-laugh and half-a-sob which I had heard had been the effect of astonishment at seeing her image in water; and I firmly believe, from the expression of her face, that this was the first day that she had seen it.

\* \* \*

Never, I felt, as I observed her, had I beheld on earth a being so fair (though, analyzing now at leisure, I can conclude that in reality there was nothing very remarkable about her looks): her hair, fairer than auburn, and frizzy, forming a real robe to her nudity, robing her below the hips, some strings of it falling, too, into the water; her eyes, a violet blue, wide in the silliest look of bewilderment; and when, while I eyed and eyed her, she slowly rose, at once I remarked in all her manner an air of unfamiliarity with nature, as of one all at a loss what to do, her pupils looking unused and shy to light, and I could swear that that was the first day in which she had seen a tree or a stream.

Her age appeared seventeen or eighteen; I could conjecture that she was of Circassian blood, or, at least, of origin; her skin whitey-brown, or old ivory-white.

\* \* \*

Motionless she stood, at a loss: took a lock of her hair, and drew it through her lips; and there was some look in her eyes, which I could now plainly see, that somehow indicated a hunger going wild, though the wood was full of food. After letting go her hair, she stood again feckless and imbecile, her head hung sideward, pitiable to see I think now: for, though no faintest pity visit me hen, it was evident that she did not know what to make of the look of things. At last she sat on a moss-bank, reached and took a musk-rose, put it on her palm, looked hopelessly at it.

\* \* \*

One minute after my actual sight of her my excess of excitement, I say, had died down to something like calm. The earth was mine by old right: I felt that; and this creature a slave, upon whom, without heat or haste, I might perform my will: and for several minutes I stood coolly enough considering what that will should be.

The little canghiar, its silver handle encrusted with coral, its curved blade sharp as a razor, was as usual at my girdle: and the obscenest of the fiends was whispering at my ear with persistence: "Kill, kill—and eat."

*Why* I should have killed her I do not know: that question I now ask myself, wondering now whether it may be true, true, that it is "*not good*" for man to be alone. There was a religious sect in the past which called itself "Socialist," and with these must have been the truth, man being at his highest when most social, at his lowest when isolated: for the earth gets hold of all isolation, and draws it, to make it fierce, base, and materialistic, like sultans, aristocracies and so on; but Heaven is where two or three are gathered together. It may be so: I do not know, nor care; but I know that after twenty years of loneliness on a planet the soul of man is more enamored of loneliness than of living, shrinking like a nerve from the rude intrusion of another into the furtive realm of self, shrinking with that bitterness with which solitary castes—Brahmins, patricians, aristocracies, monopolists—always resisted any attempt to invade their domain of privileges. Also it may be true, it may, it may, that after twenty years of solitary selfishness a man becomes, without suspecting it, without noticing the stages of the evolution, a real and true beast, a Rome-burning Nero, a horrible, hideous beast, rabid, prowling, like that King of Babylon, his nails like birds' claws, his hair like eagles' feathers, with instincts all inflamed and fierce, delighting in darkness and crime for their own sake. I do not know, nor care: but I know that, as I drew the canghiar, the crookedest and the slyest of the guiles of the Pit was whispering me, tongue in cheek, "Kill, kill—and wallow."

With anguished gradualness, as a glacier stirs, tender as a nerve of each leaf that touched me, I moved, I stole, toward her through the belt of bush, the knife behind my back—steadily though slow—till there came a restraint, a check—I felt myself held back—had to stop—one of the sheaves of my beard having caught in a limb of prickly-pear.

I set to disentangling it; and it was, I believe, at the instant of succeeding that I first observed the condition of the sky, a strip of which I could spy across the rivulet: a sky which a little previously had been pretty clear, but now was busy with clouds; and it was a sinister muttering of thunder that had made me raise my lids, and see it.

When my eyes came down again to the sitting figure, she was looking foolishly round the sky with an expression which as good as proved that the girl had never before heard that sound of thunder, or, anyway, had no notion what it could bode: for my fixed leer lost not one of her actions, while, inch by inch, not breathing, cautious as the poise of a balance, I crawled. And suddenly, with a rush, I was out in the open, running her down. . . .

She leapt: perhaps two, perhaps three, paces she fled; then stock still she stood—within five yards of me—with expanded nostrils, with enquiring eyes.

I saw it all in one instant, and in one instant all was over. I had not checked the impetus of my run at her stoppage, and was on the point of reaching her with the knife uplifted, when I was checked and stricken by a stupendous violence: a flash of blinding light, attracted by the blade in my hand, struck jarring through my frame, and in the same moment the most passionate crash of thunder that ever racked a poor human heart felled me flat. The canghiar, snatched from my hand, pitched near the creature's feet.

I did not entirely lose consciousness, though surely, the Powers no longer hide themselves from me, and their contact is too intolerably rough and vigorous for a poor mortal man: so during, I think, three or four minutes I lay so astounded under that bullying outcry of wrath, that I could not budge an inch; and when at last I did sit up, the creature was standing near me with a kind of smile, holding out to me the weapon in a pouring rain.

I took it from her, and my doddering fingers dropped it into the stream.

\* \* \*

Pour, pour, came the rain, raining as it can in this place, not long, but a torrent while it lasts, dripping in thick liquidity like a profuse sweat through the wood I seeking to get back by the way I had come, fleeing, but with difficulty through the embarrassment of timber, and a feeling in me that I was being tracked—as it proved: for when I struck into more open space, almost opposite the west walls, but now on the north side of the Golden Horn, where there is a flat grassy ground somewhere between Kassim and Charkoi, with horror I saw that *protégée* of Heaven, or of someone, not twenty yards behind, following after me like a mechanical figure, it being now three in the afternoon, the rain drowning me through, I weary and hungry, and from all the ruins of Constantinople not one whorl of smoke going up.

I tramped on until I came to the quay of Foundoucli, and the zaptia boat; and there she was with me still, her hair nothing but a thin drowned string down her back.

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Not only can she not speak to me in any language that I know, but she can speak in *no* language: it is my belief that she has *never* spoken; and she never saw a boat, or water, till now, I could vow.

She dared to come into the boat with me, sat clinging for dear life to the gunwale by her fingernails, while I paddled the eight hundred yards to the *Speranza*; and she came up to the deck after me, astonishment imprinted on her face when she saw the open water, the boat, the yalis on the coast, and then the ship. But she appears to know little fear—smiled like a child, and on the ship touched this and that, as if each were a living thing.

When I went down to my cabin to change my clothes, the rain now over, I had to shut the door in her face to keep her out; when I opened it there she was; and she followed me to the windlass when I went to set the anchor-engine going: for I intended, I suppose, to take her to Imbros, where she might live in one of the broken-down houses of the village; but when the anchor was half up, I stopped the engine, and let the chain run again: for I said, “No, I will be alone, I am not a child.”

I knew that she was hungry by the look in her eyes: but I cared nothing for that. I was hungry, too: that was all I cared about.

I would not let her be there with me another moment—got down into the boat, and, when she followed, rowed her back nil the way past Foundoucli and the Tophana quay to where one turns into the Golden Horn by St. Sophia, round the mouth of the Horn being now a vast semicircle of charred wreckage, carried out by the river-currents; then, in the Horn, I went up the steps on the Galata side before one comes to where the barge-bridge had been; and when she had come after me on to the embankment, I passed up one of those mounting streets, encumbered now with stone-*débris* and ashes, but still marked by some standing wall-fragments, it being now not far from night, but the air as bright and washed with the rain and after-light of the sun as the blush of some purplish diamond, the west a Tyre aburn; and when I was two hundred yards up in this mixed quarter of Greeks, Turks, Jews, Italians, Albanians, and noise and cafedjis and wine-bibbing, I, having now turned two corners, suddenly gathered my skirts, spun round, and, as fast as I could, was off at a heavy trot back to the quay.

She was after me; but, being taken by surprise, I suppose, was distanced a little at first, though by the time I could scurry myself down into the boat, she was so close upon me, that she only rescued herself from falling into the water by balancing in her stoppage at the embankment-brink, as I pushed off.

I then set out to get back to the ship, muttering: “You can have Turkey, and I will keep the rest of the world,” rowing seaweed with my face steadily averted from her, for I would not look to see what she was doing; but, as I turned the point of the quay where the open sea washes rough and loud, to row northward and vanish from her, I heard a babbling outcry—the first sound which she had uttered. I did look then: and she was still near me, for the silly maniac had been racing along the embankment, following me.

“Well, you little fool,” I cried out across the water, “what are you after now?” and, oh, my God, shall I ever forget that strangeness, that wild strangeness, of my voice addressing under the sun another soul?

There she stood, whimpering like a dog after me: so I turned the boat round, rowed to the first steps, landed, and struck her two stinging slaps, one on each cheek.

While she cowered, surprised no doubt, I took her by the hand, led her back to the boat, rowed over to the Stamboul side, landed, and set off, still holding her hand, my object being to find some sort of house near by, not hopelessly eaten out by fire, in which to leave her: for in all Galata there was clearly none, and Pera, I thought, was too far to walk to. But it would have been better if I had gone to Pera, for we had to walk quite three miles from Seraglio Point all along the city battlements to the Seven-towers, she picking her barefooted way after me through the Sahara of charred stuff, and night now well arrived, the moon at large in the vast of heaven, rendering the lonesomeness of the ruins tenfold desolate, so that my bosom smote me then with bitterness, and I had a vision of myself that night which I will not write on paper. At last, however, pretty late in the evening, I got to see a mansion with a façade of green lattice-work, and a shaknisier, and terrace-roof, which had been hidden from me by the arcades of a bazaar—this bazaar being a

vast space at about the center of Stamboul, one of the largest of the bazaars, I should think—in the middle of which stood the mansion, the home of some pacha or vizier, for it had a very distinguished look in that place; and it seemed little injured, though the vegetation which had choked the bazaar was singed to black fluff, among which lay thousands of calcined bones of man, mule, camel, horse: for all was illumined in that lucid, yet so pensive and forlorn, moonlight, that Orient moonlight of mystery that illumines Persepolis, and Babylon, and ruined cities of the Anakim.

The house, I knew, would contain divans, *yatags*, cushions, foods, and a hundred luxuries still good, for it was all shut in by a wall, though the foliage over the wall had been singed away, and the gate, all charred, gave way at a push from my palm; and now I crossed a court to the house threw open a little lattice-door in the façade under the shaknisier, and entered. Here it was dark: and the instant that she, too, was within, out I slipped quick, slammed the door in her face, and hooked it upon her by a little hook over the latch.

I now walked out some yards beyond the court, then stopped in the bazaar, hearkening for her cry: but all was still; five minutes—ten—I waited: no sound; so now I continued my grum and melancholy way, hollow with hunger, intending to be off that night for Imbros.

But I had hardly advanced twenty steps, when I was aware of a strangled cry, apparently in mid-air behind me, and glancing back, beheld her through the gateway lying a white thing in black stubble-ashes, she having apparently jumped from a casement of lattice on a level with the little shaknisier-grating, through which once peeped bright eyes, twenty-five feet high.

I don't suppose that she was conscious of danger in jumping: for the laws of nature are new to her; and, having sought and found the opening, she may have just come naively after me as the cascade leaps and does not care. When I paced back and pulled at her arm, I found that she could not stand, her face screwed in mute pain, no moaning, her left foot bloody: and by the wounded foot I took her, and drew her so through the cinders of the court, and hurled her like a little cur with my whole force within the doorway, cursing her.

Now I would not trudge back to the ship, but struck a match, and went lighting up girandoles, cressets, candelabra, into a confusion of lights among a multitude of pale-tinted pillars, rose and azure, with verd-antique, olive, and Portoro marble, and serpentine; the mansion large: I having to traverse a desert of brocade-hangings, slim pillars, Broussa silks, before I spied a doorway behind a Smyrna *portière* at a staircase-foot, went up, and roamed some time about the house—windows with gilt grills, little furniture, but palatial spaces, hermit pieces of faïence, huge, antique, and arms, my footfalls muted in the Persian carpeting; till I passed along a gallery having only one window-grating that overlooked an inner court, and by this gallery entered the harem, which declared itself by a headier luxury, bric-à-bracerie, and baroqueness of manner; from which, descending a little stair behind a *portière*, I came into a species of larder paved with marble, in which grinned a negress in an indigo garb, her hair still adhering, and here an infinite supply of sweetmeats, French preserved-foods, sherbets, wines, and so on: so I put a number of things into a pannier, passed up again, found in the cavity of a garnet some of those pale cigarettes which drunken, then a jewelled chibouque two yards long, and tembaki; with all I descended by another stair, deposited them upon the steps of a kiosk of olive-marble in a corner of the court, passed up again, and brought down a *yatag* to recline on: and there by the kiosk-steps I ate and passed the night, smoking for hours in a state of lassitude, eyeing where, at the court's center, the alabaster of a square well blinks out white through a rankness of wild vine, weeds, acacias in flower, jasmines, roses, which overgrow both it and the kiosk and the whole court, raging too over the four-square arcade of Moorish arches round the court, under one of

which I had hung a lantern of crimson silk; and near two in the morning I dropped to sleep, a deeper peace of gloom now brooding where so long the hobgoblin Mogul of the moon had governed.

\* \* \*

When it was day I rose and made my way to the front, intending that that should be my final night in this place: for through the night, sleeping and waking, the thing which had taken place filled my brain, deepening from one depth of incredibility to a deeper, so that finally I arrived at a kind of conviction that it could be nothing but a drunken dream; but, as I opened my eyes afresh, the realization of that event flashed like a pang of lightning through my frame, and saying "I will go again to the far Orient, and forget," I set out from the court, not knowing what had become of her during the night; till, having arrived at the outer apartment, with a start I saw her lying there by the door, asleep sideways, head on arm, in the same spot where I had tossed her: so softly, softly, I stepped over her, got out, was off at a clandestine trot—the morning all in *fête*, very fresh and pure—and, after running two hundred yards to one of the bazaar-arches, I stopped, looking back to see if I was followed; but all that space was desolately empty, and I then walked on past the arch of ogives, the panorama of destruction now outspread before me—a few walls still standing, their windows framing the sky beyond, here and there a pillar or half-minaret, still some trunks without branches down within the Seraglio-walls, in Eyoub and Phanar branchless forests, on the northern horizon Pera still there; and, all between, blackness, stones, a rolling landscape of ravin, like the hilly pack-ice of the Pole, if its snow were ink; and to the right Scutari, black, laid low, with its suburb of tombs and some stumps of its woods, the sea brisk, blue-eyed, with its mob of *débris*-scum floating brown before the mouth of the Golden Horn: for I stood pretty uplifted at the middle of Stamboul, somewhere in the region of the Suleimanieh, or of Sultan-Selim as I judged, with vistas into abstract distances and mirage: but to me it looked too vast, too lonesome; and after advancing a score of yards beyond the bazaar, I yearned and turned back.

\* \* \*

I found the creature still asleep at the house-door, and, kicking her, woke her: on which she sprang up with a start of surprise and quite a sinuous agility, to stare there at me, till, separating reality from dream and habit, she realized me, and then immediately fell afresh, in pain: so I hauled her up, and made her limp after me through several halls to the inner court and the well, where I set her among the bush on the alabaster, took her foot in my lap, examined it, drew water, washed it, and bandaged it with a rag torn from my caftan-hem, now and again talking gruffly to her, so that she might no more follow me.

After which I had breakfast by the kiosk-steps, and, when I had finished, put a mass of truffled *foie gras* on a plate, brushed through the thicket to the well, and gave it her. She took it, but looked foolish, not eating, so with my forefinger I put some into her mouth, whereupon she fell to devouring it; I also gave her some ginger-bread a handful of bonbons, some Krishnu wine, and some anisette.

I then started out afresh, harshly telling her to stay there, and left her seated on the well, her hair hanging down the opening, she peering after me through the bush; but I had not half got to

the bazaar-portal, when, glancing anxiously, back, I saw that she was limping after me: so that this creature tracks me in the manner of a shell led away in the wake of a ship.

I now returned with her to the house, for it was necessary that I should excogitate some further method of dodging her. That was four days ago, and here I have stayed: for the house and court are sufficiently agreeable, and are a museum of *objets d'art*. It is settled, however, that tomorrow I be off to Imbros.

\* \* \*

It seems that she never wore, nor knew of, clothes, and it was only here and there that one could descry her ivory-brown color, the rest being crusted with dust like bottles long cobwebbed in cellars.

So I have dressed her, first sousing her with sponge and soap in lukewarm rose-water in the silver cistern of the harem-bath, a marbled apartment with a fountain and the intricate ceilings of these houses, and frescoes, and gilt texts of the Koran glinting on the marble and on the hangings of rose-silk. I had flung some clothes on a couch, and, having shewn her how to towel herself, made her step into a pair of the trousers called *shintiyan*, made of white-silk with yellow stripes, which, by a running string, I tied above the hills of her hips, then drawing up the bottoms to her knees, tied them there, so that their voluminous folds, overhanging to the ankles, have the look of a skirt; over this I put upon her a chemise, or quamis, of chiffon, reaching to the hips; then a jacket or vest of scarlet satin, embroidered in gold and precious stones, reaching to the waist, tight-fitting; and, making her lie on the couch, I slipped upon her little feet little baboosh-slippers, blue, then anklets, on her fingers rings, round her neck a necklace of sequins, finally dyeing her nails, which I cut, with henna; there remained her head, but with this I would have nothing to do, only pointing to the tarboosh which I had brought, to a kerchief, to some corals, and to the fresco of a woman on the wall, which, if she chose, she might copy; lastly, I pierced her ears with the silver needles which they used here, and after two hours of it left her.

An hour later I saw her in the arcade round the court, and, to my astonishment, she had a plait down her back, and round her brows a feredjeh, or hood, of sky-blue silk, precisely as in the picture.

\* \* \*

Here is a question the answer to which would be interesting to me: Whether or not for twenty years—or say rather twenty centuries—I have been stark mad, a raving maniac; and whether or not I am now suddenly sane, seated here writing in my right mind, my whole tone changed or speedily changing? And whether such change may be owing to the presence of only one other being on the sphere with me?

\* \* \*

This singular being! Where she has lived, and how, is a problem beyond all solving. She had, I say, never seen clothes: for when I set to dress her her perplexity was endless; moreover, during her twenty years she has never seen almonds, figs, nuts, liqueurs, chocolate, conserves, vegetables, sugar, oil, honey, sweetmeats, orange-sherbet, mastic, salt, raki, tobacco, for she has

shown perplexity at all these: but she has known and tasted *white wine*: I could see that. Here, then, is a mystery.

\* \* \*

I have not gone to Imbros, but remained here some days longer, taking stock of her.

I have permitted her to sit in a corner of the apartment at meal-times, not far from where I eat; and I have given her to eat.

She is wonderfully clever! I continually find that, after an incredibly brief time, she has adapted herself to this or that, already wearing her clothes with a certain coquetry, as though a clothes-wearer by birth; and, without in the least *seeming* observant—for she gives an impression of giddiness—she reckons me up, I am convinced, closely: knows when I am talking roughly, bidding her go, bidding her come, sick of her, tolerant of her, scorning her, cursing her; nay, if I even wish her to the devil, she sees, and will disappear. Yesterday I noticed something queer about her, and discovered that she had been staining her lids with kohol, like the *hanums*: so that, having found some, she must have guessed its use from the pictures: wonderfully clever! imitative as a mirror. Again, two forenoons ago, on seeing a kittur of mother-of-pearl, I played an air, sitting under the arcade; I could see her, meanwhile, behind one of the pillars on the opposite side of the court listening closely, and, I fancied, panting; and, on returning from a walk beyond the Phanar walls in the afternoon, I heard the same air coming out from the house, she repeating it faultlessly by ear; also, during the forenoon of the day before, I came upon her—for footsteps make no sound in this house—in the pacha's visitors'-hall and what was she at?—copying the postures of three dancing-girls frescoed there! so that she would seem to have a character as flighty as a butterfly's, and troubles about nothing.

\* \* \*

Now I know.

I had noticed that at the beginning of each meal she seemed to have something on her mind, going toward the door, hesitating as if to see whether I would follow, and then returning; and at length yesterday, after sitting to eat, she jumped up, uttering to my infinite surprise her first word—with a very experimental effort of the tongue, like a fledgling which tries the air: the word "*Come*."

That forenoon, on meeting her in the court, I had told her to repeat some words after me; but she had made no attempt, as if shy to break the silence of her life; and now I felt some species of childish pleasure in hearing her utter that word, frequently no doubt heard from me: so, after hurriedly eating, I went with her, saying to myself "She must be about to shew me the food to which she is accustomed, and that may solve her origin."

And so it has proved. I have now discovered that, to the moment when she saw me, she had tasted only her mother's milk, dates, and that white wine of Ismid which the Koran permits.

As it was getting dark, I lit and took with me the red-silk lantern, and we set out, she leading, walking confoundedly last, slackening when I swore at her, then getting fast again: and she walks with a kind of levity, flightiness, liberated *furore*, very difficult to describe, as though space were a luxury to be revelled in. By what instinctive cleverness or vigor of memory she found her way I cannot tell; but she led me such a walk that night, miles, miles, till I became furious, darkness having soon fallen, with only a faint moon obscured by cloud, and a drizzle

which haunted the air, she without light climbing and picking her thinly-slipped steps over piles of stone with a flying ply of foot, I anon dipping a foot with horror into one of those little ponds which always spotted the Stamboul streets. In the moments when I was nearer her I would see her peer upward toward Pera, as if that were a known landmark, would note the constant aspen caprices of the coral drops rocking in her ears, the nimble of her limbs, and would wonder with a groan if Pera was our goal.

Our goal was even beyond Pera. When we had got to the Golden Horn, she pointed to my caique which lay at Old Seraglio Steps, and over the water we went, she lying quite at ease now, her face at the level of the water in the center of the caique's crescent -shape, as nonchalant as a *hanum* of old, engaged in some escapade, going over to the Babel of Galata mod that north bank of the Horn.

Then through Galata we passed, I already cursing the journey; and, following the line of the coast and that steep thoroughfare of Pera, we came at last, almost in the country, to a great wall, and to the entrance to a great terraced garden, whose limits were invisible, many of the avenues being still intact.

I knew it at once—had laid a special fuse-train in the palace at the top of the terraces: the royal palace, Yildiz.

Up and up we mounted through the grounds, a few unburned persons in rags of uniform still discernible at random, as the lantern swung past them: a musician in blue, a fantassin in scarlet, three domestics of the palace in red-and-orange. . . .

The palace itself was all a ruin, together with all its surrounding barracks, mosque, seraglio, and, when we got to the top of the grounds, presented a picture very like those I have seen of the ruins of Persepolis, only that here the columns, both standing and fallen, were innumerable, and all more or less blackened; and through doorless doorways we moved, down flights of four or five steps immensely-wide, and up them, and over strewn courtyards, by tottery fragments of arcades, all roofless, and tracts of charcoal reaching away between the relics of avenues of columns, I following, expectant, her feet very keen now. Finally, down a flight of narrow steps, very dislocated, we jolted to a level which, I thought, must be the floor of the palace vaults: for at the foot of the steps we stood on a plain of plaster, which shewed the marks of the flames; and over this the girl spurted, pointing with eager recognition to a hole in it, and disappeared down the hole.

When I, on following to the hole, lowered the lantern into it, I saw that the drop down was about eight feet, made less than six feet by a heap of stone-rubbish below, the falling of which had caused the hole: and it was by standing on this rubbish-heap, I knew at once, that she had managed to climb out under the sky.

Dropping down now, I found myself in a cellar with a floor of marl, fusty and damp, but so very vast in area, that even in the day-time, I believe, I could not have made out its limits: for I think that it extends under the whole palace and its environs—a stretch of space of which, with the lanterns, I could only see a little portion.

She still leading me keenly on, I presently came upon a region of boxes, each about two feet square, nine inches high, made of flimsy laths, packed to the roof; and two hundred feet from these I saw, where she pointed, a region of bottles, bottles with paunches in chemises of wicker-work, stretching away into dimness and invisibility: the boxes, of which a throng lay broken open, as they can be by just wrenching at a crack, containing dates, and the bottles, of which many thousands lay empty, containing old Ismidt wine. Some fifty or sixty casks—covered with mildew—some broken bits of furniture, a cube of parchments—large as a cottage, rotting,

curling—showed that this cellar had been more or less loosely used for the storage of unwanted odds-and-ends.

It had been used, too, as a domestic prison: for in the lane betwixt the region of boxes and the region of bottles there lay the skeleton of a woman, the details of whose costume were still appreciable, she having thin shackles of brass on her wrists: and when I had scrutinized her I knew the history of the being standing silent by my side.

This being is a daughter of the Sultan, as I assumed when I had once understood that the skeleton is both the skeleton of her mother, and the skeleton of the Sultana.

That the skeleton was her mother is evident: for when the cloud came, twenty years since, the woman was in the prison, which must have been air-tight, and with her the girl; and since the girl is certainly not over twenty—she looks younger—she must have been either unborn or a baby: but a baby would hardly be imprisoned with another than its mother. I rather think that the girl was unborn at the moment of the cloud and was born in the cellar.

That the mother was the Sultana is evident from her fragments of dress, and the symbolic character of her every ornament—crescent ear-rings, heron-feather, and the blue campaca enameled in a bracelet—this poor woman having perhaps been the victim of some fit of imperial spleen, envenomed by some domestic misdemeanor which may have been pardoned in a day, had not death overtaken her master and humanity.

There are five steps near the center of the cellar, leading imp to a trap-door of iron, at present fastened, this apparently being the only opening into this hole: and this trap-door must have been so almost air-tight as to exclude the intrusion of the poison in deadly quantity.

But how rare—how strange—the coincidence of chances here. For, if the trap-door was quite air-tight, I cannot think that the supply of oxygen in the cellar, large as it was, would have been sufficient to last the creature twenty years, to say nothing of what her mother breathed before death: for I assume that the woman must have continued to live some time in her dungeon, sufficiently long, at least, to teach her child to acquire its fare of dates and wine: so that the door must have been only just hermetic enough to block the poison, yet admit some oxygen—unless the place was quite air-tight at the time of the catastrophe, and some crack which I have not observed, due perhaps to earthquake, opened to admit oxygen and some sunlight after the poison was dissipated: in any case—the all-but-infinite rarity of the probability!

Thinking these things I climbed out, and we walked to Pera, where I slept in a white-stone house in five or six acres of garden overlooking the cemetery of Kassim, having pointed out to the creature another house in which to sleep.

This creature! what a history! After existing twenty years in a sunless universe hardly nine acres wide, she one day saw the only sky which she knew collapse at one point! a hole opens into yet a universe beyond! It was I who had arrived and fired a city, and set her free.

\* \* \*

Ah, I see something now! I see it was for this that I was preserved: I to be a species of First-man, and this creature to be my Eve! That is it! "*The White*" does not admit defeat—would recommence the race—at the final, the eleventh hour, in spite of everything, would twist rout into victory and outwit that Other.

However, if this be so—and I seem to see it—then, in that White scheme is a flaw; at *one* point that elaborate Forethought rambles: for I am such, that I choose to refuse.

Certainly, in this matter I am on the side of “Black”: and since it depends absolutely upon me, this time Black wins.

No more men down this way after me, ye Powers! To *you* the question may be nothing more than a gaming-table exhilaration as to the outcome of your aërial squabble, but to the poor beggars who had to bear the racks, rack-rents, wrongs, sorrows, horrors, it was strong stuff, you know! Oh, the deep, deep pain—the commonness and dullness—of that bungling ant-hill, now happily wiped out! My darling Clodagh—not idea! Those lubber “lords” and “ladies” of my clay! And there was a man named Judas who “betrayed” that gentle Jesus, and some Roman dog named Galba, and a French devil, Gilles de Raiz: and the rest were much the same. No, not a good race, that small infantry that called itself Man; and here, falling on my knees before God and Devil, I vow: Never through me shall it sprout and fester afresh.

\* \* \*

I cannot realize her! Not at all, at all, at all! If she is out of my sight five minutes, I fall to doubting her realness; if I lose her during two hours, all the old feelings, like certainties, recur, that I have merely been dreaming—that this appearance cannot be an objective fact of experience, since the impossible is impossible.

Seventeen years, long years of madness. . . .

\* \* \*

Tomorrow I start for Imbros: and whether this being chooses to follow me, or whether she stays here, I will see her from the moment I am there no more.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

She must rise very early. I who am now regularly on the palace-roof at daybreak, from the silks of the galleries, or from the steps of the telescope-kiosk, may detect her away down below, a microscopic form running about the sward, or staring up in wonder at the palace from the lake’s border.

When three months ago she came with me to Imbros, I left her in that house in the village with the green jalousies facing the beach, where there was everything that she would need; but I knew that, like all the houses down there now, it leaked profusely: so the next day. I went down to that stair cut through the cliff-rock south of the village, climbed it, and half a mile onward found a park and villa which I had seen from the sea, the villa almost intact, strongly built of porphyry, though small, and very like a Western house, with shingles, and three gables, so that I think it may have been the yali of some Englishman, for it has English rooks, though the only person I observed there was an Aararat Kurd, with ankle-pantaloons and shoulder-cloak; and all in the park, and all about the rock-steps, growths of mandragora, and from the rock-steps to the house an avenue of acacias, mossy underfoot, that join in an arch overhead, the house standing about four yards from the brink of the sea-cliff, whence one can see the *Speranza’s* main-topmast in her haven. Then after examining the place I went down again to the village and her house; but she was not there; and two hours long I paced about among the bush of these amateur little alleys and flat-roofed houses without windows (though some have terrace-roofs and a rare aperture),

whose yellows, reds, blues, once crude, look now like sunset hues when the flush has just faded, and they faint away. When at last she came running with her lips split, I took her up the rock-steps to the villa; and there she has lived, one of its roof-tips, I now find, being just visible from the northeast corner of the palace-roof, two miles from it.

That evening afresh, when I was leaving her, she made an attempt to follow me; but I was resolved to end it then: so, plucking a sassafras-whip, I cut her deep, three times, until she ran crying.

\* \* \*

So, then, what is my fate henceforth?—to think always, from sun to moon, and from moon to sun, of one only thing, and that thing a mite for the microscope? to evolve into a Paul Pry to spy upon the hoppings of one sparrow, like some fatuous gossip of old, his greed to peep, his sole faculty to sniff, his glee and his victory to unearth the infinitely insignificant? I would kill her first!

\* \* \*

I am convinced that she is no stay-at-home, but roams continually over the island: for thrice, roaming myself, I have lighted upon her, she that first time rushing with a flushed face, bent upon striking down a butterfly with a bush held in the left hand (for both hands she uses with dexterity)—about ten in the forenoon it was, in her park, at the lower end where grasses grow rank, and there is a hypertrophy of fernery luxuriating between the tree-trunks, and obscurity, and the broken wall of a funeral-kiosk sunk askew der moss, creepers, and wild flowers, behind which I peeped concealed, soaked with dew. She has had the assurance to modify the dress I put upon her, and was herself a butterfly: for, instead of the shintiyān, she had on baggy pantaloons of azure silk, a zouave of saffron satin hardly reaching to the waist, no feredjé, but a fez with violet tassel, her plait quite tidy, but her forehead-hair wanton, the fez cocked backward, while I got glimpses of her careening heels lifting out of the dropping slipper-sole and she is pretty clever, but not clever enough, for that butterfly escaped. and in one instant I saw her alter into weary and triste, for in Nature is nothing more fickle than that face, which is like a landscape swept with cloud-shadows on a sunny day. Fast beat my heart that morning, owing to my consciousness that, while I saw, I was unseen, yet might be seen.

And three weeks afterwards I came upon her at noon a good way up yonder, west of the palace, asleep on her arm in an alley between trellises, where rioting wild-vine that overgrew them buried her in gloom; but I had not been peering through the bush three minutes, when up she starts to look ardently about, her quick consciousness, I suspect, having detected a presence, though I think that I contrived to win away unseen. I saw that she keeps her face pretty dirty, all about her mouth being dry-stained with a polychrome of grape, *mûrs*, and other colored juices, like slobbering *gamins* of old; I could also see that her nose and face are at present sprinkled with little freckles.

Five evenings since, on seeing her a third time, I observed that the primitive instinct to represent the world in *pictures* has been working within her: for she was drawing. It was down in the village, whither I had strolled, and on coming out upon a street from an alley, saw her near, pulled up short, and peered at her on her face all among bush, a bit of board before her, in her fingers a chalk-splinter, and intently she was drawing, her tongue-tip travelling along her short

upper-lip from side to side, regularly as a pendulum, her fez tipped far back, her left calf swinging upward from the knee. She had drawn her yali, and now, as I could see by peering far forward, was drawing the palace from memory, for there were the waving lines meant for the platform-steps, the two pillars, the battlements of the outer court, and before the portal—my turban reaching above the roof, my two sheaves of beard sweeping below my knees—myself.

Something pricked me, and I could not resist uttering a “Hi!”, whereupon she scrambled like a chamois upright, I pointing to the drawing, smiling.

This being has a way of pressing her lips mincingly, while she shakes her face at me, cooing a fond sort of laugh—as she cooed now.

And I: “You are a clever little wretch, you know”—she cocking her right eye, trying to divine my mind with a kind of smile.

“Yes, a clever little wretch,” I went on in a rough voice, “clever as a serpent, no doubt: for in the first case it was the Black who used the serpent, and now it is the White: but it will not work this time. Do you know what you are to me, you? My Eve!—a little fool, a little piebald frog like you. But it will not do at all! A nice race it would be with you for mother, and me for father, wouldn’t it?—half-criminal like the father, half-idiot like the mother: like the last, in short. They used to say, in fact, that the offspring of a brother and sister was always weak-headed and from such a wedlock came our race, so no wonder it was what it was: and so it would have to be again now. Well, no, whatever cares we take, the White will trick us: so no risks—unless we have the children, and cut their throats at birth; but *you* would not like that at all, I know and on the whole, it would not work, for the White would be striking a poor man blind with His lightning, if I tried that on. No, then: the modern Adam is some six hundred thousand years wiser than the first—you see? less instinctive, more rational. The first ‘disobeyed’ by commission; I by omission; only his ‘disobedience’ was a ‘sin’, mine is a heroism. I have not been a particularly ideal species of beast so far, you know: but in me, Adam Jeffson—I swear it—the race shall at last attain to nobility, the nobility of self-extinction. I shall turn out trumps; shall prove myself stronger than Tendency, World-Genius, Providence, Currents of Fate, White Power, Black Power, or whatever is the name of it. No more Clodaghs, Borgias, ‘lords’, Napoleons, Peaces, Rockefellers, Hundred-Years’ Wars—you see?”

She kept her eye obliquely cocked upward like a little fool, wondering, no doubt, what I was saying.

“And, talking of Clodagh,” I went on, “I shall call you that henceforth, to keep me reminded. So that is your name—not Eve—but Clodagh, who was a Poisoner, you see? She poisoned a poor man who trusted her: and that is your name now—not Eve, but Clodagh—to remind me, you most perilous little speckled viper! And in order that I may no more see your foolish little pretty phiz, I decree that, for the future, you wear a *yashmak* to cover up your lips, which, I can see, were meant to be seductive, though dirty; and you can leave the blue-blue eyes, and the little nose, with the freckles on its white skin, uncovered, if you like, they being commonplace enough. Meantime, if you care to see how to draw a palace—I will show you.”

Before I stretched my hand she was presenting the board—so that she had perceived something of my meaning! but somewhat of guttural in my tone had wounded her, for she presented, it looking glum, her under-lip pushing crooked out, very pathetically, I must say, as usual when she is inclined to cry.

Well, in a few strokes I drew the palace, and herself standing, at the portal betwixt the pillars: and now great was her satisfaction, for when she pointed to the figure and then to herself

interrogatively, and I nodded “yes,” she went cooing her fond monotone with closed lips mincing; and it is clear that, in spite of my beatings, she but slightly fears me.

Before I could move away I felt some rain-drops, and down in some seconds rushed a shower; also I saw that the vault was fast darkening, so I darted into the nearest of the piggeries, leaving her glancing sideways skyward with the quaintest interest in the rain: for she is not yet familiarized with things, and seems to regard them with an artless seriousness and curiosity, as though they were living things, comrades as good as herself. Even when she presently joined me, she reached out to feel the drops.

Now there tumbled out a thunder-clap, a wind was blowing up, rain spraying about me: for these wee box-houses’ windowpanes (made, I believe, of paper saturated in almond-oil), have long disappeared, and rains, penetrating by roof and rare window, splash the bones of men: so I was gathering up my skirts to rush toward other shelter, when she spurted from the door to me, saying in her experimental utterance that word of hers: “*Come*,” and ran out in advance, while I, tossing my external robe over my turban, followed, to urge my way against the scourge of the rain-wash.

She took the way, by the horse-pond, through an alley between two waifs, then down a path through wood to the rock-steps; and up we ran, and along the hill, to her yali, which is a mile nearer the village than the palace is, though by the time we pelted into its shelter we were wet to the skin.

Sudden darkness had come; but she quickly unearthed some matches, lit one, looking at it with a certain air of meditation; then applied it to a candle and to a bronze Western lamp on the table, which I had taught her to oil and light; and when I pointed to a mangal like one which she had seen me light to warm bath-waters in Stamboul, she ran to the kitchen, ran back with some sticks, and very clearly lit them. And there for hours I sat that night reading (the first time for many a year): reading a book by the poet Milton, found in a bookcase on the other side of the Western fire-place by which the mangal stood: and most strange, most novel, I found that oratory about Black Power and White Power and warring angels that night, while the storm raged: for this man, though scant in brain-power like the ancients in general, had evidently taken no end of pains with his book, and done it wonderfully well, too, making the thing hum; and I could not conceive why he should have been at that trouble, unless it was for the reason that I reared the palace—some spark in a man—and he would be like the Gods—but that is vanity.

Well, there is a venom about the tempests recently that really transcends bounds; I believe I have noted it in these sheets before—I never could have convinced of turbulences so huge, such as I heard them that midnight seated there smoking a chibouque, reading, listening to the bawlings and lamentations of that haunted air, shrinking from it, fearing even for the *Speranza* by her quay in the harbor, and for the palace-pillars. But what astonished me was that female thing: for after being seated on the ottoman to my right some time, she dropped sideways asleep, not the least fear about her, though I should have thought that nervousness at such a turmoil would be so certain to occur in her; and whence she has this nonchalant confidence in the cosmos into which she has so suddenly come I do not know: for it is as though someone inspired her with the mood of lightness, saying “Be of good cheer, and care not a fig about anything: for God is God.”

I heard the ocean hawking hoarse, hurtling like heavy ordnance against the bluffs below, where the seas meet the southern of the two claws of land that form the harbor; and the thought came into my head: “If, now, I taught her to speak, to read, I could sometimes make her read to me.”

The winds were wilfully wrestling with the villa to wring it away into the drear infinities of the night, and I could not but heave a sigh: "Alas for us two cast-aways of our race, pieces of flotsam tossed up here a moment, ah me, on this coast of the æons, soon to be hauled back, O eternity, down the Bottomless of you turbid maw; and upon what strand—who shall say?—shall she next be tossed, and I, separated then perhaps by the stretch of the astral tract?"; and such a pity, and a wringing of the heart, seemed in things, that a tear parted from me that dismal midnight.

She started up at a wrath of more appalling volume, rubbing her eyes, with untidied hair (it must have been about midnight), listening a minute with that demure droll interest of hers to the turmoil; then smiled to me; rose then and left the room, presently to come again with a pomegranate and some almonds on a plate, some delicious rich liquor, too, in an Ægean cruche, and a silver cup, gilt inside, standing in a zarf; these she placed on the table at my hand, I murmuring "Hospitality."

And now she stood looking at the book, which I read as I ate, with her left eye-lid lowered, trying to divine its use, I suppose. Most things she understands quick, but this must have baffled her; for to see one looking fixedly at a thing, and not know what one is looking at it for, must be very disconcerting.

So I held it up before her, saying: "Shall I teach you to read it? If I did, how would you repay me, you Clodagh?"

Upon which she cocks her eye, trying to comprehend, the candle-flame, moved by the wind like a brush which paints, flickering on her face, though every cranny was closed; and, God knows, at that moment I pitied the dumb waif alone in the whole globe with me.

"Perhaps, then," I said, "I will teach you. You are a pitiable little derelict of your race, you know; and two hours every day I will let you come to the palace, and will teach you. But be sure, be careful, if there be danger, I will kill you—assuredly—without fail; and let me begin with a lesson now: say after me: 'White.' "

I took her hand, got her to understand that I wanted her to repeat.

"White," said I

"Hwhite," says she.

"Power," said I.

"Pow-wer," said she.

"White Power," said I.

"Hwhite Pow-wer," said she.

"White Power shall not," said I.

"Hwhite Pow-wer shall not," said she.

"Prevail," said I.

"Fffail," said she.

"Pre-vail!" said I.

"Pe-vvvail," said she.

"White Power shall not prevail," said I.

"Hwhite Pow-wer shall not—fffail," said she.

A thunder which roared as she uttered it seemed to me to go guffawing through the cosmos, and a minute I gazed upon her face with positive fear; till, starting up, I thrust her from my path, and darted forth to battle my way to the palace and my bed.

Such was the ingratitude and fatality which my first attempt, five nights since, to teach her met with; and now it remains to be seen whether my pity for her dumbness, or some servile tendency

toward fellowship in myself, will result in any further lesson. Certainly, I think not: for though I have given my word. . . we shall see.

Surely her presence in the world with me—for no doubt it is that—has worked some profound modifications in my mood: for gone now are those storm-tossed hours when, stalking like a cock, I flaunted my monarchy in the face of the heavens with blasphemies, or else dribbled, shaking up my body in a lewd dance, or was off to reduce some city to ashes and revel in redness and the chucklings of Hell, or rolled in the drunkenness of drugs. It was frenzy!—I see now—it was “not good,” “not good.” And it rather looks as if it were past—or passing. I have clipped my beard and hair, taken out the ear-rings, and thought of modifying my raiment . . . I will watch to see whether she comes loitering down there round the gate of the lake.

\* \* \*

Her progress is like . . .

\* \* \*

It is some nine months since I wrote that “Her progress is like . . .” and have since had no impulse to write; but I was thinking just now of the tricks and eccentricities of my memory, and, seeing the old book, will record it here: for I have lately been attempting to recall the name of my old home in Britain, where I was born and grew up, and it is gone, gone; maybe it will come back to me later: for I can’t say that my memory is bad; there are things—trivial little things sometimes—that come back to me with considerable vividness: for instance, I remember to have met in Paris (I think), long before the poison-cloud, a little Brazilian boy of the color of coffee-and-milk, whom she now constantly recalls to me: he wore his hair so close-cut, that one could spy the fish-white flesh betwixt, delighted to play by himself about the stairs of the hotel costumed in the spectral balloon-dress of a Pierrot, and I have the impression now that he must have had very large ears—clever as a flea he was, able to gabble six or seven languages, as it were by nature, without having any suspicion that that was at all extraordinary. She has the same light, unconscious, nonchalant cleverness, and easy way of life. It is little more than a year since I commenced to teach her, and already she can speak with a considerable vocabulary (though she does not pronounce the letter “r”); for chemistry she has a craving, a rage, and no little knowledge of it; she has also read, or rather devoured, many books; can write, draw, play the harp: and all she does without effort, rather with that flighty naturalness with which larks took to the wing.

What made me teach her to read was this: one afternoon, some fourteen months ago, I from the roof-kiosk saw her down at the lake-brink, a book in hand, and as she had beheld me looking steadily at books, so she was looking steadily at it, with her head held sideward, rather pathetic, so that I had to laugh: for I spied her through the glass; and whether she is the simplest little goose or the craftiest of rascals I am not yet sure. If I thought that she has the least design upon my honor, it would be ill for her.

I went to Gallipoli for three days in May, and came back bringing a pretty little caique, a crescent of the color of the moon, which I fetched up in the motor to the lake after two days’ labor in cutting a passage through bush-thicket; and it has pleased me to see her lie amid the silks at its middle, while I, plying the paddle a little, heard her say her first words— between eight and ten in the evening it was, though later it became 10 a.m. to noon when the reading began, we

seated then on the palace-steps before the portal, her mouth covered with the yashmak, the lesson-book a Bible with large letters which I chanced to find at her yali. *Why* she must wear the yashmak she has never once asked; and how much she conjectures, knows, or intends, I have no notion, continually questioning myself as to whether she is all simplicity, or all depth.

That she is conscious of some profound contrast in our structure I cannot doubt: for that I have a long beard, and she none at all, is among the most obvious of facts.

\* \* \*

I have wondered whether a certain *Western-ness*—a growing modernity of tone—may be the result, as far as I am concerned, of her presence with me? I do not know. . . .

\* \* \*

There is the sheen of a lake just visible in the north forest from the palace-top, and in its fish like carp, tench, roach, &c., so in May I searched for a tackle-shop in the Gallipoli Fatmehbazaar, and got four 12-foot rods, with reels, silk-line, quill-floats, some silk-worm gut, with a packet of No. 7 hooks, and split-shot for sinkers; and, since red-worms, maggots, gentles are common on the island, I felt sure of more fish than I wanted, which was none at all: so, for the amusement, I fished several times, lying at my length in a patch of long-grass over-waved by an enormous cedar, where the bank is steep, and the water deep; and one afternoon she was suddenly there with me, questioned me with her eyes, and, when I consented stayed: so presently I said I would teach her bottom-angling, and sent her heels flying up to the palace for a second rod and tackle.

But that day nothing was done: for, after teaching her to thread the worm and put the gentles on the hooks, I sent her to hunt for worms to chop up for ground-baiting the pitch for the next afternoon, and when this was done it was dinnertime: so I sent her home, for I was then giving the lessons in the morning.

The next day, however, I found her at the bank, taught her to take the sounding for adjusting the float, and she lay down not far from me, holding the rod. So I said to her: “Well, this is better than living in a cellar for years, with nothing to do but walk up and down, sleep, and consume dates and Ismid wine.”

“Yes!” says she.

“Year after year!” I said: “how did you bear it?”

“I was not closs,” says she.

“Did you never suspect that there was a world outside that cellar?” I said.

“No,” says she, “or, lather, yes: but I did not suppose that it was *this* world—another where he lived.”

“He who?”

“You ask? He who told me—Oh! a bite!”

I saw her float bob under, so, spurting to her, taught her how to strike and play it; and though it turned out to be only a tiny barbel, she was in ecstasies, stooping upon it on her palm, murmuring her fond coo.

Then, rebaiting, we lay again; and I said: “But what a life; no exit, no prospect, no hope—”

“Plenty of *hope!*” says she.

“Heavens! of what?”

“I knew vely well that something was lipening over the cellar, or under, or aloud, and would come to pass at a certain fixed hour, and that I should see it, and feel it, and it would be vely nice.”

“Well, you had to wait for it anyway. Didn’t those years seem *long*?”

“No—sometimes—not often. I was always occupied.”

“In doing what?”

“Eating, dlinking, lunning, talking—”

“To *yourself*?”

“Not to myself.”

“To whom, then?”

“Why, to the one that told me when I was hungry, and placed the dates there.”

“I see. . . . Don’t wriggle about, or you will never catch any fish: the maxim of angling is ‘Study to be quiet’—”

“O! another!” she called, and this time, all alone, very agilely landed a roach.

And presently I: “But do you mean that you were never sad?”

“Sometimes I would sit and cly,” says she—“I did not know why. But if that was ‘sadness,’ I was never miselable, never, never. And if I died, it did not last long, I would fall to sleep, for my love would lock me in his lap, and kiss me.”

“Which *‘love’*?”

“You ask that? But you know! He who told me when I was hungry, and of the thing that was lipening outside the cellar.”

“Aha! I see. . . . But in that darkness—were you never afraid?”

“*I!* Of what?”

“Of the unknown.”

“Now, how could I be aflaid? The known was the vely opposite of tellible: hunger and dates, thirst and wine, desire to lun and space to lun in, desire to sleep and dleams, yes, dleams! dleams! in sleep: the opposite of tellible; and the unknown was even less tellible than the known: for it was the nice thing that was lipening outside the cellar. How could I be—?”

“Ah, yes,” said I, “you are a clever little being, no doubt, but your continual fluttering about is fatal to all angling. Isn’t it in your nature to keep still a minute? And as to your habits in the cellar—?”

“Another!” she cried with a happy laugh, landing a young chub; and that afternoon caught seven to my one.

\* \* \*

Another day I took her from the pitch to one of the kitchens in the village with some of the fish, until then always thrown away, and taught her cooking: for the only cooking-implement in the palace is the silver alcohol-lamp for coffee and chocolate; so we both scrubbed the utensils, and boil and fry I taught her, and the making of a sauce from vinegar, bottled olives, and American butter from the *Speranza*, and the boiling of rice mixed with flour for ground-baiting our pitch; upon which she, at first astonished, was presently all deft housewifeliness, breathless officiousness, and of her own instinctiveness grated some almonds lying there, with which to sprinkle the fried carp. We ate them sitting on the floor together: the first new food, I suppose, save fruits, tasted by me for twenty-one years; nor did I find it disagreeable.

The next day she came up to the palace reading a book which turned out to be a cookery-book in English, found at her yali; and a week later she appeared, out of hours, presenting me a dish of yellow delf containing a mess of gorgeous colors—a boiled chub buried beneath red of pepper, fragments of saffron, a greenish sauce, and almonds, but I sent her away, and would have none of her, or of her dish of fish.

\* \* \*

Two miles up, west of the palace, is a ruin in forest, I think of a mosque, though only three pieces of pillars under creepers, and the weedy floor, with the courtyard and steps, remain, before it being an avenue of cedars, the path between the trees choked with long-grass and wild rye reaching to my middle; and here I saw one day a disc of brass, bossed in the middle, which may have been either a shield or part of an antique cymbal, with rings running round it from middle to circumference: so the next day I brought nails, a hammer, a saw, and a box of paints from the *Speranza*, painted the rings in different colors, cut down a lime-trunk, nailed the disc to it, and planted it before the steps: for I said I would make a bull's-eye, and do firing-practice down the avenue; and this the evening afterwards I was doing at four hundred feet, startling the island with that unusual alarum, when up she comes peering with inquiring eyes: at which I was cross, because my arm, long unused, was firing wide; but I was too proud to say anything, let her look, and soon she understood, laughing every time I made a considerable miss, until at last I turned upon her saying: "If you think it so easy, you may try."

She had been wanting to try, for she came spryly to the offer; and after I had opened and showed her the mechanism, the cartridges, and how to shoot, I put into her hands one of the *Speranza* Colt's: upon which she took her bottom-lip between her teeth, shut her left eye, vaulted out the revolver to the level of her intense right eye, and sent a ball through the center of the boss.

However, it was a fluke-shot, for I had the satisfaction of seeing her miss every one of the other five, except the last, which hit the black. That, however, was three weeks since, and now my hitting record is forty percent, and hers ninety-six—most extraordinary: so that it is clear that thus creature is the *protégée* of someone, and favoritism is in the world.

\* \* \*

Her book of books is the chemistry-book, and next the Old Testament. Sometimes, at noon or afternoon, I may look abroad from the roof or galleries, and see a remote figure seated on the sward beneath the shade of plane or cedar: and I can always divine that the book she cons there, away from her laboratory, is the Bible—like an old Rabbi: has a passion for stories, and there finds a store.

Three nights ago when it was already quite late, and the moon very glorious, I noted her moving homewards close to the lake, and howled down to her, intending to say "Good night"; but she thought that I had called her and came: and sitting out on the stop step, we talked for hours, she without the yashmak.

And, talking about the Bible, says she: "What did Cain to Abel?"

"Knocked him over," I replied, liking to use such idioms, with the double object of teaching, and teasing her.

"Over what?" says she.

“Over his heels,” I said.

“I do not comprehend!”

“He killed him, then.”

“That I know. But how did Abel *feel*?”

“Oh, well,” I said, “you see bones all round you: the same thing happened to them as to a fish when it lies all still.”

“And the men and the fish feel the same after?”

“Precisely the same—lie in a stark trance, and dream a nonsense-dream.”

“That is not dreadful. Why were men so afraid?”

“Because they were all such cowards.”

“Oh, not all! not all! far from cowards.”

(This girl, I know not with what motive, has now definitely set herself up against me as the defender of the dead race with every chance she is at it).

“Many, anyway,” I said: “tell me one who was not afraid—”

“Why, they fought in wars—for nothing,” says she: “look at Isaac, when Abrahah laid him on the wood to kill him, he did not jump up and run to hide.”

“Well, but,” I said, “in books you read of the best people, but there were millions of others—especially about the time of the cloud—on a lower level—common, dull, lubberly, mean, debased, diseased, making the earth a murrain of vices and crimes.

This she did not immediately answer, seated with her back half-toward me, cracking almonds between her teeth, continually hitting one step with the ball of her stretched slipper, her fez and corals reflected as a blotch of florid red in the gold; then she bent aside and drank wine from the gold Javan goblet which I had brought from the temple of Boro Budor, her head covered by it; then, the little hairs at her lip-corners still wet, says she: “Vices and climes, climes and vices—always the same. But was that the point? The point was their cleverness—to find out what water is made of—to fly on those things—what a pretty, witty thing a ship is!—to find out that the atmosphere of Mars has more oxygen than ours—to talk across the continents—how inspired! If they were clever enough for all that, in time they would have been clever enough to find out how to live together. What were these climes and vices?”

“Robberies of a hundred sorts, murders of—”

“What made them *do* them?”

“Their lubber souls.”

“But *you* are of them, *I* am, yet you and I live here together, and do no vices and climes.”

Her astonishing shrewdness! “No,” I said, “we lack *motive*. There is no danger that we should hate each other, for we have plenty of dates, wines, and thousands of things—our danger is rather the other way: but *they* hated because they were numerous, and there arose among them a question of dates and wine.”

“Was there not enough land to grow dates and wine for all?”

“There was—yes, much more than enough; but some got hold of lots of it, and, as the rest felt the pinch of scarcity, there arose a pretty state of things—including the dulness and commonness, the vices and crimes.”

“Ah, but then,” says she, “it was not to their bad souls that the vices and climes were due, but to this question of land. If there had been no such question, there could have been no vices and climes, since you and I, who are just like them, do no vices and climes here, where there is no such question.”

The limelight of her mind! Right into the heart of a matter does her wit drive quick.

“That may be so,” I said; “but there *was* that question of land, as there always must be where millions with varying degrees of greed and luck and cunning live together.”

“Oh, not necessarily!” she cried pressingly: “not at all, since there is more land than enough: for, if there should spring up more men now, and they, having the experience of the past at their hand, made an arrangement among themselves that the first who tried to take more than he could work should be sent to glean a nonsense-glean, the question could never again arise!”

“It arose before—it would arise again.”

“But no! I can guess how it arose before: the land was at first so very, very much more than enough for all, that the first men did not take the trouble to make an arrangement among themselves: and afterwards the habit of carelessness was confirmed; until at last the very original carelessness must have come to have the look of an arrangement. But now, if more men would spring, they would be taught—”

“Ah, but no more men will *spring*, you—”

She was silent awhile; then: “There is no telling; I sometimes feel as if they must, and, shall: the trees bloom, the thunder rolls, the air makes me lurch and leap, the ground is full of fruitfulness, and I hear the voice of the Lord God walking all among the trees of the forests.”

As she uttered this, I could see her under-lip push out askew and shiver, as when she is nigh to crying, and her eyes spring liquid; but in a moment more she looked at me full and smiled, so mobile is her countenance; and, as she looked, it suddenly struck me what a noble structure of a brow the creature owns, almost pointed at the uplifted summit, and broadening down bell-shaped, draped in strings of frizzy hair, which anon she shakes away with her head.

“Clodagh,” I said after some minutes—“do you know why I called you Clodagh?”

“No? Tell me?”

“Because once I had a lover called Clodagh, and she was a . . .”

“But tell me first,” she cried: “how did one know one’s lover, one’s wife, from all the others? There were many faces—all alike—”

“Oh, there were little differences.”

“Still, it must have been very clever to tell: I can hardly fancy any face, except yours and mine.”

“Because you are a little goose, you see.”

“What was a goose like?”

“Thing like a butterfly, only bigger, and it kept its fingers spread out, with a skin between.”

“Really? How capricious! And I am like that?—But what were you saying that your lover, Clodagh, was?”

“A Poisoner.”

“Poisoner . . . And you call *me* Clodagh?”

“To remind me: lest you—lest you—should become my—lover, too.”

“I *am* your lover.”

“What, girl?”

“Do I not love you, who are mine?”

“Come, come, don’t be a little—Clodagh was a *poisoner*. . . .”

“Why was she? Had she not enough dates and wine?”

“She had, yes: but she wanted more, more, the village bumpkin.”

“So the vices and climes were not confined to those that lacked things, but were done by the others, too?”

“Aye.”

“Then I see how it was!”

“How was it?”

“The others had got *spoiled*: the vices and climes must have commenced with those who lacked things, and then the others, always seeing vices and climes lound them, did them, too—as when one olive in a bottle is lotten the whole lump becomes collupted: and all through a little carelessness at the first; but if more men spring now—”

“But I *told* you, didn’t I, that no more men will spring? You know, Clodagh, that the earth produced men by an eternal process, commencing with a low type of life, and cumulatively developing it, till at last a man stood up; but that can never occur again: for the earth is old, old, and has lost her evolving fervors now. So talk no more of men *splinging*, and of things which you do not understand. Instead, go inside—stay, I will tell you a secret: today in the wood I plucked some musk-roses and wound them into a wreath, meaning it for a crown for your forehead tomorrow, and it lies now on the pearl tripod in the third room to the right: go, therefore, and put it on, and bring the harp, and play to me, my dear.”

On which she rank quick with a little cry of delight; and coming again, sat garlanded, incarnadine within the flushing depths of the gold, nor did I send her home to her lonesome yali till the moon, subdued and pallid now from all-night beatitudes, sank down soft within purples, quits of curdling pearl, to the Hesperian realms of her rest.

So sometimes we speak together, she and I, she and I.

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That ever I should write such a thing! I am driven out from Imbros!

I was strolling in a wood yesterday up to the west—a clear evening, the sun just set, the book in which I have written in my hand, for I had thought of making a sketch of an old wind-mill to the north-west, to show her. Twenty minutes previously she had been with me, for I had chanced to meet her, and she had come, but had kept darting on ahead after nuts, gathering armfuls of amaranth, nenuphar, red asphodel, till, weary of my life, I had called to her: “Go away! out of my sight,” whereupon she, pushing her underlip toward crying, had walked off.

Well, I was going on in my stroll, when I seemed to feel some quaking of the ground, and before one could count twenty, it was as if the land was bent upon wracking itself to fragments; so in a great scare I set to running, calling in the direction in which she had gone, staggering as on the deck of some laboring craft, tumbling, gathering myself up, running again, the air full of uproar, the land waving like the ocean; and, as I went plunging, little knowing whither, I saw to my left some four roods of forest droop and sink into a ravine which opened to receive them; upon which up I cast my arms, crying out “God! save the girl!”, and a minute later rushed out, to my surprise, into open space on a hill-side, whence I could see the palace below, and, beyond it, a wisp of white sea that had the appalling aspect of being higher than the land. Down the hill-side I stumbled, driven by the impulse to flee somewhither, but about half way down was afresh startled by a shrill pattering like musical hail, and in two moments more the palace plunged down with the jangling and clatter of a thousand bells of gold into the bosom of the lake.

Some seconds after this the commotion, having lasted fully ten minutes, commenced to lull. . . I found her an hour later standing among the ruins of her yali.

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What a thing! Probably every building on the island has been destroyed; the palace-platform, all cracked, lies tilted, half-sunken awry into the lake, like an ark stranded, while of the palace itself no trace remains, except a mound of gold-stones emerging above the lake's surface to the south, gone, gone—sixteen years of vanity and vexation. But, from a practical point of view, the direst calamity of all is that the *Speranza* now lies high-and-dry in the village, she having been bodily picked up from the quay by the tidal-wave, and driven bowforemost into a street not half her width; and there now lies, looking huge enough in the little village, wedged for ever, smashed-in at the nip like a match-box, a most astonishing spectacle: her bows forty feet up the street, ten feet above the ground at the stem, rudder resting on the quay, foremast tilted forward, and that bottom which has roamed through seas so remote ambushed in a polychrome of sea-weeds, the old *Speranza*; but, as her steps were there, and by a leap I could catch them underneath and go up hand-over-hand, till I got foothold, this I did at ten the same evening when the seawater had drained back from the land, leaving everything swampy; she there with me, and presently following me upon the ship. Most things I found cracked into fragments, twisted, disfigured out of recognition; the house-walls themselves displaced a little at the nip; the bow of the cedar skiff smashed in to her middle against the galley; and, but for the fact that the air-pinnacle had not broken from her heavy ropings, and one of the compasses still whole, I do not know what I should have done: for those four old boats that had been in the cove have completely disappeared.

I made her sleep on the cabin-floor amid the *débris* of everything, I sleeping high up in a wood to the west, and I write now lying in the long-grass the morning after, the sun rising, though I cannot see him. My plan for today is to cut four logs with the saw, lay them on the ground by the ship, lower the pinnacle upon them, roll her down into the water, and by nightfall bid a long farewell to Imbros, which drives me out in this way. Still, I look forward with pleasure to our hour's run to the Mainland, when I shall teach her to steer by the compass, and manipulate liquid-air, as I have taught her to dress, to talk, to cook, to experiment, to write, to think, to live: for she is my creation, this creature, as it were a rib from my side."

But the "design" of this expulsion, if there are "designs"? and what was it that she called it last night?—"this new going out from Halan!", this "Haran," it appears, being the place from which "Abraham" went out, when "called" by God.

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Apparently we felt only the tail of the earthquake at Imbros, for it has broken up Turkey! and we two poor helpless creatures put down here in the theatre of these distractions, it is too bad, for the rages of Nature at present are just amazing, and what it may come to I do not know. When we came to the Macedonian coast in moonlight we sailed along it, and up the Dardanelles, looking out for village, yali, or any habitation where we might put up: but everything wrecked, Kilid-Bahr, Chanak-Kaleh, Gallipoli, Lapsaki in ruins. At Lapsaki I landed, leaving her in the boat, and picked my way a little inward, but soon went back with the news that not even a bazaar-arch was left standing whole, in most parts even the line of the streets being obliterated, for the place had tumbled like a house of dice, and had then been shaken up and jumbled. Finally we slept in a forest on the other side of the strait, beyond Gallipoli, taking our few provisions, and having to wade at some points through morass two feet deep before we arrived at dry woodland.

In this forest the following morning I sat alone—for we had slept separated by half a mile—thinking out the question of whither I should go: my choice would have been to remain either in the region where I was, or to go Eastward; but the region where I was presented no dwelling that I could see; to go any distance Eastward I needed a ship, and of ships I had seen during the night only wrecks, nor did I know where to find one anywhere in this country: I was thus, like her “Ablaham,” directed Westward.

In order, then, to go Westward, I first went further Eastward, once more entered the Golden Horn, once more went up those scorched Seraglio steps. Here what the wantonness of man had spared the wantonness of Nature had destroyed, for the few houses that I had left standing round the upper part of Pera I now saw as low as the rest; also the house near the Suleimanieh, where we had lived our first days, to which I now returned as to a home, I found without a pillar standing; and that night she slept under the half-roof of a little funeral-kiosk in the scorched cypress-wood of Eyoub, and I a mile off, at the verge of the forest in which first I saw her.

The following morning, on meeting, as agreed, at the spot of the Prophet’s mosque, we passed together through the valley and cemetery of Kassim, by the quagmires up to Pera, all the landscape having to me a twisted unfamiliar aspect. We had determined to employ the morning in searching for supplies among the earthquake-ruins of Pera; and, I had decided to collect enough in one day to save us further pains for some time, we passed hours in this task, I confining myself to the white house in the park overlooking Kassim, where I had once slept, losing myself amid the obliquities of its floors, roofs, wall-fragments, she going to the Mussulman quarter of Djianghir near, on the heights of Taxim, where were many shops, and thence round the brow of the bill to the French Embassy-house overlooking Foundoucli and the sea, both of us having carpet-bags, and all within the air of that wilderness of breakup that morning a strong, permanent perfume of maple-blossom.

We met toward evening, she quivering under such a load, that I would not let her carry it, but abandoned my day’s labor, which was lighter, and took hers, which was quite enough; and we went back westward, prying the while for some shelter from the drenching night-dews of this place, but nothing could find, till we came again, quite late, to her broken funeral-kiosk at the entrance to the immense cemetery-avenue of Eyoub. There without a word I turned from her, leaving her among the wracked catafalques, for I was weary, but, having gone some distance, turned back, thinking that I might take some more raisins from the bag; and, after getting them, I said to her, shaking her little hand where she sat under the roof-shadow on a stone: “Goodnight, Clodagh.”

She did not reply promptly: and her reply, to my surprise, was a protest against her name, for a rather silky, yet gentle, voice came from the darkness, saying: “Am *I* a poisoner?”

“Well,” I said, “all right, tell me whatever you like that I should call you, and henceforth I will call you that.”

“Call me Eve,” says she.

“Well, no,” I said, “not Eve, anything but that: for *my* name is Adam, and we do not wish to be ridiculous in each other’s eyes; but I will call you anything else that you like.”

“Call me Leda,” says she.

“And why Leda?” said I.

“Because Leda sounds something like Clodagh,” says she, “and you are al-leady in the habit of calling me Clodagh; and I saw ‘Leda’ in a book, and liked it: but Clodagh is hollible!”

“Well, then,” I said, “Leda it shall be, for I like it, too, and you ought to have a name beginning with an ‘L’. Good-night, my dear, sleep well, and dream, dream.”

“And to you, too. may God give dreams of peace and pleasantness,” says she; and I went.

And it was only when I had lain myself on brake for my bed, my head on my caftan, a brook’s babbling for my lullaby, and two stars, which alone of the skyful I could spy, for my night-lights, and only when my eyes were already closed toward slumber, that a sudden strong thought wrought and woke me: for I remembered that Leda was the name of a Greek girl who had conceived twins. In fact, I should not be surprised if this “Leda” is the same as “Eve,” for all languages were connected at bottom, I have heard of *v*’s interchanging in this way with *b*’s, even with *d*’s, and if *Di*, meaning God, of Light, and *Bi*, meaning Life, and love and Ihovian and *God*, meaning much the same, are all one, that would be nothing astonishing to me, as *widow* and *veuve* are one; and where it says “truly the Light is Good (*tob, bon*),” this is as if it said “truly the *Di* is *Di*.” Such, at any rate, is the fatality that tracks me, even in little things: for this Western Eve, or Greek Leda, had twins. . . .

\* \* \*

Well, the next morning we moved through the ruins of Greek Phanar and across the triple stamboul-wall, which still shewed its ivied portal, to make our way, not without climbing, along the Golden Horn to the font of the Old Seraglio, where I soon came across traces of the railway: and that minute commenced our journey across Turkey, Bulgaria, Servia, Bosnia, Croatia, to Trieste, occupying no day or two as in old times, but four months, a prolonged nightmare, though a nightmare of pleasance; if one may say so, leaving on the memory an immense impression of ravines, ever-succeeding profundities and greatneses, jungles strange as some moon-struck poet’s fantasy, everlasting glooms, and a grieving of unseen rivers, cataracts, and slow cambered brooks whose bulrushes never behold any ray of sun or moon, with largesse everywhere, secrecies, pro-fusions, the unspeakable, the unimaginable, a savagery most lush and fierce and showy, and valleys of Arcadie, remote mountain-peaks towering, and tarns gnome-guarded like old-buried treasure, and glaciers, and we two human folk pretty small and drowned and lost in all that houselessness, yet moving always through it.

We followed the rails that first day till we came to a train, of which I found the engine good enough, and everything necessary to move it at my hand, but the metals in such a condition of twisted, broken, vaulted, buried *mêlée* from the earthquake, that, having run some hundreds of yards to examine them, I determined that nothing could be done in that way—a thing that at first threw me into a state like despair, for what we were to do I did not know; but after persevering on foot during three days over the track, which is of that large-gauge type of Eastern Europe, I began to see that, deep-rusted as it was, there were considerable bits still good, and took heart.

I had with me land-charts and compass, but nothing for taking altitude-observations, for the *Speranza* instruments, except one compass, had all been broken-up by her shock; however, on getting to the town of Silivri, about forty miles from our start, I saw among the ruins of a bazaar-shop a number of brass objects, and found sextants, quadrants, theodolites; two mornings after which we came upon an engine in mid-country, with coals in it, a stream near, the machinery serviceable, as I found after an hour’s inspection, having examined the boiler with a candle through the manhole, but red with rust, and the connecting-rod in particular so frail-looking, that, though I had a goat-skin of almond-oil, I felt very dubious: I ventured, however; and, except for some leakage at the tubulure which led the steam to the valve-chest, all went so well, that, at a pressure never exceeding three atmospheres, we travelled nearly a hundred miles before being stopped by a head-to-head block on the line, when we had to abandon our engine. We then

continued another nine miles a-foot, I all the time mourning my motor, which I had had to leave at Imbros, and hoping at every townlet to see a whole one, but in vain.

\* \* \*

It was wonderful to see the villages and towns reverting to the earth, already invaded by vegetation, scarcely any more breaking the continuity of "nature," the town now as much the country as the country, and that which is not-man becoming all in all with a certain *furore* of robustness. A whole day among the southern gorges of the Balkan Mountains the train-engine went tearing its way through many a mile of bindweed tendrils, an interminable curtain, burning with flowers of great size, but sombre as the shades of night, rather resembling jungles of Java and the Filipinas; and she that day, lying in the one carriage behind, where I had made her a little yatag-bed from Tatar Bazardjik, continually played the kittur, barely touching the strings, and crooning low, low, in her contralto, everlastingly the same air, over and over anew, crooning, crooning, some moody tune composed out of her own soul's music, just audible to me through the monotony of the engine's slow toiling, until I was drunken with so sweet a woe, my God, a woe that was sweet as swooning, and a dolor that lulled like sleep, and a grief that soothed like peace, so sweet, so sweet, that all that tangle of wood and gloom lost locality and actualness for me, and became nothing but a spell-bound and pensive heaven for her to moan and lullaby in; and from between my fingers streamed plenteous tears that day, and all that I could keep on mourning was "O Leda, O Leda, O Leda," till my heart was near to break.

The strap of the eccentric of this engine, which was very poor and flaky, suddenly snapped at a pin near five in the afternoon, so I had to stop in a fright; and now that invisible mechanism which had crooned and crooned about my ears in the air, and had followed me whithersoever I went, stopped, too, as down she jumped, calling out: "Well, I had a plesentiment that something would happen, and I am glad, for I was tired!"

Seeing that nothing could be done with the eccentric-strap, I got down, took the bag, and, parting before us the continuous screen, we went pioneering to the left between a rock-cleft, stepping over rocks that seemed negroid with moss-growths: no sight of sky through hundreds of feet of leafage overhead; and everywhere profusions of ferneries burdened with dew, rebellions of dishevelled maidenheads among mimosas which had a large leaf, with wild vine, white briony, and an odor of cedar, and a soft gushing of waters which informed all that gloaming. The way led upward three hundred feet; and presently, after some windings, and the climbing of five great steps almost regular, yet natural, the gorge opened in a roundish gap, forty feet across, with overhanging crags nine hundred feet on high; and there, behind a screen which fell from the heights, its tendrils defined and straight like a bead-hanging, we spread the store of foods. I opening the fruits, vegetables, meats, wines, she arranging them among the gold-plate, lighting both the spirit-lamp and the lantern, for here it was quite dark. The light revealed behind the screen of tendrils a green cave in the crag, and at the cave's opening a pool two yards wide, black but pellucid, which leisurely wheeled, discharging a streamlet that came out from the cave: and in it I saw four owl-eyed fish, a finger long, loiter, and instigate themselves, and gaze. So there we ate and lingered, until Leda, after smoking a cigarette, said that she would go and "lun," and went, and left me glooming: for she is the sun and the moon and the host of Heaven; I occupying myself that night in making the calendar at the end of this book—for my almanac was lost with the palace—making a calendar, counting the days in my head, but counting them across my thoughts of her.

Then she came again to tell me goodnight, and went down to the train to bed; while I, putting out the light, stooped within the cave, and, spreading my bed beside the rivulet, slept.

But an uneasy sleep: for soon I woke; and a long while I lay awake, conscious of a dripping at one spot in the cave, which at a minute's interval darkly splashed, regularly, seeming to grow ever louder, sadder, and the splash was "Leesha," but it became "Leda" to my ears, and it sobbed her name, until I pitied myself, so sad I was. And when I could no longer bear the anguish of the splash and the spasm of its sobbing, I got up to go, soft, soft, lest she should hear in that muteness of the hushed gloom, going more slow, more soft, as I moved more near, a sob stuck in my gullet, my feet leading me to her; till I touched the coach, against which through a long hour I leant my brow, the sob aching within my throat, she all mixed up in my head with the suspended night, and with the elfin hosts in the air that made the silence so vocal to the vacant eardrum, and with that dripping that grieved within the cave; and gradually I turned the handle, heard her breathe in sleep, her head near me, touched her hair with my lips, and near to her ear I said, for she breathed as if in sleep, "Leda, I have come to you, for I could not help it, Leda: and oh, my heart is full of the love for you, for you are mine, and I am yours; and to live with you, till we die, and after we are dead to be near you still, Leda, with my broken heart near your heart, little Leda—"

I must have sobbed, I think: for, as I spoke close at her ear with dying eyes of love, I was startled by a break in her breathing, and in wary haste I closed the door, and quite back to the cave I stole in haste.

And the next morning when we met I thought—but am not now sure—that she smiled singularly: I thought so. She may, she *may*, have heard—But I cannot tell.

\* \* \*

Twice I was obliged to abandon engines in consequence of forest-tree blockages right across the line, which, do what I might, I could not move, these being the two bitterest incidents of the pilgrimage; and at least twenty times I changed from engine to engine, when other trains obstructed. As for the extent of the earthquake, it is pretty certain that it was universal within the Peninsula, and at many points exhibited superlative violence: for up to the time that we entered upon Servian territory we occasionally came upon stretches of the rails so dislocated that it was impossible to continue upon them; nor during the whole course did I encounter a house or castle intact; and thrice, where the ground was of a kind to allow of it, I left the rags of metals and made the engine travel the ground till I came upon other metals, when I always contrived to drive it upon them. It was all very leisurely: for not everywhere, nor every day, could I get a nautical observation; and, having at all times to drive at low pressures for fear of tube and boiler weakness, crawling through tunnels, and stopping when darkness came on, we did not advance fast, nor particularly cared to. Once, moreover, for two days, and once for four, we were overtaken by storms of an inclemency so vast, that no thought of travelling entered our heads, our only care being to conceal our cowering bodies as deeply down as possible. Once I passed through a town (Adrianople) doubly devoured, once by the arson of my own arm, and once by Nature: and I made haste to put that place behind me.

Finally, three months and twenty days from the date of the earthquake, having traversed only 900 miles, I let go in the Venice lagoon on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> of September the lateen sail and stone anchor of a Maltese *speronare* which I had found, and partially cleaned, at Trieste; and

thence passed up the Canalazzo in a gondola; for I said to Leda "In Venice will I pitch my patriarch tent."

But to will and do are not the same thing, and still more Westward was I driven: for some of the stagnant canals of this place are now miasmas of pestilence, and within two days I was rolling with fever in the Old Procurazie Palace, she standing in pallid astonishment near me, sickness a novel thing to her; and, indeed, this was my first illness since my twentieth year when I had overworked, and went on a tour to Constantinople. I could not move from bed for a fortnight, but fortunately did not lose my senses, she bringing me the whole pharmacopœia from the shops, from which to choose my medicines; and, divining the cause of this illness, though not a sign of it came near *her*, as soon as my knees could bear me I anew set out, ever Westward, enjoying now a certain luxury in travelling in comparison with that Turkish difficulty, for here were no twisted metals, more and better engines, in the cities as many motors as I chose, and Nature markedly less savage.

I do not know why I did not stop at Verona or Brescia, or some other neighborhood of the Italian lakes, since I was fond of water; but I had, I think, the thought in my head to travel back to Vauclaire in France, where I had lived, and there live: for I thought that she might like those old monks. At all events, we did not remain long in any place till we came to Turin, where we spent nine days, she in the house facing mine; and after that, at her own suggestions, we went on still, passing by train into the valley of the Isère, and then into that of the Rhone, until we came to the old town of Geneva among mountains peaked with snow, the town seated at the head of a lake made in the shape of the crescent moon, and, like the moon, a thing of much beauty and many moods, suggesting a being under the spell of charms and magics. However, with this idea of Vauclaire still in my head, we left Geneva in a motor at four in the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, I intending to get to the town called Bourg about eight; but by some chance for which I cannot to this hour account (unless the rain was the reason), I missed the road marked in the chart, which should have been fairly level, and found myself on mountain-tracks, unaware of my whereabouts, while darkness fell, and a downpour of rain that had something of a sullen venom drowned us. I stopped often, peering about for chateau, chalet, or village, but none did I see, though I thrice came upon railway-lines; and not until midnight did I run down a rather steep pass upon the shore of a lake, which, from its apparent vastness in the moonless obscurity, I could only presume to be the great lake once again, three hundred yards to our left being visible through the rain a building apparently risen out of the lake, looking ghostly livid, for it was of white stone, not high, but big, an old thing of complicated turrets (their whiteness roofed with maroon candle-extinguishers), oddities of Gothic nooks, and window-slits, like a fanciful picture. Round to this we drove, drowned as rats, she sighing and bedraggled, to find a spit of land projecting into the lake, on which we left the car, walked forward along it with the bag, crossed a tiny drawbridge, and so got to the islet of rocks on which the castle stands. On finding an open portal, we then went investigating the place, quiet gay at the shelter, everywhere lighting candles which we saw in iron sconces: so that, as the castle is far seen from the shores of the lake, it would have looked to one watching thence a place suddenly possessed and haunted. Having found beds and slept there, the next day we found it to be the Castle of Chillon; and there we remained five happy months, till again, again, Fate overtook us.

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The morning after our coming we had breakfast—our last meal together—on the first floor in a pentagonal room entered from a lower level by three steps, an oak table in it pierced by a multitude of tunnels, worm-eaten, with three chairs having backs two yards high, an oak desk covered still with papers, arras on the walls, three dark oil-paintings, and a grandfather's clock. This room is at the middle of the château, and contains two oriels looking upon the lake, upon an islet containing four trees in a jungle of a river which proved to be the Rhone, upon a snowy town on the slopes which proved to be Villeneuve, and upon the mountains back of Bouveret and St. Gingolph—all having the astonished air of a resurrection just accomplished, everything fresh washed in dyes of azure, ultramarine, indigo, snow, emerald, that fresh morning, so that one had to call it the best and holiest place in the world. These five room-walls, and oak floor, and two oriels, became specially mine, though it was really common-ground to us both, and there I would do many little things, the papers on the desk telling that it had been the *bureau* of one R. E. Gaud, "*Grand Bailli*," whose residence the place may have been.

She asked me while eating that morning to stay here, and I said that I would see, though with misgiving: so together we went about the house, and, finding it unexpectedly spacious, I consented to stay, at both ends being suites, little rooms, infinitely quaint and cosy, with heavy furniture Henri Quatre, and bed-draperies; and there are separate, and as it were secret, stairs for exit to each suite, spirals, so we decided that she should have the suite overlooking the length of the lake, the mouths of the Rhone, Bouveret and Villeneuve, and I should have that overlooking the spit of land behind, the drawbridge, the shore-cliffs, and the elm-wood which comes down to the shore, giving a glimpse of the Village of Chillon; and, that decided, I took her hand in mine, and I said: "Well, then, here we stay, under the same roof—for the first time. Leda, I will not explain why, but it is dangerous; so much, that it *may* mean the death of one or other of us: deadly dangerous, my poor girl, believe me, for I know it. Well, this being so, you must never come near my part of the house, nor I near yours. Lately we have been much together, but, then, we have been active, full of purpose and occupation; here we shall be nothing of the kind, I can see: so we must live perfectly separate lives. You do not understand—but things are so. You are nothing to me, really, nor I to you, only we live on the same earth, which is nothing—a chance: so your own food, clothes, everything, you will procure for yourself—perfectly easy—the shores crowded with mansions, castles, towns; and I the same. The motor down there I set apart for your use: I will get another; and I will look you up a boat and fishing-tackle, and cut a cross on the bow of yours, so that you may never use mine. All this is very necessary: you cannot dream, but I know, how much. Do not run any risks in climbing, now, or with the motor, or in the boat. . . Leda. . ."

I saw her under-lip push, and went away in haste, for I did not care whether she cried or not. In that Balkan voyage, and in my illness at Venice, she had become too near and dear to me, my tender love, my dear darling soul; and I said in my heart: "I will be a decent being; I will turn out trumps."

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Under this castle is a sort of dungeon in which are seven pillars, and an eighth half-built into the wall, one of them worn away by some prisoner, or prisoners, once chained to a ring in it, and in this pillar the name "Byron" inscribed—which made me remember that a poet so named had written something about this place; and two days afterwards I actually came upon the poet in a room containing books, many of them English, near the Grand Bailli's *bureau*: so I read the

poem, which is named "The Prisoner of Chillon," and found it affecting, the description good—only I saw no seven rings, and where he speaks of the "pale and livid light," he should speak rather of the dun and brownish gloom, for the word "light" disconcerts the fancy here, and of either pallor or blue there is there no sign. However, I was so struck by the horror of man's atrocity to man, as depicted in this poem, that I resolved that she should see it: so went straight to her rooms with the book, and, she being away, ferreted among her things to see what she was doing, finding everything very tidy, except in one room where were a number of prints called *La Mode*, and *débris* of snipped cloth, and medley. When two hours later she came in and I suddenly presented myself, "Oh!" she let slip, then fell to cooing her laugh; and now I took her down through a large room stacked with every kind of rifle, with revolvers, cartridges, swords, bayonets—some cantonal magazine—then in the dungeon showed her the worn stone, the ring, the slits in the thickness of the wall, and told all the story of ferocity; while the plashing of the hake upon the rock outside came in with a strange and tragic sound, and her mobile face became all one sorrow.

Then, "How lude and clude they must have been!" cries she with a tremulous lip, her face reddened with indignation.

"Brutes," I said: "it is not surprising if brutes were cruel."

And in the time while I said this she was looking up at me with a smile. "Some others came and set the plisoner flee!"

"Yes," I said, "they did, but—Yes, that was all right, so far as it went."

"And it was a time when men had al-leadly become cluel through lack of land," says she: "if those who set him flee were so kind when the lest were duel, what would they have been at a time when the lest were kindly? They would have been just like angels...!"

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At this place fishing and rambling were the order of the day, both for her and for me, especially fishing, though a week rarely passed which did not see me at Bouveret, St. Gingolph, Yvoire, Messery, Nyon, Ouchy, Vevey, Montreux, Geneva, or one of the two dozen villages, townlets, towns, that crowd the shores, all very pretty places, each with its charm; mostly I went on foot, though the railway runs right round the forty miles of the lake's length; and one noon-day I was walking through the main-street of Vevey, going on to the Cully-road, when I had an awful shock: for from a shop just in front of me to the right there came a sound—an unmistakable indication of life—a clattering, as of metals rattled together; whereat my heart bounded into my mouth, I was conscious of becoming bloodlessly pale, and on tip-toe of exquisite caution I stole up to the open door—peeped in—and it was *she*, standing on the counter of a jeweller's shop, her back toward me, her head bent down over a tray of jewels in her hands, which she was rummaging for something. I went "*Hoh!*", for I could not help it: and that whole day, till sunset, we were very dear friends, for I could not part from her, we walking together by voralpen, wood, and shore all the way to Ouchy, she like a creature crazy that day with the bliss of living, rolling in grasses arid down flowery slopes, stamping her foot challengingly at me, superb ruler of Earth that she is, then rushing like mad for me to catch her, with laughter, *abandon*, brazen railleries, gaieties of the wild ass's foal on the hills, entangling her loosened hair with the tendrils and blooms of Bacchants, and quaffing, in the passage through Cully, more wine, I fancied, than was right: and the lightning-shocks that shot through me that day, and the rubious revelations of Beauty which my mind's eye sighted, and the pangs of white-hot honey that spanked me, and

were too much for me, and made me sick—oh, Heaven, what pen could express any of the recondite realm of things? till, at Ouchy, with a wave of my arm I motioned her back from me, for I was dumb, and weak, and I went away, leaving her there; and all that long night her might was upon me, for she is stronger than gravitation, which may be evaded; than all the forces of nature in combination, and the sun and the moon are nothing compared with her; and when she was no more with me I was like a fish in the air, or like a beast in the deep, for she is my element to breathe in, and I drown without her: so that for hours I lay on that wood-lane mounting to the burial-ground outside Ouchy that night, like a man sore wounded, biting the grass.

What made things horrid for me was her adoption of European clothes since coming to this place. I think that, in her adroit way, she herself made her dresses: for one day I noticed in her rooms some “fashion-plates,” with a confusion like dress-making; or she may have been only modifying costumes from the shops, for her western dressing is not quite like what I remember of the modern style, but is really, I believe, her own goût, nearer resembling the Greek, or the “Empire.” At any rate, the airs and graces are not less natural to her than plumage to parrots; and she has changes like the moon, never twice the same, and ever transcending her last phase and revelation: for I could never have imagined anyone in whom *taste* was a faculty so separate as in her, so positive and prominent, like smelling or sight—more like *smelling*: for it is the faculty, half Reason, half Imagination, by which she fore-scents precisely what I will wed exquisitely with what, so that every time I see her I receive the impression of a perfectly novel, completely bewitching, work of Art, the quality of works of Art being to produce the momentary conviction that anything else whatever could not possibly be so good.

Occasionally from my window I would see her in the wood beyond the drawbridge, cool and white in the shade, with her Bible probably or chemistry-book, trailing her train like a court-lady, looking taller than before; and I believe that this new dressing produced a separation between us more complete than it might have been: for especially after that day between Vevey and Ouchy I was careful not to meet her; and the more I noted that she bejewelled herself, powdered herself, embalmed herself in pouncings of nard and sachets of scents, chapleted her head, the more I shunned her. Myself, somehow, had now resumed European dress, and, ah me, was greatly changed, God knows, from the portly monarch-being that had strutted and moaned four years before in the palace at Imbros, so that my manner of being and thought might once more now have been called “modern.”

All the more was my sense of responsibility awful: and from day to day it seemed to intensify, a voice never ceasing to remonstrate within me nor leaving me peace, the malediction of unborn billions appearing to menace me; and to strengthen my fixity I would often overwhelm myself, and her, with names of scorn, calling myself “convict,” her “lady-bird,” asking what manner of man was I that I should dare so great a thing, and, as for her, what was she, to be the Mother of a host?—a butterfly with a woman’s brow! and frequently now in my fiercer hours I was meditating either my death—or hers.

Ah, but the butterfly did not let me forget her brow! To the south-west of Villeneuve, between the forest and the river, is a field of gentian, and, returning from round St. Gingolph to the Château one day in the third month, I saw, as I turned a corner in the descent of the mountain, some object floating in the air above the field. Never was I more startled, or more perplexed: for I could see nothing to account for the object soaring there like a great butterfly, though I was soon able to come to the conclusion that she was reinvented *the kite*, and presently sighted her holding the string in the mid-field. Her invention resembles the kind called “swallow-tail” of old.

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But mostly it was on the lake that I saw her, for there we mainly lived, and occasionally there were guilty approaches and *rencontres*, she in her boat, I in mine, both slight clinker-built pleasure-boats of Montreux which I had spent some days in overhauling and varnishing: mine having jib, fore-and-aft mainsail, and spanker; hers rather smaller, one-masted, with an easy-running lug-sail. It was no uncommon thing for me to sail quite to Geneva, and come back from a seven-days' cruise with my soul inflated and consoled with the lake and its many moods of smiling and darksome, flighty and pensive, dolorous, despairing, tragic, at morning, at noon, at sunset, at midnight: a panorama that never for a moment rested from unrolling its transformations, I sometimes climbing the mountains as high as the goatherd region of hoch-alpen, once sleeping there; and once I was made ill by a two-weeks' horror which I had: for she disappeared in her skiff, I being at the Château, and did not come back; while she was away there was a gale that changed the lake into an angered ocean, and, ah, my good God, she did not come; till at last, half crazy at the vacant days of care which rolled by and by, and she did not come, I set out upon a wild-goose quest of her—of all hopeless things the most hopeless, for the globe is great—and I did not find her: so after three days I turned back, recognizing that I was mad to search the infinite; and, coming nigh the Château, I saw her wave her handkerchief from the island-edge, for she had divined that I had gone to ferret for her, and was watching for me: and when I took her hand, what did she say to me, the Biblical simpleton? “Oh, you of little faith!” says she; and, since she had adventures to lisp, with the *r*'s liquefied into *l*'s, I was with her that day again.

Once a month perhaps she would knock at my outermost door, which I kept locked when at home, to present me a red trout or grayling sumptuously dressed, which I had not the heart to reject; and exquisitely she does them, all hot and spiced, applying to their preparation that taste which she applies to dress; nor did her luck in angling fail to supply her with the finest specimens, though, for that matter, this lake, with its old fish-hatcheries and fish-ladders, is not stingy in that way, swarming now with the choicest lake-trout, river-trout, red trout, and with salmon, of which last I have brought in one with the landing-net of perhaps forty pounds. As the bottom goes off rapidly from the islands to a depth of nine hundred feet, we did not long confine ourselves to bottom-fishing, but advanced to every variety of manœuvre, doing middlewater spinning with three-triangle flights and sliding lip-hook for jack and trout, trailing with the sail for salmon, live-baiting with the float for pike, daping with blue-bottles, casting with artificial flies; and I could not say in which she became the most carelessly adept, for each soon seemed as old and natural to her as a handicraft learned from birth.

\* \* \*

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of October I attained my forty-sixth birthday in excellent health: a day destined to end for me in bloodshed and tragedy, alas. I forget now what had caused me to mention the date, long beforehand, in, I think, Venice, not dreaming that she would keep any count of it, nor was I even sure that my calendar was not inaccurate by a day; but at ten in the morning of what I called the 21<sup>st</sup>, descending by my private spiral in flannels with some trout and par bait, and tackle—I met her coming up, my God, though she had no earthly right to be there; and with her cooing murmur, yet pale, pale, and with a most guilty look, she presents me a big bouquet of flowers.

I was at once thrown into a state of agitation. She was dressed in a frippery of *mousseline* all cream-laced, with short sleeves that hung wide, a diamond at her open chest, the ivory-brown of which looked browner for the powdery blueish-white of her face, where, however, the freckles were not quite whited out, on her feet slippers of silk, pink, without any stockings—a pink pale to fainting, her hair nipped by a ring of gold, and she smelled like Heaven, God knows.

I could not speak. It was she who broke a painful silence, saying, very faint and pale: “It is the day!”

“I—perhaps——” I said, some incoherency like that: and I saw the touch of enthusiasm which she had summoned up quenched by my manner, she presently asking: “I have not done long again?”—looking down, breaking another silence,

“No, no, oh no,” I hurriedly said—“not done wrong again. Only—I could not suppose that you would count up the days. You are . . . considerate. Perhaps—but—”

“Tell Leda?”

“Perhaps. . . . I was going to say . . . you might come fishing with me. . . .”

“O, luck!” she went softly.

I was pierced by a sense of my cowardice, my incredible weakness; but I could not at all help it.

So I took the flowers, down we went to the south shore to my boat, from the well of which I threw out some of the fish, arranged the tackle, then the stern-cushions for her, got up the sails: and out we went, she steering, I in the bows, with every possible inch of interval between, receiving delicious whiff’s from her of ambergris, frangipane, some imbroglio of fragrances, the morning warm, little whiffs of wind on the water, which was mottled, like water ill-mingled with indigo-wash, we making little headway: so it was some time before I moved nearer to her to get the par for fixing on the three-triangle flight, for I was going to trail for salmon or big lake-trout; and all that time nothing at all was said; but then I said: “Who told you that flowers are proper to birthdays? or that birthdays are of any importance?”

To which she answered: “I suppose that nothing can happen so important as birth; and perfumes were considered proper to birth, because in the legend the wise men blought spices to the young Jesus.”

This *naïveté* was the cause of my immediate recovery: for to laugh is to be saved; and I laughed out, saying: “But you read the Bible too much! You should read the modern books.”

“Some I cannot lead,” says she: “the people seem to have got so collupted; it makes me shudder.”

“Well, now, you see, you come round to my point of view,” I said.

“Yes, and no,” says she: “they had got so *spoiled*, that is all—seem to have become quite dull-witted—the plainest truths they could not see. I can imagine that those faculties which aided them in their stlain to become lich, and make the lest poor, must have been gleatly sharpened, while the other faculties withered: as I can imagine a person seeing double through one eye, and blind on the other side.”

“They didn’t *want* to see on the other side,” I said: “there were some tolerably clear-sighted ones among them, you know; and these agreed in pointing out how by changing one or two of their old arrangements of Bedlam, they could greatly better themselves: but they listened with listless ears, or sneered. For they had become more or less unconscious of their misery, especially the rich, so miserable were they—like the man in Byron’s ‘Prisoner of Chillon,’ who, when his deliverers came, was indifferent, for he says:

‘It was at length the same to me  
Fettered or fetterless to be:  
I had learned to love Despair.’ ”

“Oh, my God,” she went, covering her face a moment, “how dreadful! And it seems true—they had learned to love despair, to be even proud of despair. Yet, all the time, I can see, almost all of them were kind, and clever, too, except in the one eye where habit blinded them from seeing the stars, as *you* only use one hand, by habit. Such a queer, unnatural feeling it gives me to lead of those people, I can’t describe it; their motives seem so slavish, tainted, their life so lopsided—truly, the whole head was sick, the whole heart faint.”

“Quite so,” I said; “and observe that this was no new thing: in the very beginning of your Bible you read how God saw that every imagination of man’s heart is evil. . . .”

“Oh, but none of that is true,” she interrupted with a pout— “not true of the Polynesians, who, enjoying their land in common, lived in sinless gladness at this garden of God, till white slaves, debased by centuries of slavery, went to preach to their betters, and to steal from them—not true of you and me, whose hearts are not evil.”

To this I answered: “Say yours; as to mine you know nothing, Leda.”

The semicircles under her eyes had that morning, as often, a certain moist, heavy, pensive and weary something, as of a strumpet fresh from a revel, very sweet and tender; and, looking softly at me with it, she answered: “Yes, I know my own heart; and it is not evil; not even in the least; and I know yours, too.”

“Know *mine!*” I cried, with half a laugh.

“Quite well,” says she.

At which cool assurance of hers I was so disconcerted, that I answered not a word, but, going to her, handed her the baited flight, swivel-trace, and line, which she paid out; and I had got back again almost into the bows before I spoke again:

“Well, this is news to me: you know all about my heart, it seems. Well, come, tell me what is in it!”

Now she was silent, pretending to be busy with the trail, until she said with her face bent, in a voice that I could just hear: “I will tell you: in it is a rebellion which you think good, but is not good. If a stream will just flow, neither trying to climb, nor overflowing its banks, but lunning within its channel whither What leads it leads it, it will leach the sea at last, and lose itself in fulness.”

“Ah,” I said, “but that counsel is not new—what the philosophers used to call ‘yielding to Destiny,’ ‘following Nature;’ and Destiny and Nature, I tell you, often led mankind quite wrong—”

“Or *seemed* to,” says she—“for a time: as when a stream wanders north a little, and the sea is south; but it is bound for the sea all the time, and will wind once more. Destiny never could, cannot yet, be judged, for it is not finished, and our lace should follow whither it points, certain that through a maze of curves it conducts the world to God, our Home.”

“God our home indeed!” I cried, getting very excited: “girl! you talk speciously, but—Whence have you these thoughts in that—? Girl! you talk of ‘our race!’ But there are only two of us left? Are you talking at me, Leda? Do not *I* follow Destiny?”

“You?” she sighted, her face bent down: “ah, poor me!”

“What should I do, if I followed it?” I queried with a crazy curiosity.

Her face hung lower, paler, in trouble; and she said: "You would come now and sit near me; you would not be there, you would be for ever near me.

My good God! I felt my face redden. "Oh, I could not *tell* you . . . !" I cried: "you talk the most disastrous . . . I you lack all responsibility . . . I Never, never . . . !"

Her face was now covered with her left hand, her right on the tiller, and bitingly she replied with something of venom: "I could *make* you come—*now*, if I chose; but I will not; I will wait upon my God."

"*Make* me!" I cried: "Leda! How?"

"I could cly before you, as I cly often and often . . . in secler . . . for my children . . . !"

"*You* do? This is news—*children*—!"

"Yes, I cly. Is not the burden of the world heavy upon me, too? and the work I have to do *vely*, *vely* gleat? And I cly in secler, thinking of it. . . ."

Now I saw the push and tortion and shiver of her poor little under-lip, meaning tears, whereupon a flame rose in me that was beyond control, and I found myself in the act of rushing through the boat to catch her to me.

Midway, however, I was saved, when a whisper, intense as lightning, arrested me: "Forward is no escape, nor backward, but *sideward* there is a way!" and before I knew what I was doing, I was in the water swimming.

To the smaller of the islands, two hundred yards away, I swam, rested some minutes, and thence to the Castle. I did not look behind.

\* \* \*

Well, from then till five in the afternoon I thought it all out, lying in my damp flannels on the sofa in the recests beside my bed, where it is dark behind the tattered scrap of arras: and what things I suffered that day, and what depths I sounded, and what prayers I prayed, God knows. What complicated the monstrous problem was this thought in my head: that to kill her would be more clement to her than to leave her alone, having killed myself: and, Heaven knows, it was for her alone that I thought, not at all for myself; but to kill her with my own hands—that was too hard to expect of a poor devil like me, a poor common son of Adam, after all, and never any sublime self-immolator, as four or five of them were. And hours I lay there with brows convulsed in an agony, groaning only this: "To kill her!", thinking sometimes that I should be clement to myself, too, and let her live, and not care, since, after my death, I would not see her suffer, for the dead know not anything. Yet that one or other of us must die was perfectly certain, for I knew that I was on the verge of failing in my oath, and that affairs here had reached a crisis: unless we could make up our minds to part. . . ? putting the width of the earth between us? that concept occurred to me, and in the turmoil of my thoughts it seemed a possibility. Finally, about 5 p.m., I resolved upon something: and I leapt up, went down and across the house into the arsenal, chose a small revolver, fitted it with cartridge, took it upstairs, lubricated it with lamp oil, went down and out across the drawbridge, walked two miles beyond the village, shot the revolver at a tree, found its action accurate, and started back. When I came to the Castle, I walked along the island to the outer end, and looked up: there were her pretty Valenciennes, put up by herself, waving inward before the lake-breeze at one oriel; and I knew that she was in the Castle, for I felt it: and ever when she was within I knew, for I felt her with me, and ever when she was away, I knew, I felt, for the air had a dreadful drought, and a fruitlessness, in it. And I

looked up for some minutes to see if she would come to the window, then I called, and she appeared. And I said to her: "Come down here."

\* \* \*

Just here is a rock-path down to the water between rocks mixed with tree-shrubs, three yards long: a path, or a lane, say, for at the lower end the rocks and tree-shrubs reach above one's head. There she had made fast my boat to a little linden: and gloomier now than Gethsemane that familiar boat looked to my gaze, for I knew very well that I would never enter it more, as I walked up and down the path, awaiting her; and from the jacket-pocket in which lay the revolver I drew a box of matches, took two matches, broke off a bit of one; and both I now held between thumb and forefinger, the phosphorus-ends level and visible, the other ends invisible: and I awaited her, pacing fast, and my brow was brutal as Azrael and Rhadamanthus.

She came, pretty pale, poor thing, and flurried, breathing fast. And "Leda," I said, meeting her in the middle of the lane, and going straight to the point, "we are to part, as you guess—for ever, as you guess: for I see very well that you guess. I, too, am sorry, and heavy in my heart. . . to leave you . . . alone. . . . But it must, aye, be done."

Her face suddenly went as sallow as the dead were, when the shroud was already on, and the coffin had become a commonplace by the bed-side; but, in recording that fact, I record also this, that, accompanying this mortal sallowness, which wretchedly shewed up her poor freckles, was a smile, slightly down-drawn: a smile of steady, of disdainful—confidence.

She did not say anything: so I went on. I have thought long, and have made a plan—which, however, cannot be effective without *your* consent and co-operation; and the plan is this: we go from this place together—this same night—to some unknown spot, some town, say a hundred miles hence—by train; there I get two motors, and I in one, you in the other, we go different ways; after which we shall never be able, however much we may want to, to rediscover each other in this wide world. That is my plan."

She looked me in the face, smiling her smile; and the answer was not long in coming.

"I will go in the train with you," says she with decisiveness: "but where you leave me, there I will stay, waiting till I die, or till my God convert you, and send you back to me."

"That means that you refuse my plan."

"Yes," said she, bending her head with great dignity.

Then I: "Well, you speak, not like a girl, Leda, but like a woman now. But still, reflect a minute . . . O, reflect! If you stayed where I left you, I *should* go back to you, sooner or later: so tell me—reflect, then tell me—do you definitely refuse to part from me?"

Her answer was pretty prompt, cool, and firm: "Yes; I refuse."

I left her then, walked down the path, came back.

"Then," I now said, "here are two matches between my fingers: be good enough to draw one."

Now she was hit to the heart: I saw her eyes widen to the width of horror—she having read of the drawing of lots in the Bible; knew that this meant death for me, or for her.

But she obeyed without a word after one backward start, and then a hurried hovering indecision of her fingers over the hand I held out. I had decided that if she drew the shorter of the matches, then she should die; if the longer, then I should die.

She drew the shorter. . . .

\* \* \*

This was only what I should have expected: for I knew that God loved her, and hated me.

But instantly upon the shock of the enormity that I should be her executioner, I formed my resolve: to drop shot, too, in the moment after she dropped shot, so disposing my body, that it would fall half upon her, and half by her, so that we might be close always: and that would not be so bad, after all.

When, in a sudden passion of action, I snatched the revolver from my pocket, she did not move, except her withered lips, which, I think, whispered: "*Not yet . . .*"

And I stood with hanging arm, finger on trigger, looking at her, saw her glance down once at the weapon, then she fixed her eyes upward upon my face: and now that same smile, which had disappeared, was on her lips again, meaning confidence, meaning disdain.

Now I waited for her to move her mouth to say something—to end that smiling—that I might shoot her quick and sudden, and she would not, knowing that I could not kill her smiling: and suddenly my pity and love for her changed into a strange resentment and rage against her, for she was making age-long for me what I was doing for her sake; and the thought came into my mind, "You are nothing to me; if you want to die, you do your own killing; and I will do my own killing:" and without uttering anything, I strode away, left her there.

But I think now that this whole drawing of lots was nothing more than a foolery: I think I *never* could have killed her, smiling or no smiling, for to each thing and life is given a particular strength, and a thing cannot be stronger than its strength, strain as it may: it is so strong, and no stronger, and there an end of the matter.

I strode up to the Grand Bailli's *bureau*, a room about twenty feet from the ground, where, though it was now getting dark, I could see, by peering, the face of a grandfather's-clock which I had long since set going—half-past six; and in order to fix some definite moment for the effort of the mortal act, I said: "At Seven." I then locked the door which opens upon three steps near the desk, and the stair-door, then paced the chamber. As there was not a breath of air here, and I was hot, seeming to be stifling, I tore open my shirt at the throat and opened a mullion-space of one oriel; then at twenty-five to seven I lighted two candles on the desk, and sat to write to her, the gun at my right hand; but I had hardly begun, when I seemed to hear a sound at the three-step door four feet to my left, a sound like a scrape of her slipper; on which I stole to the door to crouch and listen, but now could hear nothing further: so returned to the desk, and set to writing, giving some final directions for her life, telling why I died, how I loved her, more than my own soul, wooing her to love me while she lived, and to live on to please me; but, if she *would* die, then to die near me, though how she was to come into the locked room to die near me I did not stop to enquire; anyway, tears were pouring down my cheeks, when, chancing to glance round, I saw her standing in a ghastr posture hardly three feet from my back; and the absolute stealth that had brought and put her there, unknown to me, was like a miracle: for the ladder whose top I saw intruding into the opened oriel I knew well, having frequently seen it in a room below, and as its length was well over twenty feet, its weight could be no feather's: yet I had been aware of not one hint of its impact upon the window. But there, anyway, she was, wan as a spectre.

In the instant that my consciousness realized her my arm instinctively went out to grasp the weapon but she, darting upon it, got it before me, flew, and, before I had caught up with her, threw it cleanly between two rungs of the ladder out of the window; upon which I dashed to the window to peer down, thought that I saw it down there near a rock, so away to the stair-door I raced, wrung it open, and down the steps, two together, I pelted to get the gun. I remember being

touched by some astonishment that she did not follow me, for somehow I forgot all about the ladder standing there for her to go down on.

But I was reminded of it the moment I arrived at the bottom, before ever I had gone out of the house: for the report of the gun rang out—that crack, my God!—and crying out, “Well, God, it is done!” I stumbled on, to tumble upon her in her blood.

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That night! of fingers quivering with haste, of harum-scarum quests and ferretings, of groans, and appeals to God: for there were no instruments, lint, anæsthetics, nor antiseptics that I knew of in the Château; and though I knew of a house in Montreux where I would find them, the distance was infinite, the time an æon in which to leave her bleeding to death; and, to my horror, I remembered that there was barely enough petrol in the motor, and the store usually kept in the house used up. However, I did it, leaving her there on her bed: but *how* I did it, and lived sane afterwards, is another matter.

If I had not been a medical man, she must, I think, have died: the bullet had broken the left fifth rib, then had been deflected, for I found it buried in the upper part of the abdominal wall; and for a frightfully long time she remained comatose. In which state she still was when I took her to a châlet beyond Villeneuve, three miles away on a mountain-side, a homely, but very salubrious place which I knew, imbedded in boscaje: for I was desperate at her long collapse, and had hope in that upper air. I did not sleep, only nodded and tottered, and there after two more days she opened her eyes, and smiled with me.

It was then that I said to myself: “This is the noblest, sagest, and also the most lovable, of the beings that God has made: and since she has won my life, I will live. . . . But at least, to save myself, I will put the broadest ocean that there is between her and me, for the honor of my race, being the last, and to turn out trumps. . . .”

Thus, after only fifty-five days at the châlet, were we forced still Westward.

\* \* \*

I wished her to remain at Chillon, intending, myself, to make for the Americas, whence any impulse to slip back to her could not quickly be fulfilled; but she refused, saying that she would come with me to the coast of France: and I could not say her no.

And at the coast after thirteen days we turned up, three days before the New Year, having traversed France by both steam and petrol traction.

To Havre we came—infirm of purpose that I was: for deep in my heart was the secret, hidden away from my own upper self, that, she being at Havre, and I at Portsmouth, we could still speak with each other.

We came humming into that dark town of Havre in a motorcar about ten in the night of the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, a bitter bleak night, she, it was clear, poor thing, cramped with cold; and, as I had some recollection of the place, for I had been there, I drove to the quays, near which I stopped at the *Maire’s* house, a palatial place overlooking the sea, in which she slept, I occupying another near.

The next day I was early astir, searched in the *mairie* for a map of the town, and could thus locate the Telephone Exchange; then to the *Maire’s* house, which I had fixed upon to be her home, where I found the telephone in an alcove adjoining a *salon* Louis Quinze; and, fearing any

weakness, I connected with the transmitter-circuit some new cells from the accumulator-room at the Exchange; which done, I went down among the ships by the wharves, fixed upon the first old tub that seemed sea-worthy, broke open a shop, procured some buckets of oil, and by three o'clock had tested and prepared my ship—a day of deathbeds drenched in drizzling, chill. I then returned to the *mairie*, where for the first time that day I met her, and heavy was her soul in her; but when I broke the news that she would be able to talk to me, every day, all day, first she was all surprise and uncertainty, then her eyes turned white to the skies, then she was skipping like a kid; after which we lingered together three hours, going about the town, fetching home stores of whatever she might want, until I saw darkness coming on, and we passed down to the ship.

And when those old screws awoke and moved, bearing me toward the Outer Basin, I marked her standing there darkling on the Quai through heartrending greyness of inclemency, and, ah, God, the gloomy underlook of that gaze, the piteous push of that lip, then the burying of that face! My heart broke, for I had not given her one little kiss of good-bye; and she had been so good, quietly acquiescing, like a good wife, not attempting to force her presence upon me in the ship; and I went and left her there, all widowed, solitary on a continent, blinking after me: and I steered out to the bleak and dreary fields of the sea.

\* \* \*

Arriving at Portsmouth the next morning, I made my residence in the first house in which I found an instrument, a spacious dwelling facing the Harbor Pier, then hurried round to the Exchange, which is on the Hard near the Docks, a red building with facings of Cornish moorstone, a bank on the ground floor, and the Exchange on the first. Here I plugged her number on to mine, ran back, rang—and, to my great thanksgiving, heard her speak. (This instrument, however, did not prove satisfactory even when I had put-in another battery, and at last I put a bed into the middle room at the Exchange, with stores, and here have taken up my residence). I believe that she lives and sleeps under the instrument, as I here live and sleep, sleep and live, under it; and, my instrument being near one of the beach windows, I, hearing her, can look out toward her over the field of the sea, yet not see her, and she, too, looking out over the sea toward me, can hear my speech coming out of the deeps of nowhere, but see me not.

\* \* \*

I this morning early to her: “Good morning! Are you there?”

“Good morning! No: I am there,” says she.

“Well, that was what I asked—‘are you there?’ ”

“But I am not here, I am there,” says she: “the paladox of the heart!”

“The what?”

“The paladox!”

“But still I do not understand: how can you be both there and not there?”

“If my ear is here, and elsewhere?” says she.

“An operation?”

“Yes!” says she.

“What doctor?”

“A special one!” says she.

“Ear-specialist?”

“Heart!” says she.

“And you let a heart-specialist operate on your ear? How are you after it?”

“Happy but for a sigh. And you?”

“Quite well. Did you sleep well?”

“Except when you lang me up at midnight. Have had such a dleam. . .”

“What?”

“Dleamed that I saw two little boys of the same age—only I could not see their faces—playing in a wood . . .”

“Ah, I hope that one of them was not named Cain, my poor girl.

“No! neither of them! Suppose I tell a stoly and say that one was named Caius and the other Tibelius, or one Charles and the other Herbert?”

“Ah, well . . . So what will you be doing today?”

“It is a lovely day. . . . Have you nice weather in England?”

“Very.”

“Well, at eleven I will go out and gather Sping-flowers in the park, and cover the *salon*; then I will start upon antimony, for I finished arsenic yesterday. . . . Wouldn’t you like to be here to do it with me?”

“Not I.”

“You would!”

“Why should I? I like England.”

“But Flance is nice, too: and Flance wants to be fliends with England, and is waiting, oh, waiting, for England to come over, and be fliends. Couldn’t some *lapplochement* be negotiated?”

“Good-bye. This talking spoils my morning smoke. . .”

So we speak together across the sea, my God.

\* \* \*

On the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, when I had been separated thirteen weeks from her, I boarded several ships in the Inner Port, a lunacy in my heart: and I selected what looked like a fast boat, one of the smaller Atlantic “steamers,” called the *Stettin*, which seemed to need the least toil in oiling, &c., in order to fit her for the sea: for the boat in which I had come to England was a tub, and I pined for the wings of a dove, that I might fly away to her, and be at rest.

With flustered hands I labored that day, and I should think that I was of the color of ashes to my lips. By half-past two I was finished; and by three was coasting down Southampton Water by Netley Hospital and the Hamblemouth, having said not one syllable at the telephone about going, nor to my own guilty soul a syllable: but in the depths of my being I felt this fact, that this must be a 35-knot ship, and that, if driven hard, she would go 30 against the drag of the garment of seaweed which she trailed; also that, Havre being 120 knots away, at 7 p.m. I should be on its quay.

And when I was away, and out on the bright and breezy sea, I howled to her, crying out “*I am coming!*”, and I knew that she could hear, and that her heart leapt to meet me, for mine leapt, too, and felt her answer.

The sun went low; it set. I was tired of the day’s labor, of standing in the breeze at the high-set wheel, could not yet see the coast of France, and a thought smote me: and after a quarter of an hour I threw the boat’s bows round, my face screwed with pain, God knows, like prisoners whose fingers were ground betwixt screws, and their body drawn out to tenuous length, and their

flesh pinched with pincers; and I fell upon the floor of the bridge contorted with anguish: for I could not go to her. But after a time that paroxysm passed; and I rose up sullen and resentful, to resume my place at the wheel, and steer again for England, a fixed resolve now in my breast; and I said “No, no more: if I could bear it, I would . . . but if it is impossible, how can I? Tomorrow night as the sun sets—without fail—so help me, God—I kill myself.”

\* \* \*

So it is finished, my good God.

In the morning of the next day, the 9<sup>th</sup>, I having come back to Portsmouth about eleven the previous night, when I bid her “Good morning,” she said “Good morning,” and not another word. I said: ‘I got my hookah-bowl broken last night, and shall be trying to mend it today’

No answer.

“Are you there?” I said.

“Yes,” says she.

“Then, why don’t you speak?” I said.

“Where were you yesterday?” says she.

“I went for a cruise in the basin,” I said.

Silence for three minutes; then she: “What is the matter?”

“Matter?” I said.

“*Tell me!*” she says—with such an intensity make me shudder.

“Nothing to tell, Leda!”

“But how can you be so *cluel?*” she cries.

There was anguish in that cry: and the thought took me then, how, on the morrow, she would ring, and have no answer; and she would ring again, and have no answer; and she would ring all day, and ring, and always would ring, with white hair flowing and the eye-balls of frenzy, battering reproaches at the doors of a universe which would howl back everlastingly to her howls only the howl of its soundlessness: and for very pity, my God, I could not help sobbing to myself “May God pity you, woman!”

I do not know if she heard: she must, I think now, have heard; but no reply came; and there I, shivering like the sheeted dead, stood waiting for her next utterance, waiting long, dreading, hoping for, her voice, thinking that, if she sobbed but once, I should drop dead there where I stood or eat my tongue through, or shriek the laughter of distraction; but when at last, after some forty minutes or more, she spoke, her voice was perfectly firm and calm. She said: “Are you there?”

“Yes,” I said, “yes, Leda.”

“What was the color,” says she, “of the poison-cloud which destroyed the world? Purple, was it not?”

“Yes, purple, Leda,” I said.

“And it had a smell like almonds, did it not?” says she.

“Yes,” I said, “yes.”

“Then,” says she, “there is *another* eluption. Evly now and again I seem to scent whiffs like that . . . and there is a vapor in the East which glows—purple it is . . . see if you can see it. . . .”

I flew across the room to an east-window, threw up the sash to look; but, the view being barred by the back of a warehouse, I rushed back, gasped to her to wait, rushed down the two stairs, and out on the Hard ran dodging wildly about, seeking a purview to the East; till finally I ran up the

dockyard, behind the storehouses, to the Semaphore, to arrive at the top panting for life; and now I looked abroad, but only to behold all the heavens cloudless, save for a bank of cloud to the northwest, the sun blazing in a space of azure pallor; so back anew I flew, to tell her: "I cannot see it . . . !"

"Then, it has not travelled far enough to the north-west yet," she said.

"My wife!" I cried: "you are my wife now!"

"Am I?" says she: "at last? . . . But shall I not die?"

"No! you can escape! My home! My heart! If only for an hour, then death, just think, on the same couch, for ever, heart to heart—how sweet!"

"Yes! sweet! . . . But how escape?"

"It travelled slowly before. . . . Get quick into that boat under the crane—you have seen me turn-on liquid air—that handle under the dial; get oil from that shop next to the clock-tower, and toss it over everything rusted—only spend no time; you can steer by tiller and compass, well, the wheel is the opposite, the course North-East by North—I meet you on the sea—go now——"

I was wild with bliss. I thought that I should take her between my arms, and have the freckles against my face, and taste her short firm-fleshed upper-lip, and moan upon her, and whimper upon her, and mutter upon her, and say "my wife;" and even when I knew that she was gone from the telephone, I still stood there, hoarsely calling after her "My wife! My wife!"

\* \* \*

I flew down, all confident, to where the boat lay moored that had borne me the day before, for, as her joint speed with the speed of Leda's boat would be forty knots, in three hours we must meet; nor had I the least fear of her ceasing to live ere our meeting: for, apart from the gradualness of the vapor's progress that first time, I foretasted and trusted my love, that she would surely come, and not fail, as dying saints foretasted and trusted eternal life.

I was no sooner on board the *Stettin* than her engines were straining under what was equivalent to "forced draught;" and, although on the day before it would have surprised me at any moment while I drove her to be carried to the clouds in an explosion from her rusted tanks, this day such an apprehension never crossed my mind, for I knew that I was immortal till I saw her.

The sea was quite placid, as on the previous day, and appeared placider, the skies brighter, and there was a flightiness of laughter in the feet of the breezes that frilled the sea in dashing dark patches, like *frissons* of tickling; and I thought that the morning was a genuine marriage-morning, and remembered that it was a Sabbath; and sweet smells our wedding would not lack of almond and peach, though, looking eastward, I could see no blush of any purple cloud, but only whirls of chiffon under the sun; and it would be an eternal wedding, for one day in our sight would be as a thousand years, and our thousand years of delight one day, since in the evening of that eternity death would visit us, sweetly to lay its finger on our sluggard lids, and we'd die tired of delight; and all manner of dancings and singings—fundango and glee of galliard, corantos and the solemn gavotte—were rampant in my heart that happy day; and, in running by the chart-house to the bridge, I spied under the table a roll of old flags, and presently they were flying in an arc of gala from the main; and the sea rumbled in a tract of tumbling milk behind me; and I hastened homeward to meet my heart.

\* \* \*

No purple cloud could I observe, as on and on, for two hours, I tore southward; but at hot noon, on the port beam, I spied through the glass across the water something else that moved; and it was you who came to me, O, Leda, my spirit's breath!

When I bore down upon her, waving, soon I saw her stand like the ancient mariner, but in muslins that fluttered, at her wheel on the bridge—one of those little Havre-Antwerp craft, high in the bows—and she waved a little white thing, until I could spy her face, her smile, when I called to her to stop, in a minute stopped myself, and by happy steering came with headway which failed to a slight crash by her side; then ran down the steps to her, led her up; and on the deck, without saying anything, I fell to my knees before her, and I bowed my brow down, down, to the floor, with obeisance, and I adore her there as Heaven.

And we were wedded: for she, too, bowed the knee with me under that jovial sky; and under her eyes were the moist semi-circles of fatigue, dreamy, pensive, so dear and wifish; and God was there, and saw her kneel: for He loves the girl.

Then I got the two vessels apart, and there they rested some yards separated through the day, we two being in a main-deck cabin, where I had locked a door, so that no one might come in to be with my love and me.

\* \* \*

I said to her: “We will fly west to one of the Somersetshire coal-mines, or to one of the Cornwall tin-mines, where we will barricade ourselves against the cloud, and provision ourselves for months, for it is quite practicable, we have plenty of time, and no crowds to break down our barricades—and there in the deep we will live sweetly, till the disaster is overpast.”

And she smiled, drew her hand across my face, said: “No, no; don't you trust in my God? do you think He would leally let me die?”

For she has appropriated the Almighty God to herself, naming Him “*my God*,” aye, and she generally knows what she is saying, too: and she would not fly the cloud.

And I am now writing three weeks later at a little place called Château-les-Roses, and no poison-cloud, nor any sign of any poison-cloud, has come: and this I do not understand.

It may be that she conjectured that I was on the point of destroying myself . . . she may be capable . . . But no, I do not understand, and shall never ask her.

But *this* I understand: that it is *the White* who is Master here; that though He wins but by a hair, yet He wins: and since He wins, dance, my heart.

I look for a race that shall resemble its Mother: nimble-witted, light-minded, pious—like her; all-human, ambidextrous, ambicephalous, two-eyed—like her; and if, like her, they talk the English language with all the *r*'s turned into *l*'s, that will be nice, too.

They will be fruit-eaters, I suppose, when the meat now about is eaten up; but it is not known that meat is good for men; and, if it is really good, then they will *invent* a meat: for they will be *her* sons, and she, to the furthest circle within which the organ of woman's wit is ordained to orbit, is, I swear, all-wise.

There was a “preaching” man—a Scotchman he was, named Macintosh—something like that—who said that the last end of Man shall be well, and very well; and she says the same: and the agreement of these two makes a truth. And to that I now say: Amen, Amen.

For I, Adam Jeffson, parent of a race, hereby lay down, ordain, and decree for all time, perceiving it now: That the one motto and watchword proper to the riot and odyssey of Life in

general, and in especial to the race of men, ever was, and remains, even this: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”